

Vice President Bush
**U.S. Proposes Banning
Chemical Weapons**

April 18, 1984



United States Department of State
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Following is an address by Vice President Bush before the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Geneva, Switzerland, April 18, 1984. (Introductory remarks deleted.)

It is an honor to come before this conference again today, on behalf of our President, to reaffirm our strong commitment to arms control.

And I have come to reaffirm, as well, a resolve that has dominated the American position in all arms control discussions over the last year: the resolve that the growth in the number of the most dreaded weapons of modern warfare must not simply be slowed; it must be reversed. In the matter before us—chemical weapons—they must be banned, totally banned.

I have brought with me today the latest expression of that firm U.S. resolve—a draft treaty banning entirely the possession, production, acquisition, retention, or transfer of chemical weapons.

This draft treaty includes an entirely new concept for overcoming the great obstacle that has impeded progress in the past toward a full chemical weapons ban—namely, the obstacle of verification. This new concept is part of a package of sound and reasonable procedures to verify compliance with all the draft treaty's terms.

Except on close inspection, chemical weapons, these insidious chemical weapons, are virtually identical in appearance to ordinary weapons; plants for producing chemicals for weapons are difficult to distinguish from plants producing chemicals for industry and, in fact, some

chemicals with peaceful utility are structurally similar to some chemicals used in warfare. So verification is particularly difficult with chemical weapons.

Review of Concerns

Our new concept is an arms control verification procedure that we call the "open invitation." But before I outline this unprecedented procedure, let me review some of the concerns that have led the United States to propose such a step.

When I appeared before you in February last year, I quoted Franklin Roosevelt's comment that the use of chemical weapons "has been outlawed by the general opinion of civilized mankind." Unfortunately, despite the horror that these weapons evoke, really in all decent men and women; despite specific prohibitions such as the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, there have been repeated instances of use over the past six decades, against combatants and innocent civilians alike—always, I might note, against those least able to defend themselves or retaliate against such an attack.

In the last 3 years alone, the world has heard frequent reports of violations of these agreements from such places as Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. One important reason that chemical weapons use continues is that neither the 1925 Geneva Protocol nor the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention includes any form of effective verification or enforcement.

Parties signed a piece of paper, attached some stamps and some seals of their own. Arsenals remained, ready for use against any who lacked a deterrent.

The United States has advocated reinforcement of the existing agreements. We, together with other countries, have long supported proposals to direct the Secretary General of the United Nations to initiate investigations of reported violations.

We regret that some UN members have disputed the need for such investigations and have, to date, prevented or impeded inquiries. We believe that international investigations of this sort could serve as a step toward the kind of openness required for a comprehensive chemical weapons treaty that would work.

Surely the consequences of the absence of effective verification, as seen in the reports of continued use of chemical weapons, can only provoke profound concerns among all of us today.

First, there is this unspeakable horror visited upon the victims of such weapons, many of them innocents simply caught up in the path of war.

Second, the use of chemical weapons violates existing international agreements and so undermines the arms control process.

Finally, and perhaps most disturbing, there is the chance that, as reports of use continued, the world might actually get callous, get hardened to this news. It might come numbly to accept these weapons and to abandon efforts to rid future generations of this peril.

We owe it to ourselves and to our children to prevent this from happening.

For more than a decade, the United States has exercised restraint in the field of chemical weapons, and we will continue to do so. We desire an arms control solution to the chemical weapons threat. But our restraint has not induced all other states to exercise comparable restraint.

And this is why we are taking steps to prepare for the possibility that modern chemical weapons might have to be produced in the absence of a comprehensive ban. However, we must and will do all that we can to achieve a treaty that eliminates any need for new production.

The U.S. Proposal

The President asked me to come here again this year to stress the urgency of this issue. He believes that we must do all we can to eliminate existing stocks of chemical weapons and the facilities that produce them. He wants to ensure that such weapons will never be developed or used again.

Now to that end, the President has asked me to present to this conference to-

day the U.S. draft text of a comprehensive treaty banning chemical weapons, and I ask that this draft be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The provisions of the draft treaty closely follow the "detailed views" my government presented to this conference last year. They also incorporate the views of many other delegations who have given us the benefit of their thoughts.

This treaty would prohibit the development, the production, the stockpiling, the acquisition, the retention, or transfer of chemical weapons. The principal criterion for distinguishing between permitted and banned activities would be the purpose for which an activity is being conducted.

In recognition of the need for confidence in such an agreement, the draft also contains sound and reasonable procedures—among these, "open invitation" inspections—for verifying compliance with all its provisions.

For a chemical weapons ban to work, each party must have confidence that the other parties are abiding by it. This elementary, common sense principle is the essence of what we mean by verification. No sensible government enters into those international contracts known as treaties unless it can ascertain—or verify—that it is getting what it contracted for.

Lack of effective verification and compliance mechanisms has been a major obstacle to achieving a true and effective ban on these weapons.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the technical similarities between chemical weapons production facilities and commercial production facilities, the similarity between chemical weapons agents and chemicals for peaceful uses, and the similarity between chemical munitions and conventional munitions makes discrimination impossible without very, very close observation.

And, perhaps most importantly, strict verification is needed to protect those who do not possess chemical weapons, or are willing to give them up, from those who might maintain possession surreptitiously.

The goal of our proposal is a treaty to require states to declare the sizes and locations of their chemical weapons stocks and production facilities, to destroy the stocks and facilities, and to foreswear creating new chemical weapons. If they are to sign a contract, states must have confidence, in particular, that they can know:

First, that all declared stocks have been destroyed;

Second, that all declared production facilities have been destroyed;

Third, that the declared stocks do constitute all the stocks; and
Fourth, that the declared facilities are all the facilities.

Without such firm assurance—and think everyone here knows this—we cannot claim to have banned chemical weapons. In this regard, my government has taken note of the Soviet Union's announced willingness to consider accepting the continuous stationing of international inspection teams at the locations where declared stockpiles are to be destroyed. We welcome that.

We are encouraged by this recognition of the indispensability of onsite inspection, a matter tabled right here in this room, I think by Ambassador Issraelyan [Soviet Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament]. The Soviet Union's announcement has advanced the negotiations toward establishing confidence in the first of the four critical requirements—that is, that all declared stocks be destroyed.

To address the second of the four criteria—that all declared production facilities be destroyed—we propose a similar, continuous, onsite monitoring and periodic inspection.

The verification difficulties inherent in the problem of undeclared sites—determining that there are no hidden stocks and no clandestine production facilities—that remains our most formidable challenge. It is formidable because the problem of undeclared sites can be resolved only if states commit themselves to a new but absolutely necessary degree of openness.

Let's face reality. Chemical weapons are not difficult to hide, and they're not difficult to produce in a clandestine manner. Many states have the capacity to do this. We can rid the world of these weapons only if we make it impossible for anyone, for ourselves, to do such things without detection.

The opportunity for undetected violations is the undoing of arms control. If that opportunity persists, it would render whatever chemical weapons ban we conclude illusory and, really, would set back the cause of peace.

And so, for this reason, the U.S. Government is putting forward the unprecedented "open invitation" verification proposal to which I referred earlier. As part of a chemical-weapons ban, the United States is willing to join other parties in a mutual obligation to open for international inspection on short notice all of its military or government-owned or government-controlled facilities.

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SUMMARY OF U.S. DRAFT CHEMICAL WEAPONS BAN

Overall U.S. Approach

- Complete worldwide ban on chemical weapons.
- Rigorous verification by a combination of national and international measures, including systematic international onsite inspection.
- A special anywhere-anytime onsite inspection procedure to permit treaty parties unimpeded access to suspected sites and facilities owned or controlled by the governments of other treaty parties.
- Based on our "detailed views" paper (CD/343) presented at the CD in February 1983.
- Incorporates ideas presented by many other delegations.

Scope of the Prohibition

- The treaty would prohibit:
 - Development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, retention, or transfer of chemical weapons;
 - Other preparations for use of chemical weapons; and
 - Use of chemical weapons.
- The principal criterion for distinguishing between permitted and banned activities would be the purpose for which an activity is being conducted. This general "purpose" criterion would be supplemented with toxicity criteria and lists.
- Lethal and incapacitating chemicals, and their precursors, would be covered.

Chemical Weapons Stockpiles

- Declared in detail within 30 days.
- Inspected promptly to confirm the declaration. Monitored until destruction by onsite instruments and periodic inspection.
- Destroyed within 10 years.
- Destruction verified by continuous monitoring with onsite instruments and continuous presence of international inspectors.

Chemical Weapons Production Facilities

- Declared in detail within 30 days.
- Inspected promptly to confirm the declaration.
- Monitored until destruction by onsite instruments and periodic international onsite inspection.
- Destroyed within 10 years.
- Destruction verified by monitoring with onsite instruments and periodic international onsite inspection.

Permitted Activities

- Activities to protect against chemical attack would be permitted to continue:
 - Production of supertoxic lethal chemicals and key precursors for protective purposes restricted to a single small-scale facility;
 - Quantities of such chemicals strictly limited; and
 - Single permitted facility subject to monitoring with onsite instruments and periodic international onsite inspection.

- Specific provisions would deal with chemicals which pose a particular risk:
 - Production and use of specified supertoxic lethal chemicals restricted;
 - Production of specified precursors and toxic chemicals subject to systematic international onsite verification; and
 - Data exchanged on production and use of other specified precursors and toxic chemicals.
- The convention would be implemented in a manner designed to avoid hindering legitimate activities. Systematic international onsite verification would be mandatory for:
 - Checking the declarations of chemical-weapons stockpiles and production facilities;
 - Monitoring stockpiles and facilities until they are destroyed;
 - Confirming the destruction of stockpiles and facilities;
 - Monitoring small-scale permitted production of supertoxic lethal chemicals and key precursors for protective purposes; and
 - Monitoring commercial production of specified chemicals that pose a particular risk.
- A special anywhere-anytime onsite inspection procedure would be established to permit treaty parties unimpeded access to suspected sites and facilities owned or controlled by the governments of other treaty parties.

This pledge to an "open invitation" for inspections is not made lightly. We make it because it is indispensable to an effective chemical weapons ban. The essence of verification is deterrence of violations through the risk of detection. The "open invitation" procedures will increase the chances that violations will be detected and the chances that, in the event of violations, the evidence necessary for an appropriate international response can be collected. That is the heart of deterring violations.

If the international community recognizes that such a provision is the *sine qua non* of an effective chemical weapons ban and joins us in subscribing to it, we will not only have realized the noble longing for a treaty that actually bans chemical weapons but we will have changed in an

altogether salutary manner the way governments do business.

We will have set a bold example for overcoming barriers that impede effective arms control in other areas. And we will have engendered the kind of openness among nations that dissipates ungrounded suspicions and allows peace to breathe and allows peace to thrive.

We recognize that all governments have secrets. Some speak as if openness and effective verification cut against their interests alone. But openness entails burdens for every state, every single state, including the United States. Openness of the kind we are proposing for the chemical weapons ban would come at a price.

But an effective ban on chemical weapons requires the kind of "open in-

itation" inspections we propose. We, our President, the U.S. Government are willing to pay the price of such openness. The enormous value of an effective ban warrants our doing so.

I know that the U.S. delegation to this body is eager for the process of negotiating a chemical weapons ban to begin to unfold. We hope and trust that the seriousness of this work, its urgency, and, perhaps most of all, the humane aspirations of the peoples represented here will spur all in this conference toward an early and successful agreement.

We do not underestimate the difficulties this task presents. I have said that the key to an effective convention—a convention that could eliminate the possibility of chemical warfare forever—is

enforcement of compliance through effective verification.

Our emphasis on this point (and our "open invitation" verification proposal) springs from a desire that the ban work—work permanently, work effectively to provide the security all of us seek.

America's Commitment to Arms Control

The United States is encouraged that these negotiations to ban chemical weapons have already achieved broad international support. It is significant as well that work on this treaty is widely recognized to offer a promising opportunity for enhancing not only East-West cooperation but also cooperation among all nations.

Our delegation looks forward to serious consultations with the Soviet delegation, and to detailed discussions with all other participants, on the elaboration of these provisions and other necessary aspects of an effective agreement. Our aim in these negotiations will be a practical one—to work hard and in good faith; to build mutual confidence that, frankly, is lacking right now; to achieve real results.

The President has asked me again (I saw him just before I left for Geneva) to assure you again that the American commitment to work for effective arms control extends to all of the work of this conference and to reassure you that it extends to the work beyond this conference as well. We are pleased to be making progress in the multilateral negotiations in Stockholm on confidence-building measures in Europe; pleased to have resumed East-West talks in Vienna on reducing conventional forces in Europe.

Our commitment to results is equally strong on the all-important issue of nuclear arms control, where the United States believes it is essential to accelerate effective, verifiable agreements. And, as I think most people here know, we'd seek deep reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and the greater international stability that would follow that.

Here, today, I again invite the Soviet Union to return to the two nuclear arms negotiations it suspended 5 months ago and to resume with us the crucial task of reducing nuclear arms. The United States remains ready to explore all ideas, without preconditions, at any time the Soviet Union chooses to renew the dialogue. We feel strongly about it; and in this committee—whose day-to-day work is dedicated in a multilateral way to arms reduction—I just feel that I had to make that point: we are ready, here, bilaterally, whatever form it takes.

As the President said in his January 16 address on U.S.-Soviet relations: "cooperation begins with communications." This concept is part of our entire approach to East-West relations and to all issues on the East-West agenda—be it arms control, regional problems, human rights, or an improvement in mutual understanding. We are ready—as the President has made clear in word and deed and action—to tackle the difficult work of genuine cooperation.

America has, in fact, reduced the overall size of its own nuclear arsenals over the last two decades. But we are ready to work for solutions and results—in Geneva, in Vienna, in Stockholm, or indeed in any place where men and women of good faith are willing to sit down and negotiate in earnest.

Since my visit here last year, the United States has labored long and thought very carefully about the contents of this treaty. We really are hopeful that other countries will carefully study it and join us in serious negotiations.

I am saddened that some—without even seeing a draft—have already chosen to issue statements charging that the introduction of this treaty text here today is the result of simple political motivation. I hope that we can convince those who have those reservations, made those statements, that we are sincere and that they will come to see, through the negotiations, our sincerity. Isn't it time that we focused on the concrete and open and universal—on the desire of all peoples for reducing the weapons and risks of war.

The United States has repeatedly over the last several years demonstrated its determination not simply to slow the rate of growth of the world's arsenals but to reduce these arsenals.

I mentioned we have reduced the overall size of our own nuclear arsenals over the last two decades. I don't think a lot of people even in my own country understand this. But the number of nuclear weapons in the American inventory was one-third higher in 1967 than in 1983; while from 1960 to last year, American nuclear megatonnage dropped by 75%.

In the last year, we've heard a lot of talk about the NATO modernization program. In 1979 the NATO countries decided to seek arms control negotiations but, in the absence of an arms control agreement, to deploy 572 Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles.

But agreement or no agreement, the NATO countries decided at the same time to remove 1,000 nuclear weapons from Europe. These 1,000 weapons are now gone. Last year at Montebello, the NATO allies decided to reduce their arsenal by another 1,400 nuclear weapons. And

whenever a Pershing II or ground-launched cruise missile is put in place, an existing weapon will be taken out of service.

The result of all this is that absent a treaty, NATO will deploy the entire 572 new missiles. NATO will still have removed five nuclear weapons for every one that has been added.

In the nuclear arms control talks over the last several years, America has sought multilateral agreements that would make even deeper cuts possible.

In the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) talks 2½ years ago, we proposed the "zero option." The "zero option" would eliminate the entire class of land-based INF missiles. Later, we indicated our willingness to agree to an interim step involving more limited reductions.

In the strategic arms reduction talks (START) that you are all familiar with, we proposed nearly 2 years ago a one-third reduction in the number of warheads on Soviet and American ballistic missiles. We subsequently also proposed alternative paths of "building down" and of "trading off" in order to move the negotiations forward.

We regret profoundly that the Soviet Union chose to leave, to walk out of the START and the INF negotiations, even while they continued their unprecedented and unparalleled deployment of strategic and INF systems. We know that we are joined by others here at the Conference on Disarmament in urging the Soviet leaders to come back, resume these important negotiations on which so much of the world's hopes depend.

At the same time we look forward to genuine progress in the mutual and balanced force reductions negotiations that are going on in Vienna and in Stockholm at those important talks, the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

We seek effective and equitable cuts in the world's nuclear, conventional, and chemical forces. We want to prevent their use. That is our goal and the determination to which we shall continue to dedicate ourselves.

We are determined that future generations will not look back on these and the other arms control negotiations of our time, as we look back on ones of generations past, and shrug and say: "Of course, all they did was, perhaps, to slow the pace of the arms race of that period. They didn't stop it or reverse it; and they probably couldn't have." We are determined to do better than that.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me just say something about chemical weapons. There is a need, as I said in these comments, to reduce tension. But if ever, if ever in the history of mankind there was something on which people from every single country—not we government officials or our excellencies or all of that, but let us put it in terms of the people—in my view, a father and a grandfather, getting older (I served with many of you around this table when I was a father but not a grandfather). But in my view, there is nothing, there is no difference between a family walking along the streets of Vladivostock or Leningrad or Peoria, Illinois, or Paris or London or Caracas, wherever else it is, Belgrade—no difference: every single family, a child if he knows about it, is scared to death of chemical weapons. And we have come here today with a proposal that is very,

very broad. It reaches way out, goes way beyond what I would have believed my own country (and we pride ourselves on openness)—but way beyond what we would have done a few years ago. A lot of that is in response to the feeling of people.

I have traveled to Africa, and people mentioned it there. In all these different continents, concern about all kinds of things—East-West, nuclear weapons, and all of this; but everywhere there is agreement on chemical weapons. So that is why I personally sound like I do.

But as the second-highest official in the United States of America, I came to this conference today. We are not suggesting there will be no criticism of what we have suggested. We are not saying that we are perfect, that everything must be exactly the way, and will end up exactly the way, that that treaty is drafted.

But I just didn't want to leave here without telling some former colleagues, some new friends, some with whom my country may have differences, that we come here in a spirit of good will. And we come here trying to address ourselves to perhaps the most fundamental question on arms existing in the world today—that is, how do we, as civilized, rational people, eliminate, ban in entirety in a verifiable way, all chemical weapons from the face of the earth. ■

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