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WESTERN GROUP DISTRIBUTION

U.S. Biological Weapons Convention Talking Points

At our last consultation in Geneva in July, we discussed preparation for, and possible results of, the resumed Review Conference. That discussion included the length of the Review Conference, how to handle the Ad Hoc Group, and a decision on possible follow-on activities (annual meeting, an expert group).

Since our July meetings in Geneva, Washington has reviewed these issues again, taking into account the July discussions with a number of parties.

As a result, our approach to the RevCon has evolved. We have reached the following conclusions on key issues:

- Follow-on meetings (annual, expert, etc.): The U.S. does not support follow-on meetings between November 2002 and 2006 Review Conferences.
- Non-compliance: if the RevCon is very short, the U.S. would not "name names." We would do so in a longer RevCon.
- Ad Hoc Group: on the termination of the Ad Hoc Group, the U.S. position remains unchanged. We seek the end of the Ad Hoc Group and its mandate. The U.S. will make our position on the Ad Hoc Group clear. If the RevCon is very short, we would not explicitly address the issue. We would do so in a longer RevCon.
- RevCon duration: the U.S. prefers a very short RevCon, if any.
- U.S. definition of a "very short RevCon" is one with the sole purpose and outcome of agreeing to hold a RevCon in 2006.

The United States remains strongly committed to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is a bedrock of our efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction.

Over the past six months, the United States has fully reviewed the outcome from the November/December Review Conference and the U.S. position articulated at that meeting. We have noted views expressed by others then and since.

The fundamental point underlying the U.S. approach is combating the real, present, and pervasive BW threat that exists now.

What we proposed both in consultations last autumn and at the RevCon were measures we believe address this real problem, the BW threat.

Efforts are underway to combat and respond to the BW threat in a variety of fora. We are gratified that there has been real progress over the last six months in these appropriate fora on many measures.

In November, we tried to place our ideas in the BWC context, indicating how the BWC could expand the scope and impact of the many measures for addressing the threat.

We also indicated a desire for BWC States Parties to face up directly to a uniquely BWC issue: non-compliance by some states with the obligations of State Parties to the BWC.

The negative response to these efforts convinced us that the meetings in the BWC context are not the most effective venues for pursuing measures to combat and respond to the BW threat.

The United States remains convinced that the traditional trappings of arms control, such as declarations and investigations, do not work with respect to biological weapons.

A lot of the other things that some demand, such as elimination of export controls, do not deal with real world ways to address the threat and actually detract from our ability to focus on and address the threat.

We continue to reject the approach embodied by the Ad Hoc Group and believe its mandate should be terminated.

At the resumed RevCon, we intend to make compliance with the BWC a front-and-center issue to put maximum political pressure on non-compliant States Parties.

Based on Tibor Toth's statements concerning his consultations, it appears to the United States that a number of other countries, including countries of concern, have not changed their positions from last December.

We believe that the measures that can be most effective in enhancing our ability to combat the BW threat can be done best in fora other than the BWC. Therefore, we will not support convening any meetings in the context of the BWC before a 2006 RevCon.

We have seen no reason to change our approach.

Given the disparity of views on how to proceed between now and the 2006 RevCon, it might be best to have a quick and quiet RevCon, whose only action would be to agree that the sixth RevCon be held in 2006.

A prolonged meeting will quickly degenerate into a heated battle, which will detract from the positive efforts already underway to combat the scourge of BW.

In this case, the U.S. would be forced to name countries we believe are not complying with their obligations, and would need to press for explicit termination of Ad Hoc Group.

We believe that in order to minimize the prospects for an uncontrolled meeting in November, we should try to reach agreement on a short meeting and its outcome prior to November 11th.

U.S. Biological Weapons Non-Paper

In the past year great progress has been made to combat the threat posed by biological weapons. National, bilateral, and multilateral efforts have made it more difficult for those pursuing biological weapons to obtain the necessary ingredients and made it easier to detect and counter any attack.

Since the anthrax attacks last year, the United States has enacted two new laws to improve our ability to combat the threat.

- The USA Patriot Act, signed in October 2001, provides national security and federal law enforcement officials with the necessary tools and resources to better counter terrorist activities.
- In June 2002, the Public Health Security and Bioterrorist Preparedness and Response Act was enacted, which strengthens and enhances national bio-defense activities.

The United States has placed great emphasis on working multilaterally and with like-minded groups to combat the BW threat.

At the G-8 summit in June, members announced the "G-8 global partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction." The United States pledged \$10 billion toward this effort and urged other G-8 states to donate \$10 billion over 10 years, with the aim of enhancing projects underway in the former Soviet Union, including projects dedicated towards reducing BW proliferation.

In May 2002, World Health Organization members agreed to strengthen health surveillance systems to detect any possible BW attack and improve international response to stop any resultant outbreak.

Also in May 2002, NATO's Defense Group on Proliferation set forth a number of initiatives to improve NATO's ability to combat and counter any BW attack, including stockpiling medicines and protective equipment.

In June 2002, Australia Group members adopted tougher export measures to control more effectively items that could be used to produce BW, including adding controls on the transfer of information and knowledge that could aid BW proliferation.

The United States is committed to combating the BW threat. We will do so where we can and when we can.