



UNITED STATES MISSION TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
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Statement By

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Biological Weapons Convention

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Regional Cooperation

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**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES
BWC 2007 Experts Group Meeting**

Regional Cooperative Efforts

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to share the United States' views on regional cooperation relating to national implementation measures. The relationship between Article IV on national implementation and Article X on cooperation is synergistic - encouraging international cooperation in assisting States Parties in national implementation of the Convention. The United States has contributed time and resources to this important effort of assisting other States Parties in meeting their BWC commitments. I would like to take the opportunity to share with you some of the types of assistance the United States has provided as a part of carrying out its Article IV and X obligations.

Our bilateral assistance activities purposely cover many areas. Perhaps most relevant to our focus this year, we have provided considerable aid in developing national implementing legislation for the BWC to individual states, to follow-up from the constructive discussions States Parties engaged in during the 2003 Meetings of Experts. A number of States Parties, as well as other states that are in the process of ratifying the BWC, have requested assistance on these issues, and in response, we have organized a variety of workshops to engage with those countries. These workshops are already beginning to yield positive results through development of model legislation, proposed timelines and access to information on all aspects of the process. States with whom we have worked either already have, or are in the process of drafting, BWC implementing legislation and establishing national standards of practice for pathogen security. This support is also helping participating countries meet some of their obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. The United States plans to continue this type of assistance, to the degree that resources are available, upon request by either States Parties or non-States Parties.

IGOs Important Leaders

We are pleased that Interpol has sent a senior representative to our Experts Meeting. The United States believes Interpol plays a very important role in helping its member states, through their distinct channels, to strengthen their law enforcement capabilities in the bioterrorism area. We view Interpol's activities as complementary to those being pursued by BWC States Parties. Their activities demonstrate the urgency of our efforts, and as States Parties we are in the position to help Interpol in developing an accurate database of national legislation that underpins multinational efforts to catch and prosecute entities engaging in the use of biology as a weapon. We strongly support the Interpol biocriminalization project. With U.S. funding, this project is currently developing a database containing detailed analyses of national legislation and a

legislation kit that will provide countries with a model of draft legislation as well as examples of enacted legislation. The multi-layered channels for assistance, through Interpol, UNSC Resolution 1540 channels, bilaterally and in coordination with other States Parties, will ensure that there will be help available to assist every State Party in meeting the obligations for national implementation that it assumed when joining the treaty.

We commend the OPCW for its very active effort to ensure that 182 Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are able to meet their obligations for national implementation and welcome their participation here in Geneva. We have benefited from the lessons learned through OPCW activities, which often directly relate to how assistance can be provided for the BWC. Through Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs), the OPCW Technical Secretariat provides assistance to States Parties in relation to drafting of implementing legislation and ensures certain key measures are contained in domestic regulations. The OPCW's Office of the Legal Advisor provides comments before the draft legislation goes before States Parties' domestic legislative bodies ensuring the laws meet CWC requirements. The OPCW and States Parties, including the United States, devote staff and considerable resources toward TAVs. In addition the OPCW convenes regional meetings gathering National Authority officials in capitals or The Hague, and keeps active records on the progress of States Parties in establishing comprehensive implementation measures. The OPCW experience provides BWC States Parties with useful examples of how to invigorate our efforts on this front. Continued liaison between Parties, the OPCW and our newly established Implementation Support Unit – as well as Interpol and other organizations active in this area – will be key to our collective security grounded in comprehensive national legal mechanisms.

Success at the Regional Level

The importance of regional coordination and support can hardly be emphasized enough. Each region is confronted with its own particular threats and challenges. As coordination is ongoing through trade and cultural channels, the same should be true regarding weapons of mass destruction. Those of us gathered here are most aware that biological dangers can stem from many sources, both natural and man-made, and do not respect national boundaries. An excellent example of this is the work of the European Union, under its Joint Action, in numerous regions this past year. The African Union (OAU), Organization for American States (OAS), Asian Regional Forum (ARF) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are also increasingly engaged in assisting members and are best placed to be successful. We welcome OAU, OAS and the Arab League participation here in Geneva and look for their continued engagement on all BWC-related issues. We also welcome the political endorsement by the OSCE (November 2006), OAS (June 2007), and ARF (August 2007) to focus attention and effort on full implementation of UNSCR 1540. The Chair of the Committee has made it known that such regional organization efforts are important.

Intertwined Efforts

Regional organizations have supported activities under UN Security Council Resolution 1540, hosting nearly a dozen important workshops and working directly with 1540 Committee Experts on implementation of the resolution since the 1540 Committee's mandate was extended in April 2006 through UNSCR 1673. There are substantial benefits to be gained through full and effective implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 and a firm commitment to its objectives. Not only is national security enhanced, but capacities applicable to other national priorities are built, from augmenting trade and export controls through demonstrated "good practices" and improving the capacity to mitigate threats to public health. UNSC Resolution 1540 also provides increased transparency and cooperation within the region and with other UN Member States, the Secretariat and international organizations such as the IAEA, the OPCW and the many NGO's that often provide important background materials and venues for this unique and across-the-board effort to reduce our collective risk from weapons of mass destruction.

There has been a significant amount of work done by several NGO's to support State Parties and non-State Parties during the period since the Fifth Review Conference in 2001. For example, the work of the London-based Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) and the Bio-Weapons Prevention Project (BWPP) here in Geneva are noteworthy. They have provided the much needed impetus and gathered, produced and widely distributed their work on the importance of a systematic way to improve our national implementation of the BWC. I am sure many of you have seen and used VERTIC's extremely useful compilation of documents distributed at last winter's Sixth Review Conference. As debuted on Tuesday by the BWPP, their database, the BioWeapons Monitor, contains a repository of information relating to biological and chemical weapons, to include historical documents. Many delegations will find this database valuable.

U.S. Assistance Beyond Implementation Measures

The United States provides substantial funding under the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction. It continues to engage former weapon scientists in redirection programs, and was a founding member of the G-8 Bioterrorism Experts Group and the Global Health Security Action Group (GHSAG). We also invest considerable resources in the area of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and response. We firmly believe that it is in the interest of all countries to work together to address the threat of established as well as newly-emerging diseases. The United States works through a number of agencies and offices to assist other countries in dealing with the issue of infectious diseases. Among these agencies are the Department of Health and Human Services, including both its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health; the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Defense, Energy, Agriculture and State Departments as well as many other agencies and U.S. organizations. Our government has assisted more than 40 other countries in preparedness and response to such diseases as measles, tuberculosis, SARS, and avian influenza. We have shared knowledge, diagnostic tools, and assistance in building laboratory capacity, as well as collaborated with a variety of

international partners to combat devastating diseases such as polio and malaria. These efforts strengthen the ability of our international neighbors to deal with diseases, both recurring ones and newly emerging ones. Strengthening preparedness for naturally occurring diseases is the best defense we can raise against the potential misuse of biological agents and toxins as weapons; thus, by helping other states parties strengthen their health systems, we assist them in preparing for response to the use of biological weapons and therefore contribute directly to the objectives of the BWC. We have also dedicated extensive resources to establish programs such as the Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention Center (REDI) in Singapore, with the goals of enhancing disease detection and response, improving laboratory biosafety and security, and assisting in regional biodefense in Southeast Asia; and the International Center for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR-B), which has enhanced regional preparedness in South Asia for pandemic influenza.

Global Pathogen Security

One other form of assistance provided by the United States has been in the area of promoting better global pathogen security practices, one of the topics addressed in the 2003 Meeting of Experts. The United States, through a number of its agencies and programs, has worked diligently over the past few years to share what it has learned about the importance and practice of pathogen security. In addition to legislative assistance in this area, resources have been provided to a number of countries, many of which are States Parties to the Convention, to enhance the security of laboratories that handle especially dangerous pathogens. This assistance has been in the form of upgrading security at facilities, development of institutional security programs, staff training and development, risk assessment and mitigation, and consolidation of dangerous pathogen collections. We are convinced that these efforts have contributed to safer, more secure laboratories. It is our intention to continue this type of assistance in the immediate future and we welcome the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other States Parties on ways we can help improve pathogen security practices. The United States, along with other countries, has worked closely with WHO, FAO, and the OIE in the development of the biosecurity standards released last year by the WHO, and worked with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on a similar project that reflect best practices in biosecurity. We also provide assistance to the WHO in development and dissemination of training in biosafety and biosecurity practices on a global scale.

As a country, and member of many of the regional organizations mentioned above, the United States is committed for the long-term to assist BWC States Parties and non-State Parties, in any useful manner, with obligations under our Convention and the myriad of related and critical efforts to collectively ensure we are doing everything possible to counter the threat of disease, from whatever source.

We look forward to discussing this week's topics further and my delegation stands ready this week to provide and additional information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.