

BACKGROUND AND TALKING PAPER FOR SECDEF VISIT TO AUSTRALIA  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS (CW) ARMS CONTROL

(U) Background Bilateral/multilateral efforts toward CW ban, active since 1970s has had major breakthrough with the signing of the September U.S.-Soviet MOU and the President's UNGA initiative. This proposal restated U.S. commitment to concluding a ban on CW while we continue to develop a safer, smaller binary deterrent capability. The Soviet Foreign Minister responded in a UNGA speech to the President's initiative with a proposal that all CW production cease (which they claim already to have done) and that all CW use under any circumstances be renounced. Currently both the U.S. and the USSR reserve the right under the 1925 Geneva Protocol to use CW in retaliation for CW use. GOA had proposed a similar moratorium on production prior to the Canberra conference. After evaluating the President's initiative GOA expressed concern that the U.S. plan for a two percent stockpile is a "treaty-stopper". They believe that continuation of the U.S. binary program could jeopardize completion of and adherence to a CW convention.

(U) Binary Production Current plans call for production to continue so that during the period until all CW-capable states are treaty parties, the U.S. (2%) residual CW capability will be as safe to store and maintain as possible. Additionally the modernization program is being examined to assure that the residual stockpile will be configured with the appropriate mix of short, medium and long-range capabilities.

(U) CW Destruction US law requires the the US unitary stockpile be destroyed by 30 April 1997, with the possibility of a 10% holdback for security reasons. Destruction is on schedule.

(U) Talking points

-- The US intends ultimately to destroy all chemical weapons. We propose to destroy all but approximately two percent of our stocks within the first eight years after a treaty goes into effect and the remainder after all CW-capable countries have become parties to the treaty.

-- The US is the only CW-possessor nation to vigorously and successfully develop and implement a CW destruction program. For over two years we have repeatedly offered to share our technology with the USSR. Too date this offer has been refused.

-- We believe it is essential to our national security to retain a CW residual stockpile at this time. Our stocks of unitary weapons are obsolete and must be replaced by munitions which are safer to store, maintain, and transport. If modernization of the stockpile has been completed by the time the treaty enters into force we will not need to continue binary production.

Prepared by [REDACTED]

Army 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6)

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5 U.S.C. § 552 (b) (6)

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