

For Jerome Grossman
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President Bush has repeatedly stated his strong commitment to achieving a global ban on chemical weapons. Yet the pace of negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Geneva is being severely limited by the failure of the United States to develop clear positions and workable solutions to key outstanding issues. The two most important of these are:

1) Challenge inspection. As Vice-President, George Bush presented a U.S. proposal for mandatory challenge inspection in Geneva in 1984. Nevertheless, after prolonged review, the Administration has not yet formulated a specific negotiable position on the scope and conduct of such inspections. Without such a position, progress in negotiating this important verification element is essentially nil.

2) Destruction of stocks. At the United Nations last September, the President proposed that the United States would eliminate its chemical weapons stockpile "once all nations capable of building chemical weapons sign that total-ban treaty". The present draft text of the Chemical Weapons Convention requires complete elimination within ten years after the treaty enters into force, and makes no provision for retaining chemical weapons beyond that clearly defined time. Not one other nation has indicated support for the idea of allowing any residual stocks after ten years. Many, including friends and allies, have advised us of their opposition to the idea. Without widespread support, U.S. adherence to this position makes the Convention unnegotiable.

A further difficulty, not tied with any specific policy issue, is the low level of resource allocation now devoted to the U.S. negotiating effort in Geneva and its backup in Washington. Although the CD delegation is large and is headed by a vigorous Ambassador, only very few of its members have the knowledge and experience needed to contribute effectively to the complex negotiation. This contrasts greatly with the composition of the negotiating teams we field on nuclear and conventional force matters. A similar situation in Washington. The few highly qualified individuals in the negotiation are so overloaded that their individual effectiveness is also reduced.

In sum, the President is strongly committed to achieving a global ban--but nothing much comes out of the US government to make it happen. Calling the situation to his direct attention could break the logjam.

Given to Hatfield
& Chafee
by Grossman.