



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

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**IRAN**

**THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN'S VIEW AND CONCERN OVER THE  
DISCOVERY AND DESTRUCTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM IN IRAQ**

In March 2003 the United States and the United Kingdom and their allies invaded Iraq and consequently occupied the country on the bases of claimed existing WMDs in Iraq and removing the threat posed to international peace and security by these weapons. However, after the occupation no information was ever released on the discovery of WMDs in Iraq by the occupying forces.

It was only six years later, in April 2009, that the United States and the United Kingdom informed States Parties that they had discovered chemical weapons after their invasion of Iraq. Most regrettably they acknowledged that they destroyed these chemical weapons without declaring to the Technical Secretariat and submitting destruction plans to and getting approval of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), despite their obligations to do so under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Article III paragraph 1(a)(i) with respect to chemical weapons sets obligations for each State Party that:

**“Declare whether it owns or possess any chemical weapons, or where there are any chemical weapons located in any place under its jurisdiction or control;”**

Subparagraph (v) of the same article clearly provides that States Parties shall:

**“Provide its general plan for destruction of chemical weapons that it owns or possess, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control, in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraph 6, of the Verification Annex;”**

The Convention in paragraph 6 of part IV(A) of Verification Annex also sets provisions for destruction of chemical weapons in accordance with the order and procedures for their stringent verification to be determined by the Executive Council.

The failure to submit declarations and destruction plan(s) for discovered chemical weapons to the OPCW, in accordance with paragraph 6, Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex of the



Convention, is a clear violation of the United States and United Kingdom obligations under the Convention.

Due to the stringent confidentiality regime of the OPCW on handling and protection of information, refraining from declaring the discovery of chemical weapons in Iraq under the pretext of having concern over the possible access of terrorist groups to the information or weapons is unacceptable. Therefore, the real reason for concealment of the discovery of chemical weapons in Iraq, if any, and declaring it after six years, is yet unknown.

Arbitrary safety and security considerations of the United States and the United Kingdom shall not be used as a pretext for violating their obligations under the Convention while they were operating in Iraq. In such an important issue of chemical weapons destruction, it is only for the Organisation and States Parties to decide.

The hasty and unilateral actions taken by the United States and United Kingdom to destroy discovered chemical weapons in Iraq without supervision of the Technical Secretariat and Executive Council, in violation of the provisions of the Convention, and their failure to notify the OPCW in accordance to the timelines envisaged in the Convention, raise serious questions about the source and nature of these chemical weapons. However, should it be the case, since the unilateral action by the United States and United Kingdom undermines the credibility of the Convention, it requires serious consideration of the matter by the OPCW.

Since the regulations for declaring chemical weapons and their destruction have been clearly and thoroughly envisaged in the Convention in a comprehensive and transparent manner, any argument of **destruction of chemical weapons in exceptional circumstances** is redundant and unjustifiable. Therefore, under any circumstance, the United States and United Kingdom still had the obligation to declare to the Technical Secretariat and call for a closed session by the Executive Council to decide on the issue according to its rights and powers entrusted to it by the Convention.

It should be emphasised that informal consultation with the Technical Secretariat staff could not substitute for the obligations of any State Party to declare the chemical weapons it owns or possesses, or falls under its jurisdiction or its control in accordance to Article III.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has requested clarifications from the United States and the United Kingdom in accordance with Article IX of the Convention and has submitted questions regarding this very issue. The responses provided by the United States and the United Kingdom are still under consideration by the experts in the National Authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Based on our findings from the information that has been provided by the United States and the United Kingdom as well as other information available to the Islamic Republic of Iran, further appropriate measures will be taken in the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We strongly believe that if the violation of Convention obligations in such a delicate situation by the two States Parties in question is ignored, it sets a risky and dangerous precedence which would compromise the integrity of the Convention and credibility of the Organisation.



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**UNITED KINGDOM**

**RESPONSE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM TO A REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION  
SUBMITTED UNDER ARTICLE IX, PARAGRAPH 2, OF THE CHEMICAL  
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**UK response to compliance concerns**

The United Kingdom values the provisions for consultations, cooperation and fact-finding contained in Article IX as an important element of the Convention's compliance regime. This paper provides clarification to resolve concerns which have been raised about the actions of UK forces in destroying chemical weapons in Iraq. In the interests of openness and transparency, this paper seeks also to clarify matters which do not relate directly to matters covered by Article IX, but are relevant to UK actions in Iraq at the time.

The United Kingdom strongly rejects any allegation that it has violated any of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) or undermined the credibility of the Convention. In particular, the United Kingdom absolutely rejects allegations that it has violated its obligations by failing to submit a destruction plan for chemical weapons recovered in Iraq in accordance with paragraph 6 of Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex of the Convention. The United Kingdom has supported the negotiations and implementation of the Convention from the earliest days of the Preparatory Commission, and has continued to provide political, technical and financial support ever since. The UK is firmly committed to upholding the principles of the Convention.

The UK's actions to secure and destroy chemical weapons in Iraq were taken in exceptional circumstances and were in full accordance not only with our international obligations, but also with the fundamental object and purpose of the Convention—to rid the world of chemical weapons—taking account of the need to ensure the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq. This was to the benefit of the people of Iraq, the coalition forces, and neighbouring states. If the UK had failed to take such action, chemical weapons could have been acquired and used by insurgents in Iraq.

The circumstances under which these items were recovered were not envisaged when the Convention was negotiated and agreed by the parties. This is manifest from the face of the Convention, in that the verification steps it provides would not be practicable in circumstances such as those in Iraq at the time. (For example, the security situation in Iraq at that time would not have allowed any on-site verification by the Technical Secretariat. Indeed, the security situation in Iraq, although much improved, has still not been such as to



allow any on-site verification activities by the Technical Secretariat.) It is precisely because of this type of situation that the Executive Council (at its Fifty-Eighth Session) decided to establish a facilitation to develop guidelines for the security and destruction of chemical weapons in situations not foreseen by the Convention, including conflict situations. Consequently, a number of obligations under, for example, Article IV and Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex of the Convention did not apply in the particular situation in Iraq. In particular, there was no obligation to submit a destruction plan in accordance with paragraph 6 of Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex.

After May 2004, the UK was no longer an occupying power. At the time in question, the Government of Iraq exercised sovereign authority, and the UK was there at their invitation, and under the authorisation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546 and subsequent resolutions. Consequently, the detailed verification and declaration provisions did not apply to the destruction of chemical weapons by UK forces in this particular situation.

In addition, the UK's actions in destroying the chemical weapons were in fulfilment of our international obligations in light of the mandate provided by the Security Council in Resolution 1546 (2004) (and renewed in subsequent resolutions), which states that "the multinational force shall have the authority to take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq". The letters annexed to Resolution 1546 set out tasks which included "the continued search for and securing of weapons that threaten Iraq's security". The timely destruction of the chemical weapons—which would not have been achievable had the routine verification provisions of the Convention been applicable—was necessary in order to fulfil this mandate.

Following Iraq's accession to the Convention, with the knowledge of the Iraqi authorities, and in the light of the improving security situation, the UK informed the Secretariat and the Executive Council of the actions it had taken. This was done in the interests of transparency and the spirit of the Convention. The UK participated constructively, and in good faith, in the discussions mandated by the Executive Council at its Fifty-Eighth Session on destruction of chemical weapons in "situations not foreseen".

### **Information on recovery of chemical weapons in Iraq**

None of UNSCOM, UNMOVIC or the ISG were able to confirm that they had destroyed or otherwise accounted for all chemical weapons possessed by Iraq. It is likely that numbers of chemical weapons had been abandoned, buried or otherwise lost during the course of Iraq's military operations in the 1980s, which were not identified or recovered by UNSCOM or UNMOVIC. (It is not unusual that old chemical weapons munitions are found periodically from former programmes or in combat zones where they were deployed.) In 2006, UK forces recovered and destroyed 21 such items of suspected chemical weapons believed to have been manufactured by the former Iraqi regime before 1991. This occurred in two separate operations in January and May 2006. The dangerous operating environment and the constant threat from insurgents at the time meant that troops could only spend a limited amount of time in any one location without inviting attack; all vehicle movement had to be carefully co-ordinated and heavily protected, and no area could be considered safe. The second destruction operation took place just 24 hours before five UK troops were killed when their Lynx helicopter was shot down by a missile fired by insurgents. Subsequently, insurgents used chlorine in chemical weapon attacks against Iraqi civilians. In sum, the destruction of the chemical weapons was conducted in hazardous, complex conditions under constant threat

of attack. Moreover, these munitions were in a dangerous and corroded condition. Accordingly, the priority was the rapid and safe destruction of the weapons, which were destroyed as quickly as practicable, close to the locations where they were recovered.

The UK wishes to be as transparent as possible about these operations, both of which took place in the province of Maysaan. However, because the potential acquisition and use of such weapons by terrorists and insurgent groups poses a continuing threat to the civilian population and the Iraqi Government, as well as to remaining coalition forces, it is not possible to provide further details of the precise locations in Iraq where these items were recovered and destroyed.

### **Assessment and destruction of recovered items**

Sixteen 122mm AL BORAK canisters filled with suspected GB agent were released from Iraqi judicial authority to the UK Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) teams on 15 January 2006 for destruction. These were confirmed as chemical weapons items by the UK EOD team on the basis of visual identification, and the canisters were immediately leak-seal packaged on-site by UK personnel. They were transported to a nearby secured destruction location and destroyed the next day.

Five 122mm AL BORAK canisters filled with suspected GB agent were passed to the UK CBRN team on 5 May 2006. Visual identification by the UK team confirmed the items as chemical weapons and they were photographed and leak-seal packaged. They were transported to a secured destruction location and destroyed later that day.

The precise quantities of agent were not measured because of the urgent requirement to destroy the weapons quickly and safely, and the corroded and dangerous state of the munitions.

Other coalition forces were not involved in these two operations.

In neither case was a chemical weapon storage or destruction facility established.

Three photographs of the destruction activity on 5 May 2006 are in the Annex (Figures 1, 2 and 3) attached hereto.

### **Method of chemical weapons destruction**

Transport and destruction of chemical weapons in Iraq was carried out in such a way as to ensure the safety of people and protect the environment. In each case, all the canisters were transported to a desert location for immediate destruction by a munitions disposal team. On arrival, confirmatory vapour checks were carried out to ensure that the canisters and packaging were intact. In both events the destruction method was an explosion in an open area, which was secured, including the downwind locations. In order to conduct the post-destruction survey, UK personnel returned to the site after each destruction event to confirm that the chemical weapons had been successfully destroyed and that there was no residual contamination on site. The results showed no chemical weapons or explosive contamination near the demolition crater. This was confirmed using several types of detector. There was no visual indication of any liquid contamination in the area. All

post-destruction surveys showed that the explosive method used was effective and that no residual threat of contamination remained on-site after this operation.

All chemical weapons recovered by UK forces in Iraq were completely destroyed.

### **Transfer, sampling and analysis**

A small number of samples suspected of containing Schedule 1 chemicals, weighing about 1 gram each, were transferred from Iraq to the UK for confirmatory chemical analysis in order to determine the nature of the safety and security risks they posed. These were transported in a toxic sample container in accordance with UK national standards to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down, which is the UK's designated laboratory for analysis of suspected chemical weapons agents. Analysis showed that the samples contained a mixture of sarin (GB) and GF of varying concentrations. The samples were destroyed on completion of the analysis.

No other items were transported to the UK or elsewhere.

### **Reporting of information to the Technical Secretariat and the Executive Council**

The decision to destroy these items quickly was taken with safety and security as the key justifications. Although the Secretariat was not advised of these two individual destruction operations at the time, it was made aware of coalition forces' operations to recover and destroy chemical weapons in Iraq. As set out above, there was no obligation to make a declaration, but in the interests of transparency, the UK voluntarily informed the Secretariat by letter of the destruction of these items on 6 April 2009. The UK letter also requested that this information be distributed to States Parties.

On 6 April 2009, the UK declared the transfer of samples containing Schedule 1 chemicals under paragraph 6 of Part VI of the Convention Verification Annex, and provided details of the samples and the analytical results.

In both cases, the UK's actions were driven by security concerns, namely the need to ensure security and stability in Iraq by not releasing information which could have been useful to insurgent groups seeking to acquire and use chemical weapons; at the same time the UK wished to act in accordance with the spirit of the Convention. In addition, it would not have been appropriate to provide such information without Iraq, as the responsible State, having the opportunity to take part in discussions in the OPCW as a State Party. Accordingly, in the light of the improved security situation in Iraq, with the agreement of Iraq and after Iraq had become a State Party to the Convention on 12 February 2009, the UK provided the appropriate information and declaration in April 2009.

The UK also made a short explanatory statement to the Executive Council at its Fifty-Sixth Session on the destruction of the 21 munitions, highlighting that, because of the security conditions in which they were recovered, and in many cases their corroded and dangerous state—and to ensure the safety and security of UK Forces and the Iraqi people—destruction of the recovered chemical weapons was carried out in as timely a fashion as possible, using explosives.

The UK subsequently invited the Secretariat to review UK records of chemical weapons destruction activity, and the Secretariat did so in September 2009. The Secretariat similarly reviewed US records. The OPCW Director-General, in his report to the Fifty-Eighth Session of the Executive Council stated: “In both cases, the Technical Secretariat’s teams concluded that the documents reviewed during the visit appeared to be consistent with the information provided by the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the United States of America on 6 April 2009 and 17 April 2009 respectively. At the same time, both States Parties demonstrated full transparency and cooperation in providing all required and available information in support of the review.”

### **Chemical weapons production facilities, equipment and other aspects**

No additional chemical weapons production facilities (CWPF) other than those noted and sealed by UNSCOM were discovered by UK forces. The UK neither used nor occupied any former CWPFs in Iraq. Although the UK is aware of reports of looting of specialised equipment, no items were recovered by UK forces.

No biological weapons were discovered by UK forces in Iraq.

### **Conclusion**

The UK has endeavoured to provide sufficient information to resolve the doubts raised, to answer the questions which fall within the purview of Article IX.2, and to provide additional relevant context. The UK considers that the information contained in this paper provides the clarification necessary to resolve the concerns which have been raised about the actions of UK forces in destroying chemical weapons in Iraq, but stands ready to take part in further consultations if requested.

**Annex**

Figure 1: AL BORAK canisters prior to packaging. One canister still had a fuse attached, but no rocket motors were present.



Figure 2: Canister placed in barmine stack. Further barmines were then placed over the “lid” and donor charges and initiators fixed.



Figure 3: Destruction site after demolition had been completed.





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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK  
UNITED STATES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE  
FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to be here among so many colleagues at the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I warmly welcome our new Chairman, Ambassador Julio Roberto Palomo Silva. I have every confidence in his ability to guide us skilfully through our full agenda this week, and I pledge my own support and that of the entire United States delegation to making this a productive and successful session. I also extend my deep appreciation to our outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Vaidotas Verba of Lithuania, and thank him for his dedication and exemplary service to this Organisation over the past year.

Mr Chairman,

This is the first Conference of the States Parties for our new Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü. His vision and guidance will be critical to the ongoing success of this Organisation, and we welcome his leadership.

The many accomplishments that this Organisation has achieved within the bounds of fiscal responsibility are directly related to the hard work of the staff of the Technical Secretariat and I thank them as well.

The first priority this week must be to bring the 2011 budget negotiation to a successful conclusion, drawing on our culture of cooperation and consensus building. The United States delegation supports the proposal by the Director-General for a small increase in both OCPF inspections and in funding for international cooperation and assistance. Some other delegations do not support this proposal. My delegation pledges its commitment to finding a balanced political solution that will strengthen both industry verification and international cooperation and assistance. Both elements are important for achieving the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We must give the Technical Secretariat the tools it needs to fulfil the object and purpose of the treaty so that never again will mankind face the evil of chemical weapons.



Mr Chairman,

Bringing the seven remaining non-Member States, particularly those that may possess chemical weapons, into the Convention, is essential to realise fully its objectives. Experience has made clear that persuading them to join will not be easy. All Member States, working together with the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, should continue to signal that being a part of this Convention is part of being a full member in the community of nations.

Joining the Convention is only the beginning of the story, however, and not the end. The United States recognises that in many States Parties the work to fully implement Article VII obligations is far from finished. The Director-General's annual report on Article VII implementation that is before us this week makes that clear. In responding to the Director-General's report, we as Member States must consider what more can be done to remedy the current situation. The United States stands ready to provide Article VII support and technical assistance to any State Party requesting it. It is also important to note that fulfilment of Article VII obligations also satisfies part of a Chemical Weapons Convention State Party's obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 of 2004. The United States encourages all States Parties to take advantage of this mutually beneficial linkage. When a State Party takes this important step, another gap is closed, and our collective security is enhanced.

Mr Chairman,

As 2011 ushers in the greatest transition the Organisation has yet faced, the Director-General and his senior management will need to re-align the Organisation's activities, personnel, and budget while maintaining the support of the States Parties. Indeed, the OPCW faces a critical period of transition that should be smooth, orderly, and transparent. The United States looks forward to refinement by the States Parties of the tenure policy to provide the Director-General with necessary flexibility to retain or rehire the staff members he needs to run the Organisation most effectively.

As possessor States continue working hard to complete the destruction of the remaining stockpiles, the OPCW's focus will naturally transition from disarmament to preventing acquisition of chemical weapons. The provisions of Article VI are key tools for ensuring the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. It will be essential for all States Parties to work cooperatively to achieve an effective balance among the different parts of the industrial verification regime, including that of the regime for other chemical production facilities. This regime was created by the negotiators of the Convention to capture a range of industrial facilities that were not Schedule 1, 2 or 3 facilities, but that still potentially posed some risk. Some of these facilities could be suitable for the illicit production of chemical weapons or even contain an embedded chemical weapons production mobilisation capability. The regime is neither perfect nor complete, and it now falls to us to complete the task and develop a regime that is focused on those facilities that pose the greatest risk. This should be a priority task for the Council in the coming year.

The United States also believes that Articles IX, X, and XI are important for the future of the OPCW. The recently concluded ASSISTEX 3 exercise in Tunisia demonstrates the potential importance of Chemical Weapons Convention States Parties coming together to provide much needed international assistance in the event of a chemical attack by terrorists or another

State. Likewise, the OPCW also offers an excellent forum for discussing chemical safety and security issues. The United States also fully supports the on-going work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, and we congratulate Mr Mike Byers of Australia for his successful stewardship of the OEWG.

Article XI also deserves increased attention. The United States welcomes the just-concluded Article XI workshop, which considered ideas for more robust implementation of Article XI of the Convention. Participants offered a broad range of ideas to increase awareness and understanding of the goals of Article XI and how to promote linkages and information exchanges among States Parties and relevant subject matter experts. Such forward-looking sessions are to be encouraged as we grapple with today's and tomorrow's opportunities, as well as with threats and challenges to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr Chairman,

I have spoken about a number of important items on our agenda. I would now like to address a fundamental goal of this Organisation that is certainly on everyone's mind this week: the total destruction of chemical weapons. For the United States, the safe and environmentally sound destruction of more than 27,000 metric tonnes of assorted chemical weapons is an enormous challenge. It is one that the United States has made significant strides towards accomplishing, and I am proud to report on these achievements.

The United States has met the 1%, 20%, and 45% treaty milestones. To date we have destroyed more than 81% of our Category 1 chemical weapons, which includes the destruction of over 82% of our chemical rockets, the destruction of 96.6% of our nerve agent, and the destruction of all of our binary chemical weapons. The United States has also destroyed all of our former chemical weapons production facilities.

I am pleased to announce that on 12 November 2010, the United States completed destruction of all chemical agent filled munitions at the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility. This brings the number of stockpile chemical weapons destruction facilities that have completed operations to four.

Currently, the United States has chemical weapons destruction facilities operating in Alabama, Oregon, and Utah at a cost of nearly USD 1 billion per annum with two additional sites under construction. To date, the United States has expended an estimated USD 22.1 billion for the destruction of chemical weapons in the United States.

Over an extended period of time, the United States has confronted and successfully overcome a wide range of complex safety and environmental concerns raised by state and local authorities, as well as local citizens living near our chemical weapons storage and destruction facilities. Technical issues that arose in the course of destruction operations have also been surmounted. We have made, and will continue to make, every effort to ensure that our chemical weapons are destroyed consistent with the Convention: safely, without harm to workers, people living near the facility, or the environment; verifiably, under the eyes of OPCW inspectors; and as rapidly as feasible.

Mr Chairman,

Let me assure you that the United States understands our obligations under the Convention, and we are fully committed to meeting the Convention's objectives, including verified destruction of 100% of our stockpile as rapidly and as safely as possible. The Obama Administration is examining all viable options to accelerate our chemical weapons destruction activities further, consistent with the Convention and applicable United States safety, technical, and environmental requirements. In 2006, the United States reported only 66% of its stockpile was expected to be destroyed by 2012, but we are now on pace to destroy 90% by that time. We are continuing to seek ways to accelerate the programme further.

We are also committed to proactive disclosure of our chemical weapons destruction programme, so that Member States can evaluate our efforts for themselves. To that end, we have provided 90-day reports for the past four and one-half years that track our progress in three-month intervals. We have also made informal destruction presentations at every informal meeting of the Executive Council on chemical weapons destruction to offer frank and honest information on our programme. We have invited Executive Council representatives to make site visits to our facilities—which allow an opportunity for these representatives to observe first-hand the enormity and technical complexity of ongoing United States destruction, and construction efforts at the two chemical weapons destruction facilities. In fact, arrangements for an Executive Council visit to two United States facilities in March 2011 are well under way, with invitations already received by participants and observers. We are optimistic that this will be another productive visit.

Tomorrow, (30 November) at 2:00 pm, the United States delegation will provide an informal presentation on the status of United States chemical weapons destruction efforts, which will be delivered by Mr Andrew Weber, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs. We offered a similar presentation last year, which garnered considerable interest and attention. This year Mr Weber has returned to demonstrate our continuing commitment to transparency and 100% destruction.

The United States will continue to provide the transparency measures necessary to ensure that the Member States of this Organisation have confidence in our chemical weapons destruction efforts.

Mr Chairman,

As the States Parties consider the issue of managing the 2012 extended destruction deadline, the United States wants to reassure States Parties that we agree that rewriting or reinterpreting of the Convention is not an acceptable means for resolving this issue. In fact, we believe that this point should be reflected in the Conference report.

The United States is interested in hearing other delegations' proposals for a political solution within the legal framework of the Convention. In this regard, we note the interesting approach put forward by the Brazilian delegation. We are actively considering what the United States can do to increase the confidence of the other States Parties that we will complete the safe destruction of our chemical weapons stockpile in a timely manner.

Mr Chairman,

Although there is considerable attention to what must still be done, we should not lose sight of the enormous accomplishments already achieved towards the aim of complete destruction of chemical weapons. It is important that we acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made by possessor States Parties and encourage continued efforts in a constructive and cooperative atmosphere. This year marked the commencement of chemical weapons destruction in Libya as well as the beginning of the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China by Japan. We understand that the Technical Secretariat and the Republic of Iraq have made significant strides toward developing a strategy for the destruction of chemical weapons remnants in Iraq. The largest single possessor of chemical weapons, the Russian Federation, has destroyed almost half of its chemical weapons stockpile. And as I mentioned earlier, the United States has destroyed more than 81% of its chemical weapons. These accomplishments, coupled with the previous achievements of complete destruction by A State Party, India, and Albania, represent massive efforts that should not be overshadowed by emphasis on what remains to be done. These efforts demonstrate that this Convention is working and fulfilling its purpose. This Organisation is succeeding, and without a doubt, it will continue to do so until the core objective of the Convention is met: a world free of chemical weapons.

Finally, we must all begin to consider together what kind of OPCW we want in the future. The budget for 2012 will need to begin to reflect that vision. We need to consider the challenges that are already looming, such as the need to adapt OPCW activities to advances in science and technology and to changes in the chemical industry. We need to discuss and reach agreement on a programme of activities that provides real value for States Parties. The United States commends the Director-General for seeking the advice of an outside panel of experts and looks forward to reviewing and discussing their recommendations.

Lastly, Mr Chairman,

One delegation recently alleged that the United States was not in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention in the manner in which it recovered and destroyed pre-1991-era chemical weapons in Iraq. Our immediate destruction of these weapons did not violate the treaty and indeed was necessary to support the object and purpose of the treaty. It was also necessary to protect our forces, the local populace, the environment and the stability of Iraq. Our actions were fully consistent with our Article I obligations to “never under any circumstances develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons.” The United States rejects as totally unfounded any allegation that it violated the Chemical Weapons Convention in these unusual and unforeseen circumstances.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document to the Conference. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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