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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 8, 1997

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MEDIA ADVISORY

IN SURPRISE TESTIMONY CHENEY RENEWS OPPOSITION TO CWC

WASHINGTON, DC — Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney weighed in renewing his opposition to ratification of the CWC today, delivering a written statement at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

Unable to appear in person due to scheduling conflicts, Cheney asked Secretary Schlesinger to read a letter into the record in which he reiterated his opposition to the CWC, and urged "the Senate to reject the Chemical Weapons Convention."

With Cheney's written testimony, the Committee hears today from defense secretaries of every single Republican Administration since Richard Nixon opposing the CWC.

A copy of Cheney's letter is attached.

-- END --

Dick Cheney
500 North Akard Street # 3600
Dallas, Texas 75201
(214) 968-2813

April 7, 1997

The Honorable Jesse Helms
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter inviting me to join several other former Secretaries of Defense in testifying in early April when the Foreign Relations Committee holds hearings on the Chemical Weapons Convention. Regrettably, other commitments will preclude me from participation. I hope that this correspondence will be sufficient to convey my views on this Convention.

During the years I served as Secretary of Defense, I was deeply concerned about the inherent unverifiability, lack of global coverage, and unenforceability of a convention that sought to ban production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. My misgivings on these scores have only intensified during the four years since I left the Pentagon.

The technology to manufacture chemical weapons is simply too ubiquitous, covert chemical warfare programs too easily concealed, and the international community's record of responding effectively to violations of arms control treaties too unsatisfactory to permit confidence that such a regime would actually reduce the chemical threat.

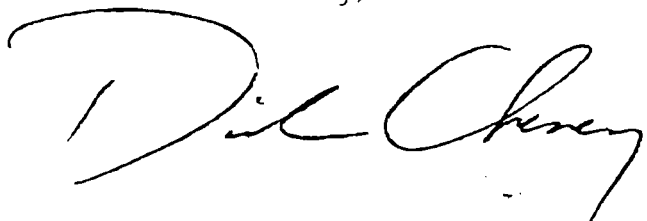
Indeed, some aspects of the present Convention – notably, its obligation to share with potential adversaries like Iran chemical manufacturing technology that can be used for military purposes and chemical defensive equipment – threaten to make this accord worse than having no treaty at all. In my judgment, the treaty's Articles X and XI amount to a formula for greatly accelerating the proliferation of chemical warfare capabilities around the globe.

Those nations most likely to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention are not likely to ever constitute a military threat to the United States. The governments we should be concerned about are likely to cheat on the CWC, even if they do participate.

In effect, the Senate is being asked to ratify the CWC even though it is likely to be ineffective, unverifiable and unenforceable. Having ratified the Convention, we will then be told we have "dealt with the problem of chemical weapons" when in fact we have not. But, ratification of the CWC will lead to a sense of complacency, totally unjustified given the flaws in the convention.

I would urge the Senate to reject the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dick Cheney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "D" and a long, trailing "y".