

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT P. MIKULAK  
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE  
PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

September 22, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee as the United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with rank of Ambassador. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have shown in nominating me for this position.

My career has combined my education in chemistry and my long-standing interest in international security affairs. Since completing my graduate education in chemistry, I have been directly engaged throughout my entire career in helping to develop and defend policies to strengthen the security of the United States and its friends and Allies against chemical and biological weapons. I was actively involved in negotiating the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, which establishes a global ban on these weapons. I worked closely with the U.S. chemical industry to help ensure that our economic interests were protected. Since the treaty was concluded, I have been a senior member of the U.S. delegation to the OPCW, which implements the extensive verification system that was established by the Convention. I currently head the office in the State Department that is responsible for developing policy recommendations on chemical weapons arms control and nonproliferation, and for providing guidance to the U.S. Delegation to the OPCW. As an additional responsibility since February 2009, I have also been the U.S. Representative to the OPCW's Executive Council, which is a 41-member executive body that meets quarterly.

The United States was instrumental in the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention and continues to strongly support this agreement, which now has

nearly universal membership at 188 States Parties. Only seven countries have not joined. The most prominent are Egypt, Syria, Israel, and North Korea.

The OPCW has developed into a lean and effective international organization. Under a very capable Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter of Argentina, it has become a model of effective multilateralism. OPCW inspectors have efficiently carried out hundreds of inspections around the world at military chemical facilities and at declared chemical industry plants. Over the last five years, the OPCW has done so without a budget increase.

Since the CWC came into force, a number of countries in addition to the United States and Russia have revealed their chemical weapons programs and submitted them to international inspection, including Albania, India and Libya. Numerous chemical weapons production facilities have been destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes and the CW stockpiles are steadily being eliminated under international verification.

While the success of the OPCW has been encouraging, important challenges need to be addressed in the next few years. The CWC establishes a firm deadline for stockpile destruction of April 29, 2012. Currently the United States and Russia are not on track to finish destruction by that deadline, even though both countries are solidly committed to completing destruction as soon as possible and are devoting very substantial resources toward meeting that commitment. Furthermore, up until now, monitoring of destruction of the CW stockpiles and the former CW production facilities has been the focus of the OPCW's activities. As the requirements for monitoring destruction decrease over the next few years, the OPCW will need to carefully consider its evolving security role in order to achieve the goals of the CWC.

In addition to the transition in its activities, the OPCW is also going through a very important management transition. Ambassador Pfirter, who served as Director-General for the maximum time permitted under the CWC, was succeeded at the end of July by Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, a very capable Turkish diplomat. The United States strongly supported his selection and looks forward to working closely with Ambassador Üzümcü in the coming years.

The nature of the security threat from misuse of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes is evolving as well. The CWC was negotiated to deal with the threat from state programs, which has diminished but is still significant. In recent years, however, non-state actors have become an important concern. The CWC nonetheless provides some potentially useful tools to help states address this threat. Also, the implications for the CWC of the increasing convergence of chemistry and biology need to be carefully assessed and addressed. For example, the rapidly advancing knowledge of the chemistry of biological systems broadens the range of chemicals that might be exploited for hostile purposes.

The United States has an extensive agenda at the OPCW. We want to ensure that the norm against chemical weapons in the CWC is universally accepted. We want to ensure that existing chemical weapons stockpiles and former weapons production facilities are eliminated with international verification and that no new chemical weapons are produced through dedicated facilities or through misuse of the chemical industry. We want to ensure that the OPCW continues to operate effectively and efficiently and adapts to address the evolving nature of the chemical security threat. If confirmed, I will actively and effectively work with both this committee and Congress on these important issues in order to advance the interests of the United States at the OPCW in each of these areas.

Thank you. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions that you may have.