

Statement on Completion of the Chemical Weapons Convention January 13, 1993

For more than 20 years the United States and many other countries have labored to achieve a ban on chemical weapons. The long-awaited Chemical Weapons Convention is now completed and open for signature.

I have had a deep and abiding personal interest in the success of the effort to ban these terrible weapons. As Vice President, I had the honor on two occasions to address the Conference on Disarmament and to present United States proposals to give impetus to the negotiations. As President, I directed the United States to take new initiatives to advance and conclude the negotiations. The United States is profoundly gratified that these talks have now been successfully concluded.

The countries that participated in the negotiations at the conference on disarmament deserve special congratulations. The Chemical Weapons Convention is uniquely important in the field of arms control agreements. It will improve the security of all nations by eliminating a class of weap-

ons of mass destruction that exists in all quarters of the world and that has been used in recent conflicts. It is a truly stabilizing and nondiscriminatory agreement.

The United States strongly supports the Chemical Weapons Convention and is proud to be an original signatory. We are encouraged that so many other states have also decided to take this step. This clearly demonstrates global international endorsement of the convention and the new norm of international conduct that it establishes. However, we must not cease our efforts until the norm becomes truly universal, with all countries becoming not only signatories but also parties to the convention.

Much work remains to make the convention fully effective. The United States will cooperate closely with other countries to bring the convention into force as soon as possible and to ensure that it is faithfully implemented. Only then will we be able to say that the risk of chemical warfare is no longer a threat to people anywhere in the world.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the National Strategy on the Environment

January 13, 1993

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

During the past 4 years, the world has witnessed major changes in the political profile of nations. The Earth Summit, sponsored by the United Nations in Brazil in June 1992, signaled the next era in world history—one characterized by the recognition that environmental protection, economic development, and public participation in decision-making are interrelated and crucial to our future quality of life.

In these last 4 years, the United States charted an ambitious agenda to remain in the vanguard of environmental protection by harnessing the energy of capitalism in service of the environment. Those who said

that we posed a false choice between a strong economy and a healthy environment disregarded our words and our deeds. We worked to achieve both while sacrificing neither—as must all nations in the coming century.

Economic development and environmental protection go hand in hand. Economic growth supplies the financial and technological resources necessary for environmental enhancement; while its opposite, the struggle for bare survival, places strains on natural protection. We have seen this phenomenon in America as our economy grew in the 1980s and waters and skies became cleaner, just as we have seen it in the degraded

forests and rivers of Eastern Europe and in the faces of Africa's starving children. The challenge for leaders in all parts of the world is to ensure both economic growth and environmental progress at the same time.

A Strategy That Produced Results

The pioneer American conservationist, Gifford Pinchot, once remarked, "There are just two things on this material earth—people and natural resources." Human beings are not intruders in nature but an essential species with a responsibility to sustain other species.

The Bush Administration combined an understanding of human nature with an idealism about Mother Nature in developing a National Strategy for Environmental Quality, based on six goals:

- Harnessing the power of the marketplace;
- Managing natural resources as responsible stewards;
- Promoting creative partnerships;
- Developing cooperative international solutions;
- Preventing pollution before it starts;
- Enforcing environmental laws firmly and fairly.

And the strategy worked. In just 4 years, consider what has been accomplished:

Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990: We broke 10 years of congressional gridlock to enact the world's most protective and cost-effective clean air legislation. At its heart is an innovative, market-based, emission-allowance trading system. During the past 2 years, we proposed and finalized rules that promise to achieve 85 percent of the anticipated pollution reductions.

Budgets: By shifting Federal funds from other programs to environmental programs, we were able to increase the operating budget of the Environmental Protection Agency by more than 50 percent and increase funding for clean energy research and development by 66 percent.

Pollution Prevention: Market-driven pollution prevention efforts by the private sector are reshaping American industries, making us leaner and more efficient. For example, under just one Administration initiative, the EPA 33/50 program, more than 900

companies have reduced releases and transfers of toxic chemicals by 347 million pounds—25 percent below the 1988 baseline, with enormous savings in operating costs.

Enforcement: We broke new ground and old records, filing more cases, collecting more penalties, and putting more polluters behind bars than every previous administration in history combined.

Public Lands: We helped make America's great outdoors even greater by investing over a billion dollars to acquire wetlands, improve campgrounds, and add half a million acres to our national parks and 1,200 miles to our Wild and Scenic Rivers System. We created 57 new wildlife refuges—more than any administration in history. We adopted a philosophy of ecosystem management and ended clear-cutting as a standard practice on Federal land. The America the Beautiful initiative got off to a good start with the planting of more than 225 million new trees in rural and urban areas across the Nation.

Coasts and Oceans: To ensure that America's seas always will shine, we ended the ocean dumping of sewage sludge. We proposed and won passage of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, a vigorous antipollution measure. To protect our ecologically sensitive coastal areas, we imposed a 10-year moratorium on oil and gas leasing and added six national marine sanctuaries, including the Monterey Bay sanctuary off California—which is second only to Australia's Great Barrier Reef as the largest marine protected area in the world.

Energy: We launched a new generation of clean energy technologies, not only by increasing funding for research and development but also by increasing incentives for the application of new technologies. We proposed and won passage of comprehensive national energy legislation with the Energy Policy Act of 1992, an act that will guide the United States into the next century.

Federal Leadership: We tripled funding for Federal facility cleanups, especially at nuclear weapons manufacturing sites, and secured more than 100 enforceable cleanup agreements at Federal facilities. Executive

orders spurred the Federal Government to speed improvements in energy efficiency, recycling, waste reduction, and conversion of the Federal fleet to alternative fuels.

International Leadership: We insisted that a new world order include a cleaner world environment and reached 27 new international environmental agreements. We made America the world leader in phasing out ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and led the way to a global ban on driftnet fishing. We launched a Forests for the Future initiative that proposed doubling international aid for forest conservation as a step toward halting global deforestation and dieback. We reduced Poland's debt to help that nation fund a new environmental foundation, and we launched the East-West Environmental Center in Budapest, Hungary, to help countries in Central and Eastern Europe. We addressed environmental protection in trade negotiations with Mexico, expanded debt-for-nature swaps to protect rainforests in Latin America, and created a network for environmental cooperation with Asia.

Global Climate Change: Our comprehensive action-oriented approach to global climate change was adopted by the world community at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil and ratified unanimously by the United States Senate. The United States was the first industrialized nation to ratify the treaty and the first nation to set forth its action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

President's Commission on Environmental Quality (PCEQ): This Presidential commission was unique because it was not created to provide advice but rather to demonstrate innovative ideas through action. Over the last 18 months, PCEQ built a network of more than 200 organizations to design and carry out 10 voluntary initiatives on such issues as biodiversity, energy efficiency, education and training, and environmental management.

President's Environment and Conservation Challenge Awards: We established a Presidential medal to honor those who honor the environment. Medal recipients have forged innovative solutions across the environmental spectrum from agriculture to

manufacturing to small business, from the classroom to the great outdoors and back to the inner city. Their good deeds have improved our Nation's air, water, and lands.

Why the Strategy Worked

Too often, the Federal Government has adopted goals with little regard to costs, practicality, or actual degree of risk. At times our environmental laws and regulations have been unnecessarily costly and punitive, especially for small businesses and communities.

That is why our environmental strategy was based on concepts that will make environmental protection a practical goal, consistent with economic growth. In an era of large Federal deficits and intense international economic competition, our country cannot afford policies that ignore costs.

A free society needs sensible regulation; our emphasis on market incentives and voluntary collaboration was credible because of its link to vigorous law enforcement, which motivated businesses to be innovative. But we cannot rely solely on the legislate-regulate-litigate pattern of the past. That approach will waste more time and money than it saves, hurting our economy and environment in the process.

Looking Forward

Our national environmental strategy has produced lasting benefits that prepare the stage for additional progress in the future. These and many other accomplishments in environmental quality are possible within the coming decades:

I look forward to a time when our natural vistas and urban skylines are never obscured by smog.

I look forward to the day when all industrial corporations can improve their energy efficiency and eliminate toxic discharges into the environment, at a profit.

I look forward to a less contentious era when ecologists, business people, and community leaders collaborate in finding ways to protect species and ecosystems without sacrificing an area's long-term economic development potential.

I look forward to the day when our scien-

tists can tell us how to reorient regulations toward problems that pose the greatest risks to human health and the environment. A more scientific approach to setting priorities could save the country many billions of dollars while focusing on the greatest risks.

I look forward to the day when trade agreements are routinely matched by closer environmental cooperation. Trade liberalization is crucial to the growth of America and every nation in the 21st century, and growth is the key to greater environmental protection. Trade-environmental linkages are a practical way to realize sustainable development, especially for the developing

nations that need it so desperately.

In the years ahead, we can take pride in what the American people helped us accomplish to protect our environment. We can be comforted by the knowledge that the next generation will continue the work we started to leave a better world.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Dan Quayle, President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Celebration of the Points of Light

January 14, 1993

Thank you all very, very much. And I'm just delighted to be with you today to celebrate the work of those wonderful Americans we call Points of Light. And I think our First Lady is a Point of Light. So I salute her for what she's done in literacy and helping this country understand the importance of reading.

There's another guy here who's been a personal Point of Light to me, and that's Gregg Petersmeyer, who many of you know. In a sense it was his dream and his dedication that made all this possible. And Joe and Jenny, your witnessing, your testimony really makes this speech superfluous. I don't need to do it, but I will anyway. *[Laughter]* But thank you. You said it all with your own lives.

I also want to thank the leaders of three new institutions that have been established in the last 4 years: Tom Ehrlich of the Commission on National and Community Service, Dick Munro of the Points of Light Foundation, and Solon Cousins of the National Center for Community Risk Management and Insurance. And I also want to thank my friends: Ray Chambers, what an inspiration he has been in this whole voluntarism concept; Pete McCloskey; also George Romney, who I hope is here with us today. But we're grateful.

What an honor it is to have Larnelle here, Larnelle Harris, for helping make this event so very special. Anybody that can get up without a pitch pipe or a band and do what he did, we've got to look them over and see what makes him tick. *[Laughter]* But I'll tell you, his song said it all; his song got right to the heart. And I understand that he's just been nominated for his seventh Grammy Award. And Presidents ought not to do this, but I know who I'm rooting for. So there we are.

But above all, Barbara and I wanted to come over and thank the Points of Light that we're honoring today. I know that many of them have gone to great efforts to get here. And lots of folks ask me about the phrase, Points of Light. And some say it's religion; others say, well, it's a patriotic theme, like the flag; and others think it's an image of hope. But I think that Points of Light are all of these things and yet still something more. It's what happens when ordinary people claim the problems of their community as their own. And it's the inspiration and awakening to the God-given light from within, lit from within, and it's the promise of America.

We've got Points of Light here today from all 50 States, shining all the way from Anchorage to Harlem, Miami to Maine. And