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Joint Statement by the Depositary States on the 25th Anniversary of Entry Into Force of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

March 27, 2000

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Convention, the three Depositary States, the Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, reaffirm their belief in the continuing relevance and importance of the Convention. As we start a new century the principles and objectives of the Convention are an important international norm serving to prevent any country from developing, producing, stockpiling or obtaining the means to employ bacteriological, biological or toxin weapons as a means of warfare. As such the Convention remains one of the key elements of international security and stability.

At its inception the Convention was a watershed international document, the first formal multilateral agreement to foreswear an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Twenty five years later 143 States have acceded to it, a remarkable endorsement of the principles which it encompasses, and of the very important role it plays in the web of non-proliferation and arms control treaties. We, as the Depositaries, take this opportunity to call on those states which have not yet ratified or acceded to the BWC to do so without delay, so that the prohibitions on possession and development of biological weapons become even more universal.

The representatives of many States Parties are now engaged in work to strengthen the Convention. The aim is a Protocol that will create a regime to enhance confidence in compliance with the fundamental objectives of the Convention. This effort will bring the Convention into better alignment with the principles of other arms control agreements. As the terms of the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Group make clear the objective is "to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures . . . . to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument." Successful achievement of an effective Protocol within the agreed timeframe must be the target of all States Parties. We pledge our own efforts to achieving this goal, and call upon all other States Parties to do likewise, and to accede to the Protocol once it is agreed.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

March 27, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a semiannual report "detailing payments made to Cuba . . . as a result of the provision of telecommunications services" pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 27, 2000.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.