

Statement on Chemical Weapons May 13, 1991

The Gulf war has once again raised the specter of chemical weapons and demonstrated that unscrupulous regimes can and will threaten innocent populations with these weapons of terror so long as we permit them to exist. These stark events renew and reinforce my conviction, shared by responsible leaders around the world, that chemical weapons must be banned—everywhere in the world.

The world's best hope for this goal is the chemical weapons convention now being negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The United States is committed to the early, successful completion of this convention, and I am today announcing a number of steps we will take to accelerate the negotiations and achieve an effective chemical weapons ban as soon as possible. I hope this initiative also will spur other nations to commit themselves equally to this critical objective.

I have instructed the United States negotiating team in Geneva to implement my decisions at the next session which begins May 14. To demonstrate the United States commitment to banning chemical weapons, we are formally forswearing the use of chemical weapons for any reason, including retaliation, against any state, effective when the convention enters into force, and will

propose that all states follow suit. Further, the United States unconditionally commits itself to the destruction of all our stocks of chemical weapons within 10 years of entry into force and will propose that all other states do likewise. We will offer technical assistance to others to do this efficiently and safely.

In addition, we will call for setting a target date to conclude the convention and recommend the Conference stay in continuous session if necessary to meet the target. The United States also will propose new and effective verification measures for inspecting sites suspected of producing or storing chemical weapons. To provide tangible benefits for those states that join the convention and significant penalties for those that fail to support it, the United States will propose the convention require parties to refuse to trade in chemical weapon-related materials with states that do not join in the convention. The United States reaffirms that we will impose all appropriate sanctions in response to violations of the convention, especially the use of chemical weapons.

These steps can move the world significantly closer to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons. I call upon all other nations to join us in the serious and cooperative pursuit of this important goal.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Robert M. Gates To Be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a News Conference May 14, 1991

The President. Well, I'm pleased to nominate Robert Gates to be the Director of Central Intelligence. As most of you know, Bob Gates has served as deputy national security adviser for the last two and a half years. And before that, he dedicated more than 20 years to the service of the CIA and the important task that it performs for our country. It's with this background of

professionalism, dedication, and integrity that I'm asking the Senate to approve his nomination to be the next Director.

He follows in the distinguished footsteps of Bill Webster. And I know that Bob will maintain a strong and responsive Central Intelligence Agency that will provide the kind of intelligence America needs to maintain its role as leader of the free world.