

Statement to the Nineteenth Session of the States Parties

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Hague, The Netherlands

2 December 2014

Ms. Irene Kornelly

Chair, Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commission

Madam Chair, Mr Director General, distinguished delegates and guests.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to talk briefly about the unique program in the United States that is designed to destroy chemical weapons by the use of a technology other than incineration. The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program was established by the U.S. Congress in 1995 as a result of citizen pressure to provide communities a choice between incineration and a non-incineration technology. The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Project, commonly known as PCAPP, is fully carrying out the principles of this program in Pueblo, Colorado.

Madam Chair,

While the mission of this program is like all other chemical demilitarization programs: to fully destroy the stockpiled chemical weapons in a safe manner, there are 4 additional hallmarks of this program that are important today.

1. Transparency
2. Community and citizen involvement
3. Education of the workers and public
4. Safety of the workers, the community and the environment

Transparency within the program was evident from the very beginning. The Assembled Chemical Weapons Dialogue was made up of individuals from each site as well as members of the Army, Department of Defense and the numerous contractors who were intending to design and build this new type of facility. All of us together developed the criteria and vetted the proposals when they were submitted. While we all knew that the Department of Defense had the final authority to choose both a technology and a contractor, the members of the Dialogue were an integral part of the discussion every

step of the way. We helped with funding from Congress and with the continuation of the program by Congress when things looked pretty bleak. We weren't always successful, and some would even say we were wrong, but here I stand here before you today with a program that is successful and within weeks of beginning to destroy weapons in Pueblo in the eighth and next-to-last stockpile destruction program in the US.

Even today the community has input into almost every aspect of the program. Most recently we have participated in the choice of a second processing system to destroy damaged weapons in storage and to discuss with contractors and the Department of Defense a series of "what ifs." What if different portions of the facility fail to perform as predicted?

Community and citizen involvement came into being with the establishment of Citizens' Advisory Commissions by Congress. Creating commissions, however, did not insure that they would work as planned. Members had to be tenacious and ask questions and be willing to argue and speak up. Everyone had to be heard and every question taken seriously. Nothing was too insignificant or too far-reaching in the beginning. Today the Citizens' Advisory Commissions in Pueblo and Blue Grass are active citizens groups, trusted by the community, state and federal regulators and the Department of Defense.

Public meetings and tours of the construction site are also an important part of community involvement. Seldom does a month go by when there are not meetings and tours, from the local community clubs to visiting members of Congress and even the OPCW.

Education of the community is an equally important part of transparency and understanding. Both Pueblo and Blue Grass have an educational specialist who goes into the schools to teach about chemical weapons and the destruction programs at the Depots. They teach about job opportunities to the older students, as well as the history of chemical warfare, chemistry, math and physics. Children down to the age of 10 learn about these programs.

Outreach offices are located in each community, where citizens can walk in and view displays and take away program information. The ACWA program has a website where anyone can look up information, view pictures and watch YouTube videos about the processes.

The final cornerstone of the program is the most important to the community - safety. No one wants to send their husband or wife, son or daughter, father or mother or

neighbor to work at a facility that is unsafe. No one wants to live near a facility that is unsafe. And lastly, while destruction of the weapons is of paramount importance, destroying the weapons and the surrounding environment at the same time is unacceptable. The workers must be kept safe, the nearby residents must be safe and the environment must be protected. These factors must not be compromised in the course of destroying the chemical weapons in the stockpile.

Madam Chair

Meeting the criteria of transparency, community involvement, education and safety may appear on the surface to extend a very lengthy process, but community protests, arguments and lawsuits are ugly and divisive and also extend the life of a project in a very negative way. The ACWA program allowed the community and the Department of Defense to work together in a win-win effort to build a program that meets the needs of everyone by employing face-to-face discussion and consensus.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about chemical weapons destruction in Pueblo from the point of view of an interested and involved citizen. I ask that this statement be made a part of the final CSP report.