

**BWC Review Conference
Right of Reply
Special Representative Kenneth D. Ward
United States of America**

29 November 2022

Mr. President:

The United States notes the national statement and interventions made by the Russian Federation and wishes to exercise our right of reply.

During the Article V Formal Consultative Meeting, the United States, jointly with Ukraine, fully addressed the unfounded concerns raised by the Russian Federation. However, it was clear from the outset of the Article V process that Russia never intended to engage constructively with Ukraine and the United States. It came to our attention on the very first day of the meeting that the Russian delegation had already made up its mind and circulated a draft of a proposed “joint statement” to select delegations regarding the outcome of this Article V Consultation. In this draft joint statement, the Russian Federation explicitly concluded that Ukraine and the United States had failed to answer questions regarding the activities of biological laboratories in Ukraine – a conclusion it reached before the United States and Ukraine even began our joint presentation.

Clearly, Moscow was not interested in hearing our responses, not interested in working in good faith with us. This was the most striking example, but it was only one of several actions through which the Russian Federation clearly signaled its lack of sincerity.

Russia then unsuccessfully escalated its false claims to the UN Security Council, requesting an investigation pursuant to Article VI. Russia garnered only two of the nine votes required for adoption of its draft resolution – one of which was its own vote.

Mr. President:

The United States believes that the Ninth Review Conference constitutes a crucial opportunity to advance the Convention. That crucial opportunity will be the sole focus of our diplomatic efforts. We consider this consultation process with Russia

to be completed and closed, and we do not intend to engage any further on this matter.

Mr. President:

Yesterday, the Russian Federation lodged several points of order during national statements. Russia claimed there was no connection between its war of aggression against Ukraine and the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention. Such a claim is explicitly contradicted by Russia's own official statements which seek to justify military action against Ukraine based on alleged biological weapons activities.

On March 16, President Putin claimed that "components of biological weapons were being created in direct proximity to Russia on the territory of Ukraine" and he asserted "we were forced to begin this special military operation." <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/67996> On May 13, Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations echoed President Putin's claims and justification in a statement to the UN Security Council: "We keep receiving very worrisome documental evidence that the US Department of Defense is directly involved in implementing in [Ukraine] dangerous biological projects that have characteristic features of a secret military biological program Only our special military operation was able stop this dangerous activity." https://russiaun.ru/en/news/unsc_130522

Mr. President:

There is a final issue which I would like to briefly address. As we are all aware, the BWC forum operates based on a three-group system. Yesterday, a State Party indicated that it was withdrawing from its current group and forming a new "Group of One." This is a new situation, and the United States reserves its position with respect to the implications of any new group for geographical rotation, vice-chair positions, etc. Any departure from current arrangements based on the existing three-group system would require a consensus decision by all States Parties.

I ask that this statement be an official document of the Ninth BWC Review Conference. Thank you.