



# **The Biological Weapons Convention and Resolution 1540**

**Amb. Georgi Avramchev**  
**Chairman of the 2008 Meetings of the BWC**

**1540 Committee Briefing on the BWC**

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**Convention on the Prohibition of  
the Development, Production and  
Stockpiling of Bacteriological  
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons  
and on their Destruction**

# 1540 and BWC: Common goals

- Strengthen national regimes to proscribe and prevent biological resources being used for terrorism
- Protect and encourage the development of the peaceful applications of the life sciences
- Ensure that the life sciences are used in a safe and secure manner, solely for the benefit of humanity



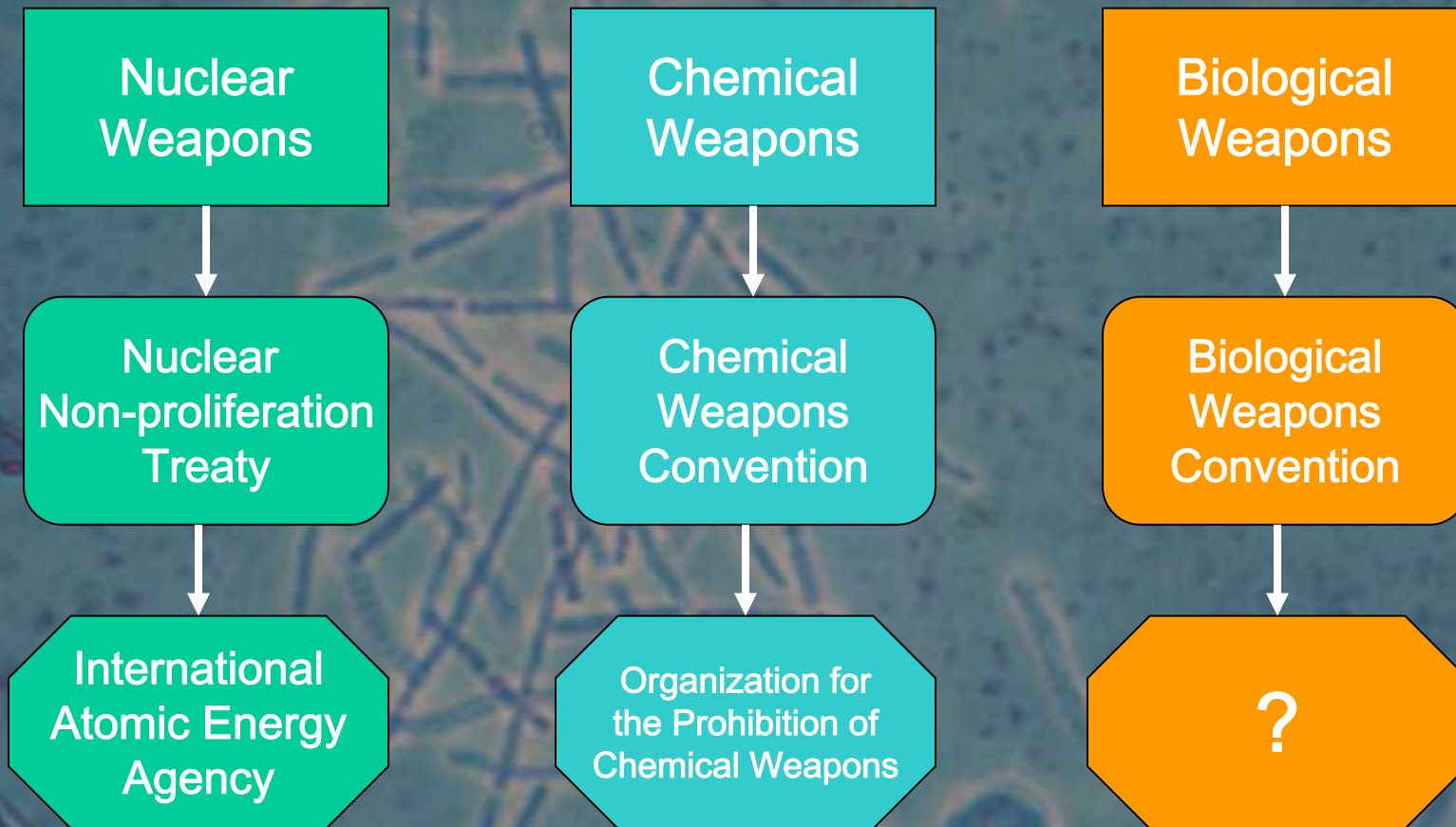
# 1540: formal links to BWC

- Affirms “support for the multilateral treaties whose aim is to eliminate or prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and the importance for all States parties to these treaties to implement them fully in order to promote international stability” (pp 5)
- Welcomes the non-proliferation commitments and efforts made under these treaties, in particular in securing sensitive materials (pp 6 & 11)
- Calls on states to promote the universal adoption and full implementation of the treaties (op 8)

# BWC: formal links to 1540

- Sixth RevCon (2006) recognized the “contribution of full and effective implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 by all states to assist in achieving the objectives of this Convention”.
- Final Declaration on BWC Art. IV (national implementation) also explicitly refers to Resolution 1540
  - notes that information provided by states in accordance with Resolution 1540 may provide a useful resource for fulfilling their Art. IV obligations

# WMD Regimes and Organizations





# Timeline of BWC Protocol Negotiations

Third Review Conference (1991)



VEREX (1992-93)



Special Conference (1994)



Ad Hoc Group (1995-2001)

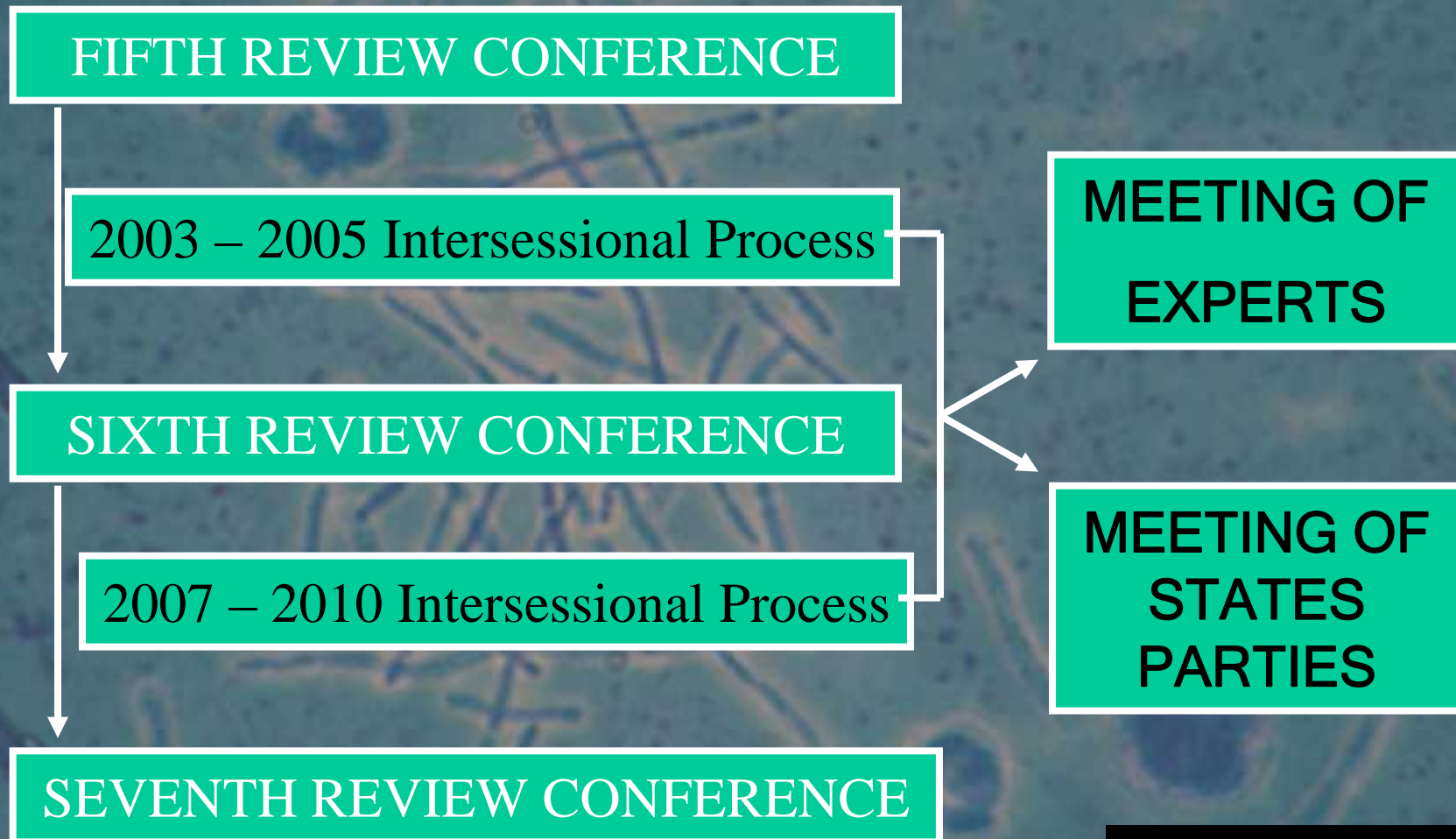


Fifth Review Conference (2001-02)

Fourth Review  
Conference (1996)



# BWC intersessional processes



# Sixth Review Conference (2006)

- Final Declaration calls on BWC States Parties to:
  - implement appropriate transfer measures, including effective national export controls
  - take measures to ensure that relevant biological agents and toxins are protected and safeguarded
  - promote the development of training and education programs for those working with relevant biological agents and toxins
  - encourage development of codes of conduct and self-regulatory mechanisms, and promote awareness among relevant professionals of the need to report suspicious activities



# Sixth RevCon: specific outcomes

- New intersessional work programme 2007-2010
- Measures to obtain universal adherence to BWC
- Update of mechanism for the BWC's confidence-building measures; more thorough review in 2011
- Require States Parties to nominate national points of contact
- Measures to improve national implementation, including of Art. X ( peaceful uses of biological science and technology)
- Establish Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

# Intersessional process: 2007 topics

1. Ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions
2. Regional and sub-regional cooperation on implementation of the Convention



# Intersessional process: 2008 topics

1. National, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, including laboratory safety and security of pathogens and toxins
2. Oversight, education, awareness raising, and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct with the aim of preventing misuse in the context of advances in bio-science and bio-technology research with the potential of use for purposes prohibited by the Convention



# Intersessional process: 2009 topic

- With a view to enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases: (1) for States Parties in need of assistance, identifying requirements and requests for capacity enhancement; and (2) from States Parties in a position to do so, and international organizations, opportunities for providing assistance related to these fields

# Intersessional process: 2010 topic

- Provision of assistance and coordination with relevant organizations upon request by any State Party in the case of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons, including improving national capabilities for disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis and public health systems



# 2008 Meeting of Experts

- Common themes (both topics):
  - Balance: need proportional measures; carefully assess risks; balance security concerns against the need for nurturing research
  - “No one size fits all”: individual and local circumstances must be taken into account



# 2008 Meeting of Experts

- Common themes (biosafety/biosecurity):
  - Meaning of biosafety and biosecurity in BWC context
  - Base national efforts on existing guidance and standards
  - Involve all relevant stakeholders, including government, the scientific community, commercial industry and academia
  - Importance of risk management, training, oversight, accreditation, licensing, accountability, information security
  - Need for building capacity of national public health, veterinary and agricultural services
  - Actively engage the private sector

# 2008 Meeting of Experts

- Common themes (oversight, education, codes of conduct):
  - Oversight should be a balanced combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" controls
  - Need to involve all relevant stakeholders in developing education and awareness-raising programs
  - The importance of clearly explaining, and providing practical guidance on, the risks involved
  - Consider formal requirements for non-proliferation education in relevant scientific and engineering training programs
  - Encourage scientists to take a more active role in addressing the threats posed by biological weapons



# BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

- Institutional face and focus for the BWC
- Central point of communication and interaction
- Channel for coordinating and integrating BWC and 1540 activities



# Challenges: universality

- BWC has 162 States Parties (7 joined since 6th RevCon in 2006)
- Lags behind CWC and NPT
- 33 states not party (including 13 signatories)
- Need to work together to encourage accessions

# Challenges: evolving BW threat

- Biology and biotechnology advancing at tremendous rate.
- Capabilities spreading rapidly around the world
- Technology is getting cheaper, smaller and easier to operate.
- Synthetic biology opening vast new horizons
- Great promise, but also serious risks



# Conclusions: 1540 and BWC

- Be flexible, nimble, innovative and creative
- Continue and strengthen current work on:
  - national legislation and enforcement
  - biosecurity
  - education and awareness-raising
- Seek opportunities for:
  - coordination and cooperation
  - pooling resources and expertise
  - sharing information and ideas