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The Honorable Trent Lott
Russell Senate Office Building 487
Washington, DC 20510-2403

Dear Senator Lott,

We, the undersigned scientists, urge you to work as a matter of national urgency to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention to a vote in the Senate before April 29 of this year. That is the date when the Convention will automatically enter into force, with or without the United States.

Negotiated by the administrations of Presidents Reagan and Bush and signed by the United States under President Bush in January 1993, the Convention was formally submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification by President Clinton in November 1993. Since then it has been the subject of thirteen hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services and the Select Committee on Intelligence. The Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Director of Central Intelligence and the representatives of the Chemical Manufacturers Association have all testified strongly in favor of ratification. More than 65 countries, including all of our major allies, have ratified.

If the Senate fails even to vote on the CWC, after three administrations have been its leading architects and proponents, the United States will have surrendered by default its essential leadership in combatting the proliferation of chemical weapons.

Respectfully,

Signed.....*Marshall Nirenberg*.....

Printed Name.....*MARSHALL NIRENBERG*.....

Affiliation (for identification only).....*National Institute of Health*.....

(All signatories are members of the United States National Academy of Sciences)