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Chemical Weapons Convention — declarations and inspections

Under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), states parties must declare within 30 days of the Convention's entry into force whether they possess chemical weapons (and if so their locations) and any chemical weapons production facilities that have been in their territory and used at any time since 1 January 1946.

Declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the CWC's verification body, remain confidential between the state party and the organization. Details may only be revealed with the permission of the state.

India

One of the CWC states parties that has revealed parts of its declaration is India. It has declared that it has maintained a 'defensive' chemical weapons programme. According to Indian Government sources, the declaration includes 'testing and development of chemical weapons and their related facilities which were developed only to deal with the situation arising out of possible use of chemical warfare against India'.

India has declared that certain military research sites hold quantities of schedule 1 chemicals. Schedule 1 of the CWC lists those chemicals that are most tightly controlled.

A research programme is carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), it is not clear whether any sizeable stockpiles of chemical agents have been produced.

However, DRDO activities are not entirely secret. For example, four authors from the DRDO Establishment at Gwalior published have published papers such as 'Effect of Topically Applied Sulphur Mustard on Haematological, Biochemical & Histological Parameters in Mice' in *Defence Science Journal* — an open publication — in July 1996 and 'Electron Microscopical Study on Skin Lesions Induced by Sulphur Mustard' in the same journal's January 1996 edition. Sulphur mustard is a well known chemical warfare agent.

Earlier Indian statements

There have been many statements by representatives of India regarding its policy on chemical weapons.

For example, at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva:

- 'India does not have chemical weapons in its stocks ... we do not have any intention of going in for such stocks' — 26 April 1979 [CD/PV.31]
- 'Soon after independence, India abjured the production and use of chemical weapons' — 3 February 1981 [CD/PV.101]
- 'I would like to reiterate that India does not possess any chemical weapons, nor does it have any intention of acquiring them in the future' — 21 April 1988 [CD/PV.459]

On 19 August 1992, the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan signed a 'Joint Declaration on Complete Prohibition on Chemical Weapons' which included the undertaking 'never under any circumstances to develop, produce or otherwise acquire chemical weapons; never to use chemical weapons or to assist, encourage or induce anyone in any way to engage in the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling or use of chemical weapons'.

Further statements on non-acquisition have been made, such as: by Foreign Minister Natwar Singh at the January 1989 conference of parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol; by Minister of State Eduardo Faliero at the CWC signing ceremony in January 1993. More recently, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao stated on 24 December 1993 that India had 'nothing to hide' with regard to chemical weapons.

Inspections in India

The OPCW has carried out initial inspections at DRDO facilities at Ozra and Gwalior.

Conclusions

Press speculation has made a lot of the fact that India has declared a CW research programme, perhaps not realising that such a programme was already on the public record.

On the information that has been made public it is impossible to tell whether India has declared more than has already been known and it would be in India's interest to reduce speculation by making public its full declaration on military activities.

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United Kingdom

The UK Government has released a large proportion of its declarations relating to its past military activities and its 'Single Small Scale Facility' (SSSF) — allowed under the Convention for producing Schedule 1 chemicals 'for research, medical, pharmaceutical or protective purposes'.

Inspections in the UK

The OPCW has carried out initial inspections in July at Porton Down — site of the UK's SSSF and other treaty-relevant facilities and materials — and at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham — one of the sites that had been declared as holding small quantities of Schedule 1 chemicals.

The OPCW has also conducted initial inspections of former chemical weapons storage sites in the UK. On 4–9 August, inspectors visited Lords Bridge, Barnham Heath, Norton Disney and West Cottingworth. On 11–16 August, inspectors visited Valley, Randle Wigg Island, Sutton Oak and Portreath.

Vienna Document 94 — 'Observation of Military Activity'

35 observers from 20 countries have carried out an 'Observation of Military Activity' in the UK under the terms of the Vienna Document 1994. The Vienna Document 1994 is an agreement under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for carrying out confidence-building measures.

The observers were watching part of exercise FIRST CRUSADE a field training exercise being held by the 1st Mechanised Brigade at the

Salisbury Plain Training Area during 28 June–8 July 1997.

The exercise involved 4,000 troops and 250 tracked vehicles and was designed to practice all elements of high intensity operations in a 'regional conflict scenario'. This scenario was described as 'following recent political, commercial and military tensions, 1st Mechanised Brigade has deployed to Gallia to train in preparation for a possible deployment to Saxonia, as a show of

strength against Mercian aggression against Saxonia'.

The observers were from the following states/organization: Austria (1), Belgium (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Canada (2), Croatia (2), Czech Republic (2), Denmark (1), France (2), Finland (2), Germany (2), Hungary (2), Italy (1), Norway (2), Poland (2), Romania (2), Slovak Republic (2), Sweden (2), Switzerland (2), Turkey (1), United States (2) and VICS, NATO (1).

Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

On 23 July a meeting of the states parties to the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty agreed to a series of 'adaptations' to the agreement.

Key features of these adaptations are:

- reconfiguration of the Treaty so that it is no longer a bloc-to-bloc arrangement;
- removal of the zones in the Treaty to be replaced with new territorial limits; and
- reductions in Treaty Limited Equipment levels (most states parties are not using their full TLE entitlements).

The 'basic elements' paper that was agreed at the meeting was based on

one that the NATO states had proposed in February.

The Joint Consultative Group established by the Treaty will continue discussions on adaptation using the framework agreed at the July meeting.

A VERTIC briefing paper on recent developments in relation to CFE is currently in preparation and will be published shortly.

Alphabet soup

If elements of the Treaty text are to be renegotiated, perhaps negotiators could start using the more literally-correct acronym of CAFE for the discussions as this would give acronym writers much-needed opportunities to exercise their art.

For example, additional bean counting could be done under the rubric of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Auxiliary Unit Limits for Applying Integrated Totals (CAFE AU LAIT).

New verification measures could be given names such as the Executive System for the Preservation of Regulations for European Sustained Schemes of Obligations (ESPRESSO) or the Combined Application, Promotion and Preservation of Uniform Compliance and Conformity with International Norms Organization (CAPPUCCINO).

Those hungry for more could support the Broad-based Integrated System for Counting Under International Treaties (BISCUIT).

Itavia aircraft loss — radar data released

Investigators into the total loss of a Italian civilian aircraft — a DC-9 operated by Itavia with 81

passengers and crew — on 27 June 1980 have been presented with NATO radar tapes that had

previously been withheld that show activity in the relevant airspace (see *Trust & Verify*, no 65, April 1996).

While the contents of the tapes have not been publicly released, it is understood they verify that a skirmish was taking place between fighter aircraft from Libya and from three NATO states — France, Italy and the US.

That such a skirmish had taken place had been previously officially

denied. The release of the tapes, which had taken many years of pressure to achieve, appears to have reopened debate about the openness of NATO structures.

Reportedly, the tapes indicate the launch of an air-to-air missile from a NATO aircraft. However, as the radar return from the missile is

weak, it is not possible to track it perfectly. Wreckage of such a missile had been found in the vicinity of the wreckage of the jet, but it had previously been impossible to provide corroborative evidence that the missile may have been connected with the loss of the DC-9.

The judicial investigation continues.

SS-23s to remain in service

Bulgaria and Slovakia have announced that there are to retain in service SS-23 missiles supplied to them in the 1980s by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's stocks of these missiles were destroyed under the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed in 1987.

It is unclear how many missiles remain in service, nor how many

missile sites are currently operational. When the missiles were first deployed, there were eight missile sites in Bulgaria and six in Slovak territory of Czechoslovakia.

Western governmental sources have maintained that these missiles should have been destroyed under the INF Treaty, while Bulgaria and Slovakia claim that as they were not

signatories to the treaty, they have no obligations under it.

There has been speculation that the two states had offered to destroy the missiles if they had been offered NATO membership following the Madrid Summit in July. In the event, only three states were offered membership: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Climate negotiations — UN Special Session

In recent months there have been important events in the run-up to the third Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will be held in Kyoto in December. At the Conference, the Parties to the Convention are meant to decide on a protocol or amendment containing greenhouse gas emission limitation or reduction objectives extending into the next century, in addition to those commitments already in the Convention which run to the year 2000.

There is still a wide variety of views amongst Parties as to what the new commitments should be. By early summer, the EU had proposed a 15 per cent emission reduction target for all greenhouse gases by 2010, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) had proposed a target of 20 per cent carbon dioxide emission reductions by 2005, and most other countries had proposed less significant targets if, indeed, they had proposed any. The US and Japan, for example, had yet to propose any target, and the OPEC countries and Australia did not want any emission reductions at all.

UN Special Session

A special session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) was held in late June in New York. Nominally, this was intended to review progress on environment and development

issues under Agenda 21 (agreed in Rio in 1992) the operation of which is overseen by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. However, the Agenda contains a 'chapter' on climate change. States that wanted significant greenhouse emission reductions, notably those from the EU, thus used UNGASS as a means of highlighting the climate issue at a gathering replete with heads of government.

At a G7 meeting, held in Denver on the weekend before the heads of government were due to arrive at UNGASS, Messrs. Kohl, Blair and Chirac put the EU climate case to the other heads of government present — applying pressure on Mr. Clinton and Mr. Hashimoto, in particular, to commit to significant action on climate change. Having obtained a the inclusion of promising, if vague, text on climate in the G7 communiqué, The EU trio then moved on to New York to speak to the Special Session.

The UK, especially, arrived in force with Mr. Blair, four other senior ministers and a delegation of more than sixty civil servants. In a rousing speech Blair committed the UK to 20 per cent emission reductions by 2010. Dr. Kohl and Mr. Chirac also made speeches centring on climate change and the environment. Much later in the week Mr Clinton arrived and said that not enough was being

done about climate change and implied an increased willingness on his part to take on Congress on this issue.

Meanwhile in the basement of the UN, debate continued on what to include in the report on progress on the climate chapter of Agenda 21. Strictly speaking there was little to report. Very few states have any chance of meeting their current commitment to return to 1990 emission levels by the year 2000 and most, including the USA and Japan, will massively overshoot their target. The debate focused, instead, on what should happen in Kyoto.

By the final day of UNGASS two contact groups — on climate and on finance — were still deadlocked. Eventually, late on the last night, both came up with compromise agreements. The deal on climate was that the EU had its way in that any protocol to the Climate Convention should contain commitments to 'significant emission reductions'. Australian and Japanese reservations were covered by the inclusion of words to the effect that there was general but not universal agreement on this matter. OPEC reservations were covered by the promise to take into account developing country concerns regarding the economic impacts of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

US Senate action

Not long after UNGASS, a US Senate Committee (chaired by Democrat Senator Byrd from West Virginia) considered the climate issue and what the Senate might want from any protocol.

Many Senators were worried that a protocol containing commitments only for developed countries (which is what the Berlin Mandate stipulates) might harm US competitiveness abroad and lead to job losses at home.

Others became focused on the notion that the Climate Convention was a United Nations instrument, and was thus 'tainted' to those in US politics with a deep distrust of the organization.

A bizarre, and sometimes paranoid, debate thus ensued. It ended with a

David Yates 1972-1997

It is with deep regret that we announce the sudden death of David Yates, a PhD student at the School of Peace Studies, Bradford University.

In carrying out research into his thesis on 'Technological Aspects of Verification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention', David was often in contact with members of VERTIC.

Before starting his PhD, David had worked for 9 months at the International Security Information Service (ISIS), which has offices next door to VERTIC in Carrara House.

David died without warning on 23 July from a pulmonary embolism (a blood clot on the lung). David was one of the brightest students of his generation. He will be sorely missed.

95-0 agreement that the US should not enter into any international agreement that did not include

commitments for developing countries or, at least, tie them into commitments in some way.

In the News

BWC Ad Hoc Group

The Ad Hoc Group (AHG) of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) met for its seventh session in Geneva during 14 July-1 August.

The AHG has been tasked with developing verification measures for the BWC.

During the latest session a 'rolling text' was put together, following proposals by the Chair of the AHG, Ambassador Tibor Toth of Hungary.

The next AHG session is scheduled for 15 September-3 October.

Cuban BW allegations

A meeting between Cuba and the United States is scheduled for 25 August to discuss Cuba's allegations that it has been the subject of a US biological weapons attack.

Land Mine News

A meeting in Oslo, scheduled for 1-19 September is expected to conclude the text for the 'Ottawa Process' treaty on the banning of anti-personnel land mines.

Of the 15 EU states, only Finland and Greece have not yet formally committed themselves to the 'Ottawa Process'.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Government have announced that they are making preparations for the possibility of holding a signing ceremony for the new treaty in Ottawa on 2-4 December.

CWC/OPCW Conference of States Parties

The Second Session of the Conference of States Parties of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons — the verification body for the Chemical Weapons Convention — is scheduled for 1-5 December in the Hague.

Trust & Verify

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VERTIC is the Verification Technology Information Centre, an independent organization aiming to research and provide information on the role of verification technology and methods in present and future arms control and environmental agreements.

VERTIC is the major source of information on verification for scientists, policy makers and the press.

VERTIC is funded primarily by grants from foundations and trusts and its independence is monitored by an Oversight and Advisory Committee.

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