
Part 1. Some General Considerations

The IAEA is generally regarded as successful in its function of safeguarding peaceful nuclear activities in states. That a safeguards system could be created in this sensitive area, could employ such intrusive techniques as routine on-site inspection, and could be regarded (despite some limits, defects and criticisms) as effective, all provide one initial, fundamental lesson: that such a system is not inherently infeasible. In appreciating the nature of this success, and in suggesting its lessons for other areas of arms control, one should be aware not only of the ways in which the Agency has carried out its tasks but also of the limits of its efforts, and of the conditions under which it operates.

The first part of this study will examine some general considerations affecting the Agency and how these could bear on chemical weapons verification by an international agency employing inspection as a primary verification technique. It will focus its discussions on several questions: What does the Agency do? How has it defined its objectives and the problem to be dealt with? How broad is its threat coverage? How successful has it been, given the limitations of its techniques and resources and the limits of its coverage? What environmental conditions have assisted the Agency? What issues arise from the use of an international organization as a verification agency?

What Does the Agency Do ?

Objectives and Problem Definition

As stated in Article II of its Statute, the Agency "shall ensure, so far as it is able, that assistance provided by it or at its request or under its supervision or control is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose." This objective, it should be noted, does not involve disarmament (the reduction or elimination of a certain class of weaponry) but rather non-proliferation (preventing the further spread of a class of weapons). Although its controls are applied to nuclear production systems (the nuclear fuel cycle), they are directed at controlling the end-use of nuclear materials and facilities rather than at the acquisition of fuel cycle facilities and nuclear materials as such. Its safeguards are applied to civilian nuclear material and facilities to deter, through a high risk of detection, diversions of nuclear material to proscribed or (as stated in INFCIRC/153) unknown purposes.

If a chemical weapons agreement removed existing stocks of chemical weapons and associated production facilities, as well as guarded against future production, it would be both a disarmament and a non-proliferation agreement.

