

In related developments, as required by UN Resolution 687, on 8 April 1991, Iraq ratified the BTWC. Inspections of Iraq's biological weapons facilities have been occurring throughout the year. Iraq had been carrying out research on biological weapons which it claimed was for defensive purposes. The Iraqi research programme has been found to have been quite advanced but, to date, no evidence of a production facility has been discovered by the inspectors.

CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

Canada signed and ratified the BTWC in 1972 and has been a strong participant in all review conferences, working with other states in an effort to strengthen and consolidate the Convention.

Just prior to the review conference the Canadian government announced that it was withdrawing its reservation to the Geneva Protocol as it pertained to bacteriological weapons.¹ Since signing the 1925 Geneva Protocol, Canada, as well as some other states, has maintained a formal reservation retaining the right to retaliate with biological or chemical weapons if such weapons are used against its citizens. Such reservations have been an issue since the signing of the BTWC given the apparent contradiction between retaining the right to use the very weapons that the convention prohibits. Canada's announcement was followed by a similar announcement from Britain.

In an opening statement to the review conference, Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, Peggy Mason, outlined the Canadian position and goals. She stated:

We, government representatives shall have hard choices to make from the generous menu before us. In this regard, my delegation shall strive to evaluate the various proposals while bearing three characteristics, or criteria, in mind: practicability; effectiveness in enhancing transparency in relation to compliance with the Convention; and economy...my delegation prefers to speak in terms of the creation of a 'compliance regime' for the Convention that will encompass not only confidence-building measures but also verification measures....As long ago as 1970, the Canadian Government unilaterally declared that it would not use biological or toxin weapons at any time in the future. The more recent formal action taken with regard to the 1925 Geneva Protocol is meant simply to ensure that there can be no suggestion of uncertainty anywhere as to the extent of Canada's abhorrence of biological warfare and the means of conducting it....Our goal is nothing less than a universal

¹ "Canada Withdraws BW Reservations to Geneva Protocol," *Disarmament Bulletin*, No. 17, Fall 1991: 20.