
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention: Practice
challenge inspections of military facilities

1. CD/715 of July 1986 set out detailed proposals by the United Kingdom for the conduct of a challenge inspection under article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. These proposals placed a basic obligation on any State party receiving a request for clarification or resolution of any matter causing doubts about compliance to demonstrate to the other treaty States, and especially the requesting State, that it remains in full compliance with the treaty.

2. Building on the ideas in CD/500, the United Kingdom proposed that each State party should have the right directly to request a challenge inspection of another party, and that any State receiving such a request should allow an inspection team from the technical secretariat, accompanied by a representative from the requesting State to carry out a comprehensive investigation in order to determine the facts of the case.

3. The United Kingdom's proposals recognized that a State receiving a challenge might have legitimate security interests at stake. In such exceptional circumstances a State would have the right to propose alternative measures to demonstrate compliance.

4. In 1988 the United Kingdom set out to test how these proposals might work in practice by conducting a series of practice challenge inspections at military facilities. Our objectives were:

(a) To assess the security implications of challenge inspections under a Chemical Weapons Convention;

(b) To examine ways of demonstrating compliance with a Chemical Weapons Convention while protecting legitimate security interests unrelated to chemical weapons;

(c) To draw any lessons for how challenge inspections under a Chemical Weapons Convention might be conducted.

5. It was decided that practices should be conducted across a range of Ministry of Defence facilities from ammunition storage facilities through to research and development facilities, since different types of facility would pose different problems for inspection. After preliminary visits to various candidate facilities, it was decided to hold the first practice at a conventional ammunition storage facility.