

suspect facilities would have to be subject to careful inspection. It could be extremely difficult to obtain the necessary access to inspect properly all the potential sites. Further, there are now many more facilities capable of producing large quantities of toxins and bioregulators than existed in the 1970s when the Convention entered into force. While the large-scale synthesis of some potent peptides may have legitimate medical or scientific uses, the possibility exists for diversion for illegal purposes.

Without on-site verification, illegal activity would be more difficult to detect. One would then have to rely on other forms of monitoring to keep abreast of what is occurring. Examination of the open scientific literature is one method that is available to monitor this area. Patterns of research can be established, interesting trends monitored and, most importantly, abrupt halts in the research on a particular topic can be revealing. Monitoring of the literature, coupled with other sources of information, can point to questionable activities. For example, countries rather abruptly devoting inordinate resources to biotechnological research on toxins and bioregulators may be suspect.

In summary, technological changes in the past few years have an important bearing on the issue and potential scope of verification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. There has been a tremendous increase in the identification of peptides, both toxins and bioregulators, that control biological processes.