
Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons

CANADA

Thiodiglycol

1. Considerable attention is being given to Article VI and its related schedules of chemicals. Two earlier working papers, CD/CW/WP.231 and CD/CW/WP.259, developed a theme concerning criteria other than toxicity for the determination of whether a chemical should appear on a particular schedule. In CD/CW/WP.259, pinacolyl alcohol was used as an example to illustrate the difficulties faced when attempting to develop and utilize suitable guidelines for placing a chemical that poses a risk to the Convention on an appropriate schedule. In that instance, the "rolling text", CD/961, lists this alcohol as a candidate for both schedules 1 and 2A. It was noted in the working paper that pinacolyl alcohol had little or no commercial use, an important factor which was one of several guidelines listed for schedule 1. However, it was pointed out that use of this guideline could set up a temporal trap in that there is often a rapid changeover in the industrial uses of chemicals. Valuable commercial uses for chemicals may be developed very quickly and it would be useful to have some means of predicting the future commercial value of chemicals before placing them on schedule 1 which could have the effect of discouraging further development. The working paper developed methodology using technical criteria to show that pinacolyl alcohol had sufficient commercial potential to suggest that schedule 2A might be more appropriate for it than schedule 1, although arguments could still be made that risk factors would override this technical assessment. As a result it was suggested that the modalities for revision of lists must contain a practical way of moving potentially useful chemicals from one schedule to another so that placing a substance on schedule 1 would not preclude valuable commercial developments.

2. In this paper the technical methodology is tested further using another controversial example. Thiodiglycol is readily available from industrially important chemicals, and attention has recently been focussed on its use as an immediate precursor to produce sulfur mustard for chemical weapons purposes. That thiodiglycol poses a risk to the convention is not in doubt. In the current rolling text,

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