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Toxic weapons attacks, deaths and incapacitation continue to be reported. At this point in our analysis, however, the 1983 information shows some differences from that of previous years. Specifically, there appears to have been a diminution of attacks in Afghanistan, and a decrease in the lethality of attacks in Laos and Kampuchea. At the same time, however, there is evidence of continuing use in Laos and Kampuchea of an as yet unidentified, non-lethal agent or agents.

Since December 1980, the international community, the United Nations and private individuals and organizations have been calling attention to chemical and toxin weapons use and bringing substantial international pressure to bear on the users to cease such activities. Although current evidence indicates a decrease in the use of toxic weapons, the international community must persevere in its efforts to bring about a full and permanent cessation. Permanently ending the use of these weapons in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, however, is only one of our goals. In addition, the Government of the United States will continue to press for strengthening relevant international conventions and for achieving a complete and verifiable ban on all chemical weapons through the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Secretary of State Shultz expressed the concerns of the United States in his letter of submission for our November 1982 report:

"The use of chemical and toxin weapons must be stopped. Respect for existing agreements must be restored and the agreements themselves strengthened. Failure to achieve these goals can only have serious implications for the security of the world community, particularly for the security of smaller nations, like those whose people are being attacked."

Accordingly, the United States will continue to monitor the situation and share with the United Nations what further relevant information it may acquire on prohibited use of toxic weapons. In this connection, the United States will not neglect to monitor other areas in the world where prohibited use of chemical weapons has been alleged. The United States notes with deep concern reports that chemical weapons have been used in the unfortunate ongoing conflict between Iraq and Iran -- both parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Such use of chemical weapons would constitute yet another serious breach of the Protocol, and related rules of customary international law, requiring the urgent attention of the world community.

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