

C113(A83)

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Proposal Abstract C113(A83)

1. Arms Control Problem:

Chemical weapons - use
- production

2. Verification Type:

(a) On-site inspection - selective
(b) Complaints procedures

3. Source:

Flowerree, Charles C. "Chemical Weapons: A Case Study in Verification". Arms Control Today 13, no. 3, (April 1983).

4. Summary:

The problems associated with the verification of compliance with a chemical weapons agreement and, in particular, with the Geneva Protocol of 1925, are discussed in this article. It examines the incidents which were alleged to have occurred in Laos and Afghanistan, and in particular, looks at the investigation of the Afghanistan case as the first 'fact-finding' effort which has been made to verify compliance. Some of the difficulties which arose in setting up this investigation were traced. Initial acceptance of this investigation was slow, starting with the incorporation of the appropriate language into the report of the Committee on Disarmament and the subsequent adoption of a resolution in 1980 after heated debate. Problems were encountered in the search for a suitable group of qualified experts, and the investigations of that group were hampered by procedural difficulties and the intractability of the authorities in states accused of violations. The findings of the investigators did not reveal any substantial proof that violations had occurred, but did produce some circumstantial evidence pointing to the probable use of chemical weapons.

The effectiveness of this investigative body was limited in part by its mandate; it could not make recommendations, and it was required only to raise the matter with the Security Council. Under the existing legal regime, assurance of compliance depends entirely on the self-interest of the parties and the pressure of world opinion, and this is deemed to be insufficient. Consequently, this issue must remain clouded so long as government unwillingness prevents any certain means of verification.

In conclusion, some suggestions are made to improve procedures for the verification of compliance. General Assembly Resolution (37/98d) was passed asking the Secretary General to: "(1) undertake investigations of any reports of violations of the protocol; (2) draw up a list of qualified experts who could be regularly available to conduct investigations; and (3) appoint a committee of experts to