

an advisory group of experts if a problem arises concerning the application of the Convention.

In recent years the ability of the Convention to control the threat posed by biological weapons has been questioned. The development of new technologies, such as the use of recombinant DNA, risks rendering the Convention useless because of the many ways in which these technologies can be employed. The Convention does not restrict research on biological or toxic agents in any way. Most such research is concerned with the properties of these substances and can be used for protective purposes. It is possible however that the same research could ultimately be used to produce new biological weapons. These concerns are a result of the ill-defined boundary between research and development in this field.

Doubts as to the effectiveness of the Convention have also arisen in connection with the allegations, first made in the seventies, that the superpowers (and their allies) have developed and used biological weapons. The most recent such accusation was made against the Soviet Union which was said to have used toxic weapons in South East Asia (yellow rain). The fact that a definite verdict on whether toxic weapons were used in that instance was never been reached emphasises the problems of verifying the Convention and the need to strengthen the Convention accordingly. The mechanisms required for verification have been the subject of considerable discussion and are at the heart of the disagreements which have arisen concerning the Convention.

Canada signed and ratified the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Convention of 1972. After the Second World War it carried out research on the defensive aspects of biological and chemical weapons, often in collaboration with the United States and Great Britain. In the mid-sixties, at a time when the United States was being accused of using herbicides and defoliants in Southeast Asia, Canada increased its efforts in the UN to have such weapons banned. Canada is among the countries that have recommended that chemical