

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

VERIFICATION OF NON-PRODUCTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Introduction

1. It has become increasingly clear that the key to agreement on a chemical weapons convention is the elaboration of a sound verification regime which will generate confidence that States Parties are complying with provisions of the convention. The Working Group of the Committee on Disarmament has discussed this question in depth and a great deal of work has been done on the technical procedures which could be used for such verification. These discussions have shown that it would not be practicable to devise verification procedures which would provide an absolute assurance that the convention is not being violated. On the other hand, a chemical weapons convention must provide for sufficient verification to deter the would-be violator and to provide a degree of assurance against violation by one party which is accepted as adequate by others.
2. Five main complementary types of verification for a chemical weapons convention have been suggested:
 - (i) verification of destruction of stocks of chemical weapons,
 - (ii) verification of the destruction of facilities for their production and filling,
 - (iii) monitoring of production of super-toxic chemical agents for permitted purposes,
 - (iv) verification of non-production of chemical weapons;
 - (v) special inspections under the fact-finding procedures, including those conducted in relation to possible violations of all types.

This paper addresses itself to the problem of verification of non-production by regular inspection, i.e. category (iv) above. It would aim to provide confidence through non-discriminatory routine inspections that those chemical warfare agents posing the greatest threat are not being produced in violation of the convention. It would thus lessen the need for special inspections of type (v) above. This paper aims to show that the regime required for this purpose need not be anything like as onerous to the chemical industry as has sometimes been suggested.

3. Attention will be concentrated on a limited list of substances which pose particular problems for the verification of a chemical weapons convention. They comprise a list of named compounds or types of compound which are key precursors of super-toxic chemical agents. Valuable work on the identification of key precursors which might be included in this list has been done in the latest series of Chairman's consultations with experts on technical matters (17 January - 4 February 1983). The illustrative list at annex is designed to show types of compound which might be included in a special category for the purpose of verification of non-production under a chemical weapons convention. This list is