

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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REPORT ON A UNITED STATES NATIONAL TRIAL INSPECTION EXERCISE

Introduction

From the beginning of the negotiations on a chemical weapons ban, the United States Government and the United States chemical industry have recognized the importance of providing assurance that the civil chemical industry is not being misused for illegal production activities. Government and industry have been working together to develop provisions for a future chemical weapons convention that will provide effective verification and at the same time protect legitimate sensitive and confidential business information.

The United States welcomed the suggestion in 1988 that States participating in the negotiations conduct trial inspections in the civil chemical industry to assist the negotiating process. Consequently, the United States delegation participated actively in the informal open-ended consultations held to prepare for such inspections.

In late February 1989, United States experts conducted a national trial inspection at the facility operated by Akzo Chemicals, Incorporated in Gallipolis Ferry, West Virginia. This facility produces a Schedule [2] chemical, dimethyl methylphosphonate (DMMP), from a Schedule [3] chemical, trimethylphosphite. Some of the DMMP is used on-site to produce another Schedule [2] chemical. The Schedule [2] chemicals are legitimate commercial products used as flame retardants and for other purposes.

The United States views this first national trial inspection as the beginning of a process to develop and refine inspection procedures, not as a test of procedures that are close to final form. This first inspection omitted testing some necessary procedures, such as notification, transportation, and escort arrangements. Also, other gaps have been recognized and procedures that need to be improved have been identified.

The results of the national trial inspection are presented in this working paper, drawing in part on the format elaborated during the Conference on Disarmament open-ended consultations in 1988 (CD/CW/WP.213).