



Gas mask used to prevent inhalation of chemical agents

Canada's Response to the Global Partnership Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Destruction of Chemical Weapons

Russia has the largest declared stocks of chemical weapons in the world—approximately 40,000 tonnes. These chemical weapons are stored at seven facilities. Two of these sites house the vesicants (i.e. blister agents) mustard, lewisite and lewisite/mustard mixture (a total of roughly 5,500 tonnes, or 20 percent of the total CW stockpile). Five others are repositories for the deadly organophosphorous agents (i.e. nerve agents) sarin, soman and VX (a total of approximately 32,500 tonnes, or 80 percent of Russia's total CW stockpile). Of particular concern are the nearly four million nerve agent-filled artillery shells stored at Shchuch'ye (Kurgan Oblast) and Kizner (Udmurt Republic). The small-calibre artillery shells pose a particular risk since they are both rugged and portable (they can fit into a briefcase)—two characteristics that make them an especially attractive target for terrorists.