

The Opportunity

In terms of BW controls, with the current impasse in developing a global approach, one alternative would be to develop regional approaches. Within Europe, such an approach would build on the leadership that European delegations consistently demonstrated in the Ad Hoc Group. A European regime could be developed in two stages. The first stage would encompass the EU Member States and the EU Associate Countries (although the latter may initially need to be precluded from some of the more sensitive aspects of the regime, as is currently the case for example with some of the operative mechanisms of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports). The second stage would involve the rest of Europe, including the Russian Federation. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) may provide the vehicle for wider European development of such a regime (although its consensus-based decision-making and the likely opposition of the United States will be a formidable hurdle).

This proposal has a little-known historical precedent: the so-called BW Inspection Project, which was the first research project of the nascent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).² SIPRI took over the project from Pugwash, which had initiated it in 1963. Looking for ways of stimulating multilateral BW disarmament, Pugwash had the idea of seeking to extend the declarations-plus-inspection BW controls of the Western European Union Armaments Control Agency into non-aligned and eastern Europe on a trial basis. The SIPRI pilot scheme (see Box 2 in section 4) involved inspections by small teams of well-known microbiologists to 14 research laboratories or production establishments in nine European countries (belonging to NATO, the Warsaw Pact as well as some non-aligned countries). The tentative conclusions that SIPRI drew at the time were that:

a substantial measure of on-site verification would be possible, provided certain conditions were fulfilled—documentation, free access to all facilities and personnel, the possibility of visits at short notice or of 'permanent' inspection by resident inspectors or by exchange scientists cooperating with them.³

The project ended in 1971 when the BTWC negotiators decided to do without verification procedures. However, the existence of the project, and the political pressure it succeeded in generating, helped to lay the foundation for the establishment of the BTWC. Over thirty years later, Europe might again provide the precursor to a strengthened BTWC regime.

Objectives of the Report

This report seeks to examine the potential for a European BW control regime centred on the EU, its Member States and the EU Associate Countries. More specifically, the report:

- Seeks to define the usefulness and political feasibility of a BW regime among the EU Member States and EU Associate Countries, none of which is suspected of having an offensive BW programme;

² This paragraph is based on a private communication with Julian Perry Robinson, Harvard-Sussex Program, October 2002, and Chapter 5 of the book *SIPRI: Continuity and Change 1966-1996*. SIPRI: Solna, 1996, pp49-63.

³ OP.Cit., *SIPRI: Continuity and Change*.