

CANADA

VERIFICATION AND CONTROL REQUIREMENTS FOR A
CHEMICAL ARMS CONTROL TREATY BASED ON AN
ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

There seems little doubt that most nations would prefer to see the end of chemical weapons and of the threat of chemical warfare. Chemical weapons are not generally integrated components of conventional arsenals and are not required for normal defensive purposes by any nation. There is no excuse for a nation possessing them to avoid the timely negotiation of a protocol. Yet the Committee on Disarmament and its predecessor, the CCD, have actively negotiated for nearly 15 years without success.

The two Superpowers, the United States and the USSR, are the only nations thought to possess significant quantities of chemical weapons. Since neither needs them for defensive purposes, except for retaliation in kind against the other, a disposal formula which would preserve the relative security of each should be achievable. This would remove the bulk of world chemical arsenals and the remaining nations would most likely follow suit. However, even in direct bilateral negotiations, agreement has not been possible.

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The major stumbling block appears to be verification mechanisms which would assure each Superpower that the promised weapon destructions in fact take place and that no new weapons are produced. There is a distinct difference of opinion on the extent of international involvement in verification activities and on the degree of intrusiveness which must be allowed. This situation may be further strained if the reported disparity in stocks continues or the United States decides to renew its capability with binary weapons. The problem of verification involves political judgements, but it is also a technical matter, and every effort should be made to ensure that technical difficulties do not stand in the way of an agreement.

In spite of the great variety of verification proposals that have been made over the years, no clear agreement has been reached as to which should be implemented. To assist in overcoming this block to agreement it should be feasible to systematically review the technical requirements for verification for each basic activity to be undertaken or banned. This should determine the minimum levels of verification