

Efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention since 1975

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Some BWC dates

- 1968 - UK Paper on Microbiology
- 1971 - BWC text adopted
- 1972 - BWC signed
- 1975 - BWC into force

Identified weaknesses

- No transparency
- No formal compliance measures
- No institutional basis

Note – there was rarely consensus on what constituted a weakness!

Select Influences – treaty regimes

- NPT/IAEA
- Stockholm Document
- INF Treaty
- CWC (& negotiations)
- UNSCOM/Iraq

Select Influences – allegations and events

- Sverdlovsk
- Yellow Rain
- Cuba - *Thrips palmi*

Landmarks

- Review Conferences
- Verex
- Special Conference
- Ad Hoc Group
- Inter-Sessional Process

Early Review Conferences

- Recognition of weaknesses and areas of potential improvement, for example:
 - high containment facilities
 - disease outbreak notification
- Results in voluntary information exchange in form of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

Verex (1)

- Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts –
‘to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical viewpoint’
- Established by Third Review Conference (1991)

Verex (2)

Six criteria for measures:

- Their strengths and weaknesses based on, but not limited to, the amount and quality of information they provide, and fail to provide;
- Their ability to differentiate between prohibited and permitted activities;
- Their ability to resolve ambiguities about compliance;
- Their technology, material, manpower and equipment requirements;
- Their financial, legal, safety and organizational implications;
- Their impact on scientific research, scientific cooperation, industrial development and other permitted activities, and their implications for the confidentiality of commercial proprietary information.

Special Conference

- Discussed Verex report and established AHG
- ‘The objective of this Ad Hoc Group shall be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument, to be submitted for the consideration of the States Parties.’

Ad Hoc Group

- 24 sessions
- Over 450 working papers
- Broad scope
- Development of 'rolling text' for 'the protocol'
- However, old divergences of views reappeared

2001

- US announces it would not be able to accept any product that may come out of the AHG – brings effective halt to negotiating activities
- Fifth Review Conference unable to reach consensus and suspended
- States parties divided on next steps

2002

- Review Conference re-convened
- 'new process' proposed as take-it-or-leave-it option

Inter-Sessional Process

- Proposed as 'take-it-or-leave-it' option at re-convened Review Conference
- Two sets of annual meetings
 - MX - Meeting of Experts
 - MSP - Meeting of States Parties
- Each year 2003-2005 on a different topic
- Not decision-making body

ISP topics 2003-05

- the adoption of necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of penal legislation; [2003]
- national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic microorganisms and toxins; [2003]
- enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease; [2004]
- strengthening and broadening national and international institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants; [2004]; and
- the content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists. [2005]

And on to 2006 ...

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