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Working Paper

## International Criminalization of Chemical and Biological Weapons

Every major new technology - metallurgy, explosives, aviation, electronics, nuclear energy - has come to be exploited not only for beneficial purposes but also for hostile ones. Will this be the case for biotechnology, surely destined to be a dominant technology of the 21st century?

Biological weapons that are already developed and tested provide a relatively simple and inexpensive means for the attack of people, animals and crops over large areas. A world in which the constraints against such weapons have broken down would be a world in which a multitude of states and non-state entities could acquire otherwise unattainable capabilities for overt and covert mass destruction and the disruption of civil society.

Over the longer term, a world in which biotechnology could be freely exploited for hostile purposes would be a world in which the very nature of conflict had radically changed. As our understanding of life-processes becomes increasingly profound and as biotechnology continues to advance, it will become possible not simply to destroy life, but to manipulate it, including the processes of cognition, development, inheritance and reproduction. Therein could lie terrible new opportunities for violence, coercion, repression or subjugation. Movement towards such a world would distort the accelerating revolution in biotechnology in ways that could vitiate its vast beneficial application, with inimical consequences for the course of civilization.

Confronted with this menace, the international community faces a momentous challenge. Now that a majority of states, including all of the major powers, are parties to the Geneva Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the challenge is to build upon these international agreements and on the moral and political norms that underlie them to achieve an effective worldwide system of constraints sufficient to forestall the intensive exploitation of biotechnology for hostile purposes. Potentially important although largely unexplored opportunities to enhance the system that is required lie within the realm of international criminal law.

The prohibitions embodied in the Geneva Protocol, the BWC and the CWC are directed to the actions of states, not individuals. Although the CWC and, less explicitly, the BWC contain provisions obliging each state party to prohibit persons under the jurisdiction of that state from undertaking activities prohibited by these treaties, these provisions fail to deal with the

situation in which an offender is present in a state that has not established or otherwise lacks jurisdiction to prosecute, or is complicit with the offender, or fails to prosecute for any other reason. The Harvard Sussex Program on CBW Armament and Arms Limitation, with advice from an international group of legal authorities, has prepared a draft convention that seeks to address these deficiencies.

The proposed convention would go considerably beyond the provisions dealing with biological and chemical weapons in the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, opened for signing in January 1998, or the provisions on war crimes in the Statute of the International Criminal Court signed in Rome in July 1998. Among other differences, the Bombing Convention does not cover the activities of military forces in armed conflict and neither the Bombing Convention nor the ICC Statute make it an offense *per se* to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer biological or chemical weapons.

The proposed convention would make it an offence for any person, regardless of official position, to order, direct or knowingly to participate or render substantial assistance in the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of biological or chemical weapons or to threaten the use of such weapons.

A person who commits any of the prohibited acts anywhere would face the risk of apprehension, prosecution and punishment or of extradition should that person be found in a state that supports the proposed convention.

The proposed convention would oblige each state party: (i) to establish jurisdiction with respect to these crimes extending to all persons on its territory or equivalent bases for enforcement of law, regardless of the place where the offense was committed or the citizenship of the offender and (ii) to prosecute or extradite any such offender found on its territory or any other place under its jurisdiction.

The same obligations, to establish criminal jurisdiction and to extradite or adjudicate (*aut dedere aut judicare*), are included in international conventions now in force for the suppression and punishment of aircraft hijacking and sabotage (1970; 1971), crimes against internationally protected persons (1973), hostage taking (1979), theft of nuclear materials (1980), torture (1984) and crimes against maritime navigation (1988).

The proposed convention includes provisions that oblige its states parties to provide assistance to one another in the adjudication of offenses and to guarantee those regarding whom proceedings are being carried out fair treatment and due process of law.

Adoption and widespread adherence to the proposed convention would create a new dimension of constraint against biological and chemical weapons by applying international criminal law to hold individual offenders responsible and punishable wherever they may be and regardless of whether they act under or outside of state authority. Such individuals would be regarded as *hostes humani generis*, enemies of all humanity. The norm against chemical and biological weapons would be strengthened, deterrence of potential offenders, both official and unofficial, would be enhanced, and international cooperation in suppressing the prohibited activities would be facilitated.

The following plan of action is being implemented to develop an appropriate draft of the proposed convention and to promote its international consideration and adoption:

1. Research and drafting. This was begun in January 1996 and is represented by the current draft of 24 September 1998. Its text is based on modern conventions dealing with international crimes and incorporates extensive advice from an international group of

legal authorities who participated in workshops organized by HSP in Cambridge, Massachusetts in January 1997, at the Lauterpacht Research Centre for International Law of the University of Cambridge in May 1998, and at Woods Hole, Massachusetts in August 1998.

2. Publication and international consideration The draft convention will be published in the December 1998 issue of *The CBW Conventions Bulletin* and, thereafter, along with background material and an article-by-article commentary that has been prepared, in an appropriate journal with international circulation. The proposed convention will also be presented and discussed at conferences and symposia in which the HSP co-directors and collaborating international legal authorities participate and in private meetings with senior officials of various governments and international organizations.

3. Presentation to the UN General Assembly for negotiation and commendation. The sponsorship of a number of states will be sought to introduce a resolution at the UN General Assembly referring the draft convention to the Sixth (legal) Committee for negotiation of an agreed text. If this can be achieved, it is envisaged that the agreed text of the convention would receive the commendation of the Assembly and be opened for signature and ratification, leading to its entry into force.

**WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINALIZATION  
OF BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
LAUTERPACHT RESEARCH CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW  
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(All of the above persons participated in their personal capacities only.)

*Japan India China  
France Germany*

*Convention Draft of 24 September 1998:*

**DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE  
CRIME OF DEVELOPING, PRODUCING, ACQUIRING, STOCKPILING,  
RETAINING, TRANSFERRING OR USING BIOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL  
WEAPONS**

**PREAMBLE**

The States Parties to this Convention,

Recalling that States are prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of 1925, the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, and other international agreements, from developing, producing, stockpiling, acquiring, retaining, transferring or using biological and chemical weapons, and that these prohibitions reflect a worldwide norm against these weapons;

Recognizing that any development, production, acquisition or use of biological or chemical weapons is the result of the decisions and actions of individual persons, including government officials, and that these activities are within the capability not only of States but also of other entities and of individuals;

Affirming that all persons and entities should be prohibited from engaging in these activities, and should be subject to effective penal sanctions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the Geneva Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Reaffirming that any use of disease or poison for hostile purposes is repugnant to the conscience of humankind;

Considering that biological and chemical weapons pose a threat to the well-being of all humanity and to future generations;

Resolving that knowledge and achievements in biology, chemistry and medicine should be used exclusively for the health and well-being of humanity;

Desiring to encourage the peaceful and beneficial advance and application of these sciences by protecting them from adverse consequences that would result from their hostile exploitation;

Determined, for the sake of human beings everywhere and of future generations, to eliminate the threat of biological and chemical weapons;

Have agreed as follows:

## ARTICLE I

1. Any person commits an offence who knowingly:
  - (a) develops, produces, otherwise acquires, stockpiles or retains any biological or chemical weapon, or transfers, directly or indirectly, to anyone, any biological or chemical weapon;
  - (b) uses any biological or chemical weapon;
  - (c) engages in preparations to use any biological or chemical weapon;
  - (d) assists, encourages or induces, in any way, anyone to engage in any of the above activities;
  - (e) orders or directs anyone to engage in any of the above activities;
  - (f) attempts to commit any of the above offences;
  - (g) threatens to use biological or chemical weapons.

## ARTICLE II

1. Nothing in this Convention shall be construed as prohibiting activities that are permitted under:
  - (a) the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, of 10 April 1972, or
  - (b) the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, done at Paris on 13 January 1993,or that are directed toward the fulfillment of a State's obligations under either Convention and are conducted in accordance with its provisions.
2. In a prosecution for an offence set forth in Article I, it shall be a defence that the accused person reasonably believed that the conduct in question was not prohibited under this Convention.
3. It is not a defence that a person charged with an offence set forth in Article I acted in an official capacity, under the orders or instructions of a superior, or otherwise in accordance with internal law.

### ARTICLE III

For the purposes of the present Convention:

1. **“Biological weapons”** means:
  - (a) microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;
  - (b) weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.
  
2. **“Chemical weapons”** means the following, together or separately:
  - (a) toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where intended for:
    - (i) industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical or other peaceful purposes;
    - (ii) protective purposes, namely those purposes directly related to protection against toxic chemicals and to protection against chemical weapons;
    - (iii) military purposes not connected with the use of chemical weapons and not dependent on the use of the toxic properties of chemicals as a method of warfare;
    - (iv) law enforcement including domestic riot control purposes.  
as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes.
  - (b) munitions and devices, specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals specified in subparagraph (a), which would be released as a result of the employment of such munitions and devices;
  - (c) any equipment specifically designed for use directly in connection with the employment of munitions and devices specified in subparagraph (b).
  
3. **“Toxic chemical”** means any chemical which through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm to humans or animals. This includes all such chemicals, regardless of their origin or of their method of production, and regardless of whether they are produced in facilities, in munitions or elsewhere.
  
4. **“Precursor”** means any chemical reactant which takes part at any stage in the production by whatever method of a toxic chemical. This includes any key component of a binary or multicomponent chemical system, that is to say, the precursor which plays the most important role on determining the toxic properties of the final product and reacts rapidly with other chemicals in the

binary or multicomponent system.

5. "Person" means any natural person or, to the extent consistent with internal law as to criminal responsibility, any legal entity.

#### ARTICLE IV

Each State Party shall adopt such measures as may be necessary:

- (a) to establish as criminal offences under its internal law the offences set forth in Article I;
- (b) to make those offences punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account their grave nature.

#### ARTICLE V

1. Each State Party to this Convention shall take such measures as may be necessary to establish its jurisdiction over the offences set forth in Article I in the following cases:

- (a) when the offence was committed on the territory of that State or in any other place under its jurisdiction as recognized by international law;
- (b) when the alleged offender is a national of that State;
- (c) when, if that State considers it appropriate, the alleged offender is a stateless person whose habitual residence is in its territory;
- (d) when the offence was committed with intent to harm that State or its nationals or to compel that State to do or abstain from doing any act;
- (e) when the offence involved the intentional use of biological or chemical weapons and a victim of the offence was a national of that State;
- (f) when the offence involved the intentional use of biological or chemical weapons against any persons, irrespective of their nationality.

2. Each State Party shall likewise take such measures as may be necessary to establish its jurisdiction over the offences set forth in Article I in cases where the alleged offender is present in its territory and it does not extradite such person pursuant to Articles VI and VII.

3. This Convention does not exclude any criminal jurisdiction exercised in accordance with internal law, including any internal law giving effect to Article I.

4. Jurisdiction with respect to the offences set forth in Article I may also be exercised by any international criminal court that may have jurisdiction in the matter in accordance with its Statute.

## ARTICLE VI

1. Upon receiving information that a person who has committed or who is alleged to have committed an offence as set forth in Article I may be present in its territory, a State Party shall take such measures as may be necessary under its internal law to investigate the facts contained in the information.

2. If it is satisfied that the circumstances so warrant, a State Party in the territory of which an alleged offender is present shall take that person into custody or shall take such other measures as are necessary to ensure the presence of that person for the purpose of prosecution or extradition.

3. Any person regarding whom the measures referred to in paragraph 2 are being taken shall be entitled to:

(a) communicate without delay with the nearest appropriate representative of the State of which that person is a national or which is otherwise entitled to protect that person's rights or, if that person is a stateless person, the State in the territory of which that person habitually resides;

(b) be visited by a representative of that State;

(c) be informed of that person's rights under subparagraphs (a) and (b);

4. The rights referred to in paragraph 3 shall be exercised in conformity with the laws and regulations of the State in the territory of which the offender or alleged offender is present, provided that the said laws and regulations must enable full effect to be given to the purposes for which the rights accorded under paragraph 3 are intended.

5. When a State Party, pursuant to the present Article, has taken a person into custody, it shall promptly notify, directly or through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the States Parties which have established jurisdiction in accordance with Article V, paragraph 1, and, if it considers it advisable, any other interested States Parties, of the fact that such person is in custody and of the circumstances which warrant that person's detention. The State which makes the investigation contemplated in paragraph 1 of the present Article shall promptly inform those States Parties of its findings and shall indicate whether it intends to exercise jurisdiction.

## ARTICLE VII

1. The offences set forth in Article I shall be deemed to be included as extraditable offences in any extradition treaty existing between States Parties. States Parties undertake to include those

offences as extraditable offences in every extradition treaty subsequently concluded between them.

2. If a State Party which makes extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty receives a request for extradition from another State Party with which it has no extradition treaty, it may, if it decides to extradite, consider this Convention as the legal basis for extradition in respect of the offences set forth in Article I. Extradition shall be subject to the other conditions provided by the law of the requested State.

3. States Parties which do not make extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty shall recognize the offences set forth in Article I as extraditable offences as between themselves subject to the conditions provided by the law of the requested State.

4. The offences set forth under Article I shall be treated, for the purpose of extradition between States Parties, as if they had been committed not only in the place in which they occurred but also in the territories of the States required to establish their jurisdiction in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article V.

5. The provisions of all extradition treaties and arrangements between States Parties with regard to offences set forth in Article I shall be deemed to be modified as between State Parties to the extent that they are incompatible with this Convention.

#### ARTICLE VIII

The State Party in the territory of which the alleged offender is found shall, if it does not extradite such person, be obliged, without exception whatsoever and whether or not the offence was committed in its territory, to submit the case without delay to competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution, through proceedings in accordance with the laws of that State. Those authorities shall take their decision in the same manner as in the case of any other offence of a grave nature under the law of that State.

#### ARTICLE IX

1. States Parties shall afford one another the greatest measure of assistance in connection with investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings brought in respect of the offences set forth in Article I, including assistance in obtaining evidence at their disposal which is necessary for the proceedings.

2. States Parties shall carry out their obligations under paragraph 1 in conformity with any treaties or other arrangements on mutual legal assistance that may exist between them. In the absence of such treaties or arrangements, States Parties shall afford one another assistance in accordance with their internal law.

## ARTICLE X

None of the offences set forth in Article I shall be regarded, for the purposes of extradition or mutual legal assistance, as a political offence or as an offence connected with a political offence or as an offence inspired by political motives. Accordingly, a request for extradition or for mutual legal assistance based on such an offence may not be refused on the sole ground that it concerns a political offence or an offence connected with a political offence or an offence inspired by political motives.

## ARTICLE XI

Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as imposing an obligation to extradite or to afford mutual legal assistance, if the requested State Party has substantial grounds for believing that the request for extradition for offences set forth in Article I or for mutual legal assistance with respect to such offences has been made for the purpose of prosecuting or punishing a person on account of that person's race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin or political opinion or that compliance with the request would cause prejudice to that person's position for any of these reasons.

## ARTICLE XII

States Parties shall cooperate in the prevention of the offences set forth in Article I, particularly by:

- (a) taking all practicable measures to prevent preparations in their respective territories for the commission of those offences within or outside their territories;
- (b) exchanging information and coordinating the taking of administrative and other measures as appropriate to prevent commission of those offences.

## ARTICLE XIII

1. Each State Party shall inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the legislative and administrative measures taken to implement this Convention. In particular, each State Party shall notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the jurisdiction it has established under its internal law in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article V. Should any change take place, the State Party concerned shall immediately notify the Secretary-General.

2. Each State Party shall, in accordance with its national law, promptly provide to the Secretary-General of the United Nations any relevant information in its possession concerning:

- (a) the circumstances of any offence over which it has established its jurisdiction pursuant to paragraph 1 or paragraph 3 of Article V;

(b) the measures taken in relation to the alleged offender, and, in particular, the results of any extradition proceedings or other legal proceedings.

3. The State Party where an alleged offender is prosecuted shall communicate the final outcome of the proceedings to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall transmit the information to the other States Parties.

4. Each State Party shall designate a contact point within its government to which other States Parties may communicate in matters relevant to this Convention. Each State Party shall make such designation known to the Secretary-General.

#### ARTICLE XIV

Any dispute between States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

#### ARTICLE XV

1. Ten years after the entry into force of this Convention, or earlier if it is requested by a majority of Parties to the Convention by submitting a proposal to this effect to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a Conference of States Parties shall be held at [Geneva, Switzerland], to review the operation of the Convention with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention are being realized.

2. At intervals of seven years thereafter, unless otherwise decided upon, further sessions of the Conference may be convened with the same objective.

#### ARTICLE XVI

1. This Convention shall be open for signature by all States from [DATE] until [DATE] at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

2. This Convention is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. The instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. This Convention shall be open to accession by any State. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

## ARTICLE XVII

1. This Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of the deposit of the [NUMBER] instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
2. For each State ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the [NUMBER] instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

## ARTICLE XVIII

The Articles of this Convention shall not be subject to reservation.

## ARTICLE XIX

The original of this Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall send certified copies thereof to all States.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Convention, opened for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York on [DATE].