



Center for Strategic & International Studies  
Georgetown University • Washington DC

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May 1, 1986

Mr. Matthew Meselson  
Department of Biochemistry  
Harvard University  
7 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Matt:

This is to confirm that the second meeting of the CSIS Study Group on Chemical Warfare Policy Issues will be this coming Wednesday, May 7. Our topic will be U.S. chemical force modernization and the alliance. Brief opening presentations will be made by Douglas Feith, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy, and Charles Thomas, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs. As before, we will meet from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. and a continental breakfast will be available. However, we will meet in a different room this time -- room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Enclosed is a rapporteur's report of last week's meeting. This report is intended for the personal use of the group's members. The report does not attribute positions to specific individuals in accordance with our off-the-record policy.

We will telephone your office to confirm your participation. If your plans change, please let us know at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Roberts', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Brad Roberts  
Research Fellow

enclosure



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Rapporteur's Report by Brad Roberts  
Study Group on Chemical Warfare Policy Issues  
meeting of April 23, 1986

The group discussed chemical weapons arms control at its first meeting. This report synthesizes the main concepts and lines of argument in the presentation and discussion without attributing them to specific individuals (the meeting was off-the-record). It is intended for the personal use of the participants.

The focal point of the discussion was the Geneva summit commitment to "accelerated negotiations" and its consequences. It was reported that the previously scheduled meetings of the Conference on Disarmament have proceeded on schedule and that additionally there have been two or three bilateral sessions between the U.S. and USSR as well as a separate bilateral meeting in Bern on chemical proliferation. Some movement is perceptible, albeit at a glacial pace. The Soviets were described as serious but not forthcoming. Confidentiality has been maintained and Soviet rhetoric about U.S. binary production has toned down. Progress was deemed disappointing and new opportunities few.

From the American perspective, the chief obstacle remains verification. The U.S. proposal calls for mandatory inspections within 24 hours of their request. The Soviets are willing to permit on-site inspection of destruction of stocks but not of suspected undeclared storage or production sites. The downsides of such a stringent verification regime for the U.S. were acknowledged but judged an acceptable trade-off for meaningful chemical arms control.

One participant inquired if exotic technologies in the artificial intelligence and robotics fields offer any promise for easing the requirements for on-site verification. These technologies are under scrutiny but prospects for their near-term applicability were deemed slim.

Other means to strengthen the arms control regime short of a comprehensive ban were discussed by the group. These included the following.

Efforts are being made to restore international norms against cw, primarily through the use of diplomatic demarches. Historically, such norms were previously significant in hindering

chemical weapons production and use. Norms were evident in the literature of the interwar years (chemical weapons as instruments of armageddon). The limited value of norms was noted, and they were deemed supplements to and not replacements for formal arms control.

The U.S. has also participated in a series of meetings organized in Brussels by the Australians to identify the precursors for chemical weapons in an effort to constrain their international availability. Intelligence about chemical proliferation has been upgraded as is more widely shared.

As noted above, the U.S. has also met privately with the Soviets on the subject of chemical weapons proliferation. The U.S. rejected a proposal by the Soviets for a formal non-proliferation regime, arguing that such a regime would be counterproductive of the more desirable goal of chemical disarmament.

Questions were raised about the possibility of arriving at arms control agreements with the Soviets that might reduce rather than ban chemical weapons. Specifically, proposals to eliminate classes of weapons or to codify a minimum level of deterrence were discussed. Such proposals were seen as not promising because of their unverifiability and because they would detract from the disarmament goal.

There was considerable discussion of the proposed European chemical weapons free zone. Critics of the concept argued that such an agreement would offer "only ten minutes worth of security" as soon as an outside power chooses to reintroduce chemical weapons. Arms control negotiations by an opposition party were decried as counterproductive of meaningful arms control. Proponents of the concept argued that such a zone would lend itself to verification measures not workable globally (such as monitoring large scale exercises) or not otherwise acceptable to the Soviet Union (the tight Soviet control of Eastern Europe might facilitate measures not workable on Soviet territory). Political trends in Europe that may result in a defacto unilateral chemical weapons free zone were noted. One person observed that such a zone might have the salutary effect of forcing NATO to take chemical warfare more seriously and thus to train for and practice the deployment across the Atlantic of chemical weapons.

There was some dispute about whether or not the Soviets had agreed in principle to the inspection of suspected storage sites in the proposed zone. There was also dispute about the import of any such agreement in principle, with one participant arguing such agreements by the Soviets are meaningless. There was some question as to whether the West Germans had explored this possible breakthrough in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Congressional linkage of the U.S. modernization program to NATO consultation and concurrence was also discussed. The

linkage was defended as productive of consensus and sound policy. It was criticized as giving NATO veto power of a U.S. national decision with impact on non-NATO missions.

Soviet negotiating behavior and means to influence it were also discussed. The argument that a significant binary production program will automatically induce Soviet flexibility was rejected as an oversimplification. A string of other factors bearing on Soviet motives were discussed, including Soviet political relations with Europe and the U.S., Soviet international goals, the proliferation problem, and certain domestic factors. What motivates the Soviets cannot be known with certainty, particularly in the complicated multilateral environment.

Nonetheless, the U.S. chemical arsenal was deemed to have some impact on Soviet behavior. Some argued that despite the disparity in gross measures of the U.S. and Soviet arsenals, the U.S. stockpile is still a sizeable and threatening military capability that the Soviets cannot ignore. Others argued that the usability of the existing arsenal is declining at a shocking rate. The view was reiterated that 17 years of non-production has not brought arms control, and that renewed production is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for a significant change in Soviet negotiating behavior.