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The Trench

APOME workshop:

Tackling the Middle East WMD/DVs Arsenals in the Context of Military Asymmetries Towards Zonal Disarmament

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SYRIA'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS DISMANTLEMENT

IDENTIFYING SPILL-OVER POTENTIALS

VERIFICATION AFTER SYRIA JOINED THE CWC

× **Required Syrian declarations**

- + CW stockpiles (agent, munitions, special equipment related to CW)
- + CW-relevant infrastructure (production & storage sites and related equipment)
- + History of CW programme since 1 January 1946
- + In Syria's case: additional request for info on CW destruction operations prior to joining CWC for establishing baseline of weapon holdings

× **OPCW verification of declarations, resolution of anomalies, request for amendments**

× **OPCW on-site activities**

- + Inspection production & storage sites
- + Oversight evacuation of mustard agent & precursor chemicals from Syrian territory & destruction of equipment & installations
- + Oversight neutralisation of chemicals on *Cape Ray* in Mediterranean
- + Oversight of destruction effluents in Finland, Germany, UK & USA

× **Field investigation of alleged use of chlorine**

ADAPTATION TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

× Initial declaration

- + Normally 30 days after EIF CWC for state party, **followed** by initial inspection
- + Establishes baseline for verification process
- + OPCW Technical Secretariat assists with preparation

- + Syria: inspectors already in country before formally having become a state party
- + Consequence: OPCW received data piecemeal; many corrections & updates were required
- + Establishment of Declaration Assessment team

× Ownership of CW & destruction responsibilities

- + State party always remains owner of declared CW, pays for their destructions & OPCW verification
- + Destruction must occur on territory of state party

- + Syria: once evacuated from territory, international community became owner of Syria's CW
 - × Legal responsibility for possible mishap never really clarified
- + Destruction authorised outside Syria
- + OPCW & UN trust funds to pay for operations

× Special adaptation of challenge inspection procedure

× UNSC endorsement of OPCW decisions (part of the coercive disarmament dimension)

OPPORTUNISITC USE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS

× **Syrian use of barrel bombs with chlorine**

- + OPCW investigated & confirmed allegations
- + February 2015: OPCW EC decision condemning chemical warfare in Syria (1st in a CWC state party)
- + March 2015: unanimous UNSC condemnation

× **ISIL allegations of CW use**

- + AQI bombing campaign with chlorine (October 2006 – June 2007)
- + Syria: skin irritant report from Kobane area (August 2014)
- + Several chlorine reports from Iraq (September – October 2014)
- + Today: reports of chlorine use in battle of Tikrit

× **Challenges**

- + How to investigate? Who requests investigation?
 - × CWC: territory not under government control → UNSG's investigative mechanism
- + Kobane scenario: non-state actor against non-state actor on territory of CWC state party, but not under control of that state party
- + OPCW: strategies for chemical safety/security in conflict zones?
 - × Preventive infrastructure protection strategies?

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ...

× **OPCW actions in Syria**

- + Unique circumstances
- + Measures are non-precedent setting

× **However, OPCW proved flexible, responsive to special circumstances**

- + This could be useful for support of ME zone
- + Must probably be viewed in context of potential joining of Egypt & Israel

× **Coordination between OPCW and UNSC**

- + My earlier hypothesis that decision in OPCW EC would be unanimously endorsed by UNSC has been confirmed in condemnation of chlorine
- + Potentially strengthens disarmament regime should ever there be material breaches in the ME zone and compliance needs to be restored

× **Expansion of ISIL operations in Egypt**

- + Joining CWC would bring opportunities of OPCW assistance & investigation potential in case of opportunistic use of CW



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