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APOME workshop:
Tackling the Middle East WMD/DVs Arsenals in the Context of Military Asymmetries Towards Zonal Disarmament
Berlin, 11 – 12 March 2015

SYRIA’S CHEMICAL WEAPONS DISMANTLEMENT
IDENTIFYING SPILL-OVER POTENTIALS
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)**
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
Recalling where science, industry and military art converged
Challenging entrenched positions

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