

## BOOKS AND REVIEWS

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### THE PROBLEM OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE<sup>1</sup>

Under this general title, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is publishing a series of six volumes, Nos. I, IV and V of which are now available. As is well known, the SIPRI is an institution which was established in 1966 for research into problems of peace and conflict, with particular attention to disarmament and arms regulation.

The first volume, *The Rise of CB Weapons*, describes in 400 pages the growth of CBW technology over the past sixty years and recalls the allegations of use of chemical and biological weapons. It describes the military rationale underlying the use of chemical warfare during the First World War and in three subsequent conflicts. In addition, the volume provides historical insight into the factors that may inhibit wider use or acceptance of CB weapons, and thus contribute to their more effective outlawing.

Volume IV, *CB Disarmament Negotiations, 1920-1970*, also of 400 pages, gives an account of the international attempts to outlaw and abolish CB warfare through the League of Nations and the United Nations. It describes the negotiations leading to the adoption, in 1925, of the Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of bacteriological methods of warfare. It also recounts the efforts prior to and during the International Disarmament Conference in 1932-1933 to outlaw the production of CB weapons.

This volume analyses in depth the most recent discussions on CB disarmament and reviews efforts to ensure universal adherence to the Geneva Protocol. It considers the positions adopted by various States on the problems of prohibiting production and possession of CB weapons and on the draft CB disarmament conventions. The examples quoted are extremely topical, as the authors do not omit even the consultations which took place in 1971.

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<sup>1</sup> Almquist & Wiksell, Stockholm, and Humanities Press, New York, 1971.

Volume V, *The Prevention of CBW*, discusses possible measures to prevent chemical and biological warfare. It begins by describing the political, military, psychological and legal inhibitions to the initiation of CBW, and it analyses the factors that may weaken those constraints. The implications of the use of irritant agents and anti-plant agents and of unverified allegations of chemical and bacteriological warfare are an important part of this discussion. The national interests of different countries are shown to be not necessarily coincidental with the positions assumed by governments on issues of CB disarmament.

Considerable attention is given to the technical and political aspects of supervision, and certain case studies of allegations of CB warfare are presented. The volume also describes the Western European Union system of CB weapons control and verification.

These three volumes give a particularly interesting insight into the history and evolution of chemical and bacteriological weapons since the First World War, instances of actual use in conflicts, and international efforts to restrict the use of such weapons. The other three volumes announced by the SIPRI are entitled: II *CB Weapons Today* ; III *CBW and International Law* ; VI *Technical Aspects of Early Warning and Verification*. These volumes constitute a useful comprehensive study which already appears to be a valuable contribution to knowledge of one of the greatest problems facing mankind today. This study gives expression to the profound concern of scientists throughout the world faced with the risks arising from preparations for chemical and biological warfare and the possible use eventually of weapons which could well cause extensive and lasting damage. The Red Cross shares these fears and it is for that reason that the ICRC, with the backing of resolutions adopted by several International Conferences of the Red Cross, has continued its efforts with a view to the ratification of, or accession to, the Geneva Protocol by all States which are not yet parties thereto.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *ICRC Annual Report for 1970*, pp. 101-102, and *International Review*, June 1970.