
Defense Report

AUSA



Since When Does National Security Policy Come From the Boardroom?

The clearly stated policy of our government is aimed at stemming the spiral of Third World chemical arms production while negotiating a worldwide ban on the use of these odious weapons. To accomplish this worthy goal, it is axiomatic that we possess a credible chemical war deterrent until such a ban is effectively in place.

Our government pursues this dual track while at the same time reducing our own chemical weapons stockpile. Many of our present munitions are obsolete and are dangerously deteriorating. As these aging weapons are destroyed, they will be replaced with the newer, safer binary munitions which do not constitute a storage danger since they do not become lethal chemicals until launched against their intended target.

Only two commercial companies in the United States—Occidental Chemical and Mobay Corp.—manufacture one of the key ingredients needed to produce these binary chemical weapons. Both have declined to provide our government with the required ingredients, citing corporate policy and “ethical considerations” as the basis for their refusal.

Among the 23 nations of the world that are known to possess chemical weapons several, such as Libya, Cuba, North Korea, Iraq and Iran have not been known to inspire prospects for peace.

Chemical weapons are far cheaper and easier to produce than nuclear weapons. Thus, less developed countries find them attractive as an offset to the capabilities of more advanced nations. They also are a frightening prospect in the hands of potential terrorists.

Progress toward a meaningful ban is imperative. The United States cannot take the lead in this if we lack a credible deterrent. Not only do we need a sensible arsenal but, in pursuing our present policies we project the belief that we mean business. In refusing to meet the government’s legitimate security needs, Occidental and Mobay’s high moral stance does a national disservice to the United States. Now may be the time to invoke the Defense Production Act of 1950 and require these companies to provide the government with the essential ingredients that only those two can produce.