



Resurgence Of Chemical Arms As Tools Of War

OPCW Faces Challenges Of Tackling Non-State Actors And Use Of Certified Substances In Industries

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Resurgence in the use of Chemical weapons has become one of the most challenging issues in the recent past.

The ongoing conflict in Syria demonstrates the constant use of chemical weapons. The Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has undertaken this challenge head-on. Since, its inception during 1997, the OPCW is found to be working tirelessly towards addressing various threats involving chemical weapons without any prejudice.

The OPCW needs to be complimented for its efforts in addressing the Syrian threat at every level. Also, in order to support the efforts for greater international understanding with regard to the threat of chemical terrorism, the OPCW is engaging various stakeholders including counter-terrorism and chemical weapons experts.

However, the threat from chemical weapons is far from over. Accordingly one of the reports published by the Global Public Policy Institute from Germany that there have been at least 336 chemical weapons attacks over the course of the Syrian civil war – significantly more than has commonly been known.

Approximately, 90 percent of all confirmed attacks occurred after the infamous “red line” incident of August 2013. These findings are very scary and the OPCW is keeping a constant vigil on the situation in Syria.

Another pertinent issue has been the elevating level of crimes in the cyber-space. The recently attempted cyber-attack on the OPCW Headquarters’ network and information system, has been a wake-up call for member nations. It is high time that an example is set such that a fear of consequence is instilled among the perpetrators of crime. It is per-



A man walks just meters away from where an alleged chemical weapons attack in the town of Douma, near Damascus, Syria. The survivors blamed the attack on the Army of Islam, that controlled the town before it was taken over by Syrian government .(AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

tinent to strengthen the resilience of the international institutions in the digital domain to restore faith in global organisations.

There is a need to draw attention on the work of scientists, recently, one Indian scientist, who has researched, patented and published research which establishes that though Ricin is known to be dermally inactive to cause any toxicity, it does affect the growth of hair follicles by inducing dystrophy, suggesting its therapeutic potential in dermatology.

Though Ricin is under early stages of clinical development as a pharmaceutical drug, a proof-of-concept of this technology is already in the market as clinically tested herbal cosmetic product with castor bean extract as the active ingredient.

Additionally, scientists around the world have been exploring its use as an “immunotoxin”—a substance that can assist the immune system by killing only dangerous cells. More research on this subject could tell us about Ricin’s effectiveness to treat patients suffering from colon-cancer, lymphoma and leukaemia.

However, as Ricin is classified as a Schedule 1 substance in Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as a ‘placeholder’ for protein toxins, the technological and commercial exploitation of this opportunity for peaceful

therapeutic purposes is challenging. This issues needs a debate.

Botulinum toxin is a torch bearer for de-glamorizing potential bio-crime agents into successful therapeutic agents with huge economic impact.

OPCW’s efforts to find solution to such challenges is remarkable, OPCW conducts various workshops for addressing the challenges faced due to the non-state actors misusing chemicals and assisting countries in formulating plans to implement the CWC are praiseworthy.

The CWC and OPCW have greatly contributed to norm building against chemical weapons and they would continue to do so. However, there are several key issues that will need to be discussed, and strategies for arms control and chemical weapons destruction that need to be evaluated and reassessed.

The war in Syria is just one way in which the modern chemical threat has reinvented itself, and today more than ever, nation states need to be aware of the dangers of negligence. Moreover, achieving total demilitarization has proved difficult in the past, and remains a challenge.

Without collaborative efforts, these challenges cannot be mitigated, as States would need to put aside their suspicions for the sake of countering such emergent

threats together. OPCW should be able to redefine its purpose owing to changing geopolitical realities.

The OPCW has an interest in developing a culture of prevention. This is possible when the policymakers, the scientific community, non-governmental organisations and the chemical industry work together.

Rightfully so, in this regard, the focus of the OPCW has been on education, outreach, international cooperation and training. Also, considerable efforts go into regional and national capacity-building in areas such as emergency response, forensics, and designing and implementing security and safety practices for chemical laboratories.

The chemical industry has been an integral part of the global economy for long.

During the last few years, the chemical industry’s total contribution to global GDP has been equivalent to approximately six to seven percent of the world’s total GDP per year.

The expanse of this industry is almost global. Obviously, safety and security becomes an issue of paramount importance for this industry.

For long, the issue of “Human Reliability” is being discussed mainly in the context of the nuclear, aviation and petroleum

industries. This is essentially because such industrial sectors demand high standards of safety. However, the rapidly growing chemical industry in the era of Industry 4.0 also needs to be proactive in reducing the possibilities of any chemical mishap.

At this backdrop, there is a need to address possible inherent risks of human behaviour or actions or inactions that introduce errors in the operation of a system or process.

Human factors can either positively or negatively affect the performance in a workplace. Although, human errors can be minimized through education and training programmes, there are some human actions which could be called as insider actions, these could be intentional, to compromise the safety and security at the workplace due to ideological, economic, political or personal motivations.

For this purpose there is a need for a Human Reliability Programme (HRP) which could ensure that individuals who occupy positions with access to critical assets and operations meet the highest standards so that they adhere to safety and security rules and regulations, ensure confidence in individuals based on their character and their physical and mental stability.

Over the years, OPCW have indeed come a long way since the Convention was opened for signature in 1993. But still there much to do, especially looking into the challenges today of chemical weapons use. The CWC and the OPCW have greatly contributed to norm-building against chemical weapons and they would continue to do so.

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Insurance Plays Big Role In Financial Planning

Aman Ahuja

When planning for your future, it’s very important to include ways to save money over time. Getting the right insurance can protect you and your loved ones pay major expenses when you least expect them and to save that money instead.

The Importance of Income Protection Insurance

Financial blows can be prevented with the right insurance coverage. Being in an accident - either at work or elsewhere or diagnosed with a life-threatening

disease or illness makes you miss work. This can drain your bank account very quickly and in some cases, push you to bankruptcy. During this period instead of taking money from your savings or your take-home pay, an arrangement from the right income protection plan can pay the monthly bills, extended health services or let you hire a permanent caretaker.

The Importance of Life Insurance

Buying a good life insurance plan is one of the most important aspects of financial planning. It’s

important to get life insurance when you are young and healthy. This will let you build savings and your relative risk is low. The same goes for getting life insurance in 30s, 40s, and 50s. Even though you expect to live life to the fullest for many decades, getting insurance now will save you a lot of money over waiting until your senior years. Life insurance offers a number of major advantages that save you tens of thousands over time:

- If you were to pass away, your income would be replaced for your family. This would en-

sure they live life to the fullest with all the opportunities and extras that might be unavailable otherwise.

- It can also be an excellent way to save over time. It’s like a savings plan that consistently builds over the years giving you a great retirement income.

- When life insurance is bought under a corporation to protect the key person, the plan may help you reduce your tax liability so you pay less tax, thus saving you a lot of money over time.

- Can fund your dream busi-

ness or buying a franchise opportunity that will make your first million.

All this can save you vast amounts of money over your lifetime. Life insurance doesn’t just pay your survivors if you pass away, it can finance your dreams too.

How to Save Big on Life Insurance

The best way to save on Life Insurance is to locate an experienced and honest broker with good knowledge of the vast number of available coverage possibilities.

They can look closely at your financial life and analyze what you need now or may require in the future and put together a plan that includes all your financial needs. So don’t waste time shopping and calling different brokers as the insurance industry is very competitive and highly regulated. An honest broker can get you the best deal.

Declare All Health Issues

Talk about any health issues upfront. If you have a history of problems, let your broker know about them. A medical exam will get your health correctly documented. This helps you save money and ensures your policy is exactly what you need. Quit smoking for a longer and healthier life. Ask your broker for quit-smoking incentives.

Pay Annually

You can pay some more money over time by making one insurance payment annually. It’s better to save up your single annual payment than making monthly or quarterly payments that require you to pay a bit more.

Aman Ahuja is a Financial Security Advisor with einsured.ca

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