

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Report on a Trial Challenge Inspection

A national trial challenge inspection was carried out in March 1990 at an army ammunition depot belonging to a military district of the National People's Army. It was conducted on the understanding that the GDR does not possess any chemical weapons and has not deployed on its territory any such weapons of another country. The inspection had been prepared taking into account the "rolling text" of the draft convention on chemical weapons as well as the experience gathered in the implementation of the INF Treaty and of confidence- and security-building measures.

Aims

The basic aim was to test existing conceptions on challenge inspections and make national preparations for the implementation of the convention.

Specifically, the following objectives were pursued:

- to dispel the suspicion that chemical weapons are stored at the site, and
- to identify the extent of the tasks to be performed in inspecting a military facility.

Inspection Site

An army ammunition depot of a military district was chosen as inspection site, where - in accordance with its operational purpose - all types of ammunition forming part of organic armament are stored. The depot is located in the vicinity of other military facilities. The ammunition depot consists of an administrative area with various functional buildings and a storage area comprising various ammunition bunkers and storage rooms. The storage area is secured by a high-voltage electric fence. Access for motor and railbound vehicles is only possible through gates which are also secured by an electric fence. The ammunition bunkers have different markings depending on the types of ammunition stored in them and on the danger category to which they belong. Arranged in clusters within the depot area, the bunkers are connected by concrete roads.

Inspection Team

The inspection team consisted of ten inspectors, comprising four military ammunition specialists, two military experts for protection against chemical weapons, and four specialists for storage management. In view of the limited inspection aim of the trial, the role of a foreign observer or of personnel for securing the site was not examined.

Conduct of the Inspection

The inspection team was met by the depot manager at the entrance of the facility to be inspected and was then taken through the main gate to a room for a briefing. That room

served also as a meeting room for the inspectors. Using a scale model with a site map, the manager explained:

- the purpose and types of stored ammunition,
- the geographical location of the depot,
- the location of functional buildings and ammunition bunkers and storage rooms according to danger classifications,
- facilities of a sensitive nature, with explanations of the reasons for that,
- locations of the high-voltage electric fence and entrance gates.

It was possible to identify when the gates had been opened for transports on the basis of evidence produced by records on the times when the electric fence had been switched off.

With the help of models, the inspectors familiarized themselves with the types and markings of the ammunition stored. They were introduced to the leading officers of the depot and asked them questions related to the inspection.

The inspectors used the opportunity to spell out the inspection programme in greater detail and to modify it, taking into account the discussion held during the briefing. Subsequently, the depot manager informed them of the security regulations, signals and actions in case of accidents.

In conclusion he stated that no chemical ammunition was stored on the site and that no facility or measures had been prepared which would make the storage of chemical ammunition possible. The personnel of the depot did not have any

knowledge that would be necessary to handle chemical ammunition.

The time for the briefing of about one hour was not counted within the duration of the inspection.

The inspection itself was carried out in several stages:

Stage 1

A bus tour, using the site map as a basis, helped to give an initial impression of the entire depot area in order to

- verify the accuracy of the site map, and
- undertake a first visual inspection of the site.

During that inspection attention was paid to external signs which might indicate a possible storage of chemical weapons, such as

- open storage sheds and ammunition piles,
- availability on the site of means and facilities to decontaminate, monitor and discharge toxic waste water,
- construction facilities for ground water protection,
- means and facilities to provide medical aid in case of injuries from warfare agents,
- a facility to indicate wind direction and speed on the site,
- installations for ventilating or sealing off ammunition stores and availability of filter-based ventilation systems,

- changes in the vegetation and existence of biological indicators.

None of the aforementioned signs of a possible chemical ammunition storage were found during the inspection tour.

The inspection team asked for more detailed information concerning two bunkers classified as "sensitive". A respective query of the accompanying personnel with the depot management showed that this classification only related to certain elements of the ammunition and that access was possible.

Stage 2

For closer inspection the inspectors selected, and were granted access to, two ammunition bunkers. They checked the inscriptions, arrangement and number of ammunition cases, having some of them opened at random. They established that the contents of the cases corresponded with the inscriptions. A visual check of the ammunition gave no indication of chemical weapons (no hermetically sealable charging holes and closing devices). Closer checks on ammunition were regarded as unnecessary, and were therefore not undertaken.

The inspectors used the opportunity to address some questions relating the inspection to the depot personnel. These questions were duly answered. Information concerning wall strength and compactness of ammunition stores/rooms and protective barriers were classified as sensitive and pertinent questions remained unanswered. Subsequently, the surface of the bunker as well as its ceiling and walls were more closely examined to rule out the existence of special filter systems in the area.

Given the results of the inspection so far and having questioned the depot personnel, the inspectors found it unnecessary to examine other buildings, e.g. the repair and medical centres, or to inspect medical records.

After five hours the head of the inspection team stopped the investigations, stating that the suspicion of chemical ammunition storage was regarded as disproved on this site.

Conclusions

The conclusions from the findings of the trial inspection were largely identical with those drawn by inspectors in the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Federal Republic of Germany. In sum, it can be said that the combined evaluation, as used in this trial inspection, of secondary characteristics and on-site checks provides, in the case of the selected site, sufficient evidence to prove that chemical weapons were non-existent.

The following observations can be added:

- The numerical strength of the team with 10 inspectors proved adequate. If required, the team could have been subdivided into smaller groups at times, but that was found unnecessary.
- The composition of the team, with experts from different fields, proved the right approach.

- Apparently, it remains a difficult question to determine in advance the size of an inspection team. In order to fix the number of inspectors and the duration of the inspection, it would be necessary to have prior knowledge of the operational purpose of the site to be inspected. Having only data concerning the size of the site, as envisaged in the "rolling text" of the draft convention, does not, in this context, allow a clear-cut decision on the number of inspectors needed.
- An initial analysis of the inspection results should already be undertaken on the site.
- For a number of organizational matters concerning preparations and monitoring, arrival of inspectors, conduct of the inspection and departure of the inspection team, it seems useful to draw on the experience gathered in the implementation of the INF Treaty as well as in the CSCE framework.