EDITOR'S NOTE

On the eve of the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), we are pleased to devote this special issue of the *Nonproliferation Review*, prepared in cooperation with the European Union Institute for Security Studies, to a thorough consideration of the history and challenges of controlling the spread of biological and toxin weapons. It is our hope, and the intention of our fifteen international expert authors, that the analysis and recommendations in this issue influence the discussions and outcome at the review conference this December.

Jean Pascal Zanders (European Union Institute for Security Studies) and Amy E. Smithson (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies) introduce this special issue by reviewing significant developments in the history of the BWC, confronting the assertion that the treaty is unverifiable, and assessing the issues that complicate its implementation, especially the global spread of life sciences knowledge, technologies, equipment, and capabilities. They then provide an overview of the issue and the specific questions and topics addressed by each of the author pairs. In the final essay of the special issue, Zanders and Smithson summarize the conclusions of all the authors, synthesize their findings and recommendations, and lay out a constructive and practical agenda for the Seventh BWC Review Conference to strengthen both the norm against biological misuse and the disarmament objectives embodied in the BWC.

Cindy Vestergaard (Danish Institute for International Studies) and Animesh Roul (Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict, New Delhi) examine the utility of the BWC's intersessional process—multilateral annual meetings that occur in between review conferences intended to discuss some of the ambiguities contained in the treaty. To ensure its longevity and effectiveness, they argue for a clearer delineation of the agreement's scope and more substantive talks during the next intersessional process with the aim of clarifying and strengthening it.

Nicholas A. Sims (London School of Economics and Political Science) and Jez Littlewood (Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University) consider how the BWC has evolved since the collapse in 2001 of efforts to create a new verification protocol. The argue that incremental enhancements are the best means of strengthening the treaty and identify short-, medium-, and long-term proposals to accomplish that objective.

Iris Hunger (Research Group for Biological Arms Control, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Centre for Science and Peace Research, University of Hamburg) and Shen Dingli (Institute of International Studies and Center for American Studies, Fudan University) review why the BWC's confidence-building measures (CBMs) have been only moderately successful in increasing transparency about each state's BWC-related activities. They discuss the importance and value of CBMs in the context of dual-use activities and the current status of CBMs, and recommend ways of altering them to increase their utility to state parties concerned about compliance with the treaty's prohibitions.

Caitríona McLeish (SPRU, University of Sussex) and Ralf Trapp (independent consultant) assess current trends in the life sciences and find that government controls on biological weapons are no longer sufficient to prevent proliferation. Instead, they call

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for all stakeholders—scientists, industry, government officials, and the public—to work together to create effective and treaty-compliant life sciences research. They propose that the Seventh BWC Review Conference adopt their new governance approach.

Philippe Stroot (Xibios) and Ursula Jenal (Jenal & Partners Biosafety Consulting) describe how more effective biorisk management can better address concerns about the development of bioweapons. By working with the life sciences community, biorisk management can instill a culture of ethical and safe behavior, enhance efforts to respond to natural and deliberate biological health threats, and strengthen control over possible dual-use concerns. They recommend that the BWC encourage state parties to become more active in promoting effective biorisk management, including over non-state programs.

Roger Roffey (Swedish Defense Research Agency) and Chandré Gould (Crime and Justice Programme of the Institute for Security Studies, South Africa) discuss how to encourage more information sharing and transparency between BWC state parties regarding their burgeoning biodefense efforts to prevent the potential misuse of life sciences research, particularly by illicit state-run programs. They propose several measures to accomplish this objective and prevent the treaty from becoming irrelevant.

Filippa Lentzos (BIOS Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science) tackles one of the thorniest issues of all: how to ensure that states are complying with the terms of the BWC. She reviews past problems in this area and suggests strategies for, eventually, developing a BWC compliance protocol.

Also in this issue, David E. Hoffman (*Washington Post* and *Foreign Policy*) reviews a new and detailed case study on how the United Nations unlocked the secrets behind Iraq's biological weapons programs, and Barry M. Blechman (Stimson Center) considers a collection of essays addressing the technical and political obstacles to forging an international agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons.

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