



JAPAN

JAPAN'S EFFORTS TOWARD EARLY DESTRUCTION OF ACW IN CHINA

1. Based on the policy to implement faithfully its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Government of Japan has attached great importance to the issue of the Japanese abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) in the People's Republic of China, and is committed to further accelerate its efforts for their early destruction in close cooperation with China.

I. Characteristics of the ACW projects and their challenges

2. The excavation, identification, storage and destruction of Japanese ACW in China must be carried out under very difficult circumstances. Unlike stockpiled chemical weapons, ACW have remained under the soil or water for a long time. They are heavily corroded or deformed, or both, so they require careful handling. While the number of ACW found attached with fuses is small, many shells contain picric acid, which may have formed highly explosive picrate over the years. Also, the ACW, of which there are several types, are often buried with conventional weapons of various types and origins, which makes it additionally difficult to identify Japanese ACW based solely on external features.
3. Conditions of the burial sites and the harsh winter weather in the Chinese northeast make it difficult to carry out work on the ground for nearly 5 months of a year. The need to conform with China's constantly evolving laws and regulations present another challenge. It is time-consuming that two governments should examine, amend as necessary, and agree on every piece of documentation in respecting both domestic and bilateral procedures.
4. All these factors make progress on ACW destruction more difficult. The safe recovery and destruction of ACW require special precautions and technologies. The ACW project in China is, hence, an unprecedented task involving unique challenges that are not seen in the case of stockpiled chemical weapons.

II. Efforts of the Japanese Government on the ACW projects

5. The largest concentration of Japanese ACW exists in Haerba-ling, Jilin Province, where an estimated 300-400 thousand ACWs are buried. In addition, ACW have been found in a number of other locations across China. Over 50 missions have been sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to investigate the reported discoveries. The Abandoned Chemical Weapons Office, an arm of the Japanese Cabinet Office, carries out thereafter excavation and recovery operations for identified Japanese



ACW. As a result, approximately 44 thousand ACWs have been recovered thus far without a single accident. All these undertakings are subject to the OPCW verification to ensure transparency of the ACW projects and its conformity with the CWC.

6. With a view to ensuring safe and effective destruction, the Japanese Government carried out a number of researches and experiments on chemical munitions destruction methods. After careful evaluation and verification of 30 candidate technologies, Japan and China agreed in 2004 to choose detonation plus incineration as the most suitable technology for destruction in Haerba-ling.
7. The Japanese Government has made every effort to collect information on the whereabouts of ACW in order to facilitate discoveries of ACW and prevent accidents. Although more than half a century has passed since the last war, documents have been examined and interviews taken with veterans of the former Japanese Army. Information thus acquired has been provided to the Chinese Government. Japan also cooperates with China in alerting local inhabitants about the hazards of chemical munitions by various outreach tools, such as posters, leaflets, the Internet, and press tours.

III. Recent progress of the ACW projects

8. In 2007, the commitment to early destruction of ACW was confirmed at the highest levels of the two Governments. When Premier Wen Jiabao of China visited Japan in April last year, then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan announced Japan's decision to introduce mobile destruction facilities (MDF) to destroy recovered ACW. The two leaders also welcomed the establishment of the "Japan-China Joint Organization" as the implementing body for the Haerba-ling Project. In December 2007, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda discussed with Premier Wen Jiabao the importance of accelerating the ACW projects.
9. Regarding the MDF, Japan and China have agreed on main technical requirements of the facilities, and are coordinating in detail on such issues as the MDF's operation plan, risk assessment and safety planning. The Government of Japan is preparing to invite tenders for the procurement of MDF in the near future. It envisages that if preparations go smoothly in both Japan and China, the MDF will start their first operations in Nanjing by 2010.
10. Japan and China have been working on the configuration and designs of the facilities to be built in Haerba-ling to destroy the large number of ACW buried there. Issues such as tree-clearing and external infrastructure connections are also being discussed. Japan and China are planning to start trial excavations of ACW in Haerba-ling by the end of 2007 with the aim of collecting more accurate information on the conditions of the buried ACW.
11. Despite the numerous challenges, Japan is taking firm steps to advance the ACW projects, and remains committed to destroying the ACW as soon as possible in accordance with the CWC and based on the bilateral memorandum with China in 1999. Japan counts on China to provide appropriate cooperation to facilitate this work, and on the Technical Secretariat for its continued support.