



--Development of chemical incapacitants by one country will encourage others to follow suit. As a result, incapacitants would become an available temptation to the military in many countries for illegal use in armed conflict. This would counter the fundamental purpose of the CWC, to prevent countries from entering hostilities with stockpiles of chemical weapons whose use in armed conflict is prohibited. Experience has shown that prohibitions weaken under the stress of military conflict.

--incapacitants in the hands of the military have routinely been used as adjuncts, not alternatives, to lethal force. The US used tear gas in Vietnam to drive enemy troops into the open. South Africa used them to facilitate assassinations. During the Moscow hostage rescue, Russian troops shot the Chechen hostage-takers while they were comatose. All these instances violated the laws of war, as codified in the 1977 Protocol Related to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and two earlier international treaties.

--incapacitants could be used covertly as lethal weapons by deploying synergistic pairs of incapacitants that, together, have a fully lethal effect.

--incapacitants could be used to mask lethal chemical weapons programs, since production, testing, and delivery systems would be hard to distinguish.

--incapacitants could be used for the suppression of dissent by despotic governments. Unlike tear gas, which disperses crowds, chemical incapacitants would incapacitate them in place, allowing demonstrators to be taken into custody, mistreated or tortured. Popular opposition to totalitarian regimes would become more difficult and dangerous.

--In the longer term, the development of chemical incapacitants will invite further exploitation of biotechnology to provide agents for controlling human beings through modification of consciousness, cognition, emotions and other mental functions. The basic technology is already available (see [Scientific and technological change and the future of the CWC: the problem of non-lethal weapons](#), M. Dando, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, no.4 2002). In September 2002 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued an Appeal warning of the possible covert alteration of physiological or psychological processes of target populations such as consciousness, behaviour, fertility and genetic makeup. To prevent the manipulation for hostile ends of the “life processes at the core of human existence,” ICRC calls on all political and military authorities to work together to subject potentially dangerous biotechnology to effective controls (see [here](#) for ICRC appeal).