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The world continues to witness allegations and counter-allegations relating to chemical and biological weapons. Russia and Ukraine both issued statements that violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are taking place. Ukraine and its supporters have raised the matter in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), where Russia has given the counterpoint. Moreover, Russia's accusation that the West are indulging in biological weapons making exercises has been appearing incessantly.

In yet another battlefield— in West Asia— some analysts feared the use of chemical and biological weapons. Here too, the apprehension about the development of clandestine capabilities by some countries in the region has been noted. The change in the regime in Syria puts it under extra pressure to come out clean. Chemical weapons sites grabbed the media space again.

A few more countries are under suspicion. North Korea has been reported pursuing biological weapons. China's deceptive biological weapons activities continue to appear in the policy community. Quite disturbingly, a Chinese couple faced trial for smuggling toxic fungus into the US.

However, the strategic landscape had the positive side as well. The BWC commemorated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The occasion was celebrated by the international community, which discussed successes, failures, and persisting challenges for the convention. The OPCW is receiving support from individual countries and regional organisations. It is also undertaking various activities relating to chemical safety and security.

This issue of CBW Magazine addresses several pressing concerns related to the CWC and the BWC. Dany Shoham, in his paper, narrates that in a highly unusual development, a newly updated section of a prominent White House website openly blames China for the origin of the coronavirus pandemic, attributing it to a lab-enhanced virus leaked from a laboratory.

*KTG Krishnan's paper* examines the growing threat posed by Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons in the hands of non-state actors and its impact on contemporary military strategy. It also traces the historical use of biological agents, from their application in ancient warfare to their development during the Cold War era.

Olivia Ibbotson and Lijun Shang investigate how White phosphorus is legally categorised under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, and customary international humanitarian law. After assessing its legal status, the paper contends that White phosphorus should be designated as an inhumane weapon of war, given its devastating and indiscriminate impact on civilians and long-term harm to future generations.

Manish and Vidhi Rathore, in their paper, review the evolution, achievements, and limitations of the BWC's established key norms against biological warfare. The paper highlights that the BWC remains weak due to the absence of verification, enforcement, and institutional support. It also assesses milestones, such as Confidence-Building Measures and Review Conferences, but stresses challenges, including dual-use risks, vague definitions, and bioterrorism.

Harshada Kondlekar and Animesh Roul, in their review of the report released by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, find that beyond mere commemoration, this thoughtfully compiled anthology provides a comprehensive look back at a century of efforts to counter biological warfare while also addressing future biosecurity challenges. It traces the development of international norms from the 1925 Geneva Protocol through the establishment of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1975, culminating in the discussions of the Ninth Review Conference.

This issue also features sections like "Chemical-Biological News." With feedback from our readers, we aim to publish future editions focusing on topics of particular concern.