

NEWS from ARO-FE (Jan 11, 2001): Destruction of Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China. *From Conference on Research Group for Destruction of Abandoned Chemical Weapons – Chuo University, Tokyo, Japan - Nov 2000.*

During the last World War, Japan abandoned in China many chemical weapons. The Japanese Government has taken responsibility of cleaning up/destroying these Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW). In 1999, an ACW Office was established, within the Japanese Minister's Office, to implement the destruction of the ACW's in China. This organization is now proceeding with the ACW works in China based on the Minutes of Understanding (MOU) between China and Japan.

Here are some facts: The total amount of ACWs in China is estimated 700,000 and over 90% are buried in Haerbaling, Jilin. About 800 projectiles, over 20,000 toxic smoke canisters and 13 drum cans yellow munitions have been excavated. These recovered projectiles are either Yellow Munitions (Mustard, Lewisite) or Red Munition (Diphenylethylarsine, Diphenylchloroarsine). Canisters are either Red Canisters or Green Canisters (Chloroacetophenone) and drum cans all contain Yellow agents. ACWs in China have following features: An enormous number are still underground; they have been there more than half century; they have rusted and corroded; they are still dangerous and the projectiles still contain Arsenic. The ACW project in China consists of two parts of major operation: excavation and destruction. The overall project calls for April 2007 as the target date of completion. Before an entire plant will be constructed, Japan will build a pilot plant to process Red and Yellow projectiles that are the majority of ACWs. Japan is also considering building small facilities exclusively to destroy smoke canisters even before the completion of all studies of technology.

Since MOU was signed, June 2000, contacts and consultation between ACW Offices in both China and Japan is proceeding very smoothly. The excavation in Bei'an started on September 2000 with Japan sending some 50 people to China. The Chinese government is helping with: building protection wall, paving access, adjusting land to make space, evacuating nearby residents, and adding, carrying, packing and storing munitions. **ARO-FE contacted and met with Mr. H. Yonekura and Mr. Y. Nakura of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan and was told that some collaborative work between Japan & ARL/ARO would be welcomed.** If interested, please notify Dr. D'Andrea.



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