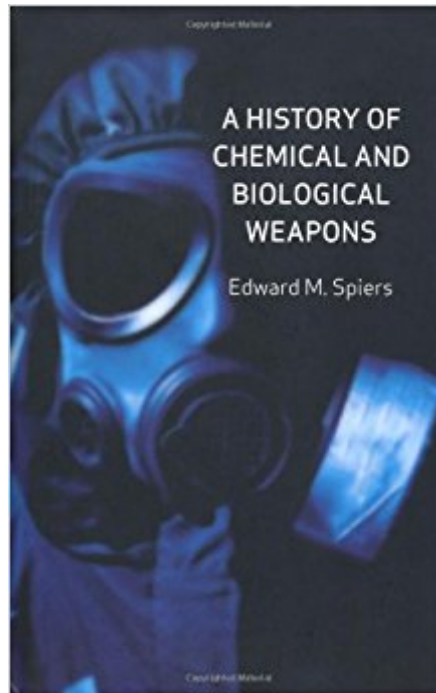




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A History Of Chemical And Biological Weapons



Synopsis

Following the 9/11 attacks and the anthrax letters that appeared in their wake, the threat posed by the widespread accessibility of chemical and biological weapons has continually been used to stir public fear and opinion by politicians and the media alike. In *Chemical and Biological Weapons*, Edward M. Spiers cuts through the scare tactics and hype to provide a thorough and even-handed examination of the weapons themselves—the various types and effects—and their evolution from World War I to the present. Spiers describes the similarities and differences between the two types of weapons and how technological advancements have led to tactical innovations in their use over time. As well, he gives equal attention to the international response to the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, analyzing global efforts aimed at restraining their use, such as deterrence and disarmament, and the effectiveness of these approaches in the twentieth century. Using Iraq as a case study, Spiers also investigates its deployment of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War and the attempts by the international community to disarm Iraq through the United Nations Special Commission and the United States-led war in 2003. A timely and balanced historical survey, *Chemical and Biological Weapons* will be of interest to readers studying the proliferation and use of chemical and biological warfare and the reactions of the international community throughout the last several decades.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This concise work, with its extensive references and bibliography, will be of interest to all students and professionals in the fields of history, political science, public policy, toxicology, and chemical

technology. Recommended." (R.E. Buntrock Choice) – "A succinct and readily accessible account of the history and key issues associated with chemical and biological weapons from World War I to the present. . . . An excellent overview of an often underappreciated segment of 20th- and 21st-century security studies. . . . It deserves the thoughtful attention of both students and professionals." (Military Review) – "A comprehensive overview of the development, future, and implications of biological and chemical weapons. Spiers's book traces the origins of chemical and biological warfare from their ancient beginnings to the first major use of gas in 1915 in World War I, to more recent uses and suspicions of use." (Arms Control)

The use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War, followed by the Rabta controversy in Libya and the threat of chemical and biological attack during the Gulf War, dramatised the consequences of the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. Although the use of these weapons has been banned by the Geneva Protocol (1925), they still have attractions for some states and pose risks to regional neighbours or intervention forces. In this work the risks and attractions are evaluated, the difficulties of curbing their spread examined, and the reaction to the Rabta revelations assessed. The Gulf War is analysed in depth, including the allied response to the Iraqi threat, the non-use of chemical and biological weapons during the war, and the lessons of the conflict. Finally, the evolution of American chemical weapons policy and the likely impact of the Chemical Weapons Convention is considered in light of the inherently dynamic nature of the weaponry and the flexibility of its use.

This book commences with a brief introduction as to what constitutes a chemical or biological weapon and the various categories therein. It then details the history of the use of chemical and biological weapons from WWI until the present and discusses issues related to disarmament/treaties. It concludes with an analysis of where the field is heading, and issues for the future. Though the book details known uses of chem/bio weapons, it does not describe the history of the discovery of various agents and how they were synthesised into weapons. So don't expect 'laboratory level' details like in Richard Rhodes's *Making Of The Atomic Bomb*. (this is possibly so as to not give unsavoury individuals tips) The book is written very matter-of-factly, so it can be slightly dry reading. The author doesn't attempt to force an agenda and does not write emotionally, so the information appears encyclopaedic and reliable. A table listing each of the agents and their effects would have been nice as a quick reference. But overall it is a good overview of 20th century chem/bio weapons history.

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