

One of the most challenging aspects of evidence collection was acquiring expertise on biological and chemical agents. As one police report noted, the Japanese police “lacked information regarding the characteristics, toxicity, manufacturing process, and raw materials of [sarin], as well as of other poisonous gases such as VX.”¹⁵ The police hurried to acquire information on sarin and other chemical and biological agents, their manufacturing process, and the buyers of the components necessary for production. The Japanese military—the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF)—sent chemical-warfare experts to assist the police. The National Police Agency and JSDF subsequently established a joint police and army investigative unit.¹⁶ However, the lack of knowledge and information on sarin and other agents made the investigation more difficult. Indeed, although many experts cooperated in helping the police learn more about the production process for sarin, the investigation was hindered, since few of these experts had actually produced sarin, and various methods of production were found to be theoretically plausible.¹⁷

These deficiencies led the police to restructure the National Police Agency to strengthen its scientific-investigation, information-collection, and data-analysis systems. To equip investigators with the technical knowledge and skills necessary for scientific investigations, the National Police Agency, regional police bureau, and prefectural police stations promoted scientific studies—including the study of chemistry and physics. The National Police Agency reinforced its data-gathering and -analysis system through the creation of a special organized-crime group. The National Police Agency also created the Police Policy Research Center to analyze drastic transitional social phenomena and group and individual attitudes and behaviors from a public-security perspective.¹⁸ In January 2000, Aum Shinrikyo was placed under surveillance for three years under an anti-Aum law that required the group

¹⁵ NPA (1996, p. 25).

¹⁶ Pangi (2002, pp. 427, 429).

¹⁷ NPA (1996, p. 25).

¹⁸ NPA (1996, pp. 27–28).