MODEL UNITED NATIONS

DMUN XI

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World Health Organization

BACKGROUND GUIDE

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Moderator: Celine Ellis

The Threat of Biological Warfare

Dalton Model United Nations XI

World Health Organization

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to DMUN XII, and more specifically, the World Health Organization (WHO). My name is Mehela, and I will be your chair for this committee. I am a junior at Dalton and started doing Model UN in my freshman year. I am a musician and play both guitar and piano, I love listening to music, and I do track and field. I was born in France and moved to America when I was two years old, and coincidentally, my sister was born on the plane ride to America (crazy, right?!). A fun fact about me is that I am licensed to fly a plane and have flown to Liberia, which connects very well with out topic! I am very excited to be your chair for DMUN XII and cannot wait to see you all.

Joining us as your moderator is Celine, a sophomore at Dalton. Celine has also been doing Model UN since freshman year. Celine, our underground celebrity, was the voice actor for Aladdin's famous side kid, Abu, in the Turkish version of the movie. Celine has goals to join the acting world for her talent in vocal impressions! Another fun fact about Celine is that she has a great colorful collection of Harem pants from all over the world! Make sure to ask her about it.

Sincerely,
Mehela Noel

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History of the Committee

Biological warfare is the use of biological toxins or microorganisms, such as viruses and bacteria, to deliberately inflict disease or harm upon people, animals or agriculture. It is distinct from nuclear and chemical warfare, which together make up NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical warfare or weapons), all of which are considered weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) due to the level of their destruction potential. Biological weapons are dangerous because of their many forms and long-term effects: attacking agents can infect humans, contaminate food or water, or destroy agriculture, and the effects of a biological weapons attack are also not immediately detectable. While international action has prohibited most biological warfare research and development, recent advances in biotechnology have made it easier than ever to develop dangerous viruses, bacteria and toxins with fewer resources, increasing the likelihood that groups may resort to bioterrorism in times of conflict.

In 2019, a terrifyingly powerful clandestine terror organization arose called the Liberty Initiative. The Liberty Initiative was not officially affiliated with any national government or organization, leaving the international community paranoid and confused after the attacks. The Liberty Initiative's members hail from mostly developed nations across all continents, and its mission was to "revive the world through biological cleansing".

In May and June of 2019, the Liberty Initiative launched two devastating bioterrorism attacks on Tokyo and London, respectively. The attacks involved the dissemination of the bacterium Bacillus anthracis, which causes the lethal acute disease Anthrax, across the major cities. Luckily, the bioweapon was contained relatively quickly after being deployed and because the nations targeted were able to provide effective antibiotic treatment and vaccines, the bioweapons only managed to kill an estimated 100 people as compared to the hundreds, if not thousands it could have killed if allowed to spread. Another reason containment was relatively easy was that Liberty Initiative had not yet developed an effective dispersal method, meaning that the anthrax strain that Liberty Initiative used could not spread to more than 10-15 people in each site where it was used before officials became aware of the problem.

However, it is very possible that before the Initiative was destroyed, it shared or sold this technology with other terrorist organizations or even national governments. It will be the job of this committee to update traditional bioterrorism protocols and prevention procedures and locate the holder of this new technology.

History of the Problem

Biological warfare goes as far back as, in recorded history, as 400 BC, when Scythian archers infected their arrows by dipping them in decomposing bodies or into blood mixed with manure. Roman, Persian and Greek literature from 300 BC show examples of dead animals dropped in wells and other bodies of water to contaminate them. Hannibal won a naval victory, in 190 BC, over King Eumenes II by firing jars of venomous snakes into enemy ships. Other incidences involving transmission of smallpox were used during the French and Indian war and the Civil War.

By the turn of the 18th century, advances in germ theory and bacteriology allowed biological weaponry to be developed with increasing levels of sophistication because isolation and production of stocks of specific pathogens was now possible. During World War I, the Germans developed anthrax, glanders, cholera and wheat fungus specifically for use as biological weapons, even though a biased subcommittee of the Temporary Mixed Commission of the League of Nations at the time found no hard evidence of biological warfare.

During World War II, the Japanese developed a terrifyingly sophisticated biological warfare program, whose center was referred to as "Unit 731". More than 10,000 prisoners are believed to have died as a result of experimental infection during the Japanese program between 1932 and 1945, many from direct effect of experimental inoculation of agents causing anthrax, cholera, dysentery or plague. In December 1949, the Soviets tried 12 Japanese prisoners of war for preparing and using biological weapons; in turn, the Japanese government accused the Soviet Union of

All are hazard symbols, although the symbol in the center is internationally recognized as a hazard symbol.

experimentation and development of bioweapons. During that time, German officials also accused the Allies of using biological weapons, citing British experimentation with B. anthracis and the United States' development of an offensive biological warfare program.

After World War II, nations including the United States, Canada, Britain, France, the Soviet Union/Russia and the United Kingdom continued their biological weapons research. A slew of allegations, especially during the Korean war, surfaced as the international community continued to search for a way to contain this terrifying branch of modern weaponry.[1]

Previous International Action

In response to the initial use of chemical warfare during World War I, international efforts directed toward limiting the proliferation and use of WMDs resulted in the adoption of the "Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare". More commonly referred to as the Geneva Protocol of 1925, it was signed by 108 nations and extended a multilateral ban on chemical weapons to biological weapons as well. Notably, the United States did not ratify the Protocol until 1975. The Protocol did not include concrete verification of compliance measures, however, rendering ineffective.

After the failure of the Geneva Protocol, the 1972 "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and toxin Weapons and on their Destruction", known as the BWC, was developed. The BWC prohibited the development of biological weaponry delivery mechanisms, the transfer of biowarfare technology to other countries and mandated the destruction of stockpiles, production equipment and delivery systems. The treaty was ratified in 1972 and went into effect in March 1975; review conferences to the BWC were also held in the years following. However, similarly to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the BWC does not provide firm guidelines for inspections and compliance assurance. As a result, several of the signatory nations of the BWC have since been developing biowarfare technology outlawed by the convention. Several assassination attempts and attacks as well as non-state-sponsored terrorist attacks have been documented since the passing of the BWC, highlighting its ineffectiveness. Biological warfare has remained a terrifying aspect of

modern weaponry and the international community has always been looking for ways to impede its development.[2]

Current Situation

After the Liberty Initiative's attacks in 2019, the world was sent into a state of paranoia and chaos. It is unclear how much of the Liberty Initiative's materials or technologies remain, and in whose hands, so the international community must both prevent the development of the Initiative's technology and biological warfare technology as a whole.

Nations have retained their biological weaponry development programs; in other words, those nations who were developing and researching biowarfare technology in 2015 have continued to do so throughout the past five years. A rift has developed between countries who allegedly develop biological weapons for offensive reasons and defensive reasons. Offensive biological warfare can target personnel, agriculture, livestock and water supplies, and are difficult to control because of their sporadic spread. Although several nations are accused of housing biological weapon facilities that are researching offensive biowarfare technologies, none have been proven. These allegations have heightened international tensions in the aftermath of the Liberty Initiative attacks because the terrorist organization is speculated to have ties with a national government that facilitated its development. Luckily, a strong global norm still exists that rejects development of offensive biological weapons, so nations strongly opposing the development of offensive biological weapons should catalyze on this standard.

A larger number of countries are known to house defensive biological weapon research and development facilities. Many of these facilities are conducting research concerning counter-measures to possible biowarfare attacks, and early means of detecting and preventing biological attacks. Additionally, in order to increase national and homeland security, these facilities aim to protect agriculture, food and water by identifying bioweapons and organizing contingency plans in the event of a biological attack. While defensive research facilities are much more accepted by the international community, standards of transparency must still be enforced by the international community.

Proposed Solutions

Increased International Transparency

Almost all nations are calling for increased transparency as a means to improve communication regarding what biowarfare developments nations are making. Because of its huge implications on public health, the current director of the WHO has already urged nations to begin to release data regarding transactions and technological developments. Increased transparency will also be helpful in discerning whether or not countries possess the technology that the Liberty Initiative utilized and if countries are developing their own biological weapons mirrored after the Initiative's weapon. However, increased transparency and compliance is difficult to enforce, and as many of these development programs are clandestine, it is unlikely that nations will comply.

Civilian Preparedness

Ensuring that civilians are prepared in the event of the worst eventuality is a primary concern of the WHO. Making sure that civilians know how they can conduct themselves if this weapon is used will increase their chances for survival. This would be a worst case scenario alternative, yet it is also necessary. Preparedness would involve coordination with the medical community in order to improve disease surveillance and reporting, as well as early detection and prompt treatment of the disease.

Limiting Availability of Materials for Creation of Bioweapons on International Markets

This remains one of the most radical proposed solutions. It would be effective, however, for limiting terrorist organizations as well as rogue countries from developing a bioweapon to use against established world powers. Many countries claim that this would allow a monopoly of bioweapons in nations with more resources available to them, but supporters of this solu-

tion argue that it is the only way to pinpoint this issue at its source.

Revising Current Legislation

Both the Geneva Protocol and the BWC were ultimately unsuccessful in limiting the proliferation of biowarfare development. Therefore, many nations are suggesting that the international body revisit these pieces of legislation and tighten their stipulations. Redefining certain key terms, such as what a biological weapon specifically entails, and adding further enforcement provisions are among the suggestions. Another option is creating a separate document detailing the current situation of biowarfare development to present to the United Nations General Assembly.

Bloc Positions

Nations with Probable Biological Weapons

Nations with likely offensive capabilities, including China, Egypt and Iran, will highly oppose measures that encourage increasing transparency and the release of information concerning the state of their biowarfare technology development. Specific biowarfare agents that these countries possess differ, but these nations will likely oppose any solutions that may endanger the clandestine nature of their biowarfare programs.

Nations with known research programs, mostly defensive, including India, North Korea, Russia and Syria will most likely also oppose radical transparency measures, but to a lesser extent.

European Union and North America

These nations are, and have been, strong advocates for increased transparency and tighter control of biological weapons in order to increase international security and decrease the possibility of weapons stockpiling. The United States, United Kingdom and most of the European Union advocate for greater adherence to the Geneva Protocol and BWC. After the Liberty Initiative attack, these countries have been in a state of panic and believe that any methods that can contain these weapons should be put in place.

Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia

Being less willing to pour funds into a problem that they don't see will impact them, these nations are not as terrified by recent developments. These nations, which have historically been relatively uninvolved and unaffected, are still concerned about controlling these weapons because all nations have the potential to be affected; they still see the benefit of increased global transparency and also increasing preparedness among densely populated urban areas.

Questions to Consider

1. How will your country's current biological warfare program impact its views on offensive and defensive bioweaponry development?

2. How can the international community attempt to prevent already developed biowarfare technologies from ever being used?

Displays the internationally recognized symbol for a hazard. Can be seen over bomb shelters, terror shelters, etc.

3. What is the best way to ensure civilian preparedness in the event of a biological attack?

4. How should the international community address the allegations and hypotheses concerning nations that are possibly housing the Liberty Initiative's technology? Are these allegations worth taking into account, or should more attention be paid to increasing preparedness and prevention on a larger scale?

5. Does your nation believe it should invest funds and research personnel in containment measures, transparency measures or measures to stop a bioweapon from spreading among civilian populations?

ENDNOTES

1 Riedel, Stefan. “Biological warfare and bioterrorism: a historical review.” Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings, United States National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health. Web. 12 Dec. 2014. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1200679/

2 “Biological Warfare: Get Facts on Examples and History.” EMedicineHealth. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Dec. 2014.