A photograph showing a person from the waist up, wearing a full-body protective suit (camouflage pattern), a respirator mask with a clear plastic window, and blue nitrile gloves. They are holding a white clipboard with handwritten notes that are partially legible, including "Tactical Alpha 4", "6-21", and "6-20".

# THREAT POSED BY BIOTERRORISM TO LIFE, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON VOLATILE NATIONS

SBSMUN2016

General Assembly:  
DISEC

# Letter From The Executive Board

Dear Delegates

Hello and welcome to SBSMUN 2016 ! It is an honour to be a part of the executive board at this Model United Nations Conference, simulating the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

As the name suggests, this document provides a broad overview of the vast agenda, that we as the members of the United Nations face and is by no means an exhaustive document. It serves as a starting point for you to delve into the various aspects of the agenda and do remember to go through the links in the footnotes. Your real research is beyond this document and look to forward to enthralling debate in the conference.

For those delegates who are attending a Model United Nations Conference for the first time, do not be taken aback by the Rules of Procedure or the terms contained within this guide. Research the topic and your country's foreign policy well and are expected to look up the UNIC Rules Of Procedure, which shall be followed.

In terms of debate, the Executive Board looks forward to your contributions towards an engaging debate in this committee and the innovative solutions that you bring forth together as a committee.

And finally a bit about me: I'm currently a rising sophomore at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Model United Nations are something I am extremely passionate about as it is the ideal platform to formulate solutions on pressing issues that affect us all. Apart from MUN's, I spend my free time playing Squash, reading and perennially procrastinating on Facebook !

I hope you are as excited for this conference as I am ! Feel free to reach out to me, for any queries related to the agenda or about Model United Nations in general.

Regards,



*Ishan Tewari  
President  
ishan.tewari96@gmail.com*



Committee Essentials

# Nature Of Proofs and Evidence Permitted In Committee

Evidence or proof from the following sources will be accepted as credible in the General Assembly:

## 1. News Sources

- a. Reuters – Any Reuters' article which clearly makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<http://www.reuters.com>)
- b. State-operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are,
  - i. RIA Novosti (Russia) (<http://www.en.rian.ru/>)
  - ii. IRNA (Iran) (<http://http://www.irna.ir/en>)
  - iii. BBC (United Kingdom) (<http://bbc.co.uk>)
  - iv. Al Jazeera (Qatar) (<http://www.aljazeera.com>)
  - v. Xinhua News Agency (PR China) (<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china>)

## 2. Government Reports – These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Some examples are,

- i. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>) or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>)
  - ii. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.meia.gov.in>) or People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng>)
  - iii. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports (<http://www.un.org/en/members>) (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative)
  - iv. Multilateral Organizations like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC ([http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/)), etc.
3. United Nations Reports – All UN Reports are considered as credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the General Assembly,

- i. UN Bodies like the UNSC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>) or UNGA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga>).
- ii. UN Affiliated Bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.
- iii. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC>)

**NOTE** – Sources like Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>) or newspapers like the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk>), Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>),etc. are typically not accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE. However, they can be used for better understanding of any issue or on rare occasions, be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a Government. Further, the information submitted as evidence citing reportage from sources such as specified in this note may be at best, treated as having significance in terms of persuasive value — e.g. to cement ones assertions, but never as binding, indisputable fact.

# About The General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. [Chapter IV, Articles 9-22, of the UN Charter](#) concern the General Assembly.

Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority and each country has one vote.

The Assembly is empowered to make recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. The Assembly has initiated actions — political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal — which have affected the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly may:

- Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States;
- Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General;
- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament;
- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it;
- Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;
- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields;
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among nations;
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs.

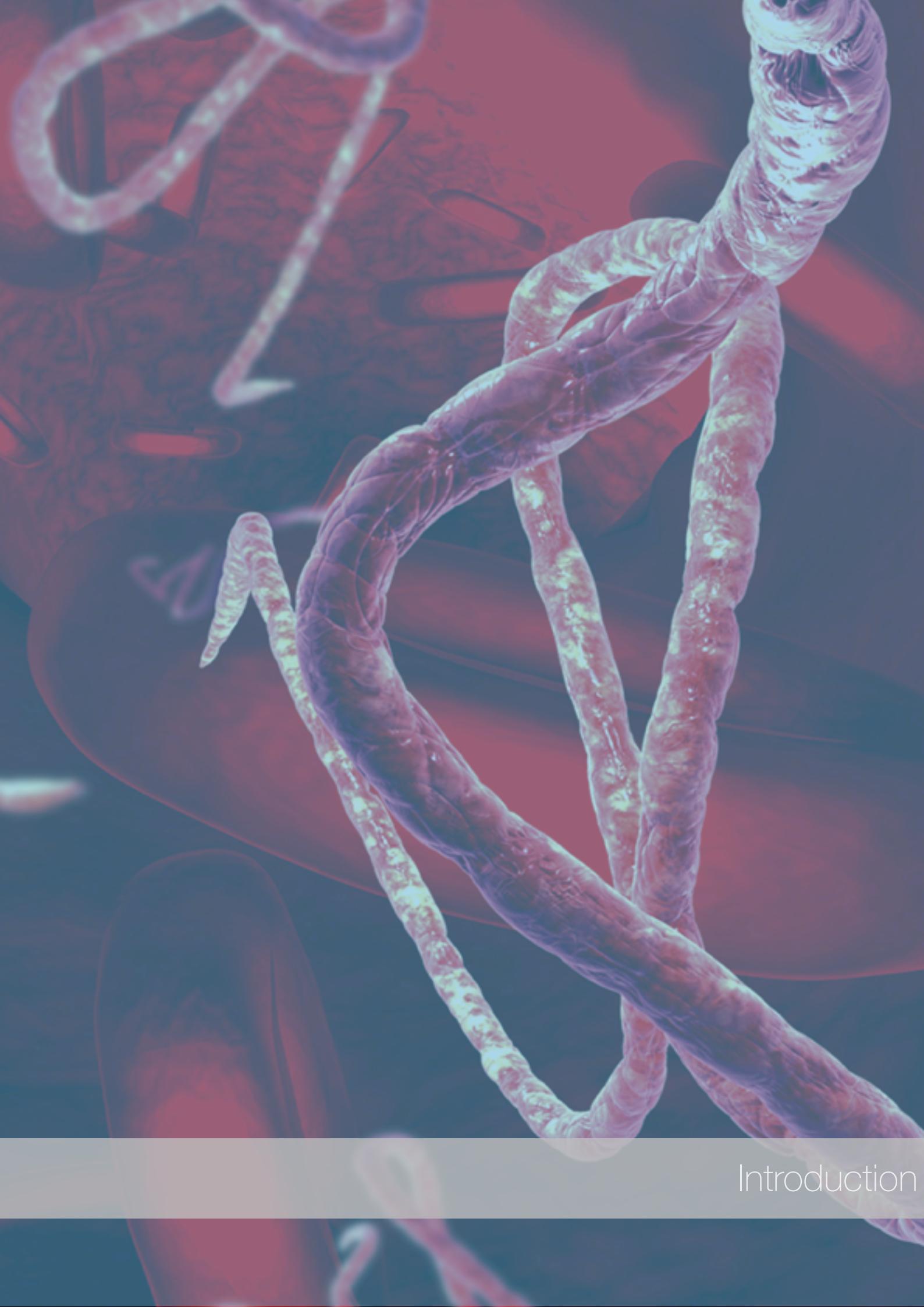
The subsidiary organs of the General Assembly are divided into categories: [Boards](#), [Commissions](#), [Committees](#), [Councils and Panels](#), and [Working Groups and others](#).

After discussing the items on the agenda, seeking where possible to harmonise the various approaches of States, the subsidiary organs present their recommendations,

usually in the form of draft resolutions and decisions, to a plenary meeting of the Assembly for its consideration.

Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly are governed by resolution [A/520/Rev.17](#).

Non-Member States, entities and organisations, on receiving a standing invitation, can participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly.



# Introduction

# Bioterrorism As A Threat

Biological warfare agents are defined as “living organisms, whatever their nature or infected material derived from them, which are used for hostile purposes and intended to cause disease or death in man, animals, and plants, and which depend for their efforts on the ability to multiply in the person, animal or plant attacked.”<sup>1</sup> Compared to regular weapons, these are extremely difficult to detect because of their microscopic nature and when released can result in massive casualties.

Biological terrorism ,or Bioterrorism ,is the deliberate release of Biological Warfare Agents to directly or indirectly inflict harm or cause death in people, animals or plants.<sup>2</sup> Bioterrorism, as such poses a very unique challenge for governments as it poses a great threat to human life and coupled with the relative ease <sup>3</sup> in acquiring biological weapons, is a great cause for alarm. Biological Weapons have even been called the poor man's atomic bomb.<sup>4</sup>

Biological Weapons are usually target populations having lower levels of immunity, using agents that are highly contagious and lethal in low dosages.

The rise of non-state actors globally, especially in the middle east, has led to a further compounding of the problem. With the increasing ease of acquiring biological weapons, the threat of a full scale conflict involving biological weapons has never been higher.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore imperative that policies be developed to keep in response to threat posed by the possession of biological weapons by both state and non-state actors, including individuals and terrorist organisations.

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*Biological (Weapons) will get easier from a terrorist point of view*

- Charles Farr, Director of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, UK

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## Bioterrorism: A Brief History

Biological Weapons have been used historically, for close to three millennia. The first recorded use of biological weapons was by the Assyrians, who poisoned enemy wells with rye ergot, a type of fungus, in the sixth century BC.<sup>6</sup> In 1346, during the siege of the city of Kaffa by the Tartars during the outbreak of the bubonic plague, the Tartars catapulted the dead over the city's defences leading to the eventual surrender of Kaffa.<sup>7</sup> In the early eighteenth century, the British Forces under General Amherst gifted Native American leaders with blankets and handkerchiefs infected with smallpox.<sup>8</sup>

Real development, though, in the weaponisation of biological weapons began in the nineteenth century with the development of microbiology and the pioneering work of scientists like Louis Pasteur.<sup>9</sup> With the advent of the First World War, development of biological weapons gathered speed with the Germans having the dubious honour of being the first to create biological weapons with a state sponsored program. During World

War I, biological weapons were primarily used against animals and not people. This was primarily aimed at disrupting the flow of supplies to the allied forces.<sup>10</sup> In retaliation, both Soviet and French forces started developing biological weapons.<sup>11</sup>

While the Soviet's efforts were halted during the 1930s, Japan's pursuit of biological weapons was much more successful. After the end of World War I, the Japanese military formed Unit 731, which was the section of their military devoted to biological weapon research and development.<sup>12</sup> Unit 731 was located in Japan-controlled Manchuria where experiments were conducted on Chinese prisoners of war.

Responding to British requests to begin developing bioweapons, President Roosevelt approved the United States' biological warfare program. In 1942, the United States started to develop genetically altered biological agents, aerosols, and bombs. The United Kingdom wanted the United States to mass produce anthrax spores and botulinum toxin for deployment against Nazi Germany in response to any future attack.<sup>13</sup> The United Kingdom's own program was focused on using anthrax spores in conventional bombs. In 1943, a mishap in testing caused an outbreak of anthrax in sheep and cattle on an island off the coast of Scotland. As such, the British stopped biological weapons research and closed all weapons testing sites.

After the Second World War, development of biological and chemical weapons primarily occurred during the Cold War, largely due to the mistrust between the Soviets and the US, to gain the proverbial upper hand. The United States secretly pardoned Japanese scientists from Area 731 in exchange for the results of their experiments.<sup>14</sup> Development of weapons continued initially in an offensive manner starting from 1945, by the US until it was ultimately halted by President Nixon, in 1969. The Soviets also slowly phased out their biological weapons development program by the start of the early 1990s.<sup>15</sup>

This period of decline in state-sponsored development of Biological weapons has been replaced by the rise of biological weapons in the hands of non-state actors such as terrorist groups, starting in the 1970s. Groups such as the Order of the Rising Sun and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in the US were responsible for bioterrorism incidents in the US, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In 1995, Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese Doomsday Cult released nerve gas (Sarin) on the Tokyo subway system killing 11 people and injuring thousands.<sup>16</sup>

In 2001, Anthrax spores were mailed to prominent American politicians and media houses.<sup>17</sup>

In recent years, Syria is accused of having used chemical weapons during the Syria Civil War in the town of Ghouta, and is also suspected of having biological weapon capabilities.<sup>18</sup>

Al Qaeda has also expressed interest in Biological and Chemical weapons, and reports from various intelligence agencies suggest Al Qaeda has access to Ricin for bombs and even tried to plot an attack on the city of London.<sup>19-20</sup>

ISIS has also claimed to have the ability to carry out chemical and biological attacks, with reports suggesting that an attack is already being planned.<sup>21</sup>



Relevant UN Action

# **The Geneva Protocol**

The Geneva Protocol of 1925 was the first piece of international law to deal with Biological Weapons. It banned the use of asphyxiating and poisonous gases along with Bacteriological methods of warfare.<sup>22</sup> The protocol called for the banning the use of chemical and biological weapons but, it did not include clauses on the development, transfer or stockpiling of biological weapons. Overall the Geneva Protocol was a good first step towards biological nonproliferation. However the lack of its scope made it an ineffective treaty at prohibiting countries from developing bioweapons programs during and after the Second World War.<sup>22</sup>

# **The Biological Weapons Convention**

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, 1972, also referred to as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), was the first treaty that aimed to curb the manufacture and spread of biological weapons. The Convention encouraged member nations to curtail manufacture of biological weapons and actively destroy existing stockpiles of biological weapons. It prohibits member nations from participating in the trade of biological weapons.<sup>23</sup>

# **The Chemical Weapons Convention**

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a treaty signed in 1997 that prohibits the use of chemical weapons and its precursors and also aims to ensure the destruction of all current stockpiles. It is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The convention also ensures assistance between states and the OPCW in case of use of Chemical Weapons and has set up an inspection regime to ensure chemical weapons are not produced.<sup>24</sup>

# **The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**

The United Nations passes the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006 under resolution 60/288. The strategy aims “address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism,” “to prevent and combat terrorism,” “to build States’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard” as well as measures to, “ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.”<sup>25</sup>

## **Resolution 1540**

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) imposes binding obligations on all States to adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and their means of delivery, and establish appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking. The resolution also forces states "to refrain from supporting by any means non-State actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems."<sup>26</sup>



Positions Of Prominent Countries

# **The United States**

The United States is a party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and does not have offensive biological and chemical programs. It is still in the process of dismantling its chemical weapons program and has taken active steps to greatly reduce its biological weapons stockpile. The United States has played a key role in furthering global norms against the proliferation of biological weapons by creating the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In December 2009, the Obama Administration released its National Strategy for Countering Biological Threats, which seeks to strike a balance between countering current threats and preventing the misuse of science.<sup>27</sup>

## **Iran**

Iran has been openly accused of working with a number of terrorist organisations such as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas. It is also accused of having offensive bioweapon capabilities .In 2005 reports indicate that Iran has hidden its biological weapons program in its biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries in order to keep its activities secret.<sup>74</sup> Due to its military infrastructure and biotechnology, Iran could support a bioweapons program without foreign assistance. Recently, Iran has conducted “chemical and biological defence military strategies” with helicopters and has altered various missile systems to support a biological attack. Iran is still believed to be conducting research on biological agents and weaponisation and developing mechanisms to deliver agents.<sup>28</sup>

## **Syria**

There is very limited open source information regarding Syria's biological warfare (BW) capabilities. Sources suggest Syria possesses strains of Anthrax, Botulinum and Ricin. Syria has a pharmaceutical infrastructure that could support a limited BW program, and engages in the trade of dual-use equipment and goods with companies in Western Europe, Russia, and North Korea. Damascus ratified the Geneva Protocol in 1968, and has signed but not ratified the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).<sup>29</sup> In recent times, reports have surfaced that the regime has lost control over certain stocks of chemical and biological weapons, to rebel groups.<sup>30</sup>

## **China**

China is a party to most of the major international agreements regulating biological weapons, including the Geneva Protocol and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). China is not a member of the Australia Group (AG), a voluntary supply—side export control regime focused on chemical and biological weapons; nevertheless, China's export control regulations currently bring its laws in line with the AG guidelines and control lists. China has publicly declared itself to be in compliance with the BTWC. Allegations though have arisen that China has a small-scale offensive biological weapons program, and that Chinese entities have transferred controlled biological weapons-related items to nations of proliferation concern such as Iran. Such transfers have resulted in U.S. nonproliferation sanctions against Chinese entities.<sup>31</sup>

## **North Korea**

Although the DPRK signed the Geneva Protocol and acceded to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 1987, it is suspected of maintaining an ongoing biological weapons program. Defectors from the DPRK and defence agencies in the United States and South Korea generally agree that the country began to acquire a biological weapons capability in the early 1960s under the orders of Kim Il Sung. North Korea is believed to have a robust biological warfare program.<sup>32</sup>



Questions To Consider

# **Questions A Resolution Must Answer**

- How can the international community help strengthen the ban on proliferation of Biological Weapons ?
- What steps can be taken to ensure biological weapons or the technology to develop biological weapons does not fall in the wrong hands, especially non-state actors ?
- How Should the International Community respond in case of Biological Attack and How shall the response be coordinated ?
- How can members of the international community help countries strengthen their biological defence program ?



Endnotes

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