

Preventing the Use of Biological Weapons in Military Actions

Forum: Disarmament Council

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Introduction

The use of biological weapons has raised debate for some time; it is clear that there is a sense of urgency to prevent it. Throughout history there have been numerous attempts to prevent the use of biological weapons; however, they have either been ineffective or have been broken by countries that refused to adhere to the agreement. As a result, the world has witnessed on numerous occasions the detrimental effects of biological weapons. Fortunately, a large majority of the member states hold a consensus that the use of biological weapons must be prevented. To ensure that these weapons are prevented from being used, the situation must be handled not only with academic knowledge, but with solicitude and novelty.

Background

The League of Nations was founded with the sole purpose of maintaining world peace—its establishment dates to 10 January 1920 proceeding the Paris Peace Conference which terminated the First World War. In addition, the Treaty of Versailles was erected with the purpose of achieving peace. Noting the many components of the treaty, one in particular required the Germans to disarm and pay reparations. Shortly after its establishment, the League of Nations proposed the 1925 Geneva Protocol which entered into force on 8 February 1928. The protocol called for the prohibition of the use of chemical and biological weapons in international armed conflicts. The Geneva Protocol was established with the purpose of creating drastic measures to avoid such scenarios where these weapons would be used again in international armed conflicts.



Lord Curson speaking at the inaugural meeting in Paris of the League of Nations



UN Security Council Meeting

However, after the fall of the League of Nations a new institution was formed that would bring in a more holistic and collective overview perspective. The United Nations has been instrumental in ensuring peaceful and maintaining dialogue between member states. Established shortly after the end of World War II, its focus to maintain international peace and security through the diplomatic ties it hopes to foster through dialogue remains true till

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this day. The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization that is guided and founded upon the principles and values inscribed within the UN Charter. Since its inception, the United Nations has witnessed some key moments that bolstered the importance of the United Nations and its role in maintaining international dialogue and speech. In addition, the United Nations has expanded into 6 organs which consist of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat.

Prior to the establishment of the United Nations, the world was able to witness several incidents of the horrendous effect of nuclear weapons. Shortly into the war, countries like the United States, Soviet Union, and Germany were all within their stages of developing nuclear weapons. On December 7th, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan and in response President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked the Congress to declare war on Japan. A year later President Franklin D. Roosevelt granted the establishment of the Manhattan Project on December 28, 1942 with the primary purpose of weaponizing nuclear energy. U.S. military officer Colonel Leslie R. Groves was appointed to foresee the project alongside Canada and the United Kingdom which took part in the project by providing resources and intelligence. Leaders of the Manhattan Project deemed it necessary to take such forceful demonstration to make Japan surrender. On August 6, 1945 the first bomb was dropped 1,900 feet above Hiroshima and three days later, on August 9th, the second bomb was dropped over Nagasaki. The destruction and death over the area was absolutely unprecedented: the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in the deaths of 129,000 to 226,000 civilians. However, the aftermath of these weapons—decimated cities and the radiation's smarting effects on civilians—was more catastrophic.

On July 24, 1945, President Truman along with his counterparts from other nations Stalin and Winston Churchill attended the historic Potsdam Conference. It was there, where President Henry Truman disclosed the Manhattan Project to the public; however, to his and Winston Churchill' surprise, Stalin seemed unmoved. The reason for Stalin's composure was because he was well informed about the project even before Truman became president through the secret networks of intelligence obtained by a ring of spies who provided the Soviets with detailed information about the designs of the hydrogen bomb.



1945, The "Little Boy" atom bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, by the United State



1945, The "Little Boy" atom bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, by the United State on 6th August 1945

Churchill, Truman, and Stalin at Potsdam Conference



Moscow, USSR, May 1960, A view of an SS4 Sandal missile loaded on the back of a transporter, as it is pulled past the Kremlin during the annual May Day military parade of the Soviet Union's armed forces

The Soviets were developing their own nuclear weapons even though they were challenged with their limited natural resources. The United States and the Soviet Union's dynamic became that of an Arms Race which competed with one another to see which one had more superior armed forces. The counterpart of the United States started to develop medium-range ballistic missiles and intermediate-range ballistic missiles to carry nuclear weapons, and this development focused into longer ranges, eventually becoming intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). This race eventually led to the Mutual Assured Destruction meaning that both sides would become restrained from attacking each other because they knew the devastation, they would bring on each other. As a result, the chances of their beginning another

world war grew more than ever.

With this concern and possibility of another world war heightening, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was founded on April 4, 1949. NATO's purpose was to address the concerns about the growing political and military power of the Soviet Union. Initially its 12 founding members met together in Washington in 1949 to sign the Alliance's founding treaty most notably article 5 which states any attack on one member is an attack on all of its members. To start with, all of the NATO's 12 members jointly had the goal of pushing back against any future aggressions by the Soviet Union. It can be argued that NATO was largely able to achieve this through the large benefaction of the United States. When the United States was at its military and economic, its booming economy, innovative technologies, and considering that more than half of the military arsenals were modernized greatly enhanced the United States military inventory making it an absolutely undeniable superpower. According to NATO, the formation of NATO meant that the United States would be allowed to place weapons in member states to stop the communists from attacking. NATO has 28 crucial major bases located around the European region, of which all contain military arsenal. This is crucial and benefits the United States, former Secretary Hillary Clinton stated that American military presence is required to achieve peace and to ensure the protection of democratic countries around Europe. It enables them to expand their military presence which is crucial as it greatly enables them to maintain their status of being a "superpower." For example, Turkey is the only NATO member in the Middle East region. Its specific geographic position has been used as a point of strategic leverage against the Soviet Union during the Cold War and a vital launching point of U.S. military operations in the Middle East. According to the Department of Defense, the military concept known as the loss of strength gradient is the primary reason as to why the US maintains a large military presence. This concept essentially theorizes that the further conflict is away from a military's home country, the less military power that nation is able to bring to the fight. And to counteract this effect, oversea bases were established outside of a country's home territory. During its early stages, much of all the NATO members relied heavily on the United States to use its threat of massive nuclear retaliation from the United States to counter the Warsaw Pact's large military power. According to NATO, NATO implemented the "flexible response" strategy, the United States equipped allied forces with American battlefield inventories as well as the theatre nuclear weapons under a dual-control system, which allowed both the country hosting the weapons and the United States to veto their use. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg

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stated that the United States has contributed enormously towards NATO but, it has also benefited enormously in regard to making the United States a “superpower”. Through the vast valuable network channel of strong and capable intelligence networks that work alongside American professionals. This is done through the intelligence that is shared



NATO Conference in Paris

through the tracking submariners in the Arctic to identify terrorists and intelligence from individual member nations greatly gives the United States an upper hand when combating invasions and responding to global or local threats effectively without the chance of making a mistake.

Likewise, three other nations including the United Kingdom, China, and France developed their own nuclear weapons during the early cold war. Besides the United States and Soviet Union, the United Kingdom became the third nation to possess nuclear weapons. Noting the profound

contributions to the Manhattan Project the United Kingdom under the leadership of Winston Churchill started to develop its own nuclear weapons out of resentment towards the United States. The United States Congress passed the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 which restricted the access to nuclear information to other countries including Canada and the



President Henry Truman Signing



President Henry Truman Signing

United Kingdom all of whom were major contributors in the Manhattan Project. By doing so, the United Kingdom believed that the United States was disregarding the Quebec agreement that was initially put into place to exchange classified intelligence regarding various issues. On February 13, 1960 France conducted a successful detonation of an atomic bomb in Algeria making them the fourth nation to possess nuclear weapons. With the assistance in intelligence and in natural resources China was able to start developing their nuclear weapons from an early stage starting from the late 1950s; however, due to the growing tensions between the Soviet Union and China that all ended. Nevertheless, China managed to continue their program even making some remarkable achievements along the way.

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On January 1, 1959 the United States started to boycott on Cuban sugar which made up a large portion of the Cuban economy because of how the Cuban government fell into communist influence. However, the Soviet government lended a hand by purchasing large quantities of resources in order to sustain the Cuban economy. This transaction was done in exchange for natural resources like oil and the permit to place nuclear ballistic missiles on Cuban soil. This transaction exacerbated even more the relationship between the Soviet Union and that of the United States into a pit hole that would lead to another war unimaginable. Considering that Cuba is very close to the mainland of the United States this placed the Soviet Union in a strategic advantage giving its nuclear arsenal a capable range of reaching the United States. This placed a great challenge on a young president (John. F. Kennedy) as the idea of the Soviet Union having a nuclear arsenal much closer to the United States not only intensified the situation but raised the chances of another war.



President John F. Kennedy Signing

Nonetheless, the Soviet Union withdrew all missiles from Cuba which ended the Cuban Missile Crisis. On October 10, 1963 the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) was signed by the Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and the United States. The objective of the treaty was to put a halt on all nuclear testing. Since its subscription in 1963 an additional 113 countries have signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). Nonetheless, the treaty prohibited the tests conducted in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater; however, it did not put a halt on tests conducted underground.



Soldiers participating in May Day parade at Red Square, Moscow, Russia, 1960

As the world was entered the 21st century, concerns regarding the jurisdiction economizing the use of biochemical weapons and nuclear weapons became a topic of debate. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), biological weapons are microorganisms that are intentionally exploited for the purpose of causing casualties among humans and animals. Biological agents are toxins and plagues that are used for bioterrorism attacks which may result in an outbreak. Biological weapons refer to weapons of mass destruction especially chemical, radiological, and nuclear. On June 30, 1978, the United Nations addressed this issue by passing the resolution S-10/2 under the General Assembly, which recognized the threat development of nuclear weapons posed to the global community. In addition, methods and potential actions against such measures were outlined and mentioned within the resolution.



World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks at a press conference at its head office in Geneva on July 3, 2020.

The first recorded biological warfare dates back to the 13th century when the Mongolians shipped plague-infested bodies over the walls of the Black Sea, the mecca for trade,

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the ideal place for plagues to spread readily. The plague soon spread to various parts of Europe and started the Black Death, taking the lives of 25 million people. Now, the diseases have advanced into such weapons that may bring deleterious consequences.

United Nation Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) was established to clarify that all member states were to refrain from providing any assistance to nations that attempts to acquire, manufacture, or develop any sort of biological weapons. It necessitated the need for all States to enforce and adopt the resolution, so that States take the drastic measures to prevent biological weapons from ending in the wrong hands. Noting the efforts of member States in adopting the resolution and implementing the various regulations it is without question that there is a need for further development.

In 1928, Spain and France used chemical weapons against each other in the Rif War. Japan used chemical weapons against Taiwan during the Wushe Massacre, and again from 1939 to 1941 in war against China. Japan initiated their biological weapons program in 1932 of which they experimented biological weapons on humans and attacked 11 Chinese cities. During the program, experiments were conducted on humans which, according to experts, estimate around 1,000 human autopsies. Eventually the program was discontinued in 1972 when Japan and other countries signed the Convention on Biological Weapons Convention. Soviet Union began its biological weapons program in the early 1920s, the program was conducted at 52 secret sites and employed over 50,000 people. During this time numerous production facilities were created to produce sources relating to that of smallpox, bioweapons, microbial weapons, anthrax and etc. However, concerns are being raised as at the end of the Soviet era all these were left behind. Nevertheless, Russia took over some of these programs in secret and under the orders of President Vladimir Putin some programs were promoted for further development

Problems Raised

Noting the efforts to prevent usage of biochemical weapons, they are still quite prevalent in some parts of the world. Despite placement of treaties, several countries do not adhere to the treaty. This raises concerns as biochemical weapons impose great threats to the global community. For example, Russia used biological weapons on loud critics of the government like Georgi Markov, Alexander Litvienenko and most recently, on Alexi Navalny. On September 2, 2013: several intelligence agencies within France revealed that the Assad regime used Sarin gas on August 21. The United Nations made it clear that such actions were not in accordance with the principles and values found within the charter, and that they go against the 1925 Geneva Protocol. However, despite the remonstrance from member States, the Assad regime continued to exploit chemical weapons upon its own people on numerous occasions after the incident. On September 27, 2013 the United Nations Security Council unanimously voted on Resolution 2118 which compelled Syria to eradicate all of its chemical weapons until mid of 2014. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) were able to confirm that Syria destroyed a large majority of the facilities for mixing and producing chemical weapons. OPCW investigated and concluded that out of the 23 sites that were identified, 21 sites have closed. In addition to Syria, there has always been a growing concern regarding the tensions between

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member states and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). DPRK declared that they are willing to use their nuclear weapons if necessary and the United States has also made similar threats against the regime. In response to such member states, international regulations have been made to prevent member states from developing nuclear weapons; however, this was inevitable as countries like Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) started to develop nuclear weapons in secret. The first recorded nuclear weapon test was on October 9, 2006 and since then it has been conducted in total 6 tests. According to experts, it is expected that North Korea has currently 40 strategic arsenals with the latest Hwasong-15 reaching as far as 13,000km. North Korea has deliberately threatened other members like that of the United States and South Korea which has always grabbed the attention of the global community. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was opened for signature in 1968 and enforced in 1970. Within the treaty 191 states have joined including five nuclear-weapon States. Noting the importance of the treaty during a time of uncertainty, the sole purpose of this treaty is to prevent the development or the usage of nuclear weapons.

International Actions

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons came into effect on March 5, 1970 with the purpose of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

1925 Geneva Protocol

The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 prohibited Germany the use and manufacture of biological weapons. This treaty was extended to bacteriological weapons under the suggestion of France, hence the Geneva Protocol was restated on June 17. Signed by 38 nations on June 17, 1925 the primary purpose was to prohibit the use of chemical and biological weapons in war.

Resolution 1540

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 was adopted unanimously in 2004, this resolution reaffirms the global communities decision to refrain any member states “from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes.” In addition, Resolution 1540 argues member states to adopt legislation to restrain any efforts to proliferate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is an intergovernmental organization created on April 29, 1997 with the purpose of overseeing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention was drafted on September 3, 1992 and put into effect on April 29, 1997. The purpose of the convention was to eliminate any weapons that fell under the umbrella of mass destruction, in which 165 countries signed.

Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT)

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The Limited Test Ban Treaty was signed on August 5, 1963 with the objective of prohibiting countries from testing nuclear weapons anywhere besides underground. Noting the good intentions of the treaty, one biggest issue of the treaty was some nations were not compliant or transparent with their inspection systems which made it hard to track which nation was complying with the treaty.

Definition of Key Terms

League of Nations

The League of Nations was established on January 10th, 1920 with the goal of maintaining world peace, it was founded after the Paris Peace Conference which took place after the end of World War I. It was founded upon the unanimous agreement that aggressive war was not a crime against one specific country but to humanity. The international diplomatic group was made up of 42 nations not including the United States because it decided to remain as an isolationist state. Disregarding the successes and failures of the League of Nations, it was eventually dissolved. However, one important thing to note is that the basis and the ideology of the international diplomatic group created an important basis for what would become the United Nations.

Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles was introduced during the Paris Peace Conference which took place inside the Palace of Versailles on January 18, 1919 to January 21, 1920. The treaty was signed on June 28th, 1919 and put into effect on January 10, 1920. The primary purpose of the treaty was to outline all of the retribution that Germany would need to accept and compensate financially for the damage in which they have caused during World War I.

UN Charter

The Charter of the United Nations is a treaty which was signed on June 26th, 1945 and put into effect on October 24, 1945. The treaty firmly establishes the mission of the United Nations and outlines the functions, roles and responsibilities of each six organs of the United Nations. In addition, the UN Charter clearly states the limitations in which each member state has and the limitations of the power in which each organ has.

Manhattan Project

President Franklin D. Roosevelt granted the establishment of the Manhattan Project on December 28, 1942. The objective of the project was to research and develop an atomic weapon. This project was a collaboration between Canada and the United Kingdom, which acted as benefactors in terms of natural resources and intelligence. The motive for such a project was in response to the growing fear of the Germans developing their own nuclear weapons.

Potsdam Conference

The Potsdam Conference took place from July 17 to August 2, 1945 with representation from the United Kingdom, United States, and the Soviet Union. Participants at this historic conference included Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Clement Attlee, and Harry S. Truman.

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The primary objectives of the conference consisted of three: establishment of the postwar order, peace treaty issues, and countering the effects of the war. In the end, all three powers agreed to divide Germany into three zones which postponed the reunification of Germany.

Arms Race

Arms race is considered one when a competitive quest for military capabilities arises between two nations. An arms race one that is still ongoing is between the United States and the Soviet Union or Russia in contemporary times. The intense desire to accumulate nuclear weapons soon turned into an arms race, one that almost brought the situation to the brink of a world war.

Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)

Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles were first developed by the United States in the early 1950s for the purpose of providing the United States with a larger target capabilities. In addition, these missiles began and still today remain a critical component in maintaining peace and ensuring the delivery of American nuclear arsenal during desperate times.

Mutual Assured Destruction

Mutual assured destruction is a military strategy in which two nations both have the military capabilities of complete annihilation. During the Cold War when the United States and the Soviet Union were in a Arms Race they found themselves both stockpiled in a nuclear arsenal that both had the military capabilities of being in a mutually assured destruction situation. By doing so, both were refrained to a large extent from conducting any military atrocities against one another which created peace.

NATO

NATO which stands for The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established on April 4th, 1949. The organization was founded upon 12 members who all shared a goal of addressing the raising concerns of the military and political power of the Soviet Union through sharing intelligence and military arsenals.

Biological Weapons

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), biological weapons are microorganisms that are intentionally exploited for the purpose of causing casualties in humans and animals.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization was established on April 7, 1948 with the responsibility of maintaining international public health. The World Health Organization played a crucial role in eradicating smallpox and in advancing the development of an Ebola vaccine. The World Health Assembly is made up of 194 member states that supply the organization with intelligence to address the wider situations.

Black Death

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The Black Death is considered to be the deadliest pandemic recorded in human history, resulting in the deaths of 75 - 200 million people.

Hwasong-15

Hwasong - 15 is an ICBM which was developed by North Korea with the ability to carry a nuclear arsenal. The United States Forces Korea (USFK) raised its concerns regarding Hwasong-15 as the ICBM could infiltrate anywhere in the United States.

Possible Solutions

Noting the catastrophic effects of biological weapons in military actions, it is without question that proper and extensive measures need to be taken to mitigate such possibilities. Some of the proposals may be include but are not limited to:

1. Specialized forces within the United Nations to conduct annual onsite investigations for potential development of biological weapons. In addition, member states must be willing to cooperate with these specialized forces deployed by the United Nations to ensure that the treaties signed are being executed accordingly. Furthermore, if certain countries do not cooperate then the UNODA should make recommendations to the SC to make sanctions against the countries. Radical actions must be in place in order to address the severity of the situation. Member states should provide annual reports to the UNODA, with which it will be looked over when hosting biannual summits. In order to create transparency and ensure the information within these reports are accurate specialized forces within the United Nations will conduct on site investigations. Research reports will be collectively compiled and recommended to the General Assembly to take further actions.
2. Holding biannual summits with member states and with NGOs that the United Nations seems apt to discuss regarding the prevention of biological weapons. Biannual summits will give delegates and world leaders a chance to hopefully settle their differences, it is the hope of the UNODA and the GA to ensure that member states have discussions that are progressive. Discussions should help to resolve conflicts in certain areas and to create resolutions to address these complications.
3. Further implementing treaties and regulations between member states in order to prevent such atrocities to happen in the first place.

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