Disarmament And International Security Committee

Background Guide

Taiwan Capital

Model United Nations

2015

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Letter from Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Disarmament and International Security Committee of Taiwan Capital Model United Nations 2015.

My name is Anne Lin, and I will be serving as your chair for this conference. I am a sophomore student majoring at National Taiwan University. I am also the president of National Taiwan University Model United Nations society. Brian Chuang and Steven Yu will be serving as your assistant chairs for this conference. Brian and Steven are both in their second year studying at Taipei Municipal Chenggong High School and serve as officers in the Chenggong High School Model United Nations club.

The Disarmament and International Security committee (DISEC), The First Committee of the six main committees at the General Assembly, was first founded upon the creation of the United Nations. The Council consists of all 193 members. This year, the Disarmament and International Security committee will be discussing the control of Bio-chemical Weapons. Bio-chemical Weapons, as we know them in the modern area, has resulted in countless casualties globally. Between the infamous mustard gas, Agent Orange and more, there is no doubt in the danger of such weapons. The Geneva Protocol, signed in 1925, was a welcome step towards the prohibitions of bio-chemical weapons in warfare but left, however, several shortcomings. Between development, production or stockpiling of bio-chemical weapons, many states not party of the protocol were still gravely affected. Decades later, progress has been made after the implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. With several countries still not on board along with other numerous problems to be solved, the journey with bio-chemical weapons is far from over.

This study guide is meant to provide you with comprehensive background knowledge of the committee topic. However, further research is required in order for you to be well prepared for the conference. You should not only search on your own country but also understand the policies of other related countries. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask us. We really look forward to meeting all of you in February!

Sincerely,

Anne Lin,

Chair, United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee

Taiwan Capital Model United Nations 2015

Committee Introduction

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), or referred to as The First Committee, is one of the six main committees of the General Assembly. DISEC comprises all Member States in the General Assembly, and each member has one equal vote; it is the only Main Committee in General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.[1] The committee's mandate is to "consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments", as endorsed by the UN Charter.[2] Therefore, dealing with disarmament, global challenges and threats to international security and peace is the consideration of the committee. The committee also makes general principles of cooperation maintaining international peace, as well as making recommendations to the Member States or to the Security Council on any such questions or matters.[3]

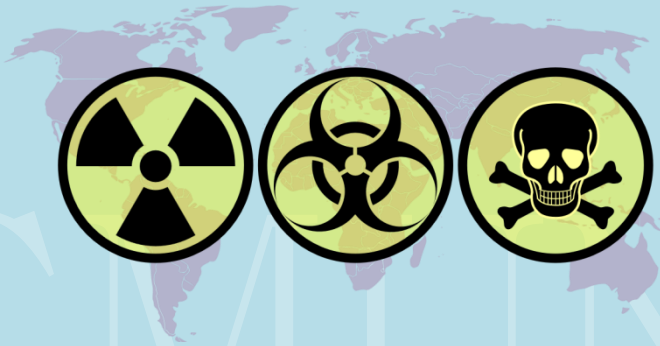
The Committee also cooperates closely with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament to resolve issues regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), arms race in outer space and establishing comprehensive programme of disarmament and transparency in armaments.

The topic of the Disarmament and International Security Committee this year is *'the Control of Bio-chemical Weapons'*. The Committee has long seized the issue on the non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. While the scientific development skyrocketing in the related fields nowadays, the obtainment and diffuseness of these weapons has become more serious. It is vital for the Committee to discuss on the matter.

Topic: the Control of Bio-chemical Weapons

Statement of the Problem

Many as the ultimate solution toward conflicts see launching warfare. It can bring a huge number of injuries and deaths as well as destroy people's living areas. Despite all the objections, the development of powerful weapons has never ended. As the technology progresses, human nowadays have the ability to produce many more advanced weapons than ever. Biological and chemical weapons are parts of the Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), which is one of the most discussed issues in the international community.



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People have been conscious of the potential destruction biological and chemical weapons ever since the prototypes were introduced, therefore lots of operations were taken and agreements were signed. There are several significant treaties that deserve attention respectively, such as the 1899 Hague Conventions, the 1925 Geneva Convention, the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Although plenty of countries have insisted on eliminating the production, possession, and utilization of biological and chemical weapons, there are still catastrophes caused by those weapons happening around the world. The fear for future devastation has yet to be ceased.

History and Discussions

Chemical Weapons

The use of modern chemical weapons can be dated back to the First World War, when both sides of the conflict utilized poisonous gas in an attempt to cause agonizing suffering and to result in significant casualties. Such weapons consisted of

well-known commercial chemicals such as chlorine, phosgene and mustard gas, put into standard munitions like grenades and artillery shells. The results of these flagrant weapons were usually brutal deaths caused indiscriminately. Chemical warfare have taken responsibilities for more than one million casualties globally ever since.

[5]

After the War finally ended in 1918, a sentiment of public outrage against of chemical weapons arose across the world. As a result, the Geneva Protocol, which prohibits the use of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons in warfare, was signed in 1925, and entered into force on February 8th 1928. Despite the fact that the Protocol has made a great welcoming step and consisted of 138 States Parties nowadays,[6] it still retains several serious shortcomings. For instance, the Protocol only bans the use of chemical weapons solely, whereas does not address the regulations on the development, production, possession or stockpiling of these weapons. Moreover, many States Parties signed the Protocol with reservations, declaring that their obligations of no-use only apply to those who also joined the Protocol, and would withdraw these obligations when encounter such chemical attacks from the enemies.

Consequently, during the several decades of the first half of 20th century, many countries were actively engaging in the development of chemical weapons regardless of the Protocol, especially after the more powerful nerve gases discovered in this field. Due to a number of precedents of chemical weapons used in the inter-war period, the major powers of Second World War all anticipated large-scale chemical warfare in the war. However on the contrary to what was expected, chemical weapons were only used by the Japanese Army during the War, and for the fear of being retaliated, the weapons were never used against Westerners, but against the asians whom they regarded as more ‘inferior’. On the other side of the battlefield, chemical weapons

never appeared in Europe, because of the controversies and the debates between the historians, either it was the fear of retaliation, the protection for their own troops, or other moral reasons.

In 1975, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) entered into force, in the Convention Article IX it states that State Parties should affirm the effective prohibition of chemical weapons and should undertake the continued negotiations to reach early agreement and measures for the prohibition of their development, production, stockpiling and destruction.[7] The issue of chemical weapons was thereby retained on the agenda of the Geneva Conference, and various States tabled drafts during the 1970s. After years of long debates and negotiations, along with the restructuring of the Geneva conference, which was renamed the Conference on Disarmament in 1980, and the thawing of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was finally adopted by the Conference on September 3rd 1992, and transmitted its report to the UN General Assembly. The Convention was commended by the General Assembly, with the request to the UN Secretary-General to act as Depositary of the Convention. The CWC opened for signature in Paris on January 13th 1993. Within the first two days, over 130 States have signed the Convention.[8] Noting that considerable preparations were required and a number of issues remained to be resolved before entering into force, the signatory states in Paris approved the 'Paris Resolution' to set up a Preparatory Commission in preparation for the thereafter Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW was formally established and began its work immediately after the entry into force of the Convention on April 29th 1997. Every five years, the Convention and OPCW convene its Member States to host Review Conferences for the assessment and evaluation of the implementation of CWC, as well as identifying areas that need changes in order to adapt to shifts in the international environment, to the changing needs of States Parties, and also to respond to the rapid pace of scientific and technological advances in chemistry, engineering and biotechnology.

Biological Weapons

There was a major step taken in microbiology during the 19th century, which has greatly boosted the production and the use of the biological weapons. During the First World War, there were evidences suggesting the existence of a biological warfare program in Germany. The program allegedly featured covert operations of attempts by German operatives to infect military-used animals with glanders and anthrax while they were awaiting their shipment from United States to the Allies. It is believed that

Germans also conducted similar operations in Romania, Russia, Norway, Mesopotamia, and Argentina, while obtaining various levels of success.[9] The German bio-warfare program is particularly noteworthy because it is the first national offensive program that has the scientific foundation and the first concrete example of biological weapons use in wartime.

The 1925 Geneva Protocol has also banned the use of biological agents. Nevertheless, because viruses were not differentiated from bacteria at that time, they were not specified in the protocol. Moreover, with no verification mechanism or compliance addressed in the Protocol, not to mention the aforementioned problematic States reservations, several signatories States began to research and develop biological weapons during the inter-war period de facto.

In the Second World War, countries began conducting some rather ambitious biological warfare research programs. Japan is believed to conduct the most notorious biological warfare programs from approximately 1932 until the end of the War. The center of the program was known as 'Unit 731' and was located in Manchuria; more than 10,000 prisoners have died as a result of experimental infection or even live vivisection.[10] In addition, the Japanese military released the plague-infected fleas from aircraft over Chinese cities to initiate plague epidemics, without well acknowledging the hazards of biological weapons. As a result, an attack on the China city Changteh in 1941 reportedly caused over 10, 000 casualties; among them include 1700 accidentally killed Japanese troops' individuals. Thus, this operation came to cease in 1942. As for the Westerners, who perceived the threat of biological warfare, the Great Britain developed its own offensive biological weapons during the War. Gruinard Island, which is near the coast of Scotland, was quarantined because of focal soil contamination by anthrax and has been prohibited from accessing ever since. The antipersonnel weapons developed by the British were never massively produced. In the United States it was not the government but an individual who initiated a bio-weapons research program. Sir Frederick Banting, the Nobel Prize winner, created the first private biological weapon research centre in 1940. Shortly afterwards, the US government was also pressed to perform such research following its British ally. Nonetheless, due to the lack of adequate safety measures in the production facility, the large-scale production was precluded. Both countries, along with French, all claimed that the research was out of the fear of potential German attack with biological weapons; however the Nazis reportedly actually never had serious intention considering using biological weapons, which is because Hitler himself issued orders prohibiting such development.

In the 1960s, public grew concern about the indiscriminate nature, unpredictability, and epidemiological risks of biological weapons, as more information indicating that various national biological weapons programs became more evident. In July 1969, Great Britain submitted a statement to the UN Conference on Disarmament calling for the prohibition of development, production, and stockpiling of biological, bacteriological and toxin weapons. In September, the Soviet Union issued a similar proposal. On November 25th, President Nixon announced that the United States unilaterally renounced its development, production, stockpiling, and use of biological weapons. The afterward research would be strictly directed to the development of vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics as defensive measures. Consequently, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was adopted. The Convention currently consists of 169 State Parties and 110 Signatory States.[11] In 1991, the Third Review Conference of the Convention was convened and it established an Ad Hoc Group of Government Experts (VEREX) to identify and examine possible verification measures from a scientific and technical perspective. Unfortunately, during its existence from 1995 to 2001, the Ad Hoc Group failed to reach consensus on such an instrument.[12]

Past UN Actions

The UN has devoted itself to working on the maintenance of international peace and security since it was established. In terms of the chemical and biological weapons, the UN pushed ahead several treaties regarding the non-proliferation of such weapons.

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The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

It was opened for signature on April 10th 1972 and entered into force on March 26th 1975. It is the first multinational disarmament treaty banning the development, production, and stockpiling of an entire category of mass destruction weapons. Under the convention, the countries are responsible to provide annual reports on activities related to the BWC, including: data on research centers and laboratories; information on vaccine production facilities; information on national biological defense research and development programs; declaration of past activities in offensive and/or defensive biological research and development programs; information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurrences caused by toxins; publication of results and promotion of use of knowledge and contacts; information on legislation, regulations and other measures.[14]

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

The Convention aims to eliminate an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties. States Parties, in turn, must take the steps necessary to enforce the prohibition in respect of persons (natural or legal) within their jurisdiction.

All States Parties have agreed to chemically disarm by destroying any stockpiles of chemical weapons they may hold and any facilities which produced them, as well as any chemical weapons they abandoned on the territory of other States Parties in the past. States Parties have also agreed to create a verification regime for certain toxic chemicals and their precursors in order to ensure that such chemicals are only used for non-prohibited purposes.

A unique feature of the CWC is its incorporation of the 'challenge inspection', whereby any State Party in doubt about another State Party's compliance can request the Director-General to send an inspection team. Under the CWC's 'challenge inspection' procedure, States Parties have committed themselves to the principle of 'anytime, anywhere' inspections with no right of refusal.[15]

Besides signing up agreements and dealing with numerous tasks on their own, the UN also puts its efforts into seeking potential allies to work with, like the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which was awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize for 'extensive work to eliminate chemical weapons'.[16]

The UN has been taking lots of actions in order to eliminate biological and chemical weapons through years and years, but there are still various obstacles blocking its way on the aspects of military, politics, and sovereignties, etc. It would be much more efficient and effective if the UN could collaborate more closely with the governments.

Key Players and Bloc Positions

The international community puts emphasis on discussion regarding biological and chemical weapons. In spite that countries having their own perspective, they can be categorized approximately into several parts.

Countries Known for Ownership of Biological or Chemical Weapons

Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Syria are known for possessing and developing chemical or biological weapons. Though Syria is presently destroying its arsenal, Iran and DPRK hold disagreement with resolutions that suggest monitoring, investigations, and destruction of chemical and biological weapons and facilities.

Countries Known for Possible Ownership of Biological or Chemical Weapons

China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Russia have received accusations of stockpiling biological or chemical weapons, as well as many other nations who have been suspected to possibly develop and maintain stocks of biological or chemical weapons. In this situation, nations will not likely oppose safeguards entirely on biological or chemical weapons, but are expected to be careful of resolutions that set strict monitoring and penalties.

Former Biological or Chemical Weapons Program

Many nations, particularly Western nations and large powers, have in the past maintained biological or chemical weapons programs and have since discontinued them. Of these, France, Germany, Iraq, Japan, the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States have successfully produced biological or chemical weapons in the past. Each country’s position will depend on its individual commitment to ridding itself of its stockpiles, whether it has ratified the CWC, and the likelihood that it still maintains programs, maintains stockpiles, or conducts research using biological or chemical agents that could be weaponized.[17]

Possible Solutions

In 2004, the Security Council Resolution 1540 imposed States to renew and fulfil their commitments to CWC and BWC and to other relevant multilateral cooperation treaties, as means of pursuing and achieving their common objectives of non-proliferation. Notwithstanding, there are still four States that haven't signed the CWC, two have signed yet ratified;[18] only 110 States have signed the BWC, nine of them haven't yet ratified.[19] It is essential to call upon all States to join these conventions in order to more effectively strengthen their implementations. Additionally, nations shall identify the classification of bio-chemical weapons and their purposes. The disputes of these questions are mainly about whether these weapons are the violations of universal human rights, or it is acceptable for nations to use as self-defense measures.

Furthermore, with advancement in the biotechnology and chemical development, the peaceful uses such as vaccines and antisera should not be banned. However these goals are still far from reach without a clear verification mechanism. On the other hand, the emerging of bio-terrorism poses another concern. Chemical and biological agents are cheap and surprising easy to produce, which allows non-state actors to easily obtain and treat them as an alternative of conventional weapons, for they are difficult to police. They can then be used in terrorist attacks or even assassinations.

During the Iran-Iraq War from 1990 to 1998, it was estimated that the total toll of Iranian people under Iraq's chemical weapons attacks was approximately 90,000, which is about the same amount of people died from toxic gases in the First World War.[20] Even today, over twenty year after the truce, thousands of people are still suffering from the contamination of the attack. The issue on the control of bio-chemical weapons is extremely complex; it cannot be resolved single-handedly. Delegates should cooperate together to reach consensus, as well as working with Inter-Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and private sectors multilaterally in order to cease the development, acquirement, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, and transferring of these weapons. Ultimately, achieve the permanent elimination of bio-chemical warfare.

Questions to be Considered

- What is the definition of the ‘peaceful-use’ of the weapons?
- How to improve the weaknesses of BWC?
- How can we effectively regulate the use of biological and chemical weapons from non-sponsored countries? Has your country agreed to the CWC? If not, why? If so, has it completely ceased involvement with chemical weapons?
- What are the possibilities of chemical weapons falling into the hands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), terrorist organizations, or rogue states? What can be done about this?
- What are ways to make the mechanism under the two conventions more transparent and effective?
- How to cooperate with diverse bodies when facing the threats of toxin weapons?

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