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Committee: CCPCJ

Issue: The issue of
biological warfare in
modern societies

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INTRODUCTION

- Biological warfare refers to the deliberate use of disease-causing microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, etc. with the intentions to debilitate or kill humans, animals and plants. The utilization of biological warfare has a long history with records dating back to 1500-1200 BCE. This enduring practice highlights the persistent threat and progressive nature of biological weaponry.
- The deployment of biological warfare has become an increasing concern in modern societies due to the advancements made in biotechnology. The consequences involved extend beyond health crises, impacting international relationships and ethical issues around scientific research. In order to combat this threat, it is imperative for nations to collaborate and create efficient laws to overcome the misuse of bioweapons.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Throughout history, while their implementation may not have always been successful, biological agents have been used. The following are a few historical instances of the use of biological warfare:
 - During **World War I** Germany attempted to use *anthrax* and *glanders* as biological weapons against Allied livestock and troops.
 - In **1940 (WWII)**, the Japanese Army Air Force bombed **Ningbo** (a city in China) with ceramic bombs full of fleas carrying the *bubonic plague*.
 - Israel conducted a biological warfare operation codenamed "Cast Thy Bread" during the **1948 Arab-Israeli War** where the Haganah initially used *typhoid bacteria* to contaminate water wells in newly cleared Arab villages to prevent the population including militiamen from returning. Later, the biological warfare campaign expanded.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Despite several laws against biological warfare, concerns regarding them have persisted particularly in modern contexts.
- The use of bioweapons in war is attributed to their **non detection** by routine security systems, their **easy transportation** from one location to another and the **easy access to a wide variety of disease causing organisms**.
- **Persistent conflicts**, necessity for **exertion of power**, and **tension amongst nations** creates scenarios where the use of biological warfare might be considered a viable tactic.

RELEVANT TREATIES OR PAST SOLUTIONS

- The **1925 Geneva Protocol** prohibits the use but not the possession or development of biological and chemical weapons in international armed conflicts.
- The **1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)** supplements the Geneva Protocol by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological weapons.
- In **1985, the Australia Group** was established, a multilateral export control regime of 43 countries aiming to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Improving detection and security systems
 - a. Investing in more advanced security systems to help detect bioweapons/biological warfare threats early on.
 - b. Developing systems to report and analyze unusual clusters of illness in populations, which might signal a biological attack.
2. Spreading awareness
 - a. Orchestrating awareness campaigns can help educate the citizens and policy makers regarding the issue at hand, the importance of being prepared to tackle any situation that may arise and develop appropriate and effective response strategies.

APPENDICE

1. https://youtu.be/uY-pYJ_rPP4?si=qsHykEMzGXVVLmnU
This video provides a very brief introduction to biological weapons.
2. https://youtu.be/sq7jCxGyOV0?si=-39sYlaV3-p_IV9F
This short video highlights the history of the Biological Weapons Convention.
3. https://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0717-34581999000300001
This link provides an article on biological warfare, bioterrorism, biodefense and the biological and toxin weapons convention.
4. <https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons/>
This link to the official UN website provides information regarding the BWC and its key provisions.