



EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

Bioterrorism-A Threat to National Security

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ABSTRACT

A bioterrorism attack is that the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or other germs to cause illness or death. These germs are often found in nature. But they will sometimes be made more harmful by increasing their ability to cause disease, spread, or resist medical treatment.

The main aim of BWC implementation is to control bioterrorism nationally and internationally. We will be talking about bioterrorism and BWC, mentioning a little bit of its history and challenges due to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and their contribution to bioterrorism. The topic we will be talking about today is under discussion since 1990 but in 2001 the term of Emerging Infectious Diseases was coined for it, to emphasize the alarming situation of bioterrorism faced even after the implementation of BTWC. We have to see this keeping in view of the fact that the biological agents are more dangerous than chemical and nuclear weapons and there being no procedure to verify that how many states have biological weapons or have the capability to develop biological weapons adds this danger. In 1975 it was thought that only 1 or 2 member states other than superpowers had biological weapons. It is important that about 14 countries haven't signed the Convention but even the 181 countries which are party to it do not have any legislation for implementation beside that we know there is no verification procedures this puts all the states at the risk of being targets of bioterrorism. There is no universal method for control of disease outbreak and to cover the Science & Technology advances. Only stringent national implementation procedures and Confidence Building Measures can help to control threat from biological material. All infectious diseases are caused by bacteria or virus. These are divided into three categories based on their potential for bioterrorism. The important factor we would like to mention here is that developed countries have their vaccine banks in which they keep

vaccines for their whole population in case of emergency. Whereas, in developing countries we can only imagine this, and are very far from having these facilities. The most important potential of bacteria and viruses is incubation delay, due to which bioterrorism is more dangerous than chemical and nuclear terrorism. It is the incubation delay or period which takes 7-20 days of symptoms of a disease to appear no nation can protect its population by simply screening the travelers. In order to control bioterrorism, as a priority we have to develop stringent surveillance methods, rapid and sensitive screening procedure of detection and efficient and fast methods of reporting.

In my view there are two important things, first of these is development of organizations along with industry and second is strengthening of capacity building for surveillance and detection of Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases outbursts at national level. If we don't do it nationally, the Eight Review Conference in 2016 (after 10 years of discussion) has given a role to the international organization of interfering in any country. But given a leverage to developing countries by adding a clause "when required and upon request of State Parties". Nationally we can provide protection by taking important steps of vaccination and surveillance and connectivity. Pakistan has made many efforts to control bioterrorism and spread of diseases by putting in place different laws. These included in Drug Act 1976, Animal Quarantine act 1979, Antiterrorism Act 1997, Export Control Laws 2004, Biosafety Guidelines 2005 and Internal Compliance Committee 2016 for HEC formed by SECDIV. The first is increase of teaching and training by becoming member of two international organizations, the Australia Group and Wassenaar Arrangement. Second to introduce Disease Early Warning System to increase surveillance, detection and reporting and the third is to upgrade vaccine production facilities and to develop a vaccine bank. At the end we would like to put forward all the essential recommendations.

Keyword: Bioterrorism, Bacteria virus, infectious diseases, Global warming, Biosafety.

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