

**Formal Consultative Meeting of the States Parties
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

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Item 6 of the agenda

**Respective outstanding questions by the Russian Federation
to the United States and to Ukraine concerning the fulfilment
of their respective obligations under the Convention in the context
of the operation of biological laboratories in Ukraine**

**Reaction to statements of the interested
participating States at the Consultative meeting of
States Parties to the Biological and Toxin
Weapons Convention (BTWC) under Article V of
the BTWC**

Submitted by the Russian Federation

Mr. Chairperson,

1. The Russian Federation rejects the unfounded, unsubstantiated and completely politicized accusations made by the delegations of U.S. allies in connection with the special military operation in Ukraine, as well as with regard to the materials and evidence we have provided covering the biological and military activities carried out by Ukraine and the U.S. in contravention of the BTWC provisions.
2. The reasons for launching the special military operation in Ukraine are well known. These are the need to protect the long-suffering population of the DNR and LNR, which have been subjected to aggression by the Kiev regime for eight years, and also the need to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and eliminate threats to the security of our country coming from its territory.
3. The Russian Federation has requested the convening of the Consultative meeting with the specific purpose of strengthening the BTWC regime: to remove substantiated questions that have arisen regarding Ukraine's and the United States' compliance with obligations under the Convention in the context of the activities of biological laboratories in Ukrainian territory. As enshrined in Article V of the BTWC, States Parties "may consult and cooperate with each other in resolving any issues that might arise in relation to the objective of, or in connection with, the implementation of the provisions of the Convention". The Russian side assumed that the consultative meeting would enable interested delegations, with the support of their experts, to gain a thorough understanding of the situation, to exchange assessments, to ask professional questions and to receive detailed answers.
4. During the Consultative meeting itself, we made all the necessary efforts to provide detailed inputs and arguments to ensure that the Consultative meeting achieves its objectives and resolves the situation related to the military and biological activities on the territory of Ukraine.



5. However, based on the results of the exchange of views among the participating States, we note that the overwhelming majority of the questions put forward by Russia remained without a proper response. Instead of detailed substantive arguments, we have witnessed an attempt to cover up with "good intentions", allegedly motivated by concern for the health and sanitary and epidemiological well-being in Ukraine in the context of the implementation of Article X of the BTWC, the true aims of this military biological activity in violation of Articles I and IV of the Convention, and also the unsightly sanitary and epidemiological situation in that country, which has steadily deteriorated over the past 15 years.

6. These issues were presented in detail by the Russian Federation at the meetings. They concern the scale and focus of the military and biological activities carried out in the territory of Ukraine, the involvement of the United States Department of Defense in these activities, the granting by the United States authorities of patents for inventions originally designed to produce means of delivery of biological weapons, and also the non-transparent nature of the United States-Ukrainian co-operation.

7. We consider the policy pursued by the United States and Ukraine during the Consultative meeting to be aimed at ensuring the continued unhindered implementation by the Pentagon of military and biological research outside the national territory (including in the immediate vicinity of the Russian borders) under the guise of allegedly "purely peaceful" and "having nothing to do" with bioweapons. This is yet another attempt to misrepresent the situation in order to distract the attention of the international community from the real risks and threats posed by the U.S. military's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

8. The ostensibly "open and transparent" nature of the cooperation that the U.S. is trying to convince the world of is nothing more than hypocrisy. Despite Russia's repeated calls, Washington refrains from providing specific, comprehensive information on military and biological activities outside the national territory, limiting itself to selective general information on the financial and material assistance provided. No data on such activities is being shared by the Americans as part of the BTWC's confidence-building measures. And this is not accidental, because traditionally the U.S. concludes a standard cooperation agreement with the recipient countries, which provides for making cooperation in the biological sphere closed and confidential.

9. A clear indication that the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program has a pronounced military orientation and has little in common with Article X of the BTWC on international cooperation is its implementation in violation of the Convention in Ukraine. The Russian Federation presented documents and evidence that shed light on the true nature of interaction of the U.S. military and its contractors with the Ukrainian side in the military and biological sphere. An analysis of the projects carried out in Ukrainian laboratories gives all grounds for an unequivocal conclusion that the development of biological weapons components was carried out in the immediate vicinity of the Russian borders.

10. This is not an isolated case of Ukraine. Under the guise of well-intentioned goals of assisting in the development of national systems of sanitary and epidemiological surveillance and combating the threat of bioterrorism and the spread of biological weapons, the United States has dragged many countries in different regions of the world, including the former Soviet Union, into its sphere of unscrupulous influence.

11. The information we presented during the Consultative meeting contains a host of special subjects to which not all participating States have given the necessary attention at the expert level. In particular, the issue of controlling the use and movement of pathogens in large collections was left without comment, and a number of countries limited themselves to purely politicized statements.

12. The risks of violations of the BTWC by the U.S. and concerns about negligence in the storage and movement of pathogens and control over the implementation of biosafety requirements have been repeatedly emphasized by the Russian Federation in recent years. A striking example is the State Department's project to study the highly pathogenic avian influenza agent H5N1 in order to enhance its virulence, which received scandalous publicity in 2012. The issue was extensively discussed in the BTWC intersessional program, but was never properly evaluated by the participating States. The "accidental" dispatch of anthrax

spores to several countries and the "accidentally forgotten" vials of smallpox virus raise doubts about the reliability of biosecurity controls in the United States and the alleged biosecurity "leadership" role it is trying to play.

13. Why isn't the international community asking questions about the 300 U.S.-controlled microbiological laboratories around the world, the activities of which are not reported by Washington as part of the confidence-building measures? In fact, this is a network of which the operations remain closed. Could this be why the U.S. is in no hurry to withdraw its reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol?

14. We urge BTWC States Parties to consider the following:

- Why is the U.S. Department of Defense all over the world, including the former Soviet Union, seeking biosecurity information, studying pathogens, collecting biological material, and installing infection monitoring software?
- why are civilian "public health and infectious disease epidemiology" projects funded by the U.S. military?
- why does the Pentagon need to support hundreds of biological laboratories around the world?
- what happens to pathogens exported from Ukraine and other countries? What research are the Pentagon institutes doing with them?

15. No country can feel safe until we have full transparency of the U.S. activities, including those outside the national territory. In the current situation, the whole world should be prepared for new epidemics, as the U.S. itself warns. At the same time, it should be taken into account that the pathogens identified may surprise experts with their "new" properties.

16. The Russian Federation, as a Depositary State of the BTWC, reaffirms its commitment to its obligations under the Convention, including Article X. We welcome the cooperation of countries and the exchange of experience in the field of biological research for peaceful purposes. We note the need for and desirability of continuing these activities. Russia takes an active part in such activities in the biological sphere. We provide advice, send mobile medical teams and supply test systems, vaccines, personal protective equipment and laboratory equipment to other countries.

17. However, as the documents and evidence we have cited demonstrate, the U.S.-assisted military and biological activities in Ukrainian territory have nothing to do with Article X cooperation. We must draw a clear line between preventive measures, strengthening response systems to potential biological threats, and the activities that have taken place in Ukraine.

18. We are grateful to delegations sharing Russia's assessments and arguments and seeking to understand the issues raised by Russia for the responsible position presented. We note that, apart from the U.S. allies, none of the delegations questioned the Russian arguments and materials. We state with regret that the Consultative meeting failed to meet its objectives and address the questions raised by the Russian Federation. We highlight that the participating States differed in their assessments of the information provided.

19. In order to resolve the current situation regarding the military and biological activities in Ukrainian territory, we see a need to continue the consultative process within the BTWC. However, taking into account the unfortunate precedent of 1997, when the issues raised by Cuba with regard to the United States were never resolved, and the results of the current Consultative meeting, we consider it necessary not to limit ourselves to consultations and exchange of views only. All instruments available under the Convention, including Article VI of the BTWC, should be used to investigate violations of the Convention by Ukraine and the United States.

20. Moreover, the Consultative meeting demonstrated the urgent need to strengthen the BTWC regime. Above all, this concerns the resumption of negotiations on a legally binding Protocol to the Convention with an effective verification mechanism, which has been blocked by the US since 2001. The reason is clear: Washington does not want its military and biological activities carried out in violation of the BTWC to become known to the world community and the public.

21. Other steps are also required. The Russian Federation has long been proposing the inclusion of information on military and biological activities carried out abroad in the reports submitted annually by the States Parties to the Convention as part of the confidence-building measures.

22. Only such comprehensive measures will make it possible to place the military and biological activities of the United States and its allies in various regions of the world, including the post-Soviet space, under close international control and ensure verifiable compliance by States Parties to the BTWC with their obligations.

Thank you for your attention.
