

Political and Security Committee

Topic 1: Biological Weapons

Biological weapons are a scourge which have plagued the world for over 200 years. Though many attempts have been made by the United Nations to end their production, they are still sought after by many countries around the world. The first attempt to eliminate biological weapons was the 1925 Geneva Protocol which banned their use. The second attempt came in 1972 at the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC or Convention). This agreement prevented countries from producing, stockpiling, and testing these weapons outside the confines of peaceful purposes. Following this model have been the African Union which published the Rights of Communities, Farmers, Breeders, and Access to Biological Resources. Many countries like Albania, Belarus, and Mauritius have implemented national laws to address biological weapons. Member nations are encouraged to communicate attempts at confidence building measures, national legislation, and actions taken by State Parties is reported annually to the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs.

Over time, several problems with the Convention have become quite evident. First, while the Convention goes a long way towards encouraging countries to report any developments made, it does not go any further. The BWC does not oversee the installation of any of the progress that these countries claim to be making – at best it encourages the United Nations Security Council to investigate violations. Second, the BWC makes no attempt to locate or identify current stockpiles of biological weapons. This issue gained international attention when Iraq admitted to the UN that after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the nation had produced 19,000 liters of concentrated botulinum toxin (most of which has yet to be accounted for). Finally, the Convention does nothing to stop countries like Iran, North Korea, China, India, and Pakistan, who are developing or in possession of biological weapons.

Additionally, the Convention does not address recent advances in the biotechnology field that have made it easier to manufacture biological weapons such as Anthrax and Ricin. The BWC makes significant headway in the proliferation of biological weapon within and between nations, but does not speak to preventing individuals and small groups from obtaining biological weapons. Attacks such like the Japanese subway attack in 1998, the 2002 Ricin Laboratory plot in Britain, and the Anthrax attack on the United States Senate offices in 2004 on have shown what extremist groups can create with out access to government stockpiles or technology.

Questions:

1. How can countries be encouraged to destroy their current stockpiles of biological weapons?
2. What should be done to address the failures of these countries?
3. What must be fixed in updating the BWC?
4. How can countries prevent the actions of single individuals and small groups as access to biological weapons becomes easier?

Resources:

1. <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>
Details countries with biological and chemical weapons capabilities and treaties each country has ratified.
2. <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/bio/resource/introtobw.html>
A description of different types of biological weapons.
3. <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/dod/fm8-9/2ch1.htm>
NATO handbook on biological weapons
4. <http://www.opbw.org/>
Website of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, attended and signed by important members of the international community.
5. http://www.emedicinehealth.com/biological_warfare/article_em.htm
The history of biological warfare.
6. <http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/library.shtml>
UN Office of Disarmament Affairs document library, providing easy access to UN documents related to disarmament.
7. <http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/ODAPublications/Yearbook/>
The UN Disarmament Yearbook, an annual publication about disarmament-related resolutions and the main topics of multilateral consideration during the year.
8. http://www.iss.europa.eu/nc/actualites/actualite/select_category/21/article/enforcing-non-proliferation-the-european-union-and-the-2006-btwc-review-conference/
A paper focusing on international efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from being developed and used as weapons.
9. <http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/disarmament.nsf/%28httpPages%29/23958FD3E9A0A67BC12571F10032D47B?OpenDocument&unid=29B727532FECBE96C12571860035A6DB>
Science and technology papers prepared in advance of the sixth review conference of the Convention.
10. <http://www.armscontrol.org/subject/16/date>
Current resources on the topic of biological weapons, compiled by the Arms Control Association.

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Topic 2: International Airport Security

Since the terrorist attempt on the flight from Belgium to the United States of America, the world has refocused its attention on airport security. However, many questions have arisen. What rights do citizens have at the airports in various nations? In Israel and the United States, passengers traveling to and from specific countries are required to go through more thorough screenings. Further, with no international directives to guide international airport security and screening, security policies vary widely. In France, airport screeners are not permitted to touch a passenger unless law enforcement officials are present, while in Israel, cavity searches are deemed acceptable in certain circumstances. One of the questions facing the UN must be how to encourage some parity among nations without infringing on what countries consider their sovereignty. Finally, the attempt through Belgium highlights security failures of both developed and developing nations.

There have been several suggestions on how to improve airport security. One is to encourage countries to take current bilateral agreements involving safety standards and expand it to airport security. The United States has proposed the use of the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System II (CAPPS II). However, the European Union has stated that CAPPS II violates their privacy laws involving the collection of data about its citizens. Since 2003, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has been auditing airport security in many countries. Some believe giving this organization enforcement powers would be one way to help address security issues. However, critics feel that there is a conflict of interest since airports and airlines employ many members of the ICAO.

Another issue that must be examined is assisting developing nations with their airport security. Security analysts state that much of the security in North and Central Africa is perfunctory with only simple pat downs and random bag searches. In many western nations, the use of metal detectors and full body scanners is taken for granted. Developing nations cannot pay the cost of roughly three million dollars for both purchase and installation of body scanners, before the costs of training personnel to use the machine or maintenance of the equipment.

Questions:

1. Are bilateral agreements amongst nations in the answer to addressing international airport security issues? Should the United Nations encourage these treaties?
2. Some have suggested that a way of addressing airport security concerns in Africa is by convincing these nations to pool their resources together. If this is the answer how can these countries be convinced to work together?
3. What is the responsibility of developed nations when it comes to providing security technology to developing nations? How should the United Nations go about upgrading developing nations' airport security systems?

Resources:

1. <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=11&ved=0CAUQFjAAOAO&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww1.maxwell.syr.edu%2FuploadedFiles%2Fcampbell%2Fevents%2FAlbertoBogatz.pdf&ei=mRfiS4q6EYjK9gTz5vyTAw&usg=AFQjCNE88haqw0deAZrcZ774PF70-GsnOw&sig2=OJa7jhJCS59qTMmHRE7B9Q>
Paper giving background on CAPPS II
2. <http://www.icao.int/>
Website of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
3. <http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/global-airport-security/1>
Suggestions for coordinating security around the world.
4. <http://www.airport-int.com/article/airport-operations-and-security-management.html>
A chronicle of recent changes in airport security throughout the years.
5. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14289974/>
A list of possible uses of technology in airports that has not been widely adopted.
6. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/13/us/13scanners.html>
A description of the controversy surrounding whole body scanners.
7. http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2010/01/detroit_bomb_attempt_highlight.html
Explanations of the weaknesses in airport security in developing nations.

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Topic 3: Internet and Computer Security

Every day the Internet becomes increasingly more important to citizens and governments throughout the world. The advent of online banking and the ability to pay bills online has brought personal internet privacy and security to the forefront as it has been shown how increasingly vulnerable these services are to being compromised. The Symantec Global Internet Security Threat Report listed credit card and banking information as the most advertised information posted on underground economy servers and this fraud is costing consumers over 500 million U.S. dollars a year. Countries around the world are becoming increasingly dependent on the Internet to run security, health care, and financial institutions and attacks seem to be increasing with each year. In 2000, the United States reported 1,415 attacks on its Department of Defense; however, in 2008, it reported nearly 45,000 attacks on its infrastructure.

While the focus of the world has mainly been on China for its involvement with web censorship, there have been startling developments in South America. With Brazil's development of its Internet infrastructure and broadband services, it has replaced Germany in the list as one of the top 3 places of origin for malicious activity behind the United States and China. Additionally the drop in ranking of malicious activities in both Germany and the United Kingdom was more related to increases in the developing countries of Brazil and India as opposed to an actual drop in activity. Finally, malicious activities in the countries of Poland, Russia, and Turkey are also expected to increase in the coming years as these countries expand their Internet services.

Many countries have taken steps to try and combat this expanding global issue. Singapore has amended its Computer Misuse Act making attacks on computers involved in national security, banking and finance, and emergency services a much more serious crime with steeper penalties. Other countries like Australia and the United States have set up specific law enforcement groups to combat these crimes. Censorship has recently been brought to the limelight by the on going struggle between China and Google. China restricts access to sites discussing the Dalai Lama, Tiananmen Square, Falun Gong, and many other websites. Google has stated that it will no longer censor its content for China. China not alone in attempts to censor content on the Internet -- countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Vietnam and Uzbekistan do so as well.

Questions:

1. With the emergence of broadband Internet services in developing nations, what can be done to protect consumers from Internet fraud? How can the international community assist these nations and their law enforcement agencies handle this growing menace?
2. How can countries be encouraged to assist each other in order to curb cyber-crime?
3. What is the position of the United Nations on Internet censorship? How can the UN encourage the free flow of information throughout the world?

Resources:

1. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/html/185.htm>
Compilation of current articles on government Internet security issues.
2. http://www.unodc.org/documents/crime-congress/12th-Crime-Congress/Documents/A_CONF.213_9/V1050382e.pdf
Twelfth UN Congress on the Prevention of Cyber Crime
3. <http://www.un.org/events/10thcongress/2088h.htm>
Special Workshop at the United Nations Tenth Congress for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
4. http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/international/countriesandterritories/china/internet_censorship/index.html
Background on Internet censorship in China
5. http://eval.symantec.com/mktginfo/enterprise/white_papers/b-whitepaper_internet_security_threat_report_xv_04-2010.en-us.pdf
Symantec Global Security Threat Report for 2009
6. <http://www.symantec.com/business/theme.jsp?themeid=threatreport>
Current Symantec Threats to Internet Security
7. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/southkorea/5835202/Internet-attacks-on-South-Korea-may-have-come-from-UK.html>
Article on attacks aimed at South Korea
8. <http://ecommerce.hostip.info/pages/241/Computer-Crime-INTERNATIONAL-COMPUTER-CRIME.html>
A description of problems that arise from crimes committed internationally through the Internet
9. http://www.securitynewsportal.com/securitynews2009/article.php?title=Russia_Tops_List_of_Internet_Attacks_in_Q4_2009
A recent article detailing Internet attacks in the end of 2009
10. <http://www.crime-research.org/news/13.05.2005/1225/>
UN Recommendations on fighting cyber-crime