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FIGHTING BIOTERRORISM: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The purpose of abstracts is to define the essence and features of bioterrorism and pay attention to measures countering the use of biological weapons in terrorist acts.

Objectives:

1. to explain the definition of terrorism;
2. to identify the main types of terrorism;
3. to survey the types of commonly used by bioterror agents;
4. to give examples of bioterrorist events in the world;
5. to consider the international experience in the fight against

bioterrorism.

Terrorism is the unlawful and deliberate use of violence to achieve an ideological, financial, religious, or political aims by intimidating the population.

Terror activities can consist of biologic, chemical, nuclear or explosive events.

A specific manifestation of terrorism is generally an act of terrorism. A terrorist act is a criminal act in the form of the use of weapons, explosion, arson or other illegal actions. Therefore, there are different types of terrorism. They are biologic, chemical, radiation and food terrorism.

Bioterrorism is the intentional release of biological agents that can cause illness or death in people, livestock, or crops. These pathogenic bacteria, fungi, toxins, or viruses can be natural or artificial. They may spread through the food, water, air or animals. Terrorists often choose biological weapons because it spreads rapidly around the world [1].

In the last 100 years, the United States and the international community have experienced numerous occasions of terrorism and bioterrorism against civilians. For example, during the First World War

Germany started a biological sabotage in the United States, Romania, Russia and France by infecting horses and mules with glanders, a virulent sickness. In 1972 two college students, Allen Schwander and Stephen Pera, were detained for designing to intoxicate the Chicago water supply with typhoid bacteria. The Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh followers in Oregon tried to influence a local election by infecting doorknobs and bars in restaurants with *Salmonella typhimurium* bacteria in 1984 [2].

Recently scientists have stated that a new threat appeared in the 21st century. Why is biophysicist Steven Block so worried about smallpox? After all, more than 20 years have passed since the World Health Organization announced the eradication of this highly infectious and cureless illness. A professor of biological sciences and applied physics at Stanford Block says that smallpox creates a real threat to the whole world. "The disease has been eliminated in the wild, the governments of Russia and the United States still preserve frozen stocks of smallpox virus," points out Block [4]. This professor of biological sciences warns that if politicians or terrorists were to get hold of the remaining supplies, the consequences could be horrible and irreparable.

Block proves that the United States and other developed countries should be doing more to block the dissemination of biological weaponry, which he designates "a real threat to peace in the twenty-first century". Bioweapons are "the poor man's atom bomb," writes Block in *American Scientist*. He claims that biological weapons suggest terrorist groups and "rogue states" (such as Iraq and North Korea) an available way to confront the prevailing military advantage of the United States and other nuclear states. A biophysicist also raises the question of "black biology" – a shadowy science in which microorganisms are genetically modified for the purpose of creating modern weapons of terror. Block points out that genetic maps of mortal viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms already are widely obtainable in the public domain.

Access to chemical and biological agents and radionuclear materials that have been developed as weapons is limited, and their production and stockpiling are controlled under specific treaties and agreements. However, more readily available toxic chemicals, including pesticides, heavy metals and industrial chemicals as well as a plethora of naturally occurring microbiological pathogens, could be used as agents in terrorist threats to food. Their effective use would depend on their potential impact on human health, the food used for their dissemination and the point of introduction into the food chain. The agents used could have acute effects, resulting in death, paralysis or vomiting, or long-term consequences, such as fetal abnormalities and increased rates of chronic illness such as cancer. The

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA have issued a list of critical biological agents as a part of their strategic plan for preparedness for terrorist incidents, but the list does not include most chemical agents [4].

Threats from terrorists, criminals and other anti-social groups who target the safety of the food supply are already a reality. During the past two decades, World Health Organization (WHO) Member States have expressed concern about the possibility that chemical and biological agents and radionuclear materials might deliberately be used to harm civilian populations [5]. In recent months, the health ministries of several countries have increased their state of alert for intentional malevolent use of agents that may be spread through air, water or food.

On 18 May 2002, the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly adopted a resolution, which expressed serious concern about threats against civilian populations by deliberate use of biological, chemical or radionuclear agents. It noted that such agents can be disseminated via food and requested the Director-General to provide tools and support to Member States, particularly developing countries, in strengthening their national systems. It also requested World Health Organization to continue to issue international guidance and technical information on recommended public health measures to deal with deliberate use of chemical, biological or radionuclear agents to cause harm.

Today the threat of bioterrorism is real. That's why the fight against terrorism is represented by a comprehensive system of measures that make it impossible for terrorists to obtain bioweapons. Also thanks to this Ncomplex law enforcement agencies are able to respond quickly to terrorist acts.

Unfortunately, Ukraine lags behind many leading countries in the matter of biosafety. The most prepared for this type of terrorism is the United States. They have a national strategic plan for preparedness in case of biological and chemical threat. It was adopted in 2001. According to the plan more than 10 different agencies and public services are involved in the detection and elimination of terrorist incidents [6, p. 44-48].

In addition I should be said that it would be appropriate to improve a material and technical providing of sanitary and epidemiological institutions, create rapid response groups for biological control, increase the level of baggage screening for the presence of biological agents at customs and airports, ensure reliable protection of water in taking, water, sewer communication, improve the system of vaccination against infectious diseases, develop effective remedies of diagnostics and fight against

infectious agents and establish control of distribution and use of biological agents.

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**ORGANISATION OF ACTIVITIES OF WATER POLICE UNITS
AND AIR SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF UKRAINE**

Ensuring environmental protection, especially responding to unlawful actions of citizens in this area is acute for our state today. This issue has taken on enormous importance, especially due to the technological progress and invention of state-of-the-art technical devices, as well as due to the indifference of citizens. Thus the activities of water police units and air support as well as and their role in this context are of special importance.

The reforms in various state sectors are permanently underway, and the National Police of Ukraine is no exception, with the aim to improve the crime rate and establish a sufficient level of safety for the citizens of our state. Thus, one of the important steps in this direction is to adopt the positive experience of developed countries and implement it within Ukraine.