

Zhuravlev T. M.
DISEASES AS A MEANS OF SOLVING MILITARY AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS
Scientific supervisor senior teacher Dunyak L. I.
Foreign languages chair
Military Academy of the Republic of Belarus

It is known that medicine is a science of treatment and prevention of diseases. But there are cases when diseases are not treated, but even spread on purpose to achieve some military or political objectives. In this paper, we will consider the main issues relating to the problem of bacteriological (biological) weapons.

Bacteriological (biological) weapons are a means of mass destruction of people, animals, agricultural crops and military equipment of the enemy. The basis of their damaging effects is bacteriological agents, which include pathogenic microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, rickettsia, fungi) and bacteria produced by toxins.

Bacteriological agents can be used:

1) as antipersonnel - pathogenic agents of bacteriological diseases (plague, tularemia, anthrax, smallpox, cholera);

2) as antianimal - pathogens of foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, swine fever, anthrax, sap, and other diseases;

3) as anticrops - pathogenic agents of cereals rust, potatoes late blight, late fading of corn and other crops; insect-pests of agricultural plants;

Possible forms of spreading the pathogens are vectors, weapons, air infection.

Biological warfare is usually thought of as a twentieth century development, but in fact the use of biological agents is not a new concept, and the history is filled with examples of their use.

Since 400 BC, when the Scythian archers infected their arrows by dipping them in decomposing bodies or in blood mixed with manure, till 1979, when an accidental release of anthrax from a weapons facility in Sverdlovsk, USSR, killed at least 66 people, biological weapons have been the most terrible weapons ever invented by the humanity.

Biological weapons are potentially more deadly than chemical weapons. A small amount can kill tens of thousands - perhaps even millions - of people.

One of the primary reasons of why biological warfare should be stopped is that it is fundamentally inhumane. This is inherently true in the nature of disease. Someone that is dying from a disease in many cases suffers far more than someone dying from a bullet wound.

Another reason why the use of biological warfare is wrong is that it is impossible to control or predict its effect. When a biological weapon is detonated it has no specific target but it can and does affect any person within its impact radius. This means that it indiscriminately kills innocent civilians including women and children.

That's why the biological weapons are prohibited. The first multilateral disarmament treaty banning the production of an entire category of weapons was the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. The Convention currently commits the 170 states. However, the absence of any formal verification regime to monitor compliance has limited the effectiveness of the Convention. There is no hard evidence, but in some experts' opinion, there are many non-official stocks of some viruses.

So, it is obvious that the problem of bacteriological weapons still exists and this problem is not only of a military character, a civil public opinion is also very important – we can contribute by researching the topic and speaking and writing about it.