
**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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**Consideration of the provision of assistance and
coordination with relevant organizations upon
request by any State Party in the case of alleged
use of biological or toxin weapons, including
improving national capabilities for disease surveillance,
detection and diagnosis and public health systems.**

National preparedness against biological threats

Submitted by Japan

I. Introduction

1. As a country that is playing a part in the advancement of bio-technology and where acts of bioterrorism have been plotted¹, Japan strongly recognizes the need to counter threats of a biological nature and is taking the necessary domestic measures to respond to such threats. Furthermore, Japan attaches particular importance to the role of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and is making a positive contribution to its universalization and national implementation. In this light, Japan is submitting this working paper for the purpose of sharing with the State Parties to the Convention the actions we have taken for national preparedness against biological threats as examples of measures for tackling the alleged use of biological or toxin weapons. The submission of this working paper is part of Japan's efforts to address biological threats, and we believe that it can greatly augment global efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

II. Basic government policy on countering biological threats

2. Following the 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States, the Government of Japan adopted the "Basic Government Policy on Countermeasures against Chemical and

¹ A summary of alleged biological weapons use by religious cults in Japan is provided in the final part of this working paper.

Biological Terrorism” at a Cabinet meeting in November 2001. In pursuance of this policy, the government shall maintain a state of readiness that will enable it to react in a prompt and effective manner to a chemical or biological terrorist attack inside the country based on the following five basic guiding principles:

- (a) Strengthen the public health care system through the implementation of infectious disease countermeasures and vaccine stockpiling;
- (b) Strengthen cooperation between relevant organizations and enhance their response readiness;
- (c) Strengthen security and precautionary measures for the prevention of terrorist attacks and the control of biological and chemical agents;
- (d) Strengthen the response capacities of the police, the self-defense forces, the fire department, the coast guard and other relevant organizations;
- (e) Provide accurate and timely information to the public.

III. Strengthening the initial response system

3. In October 2001, the Government of Japan instructed the prefectural governments to strengthen their infectious disease surveillance system in order to quickly detect unusual incidents, including an outbreak of anthrax, and to facilitate the prompt reporting and investigation of the cause.

4. In October 2003, the Infectious Disease Control Law was amended adding Smallpox to the list of diseases covered by the law among other changes. Under this new legal framework, medical doctors who diagnose patients with infectious diseases suspected to be caused by bioterrorism are obliged to promptly report the incident to the authorities.

5. In April 2008, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) designated medical institutions in the country so as to collect information to determine the infectious route in cases of unknown respiratory or skin diseases.

6. An amendment of the Immunization Law in 2003 now allows the administration of the smallpox vaccine in the event of a bioterrorist attack using smallpox. Furthermore, the Government of Japan has continued such efforts as stockpiling the smallpox vaccine, promoting methods of treating infectious diseases such as anthrax and smallpox to local governments and improving the preparedness of prefectural governments.

7. Furthermore, the Government of Japan, in cooperation with the Livestock Hygiene Service Centers of each prefecture, has put into place the Notifiable Animal Infectious Disease Surveillance System in order to monitor animal infectious diseases, and maintains stockpiles of vaccines for zoonotic diseases like highly pathogenic avian influenza, as well as for infectious diseases that may cause serious damage to the livestock industry like foot-and-mouth disease and classical swine fever (hog cholera).

8. As a part of information source, MHLW provides terrorism related information to the public on its website. Also, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries compiles regular reports about the status of various diseases under its purview and releases necessary information to the public.

IV. Enhancing response capabilities

9. Counter-Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) terrorism squads, equipped with advanced equipment and machinery, such as counter-NBC terrorism squad vehicles and

biological agent detectors, were established in the Tokyo and Osaka police departments in 2000. It was also decided to further strengthen the counter-NBC terrorism capacities of the National Police Agency (NPA) through such measures as setting up additional counter-NBC terrorism squads in seven prefectures, together with similar teams in the mobile police units of other prefectures.

10. The Self Defense Forces (SDF) has also been in the process of enhancing its own capabilities against NBC weapons. Concrete measures include the introduction of NBC reconnaissance vehicles, chemical surveillance devices, decontamination vehicles, personal protection equipments, portable detectors for biological substances and chemical protection suits, and the conduct of research and development into NBC alarm devices and decontamination kits.

11. Similarly, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) has also distributed equipment, for example positive pressure-type chemical hazmat suits and portable biological agent detectors, to major Fire Defense Headquarters throughout Japan. In addition, the FDMA provides special, sophisticated utility trucks, special hazmat fire-fighting trucks and vehicles equipped with large-sized decontamination systems.

12. In April 2009, the Cabinet Secretariat established the position of Senior Officer on Countermeasures against NBC-threats who is making efforts to improve capabilities under its purview.

13. To enhance capabilities to counter bioterrorism, the NPA, FDMA and the SDF have provided adequate education and training to their members, and the Government of Japan conducted a training drill in 2008 (smallpox) and in 2009 (anthrax).

14. To prepare for a future bioterrorism incident, Japan continues to further enhance its national response capabilities in close cooperation, such as exchanging information, with other countries and international organizations.

V. Alleged biological weapons use by religious cult "Aum Shinrikyo" in Japan

A. Botulinum

15. The Aum Shinrikyo is a yoga-circle-based religious cult that was formed in 1984 by Shoko Asahara, whose real name is Chizuo Matsumoto. Following defeat in the parliamentary election of February 1990, Matsumoto pressed forward an incubation program that had already been in operation, and ordered his followers to carry out indiscriminate mass murder by spreading Botulinum all over the world.

16. Upon receiving this order the scientific branch of the cult, which consisted of one follower who majored in veterinary medicine and a number of followers who were qualified doctors, initiated a mass Botulinum incubation program at a plant built in Kamikuishiki village in Yamanashi Prefecture. Around April 1990, the cult sprayed incubated Botulinum from a truck equipped with an aerosol generator at several spots around Tokyo. However, because they had not produced a poisonous strain of the bacteria, they were unable to kill anyone.

B. Bacillus anthracis

17. Following the work on Botulinum, the Aum Shinrikyo conducted a study on Bacillus anthracis. From around 1992, Matsumoto provided an airtight room where

poisonous bacteria could be experimented on, and allowed his followers to study Botulinum and Bacillus anthracis. Around May 1993, Matsumoto instructed many executive members of the cult to incubate a large amount of Bacillus anthracis at an 8-story sect building in Kameido, Tokyo, and to construct a spraying device. In June and July 1993, they twice sprayed the pathogen towards the neighboring areas from the top of the Kameido building, but due to the high pressure of the spraying device all the spores died and caused nothing more than an abnormal odor in the surrounding area. Later when the Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States analyzed the left-over materials, they discovered that the Bacillus anthracis incubated by the cult was originally of a harmless strain. It seems that the first strain of the pathogen that the cult obtained was used for the production of vaccines.

18. Matsumoto later moved the Bacillus anthracis incubation facility to the cult site in Kamikuishiki village, and instructed his followers to continue to incubate the bacteria. In July or August 1993, Matsumoto twice took the aerosol generator-equipped vehicle to Tokyo and its surrounding areas to spray incubated bacteria. They failed again to kill anyone because they could not produce the poisonous strain of Bacillus anthracis.

19. Later, the Aum Shinrikyo sprayed Sarin in Matsumoto city, Nagano Prefecture in June 1994, which resulted in eight deaths, and in the Tokyo subway system in March 1995. Matsumoto was arrested and prosecuted in the same year.
