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QUESTION OF GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Report of the Secretary-General on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effects of their possible use

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2454 A (XXIII) of 20 December 1968, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the General Assembly the report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effects of their possible use, prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution, the report is also being transmitted to the Security Council (S/9292) and the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament[1/] as well as to the Governments of Member States.

1/ By a letter dated 1 July 1969 from the Secretary-General to the Co-Chairmen of the Conference.

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FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

During the past few years, I have become increasingly concerned by developments in the field of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and have given expression to this concern on several occasions. A year ago, I stated publicly that "the international community was not sufficiently conscious of the dangers inherent in this new type of weapon of mass murder", and that "due attention had not been focused on this very serious problem". In the introduction to my annual report on the work of the Organization, in September 1968, I stated:

> "While progress is being made in the field of nuclear disarmament, there is another aspect of the disarmament problem to which I feel too little attention has been devoted in recent years. The question of chemical and biological weapons has been overshadowed by the question of nuclear weapons, which have a destructive power several orders of magnitude greater than that of chemical and biological weapons. Nevertheless, these too are weapons of mass destruction regarded with universal horror. In some respects, they may be even more dangerous than nuclear weapons because they do not require the enormous expenditure of financial and scientific resources that are required for nuclear weapons. Almost all countries, including small ones and developing ones, may have access to these weapons, which can be manufactured quite cheaply, quickly and secretly in small laboratories or factories. This fact in itself makes the problem of control and inspection much more difficult. Moreover, since the adoption, on 17 June 1925, of the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, there have been many scientific and technical developments and numerous improvements, if that is the right word, in chemical and biological weapons, which have created new situations and new problems. On the one hand, there has been a great increase in the capability of these weapons to inflict unimaginable suffering, disease and death to ever larger numbers of human beings; on the other hand, there has been a growing tendency to use some chemical agents for civilian riot control and a dangerous trend to accept their use in some form in conventional warfare.
>
> "Two years ago, by resolution 2162 B (XXI), the General Assembly called for the strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, condemned all actions contrary to those objectives and invited all States to accede to the Protocol. Once again, I would like to add my voice to those of others in urging the early and complete implementation of this resolution. However, in my opinion, much more is needed...."

At its twenty-third session, by resolution 2454 A (XXIII), the General Assembly requested me to prepare, with the assistance of qualified consultant experts, a report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons in accordance with the

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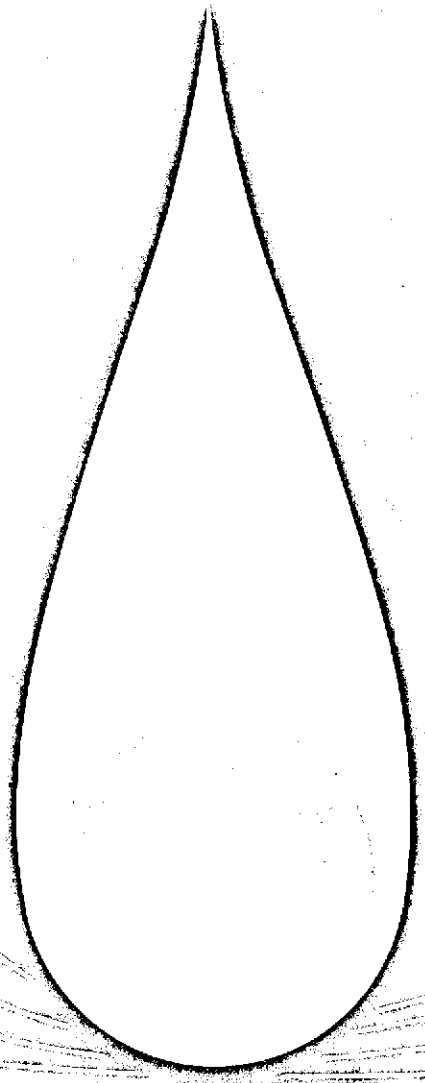

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and Security Council Affairs

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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