

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Markram, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Markram.

Mr. Markram: I would like to extend my appreciation to Council members for the opportunity to brief them this morning.

I am aware that the Russian Federation has submitted new information regarding allegations of biological weapons programmes in Ukraine.

I wish to note that Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu informed the Council in her respective briefings on 11 and 18 March (see S/PV.8991 and S/PV.8999) that the United Nations was not aware of any biological weapons programmes in Ukraine. That remains the case today. I would like to note that the United Nations currently has neither the mandate nor the technical or operational capacity to investigate that information.

I recall that the relevant instrument of international law is the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. The Russian Federation, the United States and Ukraine are all States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Biological Weapons Convention does contain several measures to which concerned States parties can have recourse in order to address situations in which they have concerns or suspicions about the activities of their peers. For example, pursuant to article V of the Convention, its States parties undertake to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of the provisions of, the Convention. Such consultation and cooperation can take place through

appropriate international procedures, including on a bilateral basis between the concerned States parties.

One such international procedure that has been elaborated within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention is the convening of a consultative meeting. Other possibilities for addressing concerns between States parties also exist under article V of the Convention, as well as under article VI. I would therefore encourage any States parties with compliance concerns to use the procedures available under the Convention.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support any procedures under the Biological Weapons Convention that States parties may decide to use.

As Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu had mentioned in her previous statements to the Council, the Biological Weapons Convention needs to be operationalized and institutionalized to ensure that it is properly equipped and resourced to face future challenges. The Convention's upcoming Ninth Review Conference in November and December presents an ideal opportunity for its States parties to strengthen the Convention.

The President: I thank Mr. Markram for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia has requested a meeting on the military and biological activities of Ukraine for the third time. Let me explain why.

We continue to receive very disturbing documentary evidence that the United States Department of Defense is directly involved in carrying out dangerous biological projects in that country that appear to be a secret biological-military programme. Those activities are being conducted in the centre of Eastern Europe and near Russia's western borders, posing a real threat to the biosecurity of our country, the region and, given the cross-border nature of those biothreats, the entire world.

As was confirmed by Mr. Markram, neither Ukraine nor the United States has provided any information about this to the United Nations, as is required under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Only our special military operation is able to prevent that dangerous activity.

Since the previous meeting (see S/PV.8999) on this topic two months ago, we have received much new evidence. We have circulated all that material within the Security Council. I would like to draw Council members' attention to the most striking evidence.

As follows from the documentation on project 3007, on monitoring the epidemiological and ecological situation regarding dangerous waterborne diseases in Ukraine, Ukrainian specialists, under the supervision of their American colleagues, have regularly collected water samples from the rivers flowing through Ukraine, including the Dnieper, the Danube and the Dniester as well as the North Crimean Canal. The objective is to determine the presence therein of specific dangerous pathogens, including cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A and E, and to evaluate the way in which they spread through water in order to draw conclusions about the abilities of those pathogens to incapacitate. A collection of those strains was then sent to the United States of America. It is reasonable to ask to what end. Why would the United States of America need a collection of dangerous pathogens that could spread into the rivers of that region? Even a cursory glance at the map of Ukrainian water resources is enough to understand that the results of such so-called scientific research could be used to create a biological disaster, not only in Russia, but in the entire area of the Azov and Black Seas and Eastern Europe, including Belarus, Moldova and Poland.

Documents suggest that the Kyiv regime has tried to gain access to the technical means for delivering dangerous bioagents by air. Last year, the Ukrainian side asked the Turkish drone manufacturer Baykar Makina about the possibility of equipping the Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with aerosol attachments that allow it to spray more than 20 litres of aerosol materials with a flight range of 300 kilometres. A copy of that letter can be found in the body of documents that we circulated in the Security Council on 19 April. A drone equipped with such a system at that range poses a real threat of the large-scale use of hazardous bioaerosols over the territory of the Russian Federation.

There is information that, in January this year, Ukraine purchased through intermediaries more than 50 such devices, equipped with biological and chemical dispersion systems. On 9 March this year, three such UAVs, equipped with 30-litre containers and a spraying system, were detected by our military in the

Kherson region. Another 10 were spotted in late April near Kakhovka.

Our Ministry of Defence has received shocking evidence that a number of projects that the Pentagon was implementing in Ukraine were putting the lives and the health of volunteer Ukrainian citizens at risk. The UP-8 project documentation stipulated that so-called minor incidents involving test subjects had to be reported to the United States Bioethics Committee within 72 hours and major incidents, including the death of volunteers, within 24 hours. In other words, those experiments were originally designed to be fatal, even though official project documents referred only to standard blood sampling procedures. What kind of blood sampling was it that could result in the death of those tested?

There is evidence of the direct involvement of the United States political establishment in the funding of bioweapons activities in Ukraine through Pentagon contractors, such as Black & Veatch and Metabiota. The aims were far from scientific. A letter from Metabiota's Vice-President, in particular, stated that its goal in Ukraine was "to ensure Ukraine's cultural and economic independence from Russia" — an unconventional objective for a biotechnology company, to put it mildly.

We informed the Council at previous meetings that, with the funding and direct supervision of the United States Department of Defense Defense Threat Reduction Agency, a network of biolaboratories was formed in Ukraine to conduct various military and biological-oriented research. According to previous data, it included Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Ternopil, Uzhgorod and Vinnytsya.

Mariupol has now been added to that list. Evidence of the urgent destruction of documents confirming work with the United States defence agency was found in two biolaboratories in that city.

A preliminary analysis of the remaining documentation indicates that Mariupol was used as a regional centre for cholera-pathogen collection and certification. Selected strains were sent to the Public Health Centre in Kyiv, which was tasked with the further shipment of biomaterials to the United States. Such activity has been carried out since 2014, as evidenced by strain transfer certificates.

An official document of the destruction of the pathogen collection, dated 25 February, was found in the Mariupol sanitary and epidemiological laboratory, according to which cholera, tularaemia and anthrax pathogens, that is, potential bioweapons agents, were handled there.

In the rush, part of the veterinary laboratory collection was not destroyed. Among its contents, our experts found pathogens of diseases uncharacteristic of veterinary medicine — typhoid, paratyphoid and gas gangrene.

Previously, we spoke about the sharp increase in the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics in recent years in cases of tuberculosis caused by a new multidrug-resistant strain. There are reasons to believe that that is not an accident.

An investigation was conducted into a biological incident that took place in 2020 in the Slavyanoserbsk district of the Luhansk People's Republic. It turned out that counterfeit banknotes, infected with the tuberculosis pathogen, had been distributed to children in Stepove village. The assumption was that children, having touched the money, often pick up food with unwashed hands.

Testing showed that the banknotes were contaminated with a live, highly active tuberculosis pathogen resistant to most anti-tuberculosis drugs. The theory that the bacteria got onto the banknotes naturally, from a tuberculosis patient, does not stand up. The concentration of the pathogen is too high to survive in natural conditions where there is sunlight, which has a bactericidal effect. In other words, everything points to human laboratory contamination of the notes with a biomaterial of high pathogenicity. Fortunately, no one was directly harmed by those banknotes in Stepove. However, all those facts can collectively be considered confirmation of an extremely worrisome trend.

I would like to highlight another story, which is a further clear demonstration of how the Kyiv regime and its Western handlers really treat the people of Ukraine. There are reports that United States scientists at the Merefa laboratory tested potentially dangerous biological drugs on patients at the Kharkiv Regional Clinical Psychiatry Hospital No. 3. Similar inhumane experiments were conducted at Psychiatric Hospital No. 1 in Streleche village, Kharkiv region. The main category of subjects was a group of male patients, aged between 40 and 60 years and with a high stage of physical

exhaustion. All those studies were conducted secretly, with Ukrainian staff undertaking non-disclosure. In order to conceal their nationality, the American experts who carried out the research travelled through third countries.

As information about the activities of the biolaboratories in Ukraine becomes available, questions are also being raised about United States NATO allies. New documents reveal that, between 2016 and 2019 alone, 3,500 serum samples of citizens living in 25 regions of Ukraine were taken by military epidemiologists from the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology. One wonders why the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany are collecting biomaterials from Ukrainian citizens.

There are documents confirming Poland's involvement in joint biological research in Ukraine with key Pentagon contractors, in particular the American Battelle institute.

I believe that today we will again hear accusations of propaganda and lack of evidence from our Western colleagues. That is why we pay great attention to documentation. We regularly distribute the original documents made available to our Ministry of Defence to the Security Council and the General Assembly. They are available to anyone who wants to see them. There are hundreds of pages of documents, signed by specific Ukrainian and United States officials. They give an idea of exactly what the Kyiv regime and its Western handlers would like to conceal from the international community.

The United States representatives refuse time and again to give explanations as to the nature and real aims of their biological activities in Ukraine and in the world as a whole. At the session of the Preparatory Committee of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), held in Geneva in early April, the American side again gave no intelligible answer except for the excuse that United States biological activities are, by definition, peaceful and so-called beneficial to the international community.

At the Arria Formula meeting on 6 April, independent journalists asked the United States to provide explanations, including why documents on United States-Ukrainian cooperation on biological research contradicted statements made by United States officials. But the United States and United Kingdom delegations simply did not come to the meeting.

There is another telling fact. During the above-mentioned Preparatory Committee session, the United States delegation once again rejected the proposal to establish an effective mechanism to verify BWC implementation. It refused to resume work on the relevant legally binding protocol to the Convention, which the United States has blocked since 2001. Our initiative to add to the BWC confidence-building measures with a protocol for reporting military biological activities outside the national territory was also rejected by the United States representatives. In other words, the United States is deliberately blocking efforts to strengthen the BWC regime so that violations of the Convention can effectively be identified.

Those are all extremely worrisome signals, especially given the fact that United States law permits military biological activities and the national legislation in that area takes precedence over international law in the United States.

Today I would once again like to ask the representative of the United States why, if its activities in biological laboratories around the world and in Ukraine in particular really are, as it claims, of an exclusively peaceful nature, does it refuse to place them under international controls and prevent the international community, in every possible way, from accessing the necessary instruments to that end? That would be the easiest way to dispel all doubts and accusations once and for all, if they are indeed totally groundless. Unfortunately, the only explanation so far is that the United States has something to hide.

We have already accumulated a significant number of materials directly indicating violations by the United States and Ukraine of the Biological Weapons Convention. We continue to collect and analyse those materials. Given the fact that the American side refuses to engage in any constructive discussion on the topic, we plan to use the mechanisms provided for in articles V and VI of the Biological Weapons Convention. As soon as the collection of materials is completed, we will submit them to the Council for investigation. We hope that will make it possible to permanently put an end to military biological activities threatening international peace and security and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I wish I could thank the Department of Disarmament Affairs for its updated information, but I am afraid that falls short given

that we have heard nothing new. That is not the Department's fault. I will nonetheless thank it for its patience in coming here and repeating once again — for the third time in a few months — what we already have heard at the two previous meetings (see S/PV.8991 and S/PV.8999), namely, that the United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programme in Ukraine and that it has not been possible to give any credit to Russia's claims.

The Department must be surprised that we keep asking it the same question, on the same issue, hoping to receive a different answer. Therefore, I am seriously wondering whether we need to continue spending time on such nothingness. I say so with all due respect, since it is difficult to take such persistence seriously. With the world in turmoil, we should be able to devote our time to other pressing issues that need the Council's attention and action.

The Council relies on United Nations reports on all the issues that we discuss here. We listen carefully to the information provided by briefers from the Secretariat. We trust them because they do what we have asked them to do. Here we are, for the third time, presented with the same unverified, uncorroborated, unsubstantiated, non-factual claims of a non-existent biological programme in Ukraine.

It is therefore hard not to conclude that we are yet again witnessing a persistent attempt to spread a false narrative, to use the Security Council for propaganda purposes and divert attention from the terrible reality of the crimes committed in Ukraine. That must stop. It affects the Council's credibility and relevance. Let me recall the famous saying that one can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, but one cannot fool all the people all of the time.

We have no doubts that Russia knows better regarding chemical weapons and their use. Its protégé, the Syrian regime, used them against rebel forces. Chemical weapons played a decisive role in the campaign of the Syrian regime to suppress resistance in rebel-held cities, killing and incapacitating fighters and civilians alike. Let us not forget that the sarin gas attack in 2013 in the eastern Ghouta region, near Damascus, may have caused the deaths of some 1,400 people. Credible reports indicate that the regime has not abandoned such despicable behaviour.

The Syrian experience reveals the troubling truth that in a protracted war, when the attacking forces are