Triggering Article VII of the BTWC

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Tabletop Exercises (TTX) on triggering emergency assistance under Article VII

- **Pilot TTX**
  - November 2016 during BTWC RevCon
  - Sponsored by the French MoFA
  - Implemented by the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique (FRS) and UNIDIR

- **Outcome: Great hesitation about triggering Article VII**
  - Implication: Biological warfare, which might escalate hostilities
  - Uncertainty about procedures and therefore about consequences of decisions
  - Three countries took totally different decision courses
    - Questions about the veracity of the allegation of BW use played major role in attitudes
    - Questions about role and consequences of invoking of UN Secretary-General’s Investigative Mechanism (not a BTWC tool)
    - Accused country sought to disprove allegation by triggering Article VII
Issues that require resolution

- What are the concrete procedures for requesting assistance?
- What are the concrete procedures for mobilising and coordinating action of international organisations?
- Who is in charge?
  - For coordination?
  - For operations in the field?
- Given today’s global health security context, what is the specific area BTWC States Parties should be concerned with? And what is their specific role?
  - BW use is an act of war
  - How does the UNSC determine BW use? How to organise an onsite investigation (fast)?
  - Under which circumstances can teams go into a warzone to offer assistance to victims of BW use?
  - Who takes responsibility if the UNSC fails to take appropriate decisions?
Tabletop Exercises for 2019

- **Two TTX planned**
  - West Africa, Francophone countries (early June)
  - Expanded exercise during 2019 MXs (August)
  - Funded by French MoFA; additional funders sought for the expanded TTX in August
  - Implemented by the BTWC ISU and the FRS

- **West Africa**
  - Expand discussion on Article VII to a different linguistic / cultural community
  - Builds on 2016 TTX and local experiences with Ebola outbreak
  - Will investigates local preparedness steps prior to crisis (infrastructure; agreements, etc.)

- **Expanded exercise**
  - Builds on insights from 2016 TTX
  - Will involve people from more professional categories and international organisations
  - Will likely involve a pathogen other than an Ebola-type of agent
    - Test what creates the ‘crisis’ moment
    - What if a BW attack involves a plant or animal pathogen? Or the disease is slow-moving?
  - Test possible roles of BTWC Articles V and VI
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