

ITHACA

Protecting Human Rights Ashland, Oregon

Mr. President, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Janet Phelan and I sit on the board of ITHACA, which is a human rights agency. I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this statement to the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.

I am here today to submit concerns to this Convention that the United States of America is engaged in an offensive biological weapons program. My research indicates that these weapons may be stockpiled at Sierra Army Depot, which is a military base in Northern California, as well as possibly at other locations.

In 2001, in the wake of the attacks of September 11, the United States passed a piece of legislation which in itself constitutes a violation of Articles I, II and IV of the BWC. This piece of legislation, Section 817 of the US PATRIOT Act, The Expansion of the Biological Weapons Statute, gives the United States a "blank check" to stockpile biological weapons and toxins and de facto removes the U.S. from the stipulations contained in the BWC. This is accomplished by the addition of a final caveat to 817, stating that "the prohibition contained in this section shall not apply to any duly authorized United States governmental activity."

Other NGO's, including the Sunshine Project, have raised concerns as to what kind of research is going on in the proliferation of BSL-3's and 4's—now numbering over 1350 BSL-3's in the United States. Other than the reports of stockpiles at Sierra Army Depot and the violations of the BWC contained in Section 817, concerns also extend to evidence that the U.S. has covertly set up two separate delivery systems—one involving extensive reconfigurations of city water systems and the other involving what we call "imposter pharmaceuticals"—the putative "poison pill" which, rather than treating a disease, will cause imminent death to the unsuspecting victim.

Both of these delivery systems have the ability to selectively attack predesignated targets and leave surrounding populations unaffected.

I do not need to remind the Convention that Saddam Hussein was executed for charges including a purported attack on his own people—the gassing of the Kurds. There is a dark red thread running through recorded history of governments initiating pogroms against their own citizens. One needs only to look at the last decade and the dramatic movement away from the democratic ideals upon which the United States was based to realize that the U.S. government has already traveled a long ways from an open, free and democratic society towards the secret and restrictive regimes that have historically initiated attacks upon their own people.

On behalf of all U. S. citizens and all others residing within her borders, we are seeking your help. The situation is dire and the international community must be alerted to the fact that all of these signals—stockpiles, changes in legislation, and multiple secret delivery systems-- point to a future attack within the borders of the U.S. facilitated by the United States government.

We have been limited by time constraints today. I would like to advise the Convention that we have accumulated a considerable amount of evidence, including correspondence with government agencies about Section 817 and other pertinent legislative changes—agencies including the Department of Justice, State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, to name a few. We have also amassed details and documentation concerning delivery systems. We would be happy to supply this documentation to the Convention, if requested.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Geneva, Switzerland