

II. History of the problem

3. The deliberate contamination of food has been a threat to the global population throughout its history, their fears of such an attack stem from various military campaigns to the more modern terrorization of civilians. In recent history, there have only been a handful of recorded attacks. In 1984, members of a religious cult in the United States contaminated salad bars with *Salmonella typhimurium*, causing 751 cases of salmonella. Later, it was found that the same cult had possession of several strains of typhoid fever. In 1996, a laboratory worker deliberately infected his co-workers food with *Shingella dysenteria* type 2 (dysentery), causing 12 people to become ill.

4. The largest, best-documented case was an outbreak of *S. typhimurium* infection, in 1985, which affected 170,000 people, caused by contaminated pasteurized milk. The largest food borne disease outbreak in recorded history was an outbreak of hepatitis A in China associated with the consumption of clams; nearly 300,000 people were involved. There has never been an attack that has caused an occurrence to the extent that overwhelming number of people halted the function of the health system from working. Many government health systems already have, or are developing, food safety infrastructures that insures that international food safety standards are upheld. On May 18, 2002, the Fifty-Fifth World Health Assembly adopted a resolution that expressed concerns about food terrorism. As a response, the World Health Organization has prepared guidelines to assist countries on how to incorporate the evasion of food terrorism into existing health programs. These guidelines include everything from prevention to response. Many countries have used some of these guidelines to help strengthen their country's health system.

III. Potential solutions

5. When creating a resolution, all delegates should focus on these questions:

- What measures should be taken either internationally or within the states to prevent and respond to terrorist attack?
- Is the current health system within the country ready and able for a terrorist attack?
- If not, then what steps is the country taking to prepare itself for one?
- What could the international community as a whole do to regulate food safety?
- Would the country create an entirely new program to combat food terrorism or simply expand on an existing program?
- Should the WHO set up international terrorist prevention system or should it be only the country's project?

6. Delegates must always remember to represent their country authentically when answering these questions. Consider how the nation feels toward other terrorist activities and their prevention and response programs for those. Since food terrorism is a relatively recent and broad topic, remember to think outside borders and the affect on the international community.

IV. Research tips

7. When starting a position paper, research is necessary. Make sure all of your sources are reliable when researching. Search for your country's health programs, their status and reliability. Also, look for a food safety program, including the status on expansion to include prevention of terrorist threats. Consider these questions:

- Have there been any major health outbreaks in recent years that have caused mass chaos in the health department?
- Is the health program well developed?
- Is the government willing to expand to include terrorist prevention?
- Are food safety regulations closely followed?
- Could your country give aid to countries that do not have developed health programs if needed?
- Is there any history of food terrorism in your country?
- Did your country use any of the ideas in the WHO guidelines?

8. Consider bloc positions as well:

- Developing countries are more likely to need to expand on their health programs in general before thinking about prevention from food terrorism and will need help from developed countries to begin that process.
- Developed countries may already have a plan for food terrorism and could present those to other countries as a way of helping them with a plan.
- Developing countries may have little to no food safety programs that are run by the government, Developed countries potentially have large food safety programs that possibly need to be reformed.

9. Please read the Food Safety Issue on Food Terrorism directly from WHO. These exact guidelines were given out to countries to help create food terrorism prevention programs. See if your country has enacted them.

References

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