

Briefing by the Chief of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Protection Troops of Russian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov on the West preparations for large-scale provocations involving toxic chemicals in Ukraine

February 28, 2023

On 22 February, an influential U.S. non-governmental organisation held a conference on the events in Ukraine. Within the event, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Sullivan made the statement, ‘...Russian troops plan to use chemical weapons in the special military operation area...’.

Russia regards this information as the intention of the United States itself and its accomplices to carry out a provocation in Ukraine using toxic chemicals.

They expect that amid hostilities, the international community will be unable to organise an effective investigation, with the result that the real organisers and executors may escape accountability and the blame is going to be placed on Russia.

Supply of safety equipment for Ukraine

In our opinion, the preparations are in full swing. In early 2023, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre planned a large shipment of individual protection means to Ukraine. In order to substantiate the situation, ‘...Russian troops have already used phosphorus ammunition and could use the poisonous substances in a foreseeable escalation of the situation...’.

The list of supplied equipment includes more than 55,000 sets of personal protective gear, 55,000 gas masks, 13,000 individual gas casualty first-aid kits. Priority is given to antidotes for organophosphorus agents such as sarin and soman — 600,000 ampoules, anti-seizure medications — 3 mln tablets, detoxification preparations for mustard gas, lewisite and chloroacetophenone inhibitors of hydrocyanic acid — 750,000 vials.

Toxic chemicals delivered to Kramatorsk

In addition, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation received information that on 10 February 2023, a rail transport arrived in Ukraine (Kramatorsk) with a cargo of chemicals in one of its cars, accompanied by a group of foreign nationals.

The car was detached and towed to the territory of the Kuybyshev Iron and Steel Works in Kramatorsk, where it was unloaded under the control of the Security Service of Ukraine and the AFU command representatives.

The consignment consisted of 16 sealed metal boxes, eight of which were labelled with a chemical hazard symbol, BZ inscription and marked with two red bands, corresponding to the class of poisonous substances of temporary incapacitation action. Five of the boxes were labelled as 'C-S-RIOT', three were labelled as 'C-R-RIOT' with a single red band, which corresponds to substances with an irritant action.

The cargo was placed on the U.S.-manufactured armoured vehicles, which moved to the combat line of contact as part of the convoy.

On 19 February, 11 cars of specially marked shrapnel ammunition have been unloaded in Kramatorsk. The unloading took place at night on a platform in the suburbs, with the car labelled as 'Building materials', 'Cement'.

According to the information of the Russian Ministry of Defence, the U.S. Army has previously upgraded its shrapnel rounds to be loaded with ready-to-use, liquid formulated irritant acids.

The facts of the simultaneous delivery of toxic chemicals and protection means indicate an attempted large-scale provocation using the BZ psychotropic warfare agent during the conflict.

Threats posed by using BZ

Under the Chemical Weapons Convention, BZ agent is a controlled chemical and its use is prohibited under Article 1 of the CWC.

This chemical causes acute phrenoplegia, disorientation, hallucinations, and memory impairment.

BZ agent is a standard war gas for the U.S. Army. It was used extensively during the Vietnam War.

The United States and its allies have repeatedly used chemical munitions in the military conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

The U.S. declared a total destruction of stocks of BZ as early as 1990. Fifty tonnes of the substance have been disposed of, but samples were left behind.

In addition, the possibility of synthesising BZ precursors from pharmaceutical production facilities in the volume of up to several dozen tonnes per year is now retained.

Examples of U.S. provocative actions

We have repeatedly noted that Western leadership regularly make provocative statements about the possibility of Russia using weapons of mass destruction.

However, similar projects have been implemented many times by the USA itself to achieve political goals.

For example, a vial of 'washing powder' in the hands of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell prompted the invasion of Iraq and the deaths of over half a million Iraqi citizens.

In 2017, photos of the White Helmets replicated by news agencies, showing people wearing ordinary gauze bandages taking samples at the site of the alleged use of sarin, led to a U.S. missile strike on Shayrat airbase in Syria.

In 2018, staged shootings of allegedly chlorine-poisoned children in Douma (Syrian) caused the destruction of a research centre in Barzah and Jamraya.

I would like to remind that no one has been held accountable for these crimes so far.

International legal assessment of the use of toxic chemicals in the conduct of hostilities

U.S. compliance with its obligations under the CWC is distinctly selective. Any restrictions under this treaty that threaten to U.S. national interests are ignored with the direct connivance of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

For example, in violation of Article 1 of the Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the United States Department of Defense has legalised the use of a range of chemicals as weapons of war. Its use is envisaged with a wide range of standard ammunition.

I would like to warn you that the Russian stationary and mobile CBRN monitoring complexes deployed in the area of the special military operation make it possible to identify chemical threats in a timely manner and to respond to them promptly. It is therefore a mistake for the West to count on successful provocations with toxic chemicals in a warfare environment.

The analytical capabilities of the Russian Ministry of Defence chemical laboratories can reliably determine not only the type of chemical used, but also the country of manufacture.

For example, the information presented on the slide about the use of improvised munitions against Russian troops by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) is widely known. Investigations proved that it was a thermal ammunition that contained flammable oxidisers and additives, some of which were produced in the Czech Republic.

We warn that in the event of provocation using toxic chemicals, the true culprits will be identified and punished.

We will continue to work to expose the Western criminal activities in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.