

## **LESSON 9 Weapons of Mass Destruction & Terrorism**

### **Abstract**

The discussion on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) includes issues of nuclear disarmament and proliferation, chemical and biological weapons, and the fall out from 9/11. Many experts believe nuclear proliferation is the most serious threat facing the world. The Nunn Lugar Program and the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons were constructive initiatives in the attempt to minimize the nuclear threat. The debate on terrorism is framed in terms of issues of efficacy, legality and legitimacy, affordability and sustainability.

### **Background**

In 1995, the signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) made the accord a permanent, open-ended commitment. In 1968, the non-nuclear weapons states had forsworn the development or acquisition of nuclear weapons in exchange for the “inalienable right” to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and based on the premise that nuclear weapons states would “pursue negotiations in good faith” to cease the arms race and to negotiate general and complete disarmament. It was an unequal bargain but most believed the treaty made them safer. In fact, the nuclear weapons states did not keep their part of the bargain, despite their 2000 unequivocal undertaking of total elimination of their nuclear arsenals pursuant to NPT Article VI. There has been no international verification of reported US and Russian reductions. With regards to safeguards, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors have the mandate to verify non-proliferation compliance by non-nuclear weapons states parties. In practice, however, IAEA investigations are often hindered in their efforts to develop a clear and accurate picture of a state’s suspected efforts to obtain nuclear weapons due to funding constraints, refusals to submit to investigations, a lack of transparency regarding nuclear programs and security-related issues, among others.

The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program launched in 1992 dealt with the dismantling and securing of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and materials in the former Soviet Union, destroying thousands of warheads, material that could be used to build several thousand more warheads, and thousands of missiles and missile launchers. Scientists who would have been otherwise idle have been gainfully employed in non lethal activity. In time, this initiative was joined by others and ultimately at its 2002 summit in Canada, the G-8 launched a \$20 billion Global Partnership against Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. (Canada’s share is \$1 billion.) Still, by some estimates, the job is probably only about half done.

In the 1990’s both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were opened for accession. By 1995, 173 countries had ratified the NPT. India, Pakistan and Israel did not. Ratifications now total 188, including Brazil and Cuba. Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapon arsenals, as did South Africa. In 1998 India and Pakistan detonated five nuclear weapons each. North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003.

The nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction is arguably the most important problem in the world. International progress on the arms control and disarmament (ACD) agenda has stalled, if not receded. Multilateral cooperation on arms control and disarmament has become paralyzed in disagreement. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty itself is in serious jeopardy, with no effective alternative in sight. Non weapon states are exasperated with the refusal of nuclear powers to take their 1968 commitments seriously.

As a consequence of 9/11, the US changed its thinking and strategy from promotion of treaties and norms to a focus on compliance and military prevention. In 2004 President Bush declared “Doctrines designed to contain empires, deter aggressive states, and defeat massed armies cannot fully protect us from this new threat.... We're determined to confront those threats at the source. We will stop these weapons from being acquired or built. We'll block them from being transferred. We'll prevent them from ever being used.”

Paul Heinbecker & Wesley Wark frame the terrorism debate in terms of *efficacy*, *legality and legitimacy*, *affordability* and *sustainability*. They state that:

“*Efficacy* raises the complex issue of root causes of terrorism and how to address and remedy them where possible. It raises, as well, the impacts, intended or inadvertent, of foreign policies and whether and how to attenuate them. In this regard, ignoring the conflation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Iraq issue, which appears to be creating militants faster than they can be destroyed, would be counterproductive. *Efficacy*, also, raises the issue of how best to fight terrorists and prevent proliferation, specifically the appropriate instruments to use, including intelligence as a first line of defense, the expansion of intelligence sharing among nations and between security services within nations”.

They also refer to innovations such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, the G 8's “Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction”, and the Counter-Terrorism Action Group. *Efficacy* also involves capacity building, military, police and development assistance, foreign policy and communications.

*Legality and legitimacy* issues involve the rule of law, including international law, in combating terrorists. *Affordability* is a matter of common concern, but rarely addressed. Terrorism can be catastrophically costly. Stopping terrorism and preventing WMD proliferation is likewise expensive, an onerous tax on national and global economies. Defusing this danger also requires extensive capacity-building in developing countries, and for political and other reasons, tends to disrupt planning and distort funding priorities. The issue is how to make the costs affordable. *Sustainability* addresses the question of long-term strategy.

## **Lesson Plan**

For general background, read:

Paul Heinbecker & Wesley Wark: *The Nexus of Terrorism & WMDs: Developing a Consensus, How could a Leaders' Level G20 make a difference?*

[http://www.l20.org/publications/9\\_57\\_wmd\\_backgrounder\\_heinbecker.pdf](http://www.l20.org/publications/9_57_wmd_backgrounder_heinbecker.pdf)

and a second paper by Heinbecker:

[http://www.l20.org/publications/Phase%20III/WMD%20Regime/Livermore-WMD%20backgrounder\\_Heinbecker.pdf](http://www.l20.org/publications/Phase%20III/WMD%20Regime/Livermore-WMD%20backgrounder_Heinbecker.pdf)

Read the text of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Review the mandate of the IAEA regarding verification of NPT commitments.

Note the dimensions of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT),

Review the Proliferation Security Initiative, the G 8's Global Partnership against Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Counter-Terrorism Action Group, found respectively at:

<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/rls/fs/23764.htm>

[http://www.g8.fr/evian/english/navigation/2003\\_g8\\_summit/summit\\_documents/global\\_partnership\\_against\\_the\\_spread\\_of\\_weapons\\_and\\_materials\\_of\\_mass\\_destruction\\_-\\_a\\_g8\\_action\\_plan.html](http://www.g8.fr/evian/english/navigation/2003_g8_summit/summit_documents/global_partnership_against_the_spread_of_weapons_and_materials_of_mass_destruction_-_a_g8_action_plan.html)

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/internationalcrime/CTAG-en.asp>

Watch the video <http://www.l20.org/publications/5-Terrorism.mov>

of Anne-Marie Slaughter, Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs, a briefing for Prime Minister Paul Martin, arguing that the issue of nuclear terrorism should be on the first L20 Leaders meeting agenda.

Read the June 2006 report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission "*Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms*"

[http://www.wmdcommission.org/files/Weapons\\_of\\_Terror.pdf](http://www.wmdcommission.org/files/Weapons_of_Terror.pdf)

For a skeptic's point of view, read Abbott, Rogers and Sloboda's *Global Responses to Global Threats: Sustainable Security for the 21st Century*

[http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing\\_papers/pdf/globalthreats.pdf](http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing_papers/pdf/globalthreats.pdf)

They argue that international terrorism is a relatively minor threat when compared to other more serious global trends, and current responses are likely to increase, rather than decrease, the risks of further terrorist attacks.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. The focus of a summit meeting on terrorism would have to be broad enough to include issues of interest to developing countries. Additionally, any hint of isolating the US would be counterproductive. For instance, abandoning the infelicitous “War on Terrorism” term would prove difficult. Focusing on Al Qaeda to the exclusion of other terrorist groups is unlikely to attract support. Any L20 communiqué would have both declaratory and substantive elements. The rhetorical elements of the declaratory part of an L20 communiqué would be relatively easy to negotiate. It could include any of a number of statements:

- Terrorism is never justified.
- Preventing nuclear terrorism is an absolute priority.
- Defeating Al Qaeda is a priority but other threats must also be recognized and faced.
- We must disaggregate groups and objectives and tailor responses accordingly.
- Enhanced defensive efforts at home to protect critical infrastructure and systems are a necessary complement to increased offensive efforts abroad.
- Rich countries should assist others to develop counter-terrorism capacity.
- Sacrificing human rights to fight terrorists is self-defeating strategically, and morally wrong.
- Promoting economic development and good governance is an important security goal.
- Implementing the Millennium Development Goals will address root causes of terrorism.

### **Question:**

Identify the possible substantive elements of a future L20 communiqué on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Could there be L-20 agreement on the following points? Why or why not? Where might trade-offs and synergies exist?

- Appoint personal representatives to lead national efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and to liaise with L20 counterparts to prepare a “package” of international cooperation?
- Establish a network of homeland security ministers to enhance effectiveness in safeguarding strategic national systems?
- Promote “dual benefit” initiatives to enhance the capacity of national and international medical and health systems to respond effectively to potential outbreaks of communicable diseases and to bio-terrorism?
- Improve national and international transportation security, both to enhance customs inspection capability and to safeguard goods transport?
- Appoint senior intelligence officials to cooperate and exchange threat assessments?

2. In the paper

[http://www.l20.org/publications/9\\_57\\_wmd\\_backgrounder\\_heinbecker.pdf](http://www.l20.org/publications/9_57_wmd_backgrounder_heinbecker.pdf) Heinbecker & Wark point out that any strategy to address issues of terrorism must avoid the self-defeating outcome of diverting ODA expenditures that should instead be part of the long-

term solution. Counter-terrorist and counter proliferation efforts must not inhibit the global movement of people, goods and ideas.

Question: What targets should be set for global counter-terrorism, and counter-proliferation? How might one determine if they are “winning”?

3. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission recommendation #8 is as follows:  
“States should make active use of the IAEA as a forum for exploring various ways to reduce proliferation risks connected with the nuclear fuel cycle, such as proposals for an international fuel bank; internationally safeguarded regional centres offering fuel-cycle services, including spent-fuel repositories; and the creation of a fuel-cycle system built on the concept that a few ‘fuel-cycle states’ will lease nuclear fuel to states that forgo enrichment and reprocessing activities.”

Question: What are the prospects for an innovative arrangement that promotes peaceful civilian use and reduces the risk of proliferation?

4. To satisfy the concerns of developing countries, some form of endorsement of the UN is an essential ingredient to any communiqué. (developing countries see the UN as “their” institution.)

Question: What practical initiatives could support UN capacities regarding terrorism prevention, counter-terrorism capacity-building and human rights protections?

5. Terrorism is an apparent consequence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as demonstrated by the continued reference to the Palestinian dilemma by terrorist and insurgent elements.

Question: Might the L20 find any practical and substantive initiatives committed to resolving the Palestinian-Israeli issue? If yes, what might these initiatives be? If not, what are the barriers?

6. The war on terrorism has created a contentious issue affecting civil society and ODA agencies (particularly progressive US private foundations). Countries have implemented draconian legislation with the intent to curb terrorism, but sometimes civil society is “sideswiped”; consequent laws are used against activists and organizations who challenge prevailing power structures.

Question: Could the L20 encourage any action to avoid unintended effects on civil society?

## **Recommended Web-based References**

Re Background: Paul Heinbecker & Wesley Wark: *The Nexus of Terrorism & WMDs: Developing a Consensus, How could a Leaders' Level G20 make a difference?*  
[http://www.i20.org/publications/9\\_57\\_wmd\\_backgrounder\\_heinbecker.pdf](http://www.i20.org/publications/9_57_wmd_backgrounder_heinbecker.pdf)

Re The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
<http://www.un.org/events/npt2005/npttreaty.html>

Re the International Atomic Energy Agency  
<http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/SV/index.html>

Re CTBT: <http://www.ctbto.org/> and  
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/ctbt/text/index.html>

Review the latest on Nunn Lugar at <http://lugar.senate.gov/nunnlugar/index.cfm>

Carnegie Endowment's work on Universal Compliance  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=16593>

The report of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the High Level Panel on UN reform,  
<http://www.un-globalsecurity.org/pdf/potter1.pdf>

Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report WEAPONS OF TERROR: *Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms* June 2006.

The Commission report contains sixty proposals on how the world could be freed of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons  
<http://www.wmdcommission.org/>