

The Nexus of Terrorism & WMDs: Developing a Consensus
How could a Leaders' Level G20 make a difference?

December 12-14, 2004
Princeton University

BRIEFING NOTE

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ISSUE: What can the G20 leaders do to prevent terrorists' WMD attacks?

Bottom line: Preventing terrorists acquiring nuclear bombs that they can explode in major cities is an absolute requirement for civilization as we know it.

- Fact: The nuclear bomb that CIA agent codenamed Dragonfire reported was in New York City one month after the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon could have killed 500,000 New Yorkers instantly.¹
- Consider: After the first nuclear bomb destroys a major city, or the second, where will people choose to live and how will they—or we!—spend our time?

BACKGROUND/CONSIDERATIONS:

- Nuclear weapons are the true weapons of mass destruction.²
- 9/11 awoke not just the United States, but the world, to the dangers of democratization of the means for mass violence. Using the superhighways of globalized technology, communication, finance, and transportation, a non-governmental terrorist cell killed more Americans in a single day on 9/11 than the Japanese government's attack on Pearl Harbor.
 - The international community recognized the threat terrorism poses to global order by immediately passing UN resolution 1373, requiring member states to freeze terrorist assets, deny terrorist groups support or safe havens, cooperate with other governments to prevent terrorist acts and prosecute those who commit them, and criminalize active and passive assistance for terrorist activity. The UN announced its "determination to take all necessary steps to ensure the full implementation of this resolution" and established a special Counterterrorism Committee, chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, then British ambassador to the UN, to organize and monitor states' efforts to comply.

¹ This event and the argument summarized in this memo are developed in Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe (Times Books 2004). For more information visit www.nuclearterrorism.org.

² WMD is a misnomer that confuses more than clarifies. Typically included with nuclear weapons under this umbrella are radiological, chemical, and biological weapons. Radiological, or "dirty bombs," are weapons of mass disruption that will not cause widespread fatalities; chemical weapons can kill only in the hundreds or thousands if conditions are optimal (terrible carnage, but not beyond the capabilities of conventional explosives); biological weapons could potentially kill in the tens or hundreds of thousands, and future advances in biotechnology brings the spectre of even more deadly pathogens, yet the effects can be countered by vaccines and public health measures, as discussed at the end of this memo.

- The U.S. was not the only victim. The World Bank estimates that the attacks of September 11, 2001 total cost to the world economy probably exceeded \$80 billion.
- Nuclear bombs would provide the means to for mega-terrorists who already have powerful motive and ample opportunity.
 - The small nuclear weapon about which Dragonfire warned would have fit easily in the back of a SUV, but its 10-kiloton blast in Times Square on a workday would kill more than 500,000 Americans.
 - Many such nuclear weapons and fissile material from which equivalent bombs could be made remain in conditions that leave them vulnerable to theft and sale to terrorists groups.
- Where could terrorists acquire a nuclear bomb or the fissile material required to make it?
 - Russia: the deadly detritus left over from the Soviet Union's Cold War stockpile--20,000 nuclear weapons and 60,000 weapons equivalents in nuclear material stored in numerous, and often vulnerable, sites across 11 time zones.
 - Research reactors: more than a weapon's worth of nuclear material remains at risky research reactors in twenty developing countries including Belarus, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, where it remains vulnerable to theft and sale to terrorists.
 - Pakistan: close historical links between elements in its security services and al-Qaeda and the unprecedented AQ Khan nuclear black market network call into question the security of its stockpile.
 - North Korea: the world's most promiscuous proliferator has been reprocessing plutonium for six new nuclear weapons and constructing a production line capable of creating an additional dozen a year.
- Current efforts provide a start and a foundation on which to build. But on the current course, we are bound to fail.
 - Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
 - Has provided the framework for limiting the number of nuclear weapons states and created a norm against proliferation. One hundred eighty four states have voluntarily foresworn nuclear weapons.
 - The Nonproliferation regime is currently stretched to the breaking point—at risk of rupture and collapse. The High-level UN Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change found that “we are approaching a point at which the erosion of the non-proliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation.”
 - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
 - Has accomplished a great deal in terms of safeguarding nuclear materials and preventing proliferation with a budget of less than \$275 million.
 - Requires universal adoption of the Additional Protocol and greater resources to conduct intrusive inspections on demand in states suspected of having secret nuclear programs.
 - Nunn Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program
 - Stands as the archetype of international cooperation in securing weapons of mass destruction.
 - Currently bogged down in bureaucratic swamps, lacking the funds and political energy to accomplish its goals on the required timetable.
 - G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction

- Symbolizes the recognition of the international scope and responsibility of the problem of securing stocks of WMD.
- While pledges have been made, both money and priority lacking.
- UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (April 28, 2004) obliges sovereign states to adopt and enforce laws closing the loopholes exploited by black market WMD networks.
 - Provides a UN framework for securing nuclear weapons, materials, and technologies.
 - Lacks enforcement mechanisms.
- Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)
 - Provides a framework for international cooperation among 15 member states in fighting proliferation networks (and 60 additional states have endorsed PSI's basic principles).
 - Given the size and signature of nuclear weapons, and the multiplicity of global transportation networks, interdicting illegal transfers of nuclear weapons and materials is unlikely to be more successful than current efforts targeting drugs. The highest leverage for defenders is thus to secure at the source.
- UN Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (December 2, 2004) recommends:
 - “Urgent short-term action to defend against the possible terrorist use of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons. High priority must be accorded to consolidating, securing, and when possible eliminating potentially hazardous materials, and implementing effective export controls.”
 - “To overcome the threat of nuclear terrorism requires the cooperation of States, strong and weak, to clean up stockpiles of HEU, better protect shipping containers at ports and agree on new rules regulating the enrichment of uranium.”
 - “The most robust defence against the possible terrorist use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons would seek to control dangerous materials, deter and capture terrorists, and address the broader threats that increase the risk of terrorist action.”
 - “The IAEA Board of Governors should recognize the Model Additional Protocol as today’s standard for IAEA safeguards, and the Security Council should be prepared to act in cases of serious concern over non-compliance with non-proliferation and safeguards standards.”
 - “Enable IAEA to act as a guarantor for the supply of fissile material to civilian nuclear users.”
 - “States should, without surrendering the right under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to construct such facilities, voluntarily institute a time-limited moratorium on the construction of any further enrichment or reprocessing facilities, with a commitment to the moratorium matched by a guarantee of the supply of fissile materials by the current suppliers at market rates”.
 - “Unlike nuclear weapons, many (though not all) biological agents can be countered by vaccinations and effective responses (including rapid diagnosis, quarantines and treatment). Well-prepared societies may thus be able to avoid the worst-case scenarios of biological attacks.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Priority

- The G20 must make preventing nuclear terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons that could arm terrorists an absolute priority.³
 - Financial resources commiserate with this mission must be made available. Financial and technical assistance should be provided where required.
 - Individuals of stature, reporting directly to each G20 leader, must be appointed in each state to focus this priority, have lead responsibility, and be held accountable.
 - When leaders of the G20 meet with each other and with those outside the Group of 20, they should place preventing nuclear terrorism high on their agendas.
2. A New “Global Alliance Against Nuclear Terrorism.”
- The mission of this alliance should be to minimize the risk of nuclear terrorism by taking every action physically, technically, and diplomatically possible to prevent nuclear weapons or materials from being acquired by terrorists.
 - This will require securing all nuclear weapons and fissile material.
 - All nations should agree to (or acquiesce in) a policy of Three Nos: No Loose Nukes, No New Nascent Nukes, and No New Nuclear Weapon States.
 - This alliance will provide a framework for international cooperation in developing a robust nonproliferation regime to shut down the production, theft, sale, and transfer of nuclear technologies, materials, and knowledge.
 - Alliance members will participate in intelligence sharing and cooperation in counterproliferation—including disruption and preemption to prevent acquisition of materials and knowledge by nuclear wannabes.
 - Alliance leaders should meet regularly and form a secretariat (similar to NATO) that coordinates working groups on specific topics, develops work plans, and tracks performance in meeting established milestones.
3. Doctrine of the Three Nos (see attached slides on required steps for implementing each strand of this strategy).
- No Loose Nukes
 - Will require securing all nuclear weapons and weapons-useable material to a gold standard.
 - International cooperation will be crucial for verification that all states implement the new standard.
 - This can build on the foundation laid by UN Resolution 1540 that requires “that all States shall take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials ... and to this end requires nations to develop and maintain appropriate effective physical protection measures.”
 - No New Nascent Nukes
 - Means no new national capabilities to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium. The international community should embrace the recommendation of the UN Panel on Threats for a temporary moratorium and then work to make it permanent.
 - This will require that universal adoption of the Additional protocol allowing inspections on demand becomes the norm.

³ Analogous to the absolute priority accorded preventing nuclear war during the Cold War. Ronald Reagan’s one-liner: “a nuclear war can never be won and must therefore never be fought.”

- In return, assured access to peaceful nuclear technologies, and international-guaranteed fuel for civilian nuclear reactors at one-half the cost of national production, plus removal and storage of spent fuel in secure, internationally-monitored sites will be provided.
- Iran is the urgent test case.
 - European engagement is vital, but the U.S. must also hold direct talks and offer a grand bargain of incentives, while simultaneously threatening sticks, to convince Iran to freeze, and over time dismantle, its development of fissile material production facilities.
- No New Nuclear Weapons States
 - Draws a line under the current eight nuclear powers and says unambiguously: no more.
 - North Korea is the urgent test case of the international community's resolve and seriousness in nonproliferation.
 - Requires robust strategy of carrots and sticks.

4. A fourth no: No Nuclear Weapons?

- In the short run, too hard technically and politically. In the meantime, nuclear states must eliminate any role of nuclear weapons and nuclear threats from international affairs.
- Operationally: accelerate current programs to reduce arsenals; no new nuclear weapons (canceling Bush administration programs to pursue); no nuclear weapons test (ratification of CTBT); no first use of nuclear weapons; and a universal policy of no use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.

No Loose Nukes

Actions Required:

- Make preventing nuclear terrorism an absolute priority
- G20 leaders must engage in a program to assure no nuclear weapons or materials are stolen
- Each should appoint individuals of stature reporting directly to them as commanders in the war on nuclear terrorism
- Develop new international “gold standard” for security of world’s nuclear weapons and materials
- Secure all nuclear weapons and materials to the gold standard as fast as technically possible on a set timetable
- Overcome bureaucratic obstacles, e.g., US-Russian liability and access disputes
- Accelerate Global Cleanout campaign to take back HEU from both Soviet- and US-supplied research reactors on fastest technically feasible timetable

No New Nascent Nukes

Actions Required:

- Close current NPT loophole that permits signatories to develop nuclear fuel production capabilities
- Orchestrate consensus that there will be no new national HEU enrichment or Pu reprocessing
- Guarantee supply of reactor fuel to non-nuclear weapons states at prices less than half national production costs
- Organize program to securely store spent fuel from civilian reactors
- Persuade all states to adopt the Additional Protocol
- Limit import of equipment for existing civilian programs to states that have signed Additional Protocol
- Criminalize proliferation on both domestic and international levels
- Expand Proliferation Security Initiative beyond current 16 states
- Make grand bargain with Iran: in exchange for dismantlement of enrichment and reprocessing facilities, offer fuel-cycle agreement, acceptance of Bushehr, relaxation of trade sanctions, and security guarantee; pose credible threats to Iran sufficient to persuade it to accept
- Resume Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) negotiations

No New Nuclear Weapons States

Actions Required:

- Draw bright line under today's eight nuclear powers and declare: no more
- Subordinate all policy objectives on N. Korea (e.g., regime change) to this goal
- Send high level representatives to Pyongyang for candid private discussions on condition that all nuclear activity is frozen for duration of talks
- Offer carrots in exchange for verifiable dismantlement: bilateral non-aggression pledge, expansion of food aid, resumption of Japan-S. Korea fuel shipments
- Describe further phased benefits: financing for natural gas pipeline, construction of two light-water reactors, aid for infrastructure reconstruction, N. Korean Nunn-Lugar, eventual normalization of relations
- Pose credible threat to North Korea sufficient to persuade it to choose nuclear disarmament
- Accelerate and highlight deep cuts in US-Russian nuclear arms, and minimize role of nuclear weapons as fulfillment of NPT Article VI
- Ratify Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Bioterrorism

Background:

- The dual-use nature of biotechnology research makes it difficult to distinguish biological research programs with a military objective from those intended only for peaceful purposes.
- Advancement of biology, genetics, etc. will continue to make it easier to produce deadly biological weapons.
- The end of the Soviet Biopreparat program left thousands of weapons scientists unemployed and huge stockpiles of biological agents with minimal security.
- The spread of SARS showed how a bioterrorist attack utilizing an infectious disease in one country could quickly spread across the globe.

Recommendations:

- Limit the availability of potential weaponized pathogens.
 - The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) must be universally adopted with provisions for verification.
 - The UN Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change recommends: “States parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention should also negotiate a new bio-security protocol to classify dangerous biological agents and establish binding international standards for the export of such agents. Within a designated time frame, States parties to the Convention should refrain from participating in such biotechnology commerce with non-members.”
- International cooperation in biodefense is required to deal effectively with the threat. Among the areas where states must collaborate:
 - Early detection and identification of outbreaks, both natural and caused by bioterrorists.
 - Improved public health systems to both deal with the effects of an attack in the target state and to halt or slow the global spread of an infectious agent.
 - Availability of vaccines and other therapeutics for all states.
 - Organized capability to distribute vaccines and therapeutics in a timely manner to prevent and mitigate damage.