



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EXTERNAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE GENERAL

DIRECTORATE Crisis Platform and Policy Coordination in CFSP
Security Policy

EXTERNAL RELATIONS PERSPECTIVES

My Unit deals with Security policy and I work in the areas of the non-proliferation of WMD and Counter Terrorism. I have some experience in the areas of WMD and in my opinion the biological area is the least well developed.

Work on non-proliferation and counter terrorism in the European Commission is normally about technical assistance; often spreading best EU practice to our partners - supporting the EU's Strategy for the non-proliferation of WMD. The focus is on capacity building in partner third countries.

There is currently no developed Commission external relations assistance policy in this the biological area but there, arguably, needs to be one. As we develop best practice in the EU we aim to export it.

Disasters know no borders, Disease knows no borders; in this area internal/external policies are inextricably linked. There is likely to be a need to develop external policies in parallel to internal ones.

Internal EU policies are clearly important but they can not by themselves protect the EU. Fortress European policies will not work in the area of bio-preparedness.

We forget third countries at our peril.

As Magnus Ovilus has already said, the area security/health issues are inextricably linked.

You only need to look at the history.

In 1346 the Tatar catapulted corpses of plague victims over the city walls in the siege of Kaffa. For next 400 years, use of plague victims as a means of spreading disease – was common place.

The Russians did the same in Sweden in 1710.

In the 1500's the Spanish gave the Incas small pox contaminated clothes.

Small pox is estimated to have killed half the 25m people in the Aztec civilization.

In the 1760's the British intentionally gave North American Indians small pox contaminated blankets

What is our protection now?

All use and possession of biological weapons have effectively been prohibited since the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, usually know as the BTWC.

- This treaty entered into force in 1975.
- The EU goal expressed in the Strategy for the non-proliferation of WMD is for universal membership by all states. Verification is a key problem.
- It is well known that at least two states, the (then) Soviet Union and Iraq, many years after signing the Convention, conducted offensive biological programmes. The Soviet Union maintained a large and sophisticated bio research programme – what happened to the materials/expertise? We do not know. Russia refuses to discuss past programmes.
- In 1979, there was the well-documented Sverdlosk incident. The accidental release of anthrax from Soviet military compound 19 in Yekaterinburg – admitted as biological-related in 1992. At the time it was explained as related to a food contamination problem.
- Iraq in 1991 admitted biological research for defensive military programmes.
- There is a clear difficulty in distinguishing between:
 - Defence programmes
 - Offensive programmes
 - Civil/military research
- Other countries are often mentioned as actively seeking biological weapons: Cuba, Israel, North Korea, Sudan and Syria. Their programmes remain unconfirmed....

– Non State Actors... What is the threat?

There are many official reports that suggest Terrorists are seeking CBRN weapons. Evidence of investigations by Al Qaeda into bio-weapons was found in Afghanistan.

The public portion of the CIA's February 2004 threat assessment (to Congress) notes that Osama Bin Ladin considered the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction to be a "religious obligation". It goes on to record that more than two dozen other terrorist groups are pursuing Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials. Terrorists (and criminals) are operating world-wide seeking to obtain such materials.

So we know the intention exists. The issue is can they get these materials and successfully turn them into biological weapons?

There is not a great deal of evidence but the accounts of the Japanese Aum Shrinrikyo group, dedicated and well funded, to acquire biological weapons suggests it is not a simple matter. Aum Shrinrikyo's failure does not however mean another terrorist group could not be successful.

The international community cannot rely solely on the BTWC to ensure that a state or non-state cannot in practice acquire by clandestine means the technology and materials necessary to produce biological weapons.

Key political supplier states have been co-ordinating export control arrangements for a number of years notably through the Australia Group (established in 1985) of which the European Commission is a member. The idea being to prevent the supply of dual use goods and technologies that could be used in bio (and chemical) weapons programmes.

Effective export control at national and international level makes things more difficult. It increases the cost and presents practical obstacles for those seeking to acquire the materials and technology.

The EU's Dual use regulation 1334 is an important part of those efforts.

There is wider international pressure to make improvement in the control of WMD materials and technology. UNSCR 1540 of April 2004 – makes controls mandatory. States are required to strengthen control over WMD/CBRN materials/technology. (Informally according to an official working for the 1540 committee the EU is in good shape apart from the biological area).

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI): undertook, a review of how European Community instruments could contribute (in the external field) in the area of the non-proliferation of WMD – basically how the Commission could spend funds available in the period 2007-2011 or technical assistance in the area of non proliferation.

The detailed report is available on the SIPRI website; it includes the following recommendation for the biological area;

“In the short term the main effort needs to be to bring clarity to what security problems need to be solved. The EU should try to help establish this conceptual clarity which can be the basis for future actions aimed both at reinforcing the EU position as a model of consistent best practice and at spreading such practices to neighbours and partners.”

CONCLUSION

- Resources are finite.
 - We cannot do everything.
 - We need to make sure we spend our resources in a way that produces the maximum added value.
 - Not a question of what can be done but what can be done best recognising that we cannot do everything.
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