



SOFIMUN
Sofia International Model United Nations

Edition: 1/2008
Period: 20-27 July 2008
Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

Website: www.sofimun.org
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COMMITTEE:
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CHAIRPERSON:
ANDREA BERGER & GEORGE NICOLOV

**TOPIC: (B) – TERRORISM AND
DISARMAMENT**

BACKGROUND GUIDE

The Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament was established in 1979 to serve as the world's foremost arms control and disarmament negotiating forum. Since that time, the CD has negotiated the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention and Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Together the 65 member states of the CD confront international disarmament issues such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency in armaments, nuclear war prevention, and weapons of mass destruction.

The Conference on Disarmament conducts its work based on consensus, one of the factors largely attributed to its persistent deadlock. In order to negotiate a treaty, the CD needs prior consensus on a programme of work which will include the mandate of the ad hoc committee charged to draft the treaty. In real life, the treaty concluded by the aforementioned ad hoc committee would be re-submitted to the CD for final adoption and approval. In light of the considerably complicated working methods of the Conference, the SOFIMUN CD will extend its discussions to the point a mandate for an ad hoc committee, special coordinator, or technical working group is agreed upon.

The SOFIMUN Conference on Disarmament will seek to overcome the impasse of the committee in order to produce a "programme of work" (the committee's agenda). Intense debates on the two topics to be discussed, biological weapons and terrorism and disarmament, are a certainty!





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Topic B: Terrorism and Disarmament - summary



Terrorism has risen to the forefront as an international security concern after September 11, 2001 and has subsequently been argued by various countries to be a justification for political and even military action outside of their respective national boundaries. Terrorist ability to obtain or produce WMD is affirmed by some to be growing amidst looser controls of stockpiles and weapons technology in a number of regions, including but not limited to the former Soviet Union. In order to prevent terrorist groups from attaining such weapons, a strong physical protection regime is necessary. The Convention for the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials outlines only specific provisions for physical protection in cases of international transport, and commits states to protect their nuclear facilities only in tandem with their domestic laws and capabilities. The 2005 amendment to the convention, which would make the provisions legally binding and extend the

original text to nuclear materials and facilities in the domestic realm, has not received sufficient international support to enter into force. The SOFIMUN CD will therefore have to find a way to strengthen international regimes to effectively combat the possibility of terrorist acquisition of WMD, a difficult process considering much of the non-proliferation regime presently pivots around state-actors and national sovereignty. The committee's discussion process may address chemical, biological, nuclear and radioactive material (whose use is of increasing concern in the making of "dirty bombs") as deemed necessary, but should avoid the topic of terrorist acquisition of conventional weapons.

Topic B: Terrorism and Disarmament – background guide

International conceptions of security and defence have been redefined in the new millennium, attributable in large part to a single date in recent memory: September 11, 2001. The attacks in the United States put terrorism on the foreign policy map in an unprecedented manner. Terrorism has since risen to the forefront as an international security concern and has been promulgated by various countries as a justification for political and even military action outside of their respective national boundaries.



Terrorism as exemplified by the events of 9/11 was, however, neither unfamiliar to the international arena, nor has been antiquated in the nearly 7 years since. Others of note include the Aum Shinrikyo sect's use of a chemical nerve agent in a Tokyo subway in 1995, the 1998 bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the 2004 train bombings in Madrid and the 2005 London public transport bombings. Preventing



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terrorist factions from acquiring the weapons necessary to execute such aforementioned atrocities and disarming those suspected of possessing them must therefore be central to any comprehensive international effort to combat the phenomena.

The SOFIMUN Conference on Disarmament (hereinafter, CD) will focus its attention on the threat of terrorist acquisition of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), as opposed to the acquisition of conventional weapons (as defined in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) The potential availability and desirability of chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological weapons to terrorist factions both represents a shift in the scope and means of these groups and jeopardizes the non-proliferation regime's ability to counter horizontal proliferation.



The threat of WMD has recently intersected with terrorism in the rhetoric of western policy makers, emphatic in their proclamations that "terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are two sides of the same coin." Terrorist ability to obtain or produce WMD is argued by some to be growing amidst looser controls of stockpiles and weapons technology, or the dissemination of information thereof, in a number of regions.

Prior to its collapse, the Soviet Union possessed a stockpile of over 27,000 nuclear weapons with enough weapons grade fissile material to triple the aforementioned amount. Thus, much of the concern regarding the nexus of terrorism and WMD centers not on the theft of a warhead by terrorist groups, as their large size makes them difficult for clandestine transport, but on the theft of fissile material from inadequately secured facilities in the former Soviet Union (although similar fears exist regarding "loose nukes" in more recent nuclear weapons states such as Pakistan, India and North Korea). Reports indicate that only just around one fifth of Russia's stockpile of weapons-grade uranium has been destroyed and plutonium destruction programs have yet to be implemented. The majority of Russian fissile material is in fact located in facilities awaiting an initial round of security upgrades.

There have been no confirmed reports to date of a stolen weapon, although intelligence points to a significant black market for nuclear and radioactive materials. The IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database, for instance, reported 827 cases of illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials between 1993 and 2005. Less than a year ago in Bratislava three individuals were arrested for attempting to sell over a pound of highly enriched uranium from the former Soviet Union for \$1 million USD.

In order to prevent terrorist groups from attaining such weapons, a strong physical protection regime is necessary. The IAEA Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), true to its name, outlines provisions on the prevention, detection and punishment of offenses relating to nuclear material. In 2005 an amendment was written which would make the convention legally binding for states Party and would extend the CPPNM to peaceful nuclear materials and facilities. However, it merely obligates States to pursue physical protection of nuclear facilities in tandem with their own national law, argued by many to be poorly enforced or underdeveloped in some situations. The Convention includes no *specific* provisions for physical protection other than those for international transport (in the original text). The 2005 Amendment, accepted by only 15/134 states party, has also yet to enter into force in light of contentious points. Some states have additionally suggested that provisions for the national movement of nuclear



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materials or extensions to radioactive material (as no binding agreement exists for the physical protection of such material or facilities) are needed.

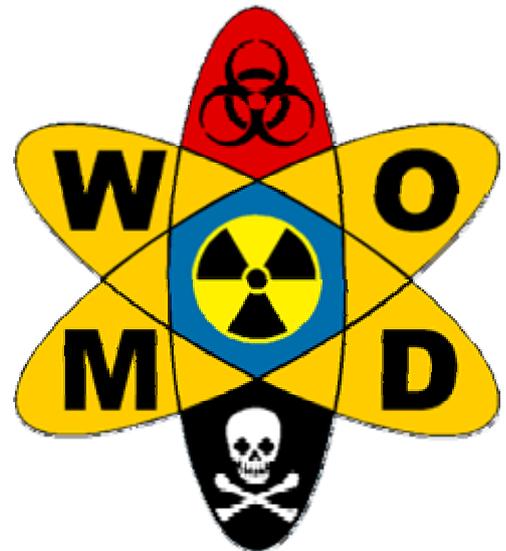
Radioactive materials have become an increasing concern by nature of their use in radiological dispersal devices, or "dirty bombs". These weapons use conventional explosives to disperse radioactive materials, but do not have the nuclear chain reactions or creation of critical mass necessary to be considered a nuclear weapon. While some argue that they should be considered a WMD, their tendency to create more chaos than casualties has led them to be termed a "weapon of mass disruption". Experts have pointed to the desire by terrorists to acquire such weapons, primarily because of their ability to induce social panic with some casualties, and their availability relative to other forms of weaponry. For this reason, radioactive materials and radiological weapons may certainly be taken into consideration by the SOFIMUN CD.

Dependent upon the agreed agenda and the outcome of the biological weapons topic, considerations of biological and chemical weapons may be included in discussion if deemed necessary and pertinent by the committee. Delegates should additionally refer to SC Res. 1540, a general resolution dealing with terrorism, as a guide to some of the binding commitments already undertaken by the international community.

The primary complication with combating terrorism lies in its very nature. Terrorism often transcends state boundaries, with its networks and tributaries reaching to the corners of the globe. The non-proliferation regime at present has pivoted on the principles of statehood, as opposed to encompassing the acquisition of WMD by non-state actors. Whether or not existing regimes can be modified and strengthened to do so will be debated by the SOFIMUN CD.

Paradoxically, some have suggested that adding to or modifying current legal structures to strengthen international security by preventing WMD and conventional weapons from falling into the hands of those who would abuse them, would in fact weaken those very structures. Strengthening or extending existing multilateral treaties may also be difficult in light of the failure of some key states to ratify them, making compromise and diplomacy in the consensus-based CD all the more imperative.

Examples of what may be discussed by the committee are specific standards for the protection of facilities with nuclear material (as the CPPNM only commits states to physical protection in tandem with national legislation and contentions over the 2005 Amendment undoubtedly still exist. A discussion in the CD could search for compromises to strengthen the plausibility of an accepted amendment), an agreement pertaining to the physical protection of radioactive materials and facilities, or practical arrangements for the down-blending of nuclear material (similar in principle to the Global Threat Reduction Initiative).





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Suggested Reading and Additional Sources

Topic B: Terrorism and Disarmament

1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material:
<http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism/Conv6.pdf>

Amendment to the 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (including the full revised text) NB: this amendment has yet to enter into force:
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/nucmat/text/amend.pdf>

2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism:
http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism/English_18_15.pdf

UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004):
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/328/43/PDF/N0432843.pdf?OpenElement>

Fact Sheet on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060715-3.html>

Bratislava Nuclear Security Initiative 2005 (bilateral between President Putin and George W. Bush to increase security in Russian facilities and transport of materials):
http://nnsa.energy.gov/nuclear_nonproliferation/presidential_initiatives.htm

IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database Report, released 11 September 2007:
http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Features/RadSources/PDF/fact_figures2006.pdf

United Nations: Action to Counter Terrorism:
<http://www.un.org/terrorism/>

"Russia's Loose Nukes" – International Affairs Journal at the University of California
<http://davisiaj.com/content/view/256/81/>

"Official: Enough Material Missing from Russia to Build a Nuke" - ABC World News:
<http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=506177&page=1>