

# Weapons of mass destruction | terrorism



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The cause of concern for any terrorists attack since the post cold war era has been unprecedented. Such concern has increased of late as the disintegration of erstwhile Soviet Union has left many nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in the hands of nations, who are finding it hard to ensure their two ends meet and to secure these weapons. So, these weapons are vulnerable in the hands of these nations, as any terrorist organisation would be looking out to materialise on such issues and acquire these Weapons of Mass Destruction.

- The chapters so far has brought out the various facets of terrorism using Weapon of Mass Destructions. Though the terrorists' activities or incidents involving Weapon of Mass Destructions is miniscule as compared to incidents involving conventional weapons, any attack by terrorists using Weapon of Mass Destructions cannot be overlooked. The growing high end incident violence and the terrorists' willingness to inflict mass casualty to general public is a pointer in the direction where terrorism is headed.
- The weapon of mass destruction is the buzz word for the terrorists, as with small effort, they inflict a larger damage. With the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union, fissile material or Chemical and Biological agent reaching a terrorists hand is not a remote possibility, especially for a state sponsored or well funded terrorist groups.
- In respect of India, the recent turmoil in Pakistan and the terrorist groups not recognising the government is a reminder of a Weapon of Mass Destructions attack in India becoming a reality.

- The terrorists can exploit the use of Weapons of Mass Destructions by either theft/ buying it from one of the states which is either in need of money or are harbouring terrorism. It is important that the world realise today that the threat from Weapon of Mass Destructions use by terrorist is imminent, and we should not be caught off guard and wanting in this regard. The starting point will include developing comprehensive plan involving the understanding the nuances of use of Weapon of Mass Destructions by terrorists and the groups.
- The starting point in this case would be to have something on lines of Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), as started by the USA. We need to identify the terrorists groups, which are most likely to use Weapon of Mass Destructions, and ban the outfit, freeze their funding and try and catch the leaders of these groups.
- India on their hand can start of on this mission, by firstly increasing the vigilance on the borders, increasing public awareness, and above reinforcing the existing security at its nuclear, chemical and biological plants, where a terrorist group may lay their hand on.
- Amongst other things which has aspired terrorism, nationalist terrorism, religious extremism and aggressive separatism are the most significant one. Nationalist terrorism is employed by a group of people with a common identity to achieve independence from the ruling power.
- Religious extremism is driven by the belief that violent actions against any state is not only fulfilling the Gods will, but also freeing mankind from evil in the world. The poor countries of North Africa and Arab states are of the opinion that the western world doesn't want these

countries to become rich. The liberal and open economy of developed nations is often taken as being against these poor nations, thus leading to religious extremism. To ensure that such kind of terrorism does not spring up, the gap between the rich and poor nation needs to be reduced.

- The modern terrorism frightens people with its ability to employ high technological weapon such as Biological, Chemical, or even Nuclear devices. The use of biological agent cannot ruled out, no matter how much repugnant it may be. Biological agents have been known to have been made few state actors, and it could have easily been passed on to the non state actors, fighting for similar cause. If a biological threat was not taken seriously, it would be a bad bargain for any state. Reasonable protective measures would demand increased attention.
- Chemical weapons or agents are an effective military tool and can be easily be defined as an instrument of terror. Many countries have since end of the World War II has invested in the chemical agents however most of them claim to have discarded these weapons. The chemical weapon use by terrorists may be less effective as compared to other Weapons of Mass destruction, but it will have a huge impact on the morale and psychological effect, in addition to political impact. The basic technology for development of chemical agents would be same as that required for civilian use. This dual use technology for chemical agent pose a significant danger if they are diverted for weapons production, and any improper or illegal use cannot be found out easily.
- Bio terrorism is more likely than ever before and far more threatening than explosive or chemical. Preventing and countering bio terrorism is

extremely difficult. Detection or interdiction of those intending to use bio weapon is next to impossible. Terrorists are likely to use the rapidity of casualty reached due to unexpected and non available diagnostic and therapeutic support needed. We are ill prepared to deal with such terrorist attacks. A chemical release is far more manageable than the biological challenge posed by Small pox or Anthrax. The spectre of Biological weapon is an ugly one, every bit as grim as that of a nuclear winter. The resource availability in the poor countries being at premium shall make them a vulnerable target that shall be unable to cope with the magnitude of such casualties. On the immediate horizon knowing well that what little can be done under such attacks, a mammoth task lies before us and a cruel opportunity with terrorist groups to exploit it to their advantage.

- The chances of a terrorist group using a nuclear weapon is less when compared to chemical and biological weapon, but any use of nuclear weapon would be profound and disastrous for a state. All countries need to be vigilant in monitoring any proliferation of nuclear weapon technology to the terrorist groups.
- A terrorist group would not like to use a Weapon of Mass Destruction in the first instance. This is because in destroying the entire population and devastating societies, these terrorists organisations would lose everything they have fought for so far. However, the use of such weapons by self destructive terrorists or those who are religious fanatic cannot be overlooked.
- The change in the nature of the threat requires changes in the way we organize our resources to provide for the common defence. To cope

with the new threat will require new doctrines and innovative technologies, improved intelligence and law enforcement, and better cooperation with like-minded governments. The three-pronged strategy I have described is both within our reach and within our budget. Of course we will have to refocus our priorities, and more funding will be required. But the threat of terrorist attack on American cities involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons has reached the point where a bold and vigorous effort is required. This is a clear and present danger to the American people that requires a timely response.

- Historically, much less attention has been paid to the CB terrorist threat than to its nuclear counterpart, despite the cogency of the argument that the latter is less likely to occur than the former. In the wake of the Tokyo subway attack, this has begun to change. In fact, the past couple of years have witnessed a good deal of intergovernmental consultation and enhanced domestic security measures planned or put into place throughout the Western world. Whether these will be sufficient or timely enough to prevent the next large-scale CB terrorist incident or at least to mitigate its consequences to an acceptable degree, however, remains to be seen.
- A robust WMD elimination capability is what all the countries require to meeting this threat and protecting from any catastrophic disaster. The hostile countries or terrorists groups would not think twice before using WMD against any country if it is assured that the country is not prepared to counter the threat.