

Terroristic tendencies

[Business](#)



The foremost foreign threat facing America today is the militant terrorist forces, such as Al-Qaeda, that conspire to harm and create fear in the country. However, one potential danger posed by terrorist, in which they acquire and deploy nuclear weapons against the country, continues to be greatly exaggerated in the minds of Americans. Even though such a scenario would prove devastating to the nation, the fact of the matter remains that the high implausibility of terrorists actually accruing the sheer amount of skill, money, materials necessary to build a nuclear weapon proves to be its most decisive detractor in fearing it.

Also exacerbating the false threat is the influence of the media in spreading inflammatory stories that incite fear in order to increase ratings and page views. The fear mongering tactics employed by these news organizations only serves to create an unjustifiable nationwide mindset of paranoia and hysteria about nuclear terrorism. In the end the widespread misconception of nuclear terrorism caused by the media conceals that in reality the difficulty of obtaining nuclear weapons makes the dangers of a nuclear terrorist attack highly improbable. The most valid reason for reducing the focus on nuclear terrorism concerns the sheer difficulty of actually building a nuclear weapon. The amount of technical expertise, money, and rare and difficult to obtain materials needed to build one nuclear weapon is staggering.

An analysis of each of these factors would illustrate that meeting the requirements for only one these conditions would be too impractical to reasonably pursue as an actual goal. Concerning the necessary technical expertise, a terrorist organization would need a “ team knowledgeable in nuclear physics or engineering, metallurgy, machining, draftsmanship,

conventional explosives, and chemical processing”, not exactly a team terrorists could recruit from ITT Tech (Moore). A team that could actually design and build a nuclear weapon would take a lengthy stretch of time to assemble considering their extreme specialization in their respective fields makes them rare and difficult to locate. Not only that, the potential pool of candidates drastically shrinks for the simple fact that not many of these skilled individuals would not to support or work for a terrorist group in the first place. Also, one must consider that blueprints for building nuclear weapons are virtually unavailable to terrorists, even in the black market, forcing a theoretical team of builders to draft a blueprint from scratch, definitely not a small feat. Even the most detailed black market blueprints for a nuclear weapon, plans from the Libya WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) program “ were apparently incomplete” and missing a few key parts (Moore).

This obstacle in itself highlights the impracticality of attempting to build a nuclear weapon. The amount of money needed to bankroll a project such as constructing a nuclear weapon would be enormously large, to the point of excluding every terrorist group except the very wealthiest from funding it. The ridiculous amount of money needed begs the question, why bother pursuing a nuclear weapon when conventional terrorist tactics are just as effective? As one author pointed out “ Terrorism, we must remember, is not about killing. Terrorism is a form of psychological warfare in which the killing of a relatively small number of civilians is used to send a brutal message of hate and fear to hundreds of millions of people” (Sprinzak). The truth about terrorism is that they do not need an incredibly destructive weapon to

achieve their purposes as their brand of psychological warfare requires only a small number of deaths to cause widespread hysteria. If that is the case, terrorists would not pursue obtaining a nuclear weapon when the necessary capital could be spent funding conventional terrorist attacks many, many times over.

One of the biggest barriers to terrorists achieving nuclear capability is the utter lack of nuclear material available to them in the black market.

According to the ITB (Illicit Trafficking Database), the “ cumulative amounts of highly enriched uranium and plutonium [trafficked up to 31 December 2004, totaled] only 8. 521 kg and . 373 kg, respectively” (Moore). To give one an idea of how useful those amounts are, a terrorist group would need “ 40 to 50 kg of weapons grade HEU” build a simple gun- type nuclear weapon and “ 8 kg of plutonium” to build the incredibly advanced implosion- type design (Moore). These figures reported by the ITB represent the total volume of all illegal trafficking, not just one or two transactions.

This means that even if the terrorists could purchase all of the illegal grade uranium and plutonium in the black market, the amount of material they would have to work with would still be pitifully meager. In practice, it would take many years before a terrorist group could even stockpile the necessary material, rendering the idea of even do so completely unreasonable and ridiculous. Figure 1. Map illustrates the conditions of all nations concerning nuclear weapons The distribution of nuclear weapons on the planet also illustrates the difficulties of obtaining nuclear weapons and also serves to elaborate on the previously discussed points. From the map on figure one, one can see that the nuclear armed states (which are shaded in red and <https://assignbuster.com/terroristic-tendencies/>

yellow), are the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, Pakistan, and India.

The reason that these countries currently possess nuclear weapons runs opposite to the reason terrorist organizations do not: The countries simply have the manpower and expertise, capital, and materials which terrorist organizations cannot hope to match. The figure above also illustrates that even though there are many full-fledged nations, with their superior organization, literally millions upon millions of men available to work, billions in capital for funding, and nuclear resources, there are still only seven countries with nuclear arsenals. If powerful countries cannot achieve nuclear capability, there is no logical reason to believe that terrorists could accomplish what whole nations could not. Works Cited Moore, James W. “The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism Is Exaggerated.

” Terrorism. Ed. Laura K. Egen Dorf. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2009. Opposing Viewpoints.

Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context. Web. 24 Jan. 2011. “ Nations on the Threshold.

” Atomic Archive. Web. 02 Feb 2011.

shtml>. Sprinzak, Ehud. “ Weapons of Mass Destruction Do Not Pose a Terrorist Threat.” The Washington Post (19 Aug. 1998).

Rpt. in Terrorism. Ed. Laura K. Egen Dorf. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2004.

Opposing Viewpoints. Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context. Web. 25 Jan. 2011.