Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2016
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Forum: *General Assembly First Committee*
Issue: *Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction*
Position: *Chair*

Introduction

Terrorism is not a new issue, as it has been used since the earliest times of recorded history. The term "terrorism" is hard to define, as there are many acts that can be defined as terrorism: a reaction to oppression or a holy duty are examples. Usually, terrorists aim at a larger audience, not individuals. They use acts of violence to draw the attention of for example governments or entire countries. Terrorist organisations that most people are familiar with are Al Qaida, ISIL and Boko Haram. The United Nations have to decide on a solution to prevent terrorism as a whole, but a part of doing this is to ensure that terrorists do not obtain more weapons than they already have.

Definition of Key Terms

Terrorism

As mentioned before, terrorism is hard to define. Various legal systems and countries use different definitions of terrorism. The difficulty is caused by the fact that the term is politically and emotionally charged. The United Nations have not succeeded in developing a comprehensive definition of terrorism, but since 1994, the UN General Assembly condemns criminal acts as terrorism using the following political description:
"Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them."[1] The United States of America define terrorism as "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."[2]

Weapons of mass destruction

"A weapon of mass destruction (WMD or WoMD) is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological or other weapon that can kill and bring significant harm to a large number of humans or cause great damage to human-made structures (e.g.

buildings), natural structures (e.g. mountains), or the biosphere. The scope and application of the term has evolved and been disputed, often signifying more politically than technically. Originally coined in reference to aerial bombing with chemical explosives, since World War II it has come to refer to large-scale weaponry of other technologies, such as chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear."(3)

Chemical weapons
"A chemical weapon (CW) is a specialized munition that uses chemicals formulated to inflict death or harm on human beings. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) states: "The term chemical weapon may also be applied to any toxic chemical or its precursor that can cause death, injury, temporary incapacitation or sensory irritation through its chemical action. Munitions or other delivery devices designed to deliver chemical weapons, whether filled or unfilled, are also considered weapons themselves."(4)

Biological weapons
"A biological agent—also called bio-agent, biological threat agent, biological warfare agent, biological weapon, or bioweapon—is a bacterium, virus, protozoan, parasite, or fungus that can be used purposefully as a weapon in bioterrorism or biological warfare (BW)."(5)

Radiological weapons
"A radiological weapon or radiological dispersion device (RDD) is any weapon that is designed to spread radioactive material with the intent to kill and cause disruption. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, an RDD is "any device, including any weapon or equipment, other than a nuclear explosive device, specifically designed to employ radioactive material by disseminating it to cause destruction, damage, or injury by means of the radiation produced by the decay of such material" (6)

Nuclear weapons
"A nuclear weapon is an explosive device that derives its destructive force from nuclear reactions, either fission (fission bomb) or a combination of fission and fusion (thermonuclear weapon). Both reactions release vast quantities of energy from relatively small amounts of matter."(7)

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism, (2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism, (3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weapon_of_mass_destruction, (4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_weapon, (5)

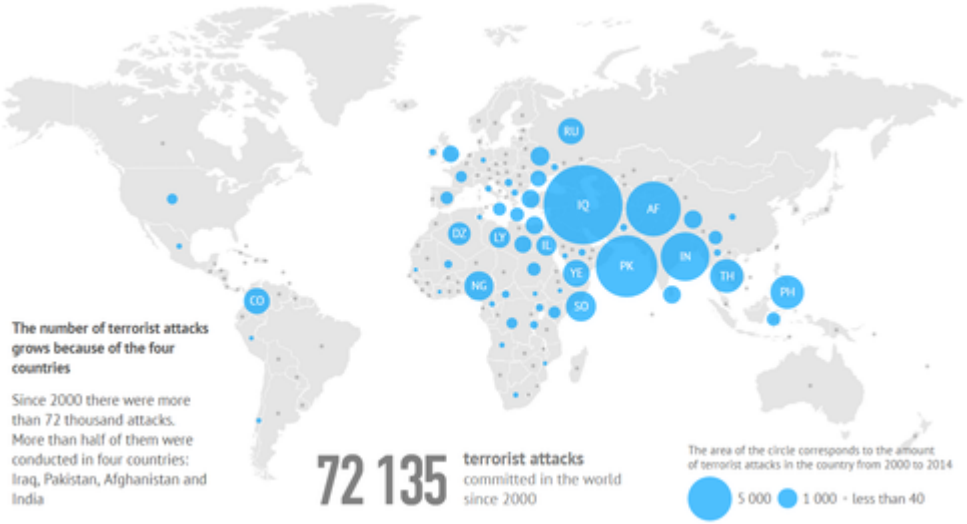
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_agent, (6) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radiological_weapon

(7) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapon

General Overview

We have known terrorism for a very long time. Of course, not everyone speaks of terrorists in the same way. Something may feel as a holy duty for one person and as an act of terrorism for the other. There are three perspectives of terrorism: the terrorist's, the victim's and the general public's. Terrorists do not see themselves as bad, they believe they are fighting for what they believe in, no matter what they have to do in order to achieve their goals. Victims of terrorism see terrorists as criminals who do not care about other human beings. The general public's view differs in various countries.

Terrorism has become a bigger issue in the past few years, with the attacks on the Twin Towers by Al Qaida and the establishment of terrorist organisations such as ISIL in Iraq and Syria and Boko Haram in Nigeria. It is almost impossible to combat terrorism without harming innocent civilians. Therefore, the most sensible solution to stop terrorists is to prevent them from acquiring weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

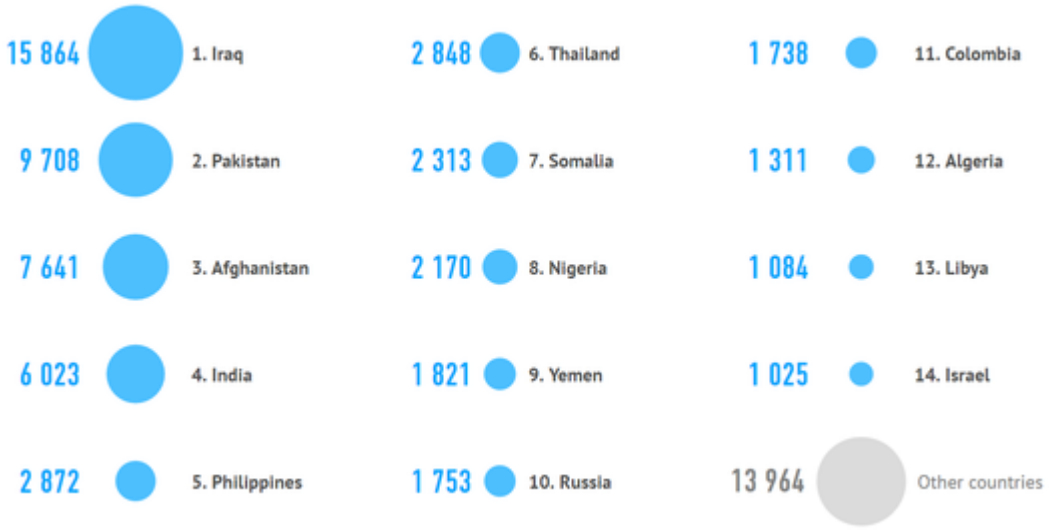


The number of terrorist attacks worldwide from 2000 to 2014

There are four major types of WMDs: chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear. We can hardly stop terrorists from making chemical weapons, as it takes little resources to create these weapons. However, this kind of weapon is very dangerous, as they are very unreliable when made by people with little to no knowledge of chemistry. Terrorists need more resources in order to make

biological weapons, but it is still relatively easy to make these weapons. The two types of WMDs that are the least difficult to stop from being made are the radiological and the nuclear weapons. These need radioactive materials and technologies in order to manufacture them.
The manufacturing of WMDs should be stopped at the source: terrorists usually have to import resources for WMDs from other countries. By improving border security, states can control the shipment of dangerous materials to other countries.

Major Parties Involved



Number of terrorist attacks from 2000 to 2014

All countries in which there have terrorist attacks are involved in this issue, as mentioned in the picture above.

Russia
Russia is an important party in this issue, as they are close to the Middle East, where there are many terrorists gathered. They also have the resources to manufacture WMDs, so it is key that they communicate with the international community on how they can stop the (clandestine) export of these resources.

Timeline of Events

1914-1918: chemical weapons were used in World War I.

1925: The Geneva Protocol outlaws the use of chemical weapons.

1937: First use of the term "weapons of mass destruction" by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

2001: Terrorist attacks on the Twin Tower on the 11th of September by terrorist organisation Al Qaida.

2001-2009: War on Terror, declared by George W. Bush

2004: The UN Security Council adopts a resolution on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

2006: The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction on December 18.

2007: The International Convention on the suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is held on July 7.

2008: The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction on the 8th of January.

Previous Attemps to solve the issue

United Nations resolutions on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction state to:

- Support international efforts to resolve the issue
- Improve international security
- Strengthen communication and communication between Member States

There have been three resolutions on this matter that have been passed by the UN General Assembly. (links are under useful documents)

Possible Solutions

To prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs, actions in the following areas must be taken: improving the security of stockpiles that already exist, dismantling said stockpiles more efficiently, strengthening border security and the tracking of suspect shipment, this can be done by improving communication among all states.
Financial support is necessary for low-income countries, as it helps to ensure maximum effectiveness. Improved border security is not to be limited to more checkpoints or extra guards, but also more effective inspection policies and better equipment to do these inspections.
International communication and transparency is needed, in order to ensure that countries do not export resources for WMDs to terrorists.
Shipping inspection could help to prevent weapons from being exported to terrorists, but this measure is harder to carry out, as it needs a lot of extra manpower.

Useful documents

GA resolution 60/78:
https://books.google.nl/books?id=H92FNrPxwI4C&pg=PA155&lpg=PA155&dq=Resolution+60/78&source=bl&ots=v67J0DlUlr&sig=cusdODbF3Sx_hF77q_8k5w_kN9c&hl=nl&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiJgfOK-pjOAhUF0hoKHbk_BRIQ6AEILDAD#v=onepage&q=Resolution%2060%2F78&f=false

GA resolution 61/86:
https://gafc-vote.un.org/UNODA/vote.nsf/511260f3bf6ae9c005256705006e0a5b/f5ff7a9e7fae054085257205006ea3fe/$FILE/A%20RES%2061%2086.pdf

GA resolution 62/33: http://www.refworld.org/docid/478cb3cb2.html

Appendix/Appendices

http://www.terrorism-research.com/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weapon_of_mass_destruction
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism
http://www.un.org/press/en/2002/gadis3240.doc.htm
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_agent
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radiological_weapon
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapon

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_weapon
https://www.quora.com/In-what-ways-can-we-prevent-terrorists-from-acquiring-weapons-of-mass-destruction
http://www.refworld.org/docid/478cb3cb2.html
https://gafc-vote.un.org/UNODA/vote.nsf/511260f3bf6ae9c005256705006e0a5b/f5ff7a9e7fae054085257205006ea3fe/$FILE/A%20RES%2061%2086.pdf