

Terrorism - Development and interest for radionuclear materials

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Agenda

- New trends in international terrorism
- How attractive are RN-weapons to terrorists?
 - case study: The al-Qaida network



New trends in international terrorism

FFI



1985

“Terrorists want a lot of people *watching*, not a lot of people *dead*.”

- RAND Corporation’s terrorism emeritus Brian Jenkins

Quote from Brian Jenkins, “Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?” *Orbis* 29 (3) (Fall 1985), p.511.

1994

“Today’s terrorists don’t want a seat at the table, they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it”

- Former CIA Chief R. James Woolsey

Quote from “Countering the Changing Threat of International Terrorism,” *Report from the National Commission on Terrorism*, June 2000

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of a grid of small squares in shades of green and white. Overlaid on this grid are three circular icons: a dark green circle with the white text 'FFI', a yellow circle with a black globe, and a blue circle with a white brain silhouette.

FFI



Why would terrorists want to use RN?

Three common arguments presented by al-Qaida:

- Balance of power
- Revenge/punishment
- Create fear/disruption to get attention, not necessarily to kill many people

Case: Al-Qaida

1. Balance of power

"Acquiring [chemical and nuclear] weapons for the defence of Muslims is a religious duty [...]. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims." (Osama bin Laden, 1998)

"In their countries, we have to use WMD in terrorism. [...] Because between us and these people there has to be a strategic balance." (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Sept 1999)



Osama bin Laden



Screen grab of al-Suri's video-taped lectures in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2000



Case: Al-Qaida

2. Revenge/punishment (“equal retaliation”)

“We have not reached parity with them. We have the right to kill four million Americans, two million of them children, and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands.”

(Sulayman Abu al-Ghayt, 2002)

“The attack against it [the United States] by WMD is accepted, since Allah said: “If you are attacked you should attack your aggressor by identical force.”

(Shaykh Nasir bin Hamd al Fahd, 2003)

Case: Al-Qaida

3. Fear/disruption

Shura council discussions (late 1990s)

The Dhiren Barot case (2004)

Internet propaganda (2008)



Dhiren Barot (2004)



The movie "Nuclear Jihad", produced by al-Qaida sympathizers and posted on the Internet, May 2008



Concluding remarks

Why would al-Qaida want to use RN-weapons for terrorist purposes?

- Shifting motivations for using RN: From "balance of power" to "retaliation/punishment" after 2001.
- In practice: Awareness that in the field of RN, "fear/disruption" is the only realistic option (this awareness both *before* and after 2001).
- May explain why AQ has not allocated more resources to development of RN.