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## NATO's response to the challenge of weapons of mass destruction

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### ABSTRACT

This short presentation will cover the Alliance's response to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) proliferation, placing this in the context of the dangers involved in the potential use of such devices by non-state actors. It will include the political measures taken by NATO, the ongoing work with Russia, activities underway within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, as well as the concrete 'deliverables' for the Prague Summit in November 2002. NATO deals with these issues both from the point of view of deployed military forces, as well as civil emergency planning measures, and the overview covers both elements.

The Alliance has recognised since the early 1990s that it is important to strengthen efforts against proliferation. The principal goal remains that of preventing proliferation from taking place, or, should it take place, to reverse it through diplomatic means. Hand in hand with such an approach goes the important role of ensuring an appropriate defence posture against the possible use of WMD. It is very important to maintain the flexibility and effectiveness of Alliance forces despite the presence, the threat or the use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. In this context, the Alliance draws upon a mix of means to address the challenges of proliferation, including deterrence and offensive and defensive means, and enhancing the effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as diplomatic and counter-proliferation measures.

In the wake of 11 September, there is clearly an increased awareness of the potential use of WMD by non-state actors. As a result, NATO has adapted its work programme to the evolving demands of the Committees we support. That said, there is a great deal of continuity in the work of a committee such as the Senior Defence Group on Proliferation – in terms of what it has been doing over recent years to enhance military readiness to operate in a WMD environment. Many of the practical steps that have been taken by Allies with respect to force protection, detection, identification and medical countermeasures can be adapted to the risks associated with the potential use of WMD by non-state actors. We are therefore seeking to build upon existing work and initiatives.



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The potential use of biological agents by non-state actors is a significant problem. Non-state actors have shown the potential to create and use some of the weapons. Potential use of such agents by terrorist or criminal elements would be very disruptive: such agents may have a delay in action, rendering them difficult to trace and extremely resource-intensive to counter, both in terms of medical counter measures and law enforcement. Dual use technology and the widespread expertise associated with modern biological industries exacerbate the difficulties associated with countering this type of proliferation. Although the use and possession of biological weapons have been prohibited since the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons (BTWC), it remains a challenge to identify suitable implementation measures. It is obviously more complex than in conventional arms-control regimes where it is possible to count specific objects (tanks, artillery, etc.) and establish verification benchmarks. It remains important to pursue efforts to ensure that the BTWC is an effective instrument to counter the growing threat of biological weapons.

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There have been a number of close and intensive consultations with Russia on missile defence. These consultations will continue in the future and are likely to head in two or three general areas. Firstly, we can discuss the nature of ballistic-missile development in the world, our understanding of the problem, its scope and the range of efforts to counter it. Secondly, we can discuss the terminology and concepts, such as a common understanding of the meaning of Extended Air Defence and how missile defence fits in the overall structure, how it works in terms of communications and command and control, and what it presupposes in terms of training.