A Counter-WMD Strategy for the Future

ALBERT J. MAURONI
© 2010 Albert J. Mauroni

The past year has witnessed a renewed emphasis by US government agencies addressing the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In December 2009, the Obama Administration released its second presidential policy directive, a "National Strategy to Counter Biological Threats," which addressed the challenge of combating infectious diseases, regardless of whether they were natural or manmade. In February 2010, the Quadrennial Defense Review stressed how the proliferation of WMD "continues to undermine global security." In April, the Nuclear Posture Review was released for the first time as an unclassified document, along with a newly signed Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, reducing the deployable number of Russian and US nuclear weapons. In May, representatives from across the globe met to renew the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which attempts to reduce (and eventually eliminate) the total number of nuclear-owning weapon states in the world. It has been a busy spring.

During talks related to these initiatives, President Barack Obama directly connected the threat of nuclear terrorism to the success of nuclear proliferation efforts. He declared, "The greatest threat to US and global security is no longer a nuclear exchange between nations, but nuclear terrorism by violent extremists and nuclear proliferation to an increasing number of states."[1] The current focus on nonproliferation activities, however, does not stop terrorists from seeking and potentially obtaining nuclear and biological materials, technology, and devices. For that matter, the emphasis on combating terrorism has not resulted in a reduction of terrorist ambitions to obtain these materials, either. The US government, and the Department of Defense (DOD) in particular, needs to review its strategy to combat weapons of mass destruction.

The combating WMD framework is based on a counterproliferation strategy developed in response to the threat of nuclear, biological, and

---

Albert J. Mauroni is a senior policy analyst working on military chemical and biological defense policy issues.

chemical (NBC) weapons to military forces in the 1990s, however, its scope was broadened after September 2001 to address concerns relating to homeland security. For all the talk about "the most dangerous weapons in the hands of the most dangerous people," there has been little discussion on whether the combating WMD strategy is adequate against current and future threats. This article will review the development of the combating WMD strategy from its initiation in the 1990s, as a result of the post-conflict analysis of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. It will outline the creation of the combating WMD strategy during the George W. Bush Administration. The article focuses on challenges in interpretation, largely due to the thesis that terrorists were actively seeking WMD materials and technology from "rogue states" that had developed this capability (or were in the process of doing so). Last, it will offer suggestions on how to improve the framework, largely by defining the strategy to counter nation-state WMD programs as distinct from the strategy to counter terrorist pursuit of WMD. If the US government clearly articulates these two strategies as separate but related, as opposed to being one single strategy to counter WMD, the agencies responsible for executing these strategies will be much more effective.

Genesis of DOD's Combating WMD Strategy

In 1993, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) initiated a Defense Counterproliferation Initiative with the image of ill-prepared US forces facing Iraq's chemical and biological (CB) weapons still fresh in its mind. There was some initial concern by the nonproliferation community that DOD was attempting to usurp its role that a focus on developing offensive and defensive capabilities to counter adversarial use of CB weapons would come at the cost of reducing nonproliferation efforts.[2] After a few years of discussion, OSD tasked the Joint Staff in 1996 to develop a counterproliferation strategy, stating in Defense Planning Guidance that "all US forces must be prepared to conduct wartime operations against adversaries armed with chemical or biological weapons. Forces must be trained and equipped to maintain the effectiveness of Joint and combined operations despite the presence, threat, or use of CBW [chemical-biological warfare] by an adversary. Furthermore, US forces must be capable of managing the consequences of an adversary's use of CBW weapons."[3]

Elaborating on that direction, the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review stated, "To advance the institutionalization of counterproliferation concepts, the Joint Staff and CINCs [commanders-in-chief] will develop an integrated counter-NBC weapons strategy that includes both offensive and defensive means."[4] The review's focus was on the proliferation of NBC weapons to adversarial states. The Joint Staff spent some four years developing a

counterproliferation strategy through a team led by US Strategic Command and US Special Operations Command representatives.

The US government needs to review its strategy to combat WMD.

The counterproliferation strategy initially focused on three activities: proliferation prevention (DOD activities under nonproliferation), offensive capabilities (counterforce), and defensive capabilities (active and passive defense). Essentially, counterforce operations would attack WMD sites and weapon systems prior to their use on the battlefield, while active defense (primarily air and missile defense) would intercept any incoming delivery systems containing NBC warheads. Passive defense included those actions taken by military personnel to protect themselves against a successful release of NBC weapons.

In response to concern regarding terrorist incidents,[5] the US government updated its Federal Response Plan in 1997 to address the possibility of terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) materials within the United States.[6] Accordingly, the Joint Staff expanded its counterproliferation strategy to address DOD's responsibility to support the "lead federal agency"[7] responding to a domestic terrorist incident, as well as any long-term actions necessary to mitigate effects resulting from the use of NBC weapons in combat operations (e.g., restoring contaminated equipment and fixed sites to pre-incident condition).[8] Defense Secretary William Cohen's intense interest in consequence management led to the concept of National Guard WMD Civil Support Teams to assist state and local emergency responders.[9] As a result, the counterproliferation strategy identified four military capabilities: counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management. It was designed to offer the US military an integrated set of operational capabilities that would counter the ambitions and offensive capabilities of adversaries in Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia, as opposed to earlier scenarios involving combat operations against the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact.

The counterproliferation strategy was intended to "protect US forces and interests …should they confront an adversary armed with WMD." This strategy would include "activities of the Department of Defense across the full range of US government efforts…including the application of military power…intelligence collection and analysis, and support to diplomacy, arms control, and export controls."[10] It emphasized the preservation of US military capabilities while in combat with nation-states possessing CB weapons. Counterproliferation was intended to complement nonproliferation activities, recognizing the primacy of arms-control negotiations as the preferred

forum for addressing the WMD threat. The Director of the Joint Staff signed the Joint Staff's counterproliferation strategy in February 2001.

From Strategy to Execution

The tragic attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., on 11 September 2001 directly impacted the Bush Administration's national security perspective. Some people feared that terrorists would escalate to using CBRN weapons in US cities as a continuation of mass-casualty events. Casualties resulting from anthrax-filled letters sent to media and congressional offices in October and November 2001 solidified these fears.[11] In its review of the Joint Staff's counterproliferation strategy, the National Security Council made a few significant changes and promulgated National Security Policy Directive 17, "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction," later released in an unclassified form in December 2002.[12] This national strategy declared that terrorist groups were pursing WMD capabilities through "rogue states" that were developing or had the capability to produce NBC weapons. The first policy change was that the new strategy would address both military and homeland security concerns relating to WMDs.

The National Security Council split consequence management out of the Joint Staff counterproliferation strategy to be a standalone "pillar" of its new combating WMD strategy. The newly formed Office of Homeland Security considered the threat of terrorist use of CBRN hazards to be a top concern. Its worst-case scenarios envisioned foreign-based terrorists gaining military-grade CB warfare agents or a nuclear bomb from a "rogue state," transporting the weapons to the United States, and releasing them in major cities. The national strategy re-emphasized the need for a robust federal response to a domestic CBRN incident, turning the consequence management pillar into a much more complex function than merely another DOD response capability.

In July 2002, the Bush Administration released a *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and in February 2003, a *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Both documents identified responsibilities to address combating WMD terrorism—the former focusing on preventing terrorist attacks within the United States, and the latter on identifying and defusing threats outside of the country. The Government Accountability Office called the inclusion of WMD in multiple government strategies an effort to provide "cohesion by sharing common themes," but this assessment was overly generous.[13] The duplicative language was causing chaos among government offices charged with carrying out the various strategies. For instance, DOD has three distinct policy offices to address

homeland defense, combat terrorism, and combat WMD proliferation, as well as larger, distinct communities of interest on each topic. These communities have different political agendas, operating concepts, and budgetary authorities, and all have conflicting views about what "combating WMD" means and how to execute their specific responsibilities.[14]

Other federal agencies also have roles and responsibilities to combat WMD and WMD terrorism, with each agency developing its own set of definitions and operational concepts. The Bush Administration created a National Counterproliferation Center in 2005 to address WMD proliferation distinct from the National Counterterrorism Center's focus on terrorists seeking WMD capabilities. While these two centers discuss common issues, they operate independently of each other. The many federal and state definitions of WMD make it difficult for federal agencies to agree on how to work together, especially with respect to coordinating agendas and projects. These differences exist today, largely unresolved.[15] This internal government debate caused years of delay between the release of the December 2002 *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* and the February 2006 *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*.[16]

Adding to the debate, the Bush Administration had developed the concepts of "WMD elimination" and "WMD interdiction" as new components under the strategy to combat WMD. During Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the Defense Department deployed a WMD Exploitation Task Force that was, at best, a rushed effort that lacked a sufficient concept of operations and good intelligence.[17] After this task force and the Iraq Survey Group failed to find anything but "WMD-related program activities and significant amounts of [related] equipment,"[18] Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld charged US Strategic Command in January 2005 with coordinating and synchronizing DOD's efforts to combat WMD, starting with the development of operational concepts for WMD elimination and interdiction.[19] This step raised the number of distinct mission areas within the combating WMD strategy from six to eight.[20]

Countering Terrorist WMD Threats

The US government's approach to combating WMD terrorism needs similar scrutiny. The US government fixates on scenarios that envision terrorist use of ten-kiloton nuclear weapons, large releases of anthrax and smallpox, and extensive use of nerve and mustard agents in heavily populated US cities, worst-case scenarios that have little basis in reality. In February 2003, the Secretary of the newly established Department of Homeland Security (DHS) told the American public to buy sheets of

plastic and duct tape to create "safe rooms" within their houses as protection against CBRN terrorism, causing a mad rush to stores, despite any evidence of terrorist plans. The homeland security approach to develop protective measures against CBRN incidents is based on the DOD passive defense construct, assuming that terrorists will use military-style NBC weapons to simultaneously cause mass casualties in multiple cities.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) developed and stockpiled medical countermeasures for civilian casualties, focusing on the same military threats that DOD addresses.[21] DHHS has only stockpiled two vaccines in the face of a dozen significant biological warfare agents, however. DHS has positioned radiological monitors and biological detectors around the country and issued financial grants for state and local emergency responders to obtain specialized detectors, protective suits and masks, and decontamination systems for CBRN hazards. Only 30-odd cities across the United States have biological detectors; the overwhelming majority of cities with a population more than 100,000 do not, due mainly to concerns regarding detector false alarms and associated costs.[22] The Government Accountability Office has commented on the shortcomings of DHS's radiological detectors and its failure to develop a federal capability to recover from radiological incidents.[23] The current concept is not sustainable nor does it adequately protect the majority of the US public from CBRN incidents, but a "Maginot Line" of radiological and biological detectors was the wrong concept to begin with.

Civil-defense discussions in the 1960s and 1970s addressed ambitious plans for national shelter and antimissile defense programs that were supposed to protect the public from the impact of Soviet bombers and ballistic missiles carrying nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. It would have cost billions of dollars to protect the entire nation. Congress never fully funded these efforts because its members were not convinced that the programs would be justified, even though the shelters may have saved millions of lives, had a Soviet nuclear strike occurred. Back then, as now, states and cities were more worried about recovering from natural disasters and paying for restoration efforts. This is still the case today. No one has considered these history lessons in crafting today's "consequence management" policies.

DOD planners assume that they have to deploy specially trained forces within the first 24 to 72 hours following an attack, as if state and local emergency responders will be unable to perform their responsibilities in this complex environment. DOD plans to equip more than 10,000 technical specialists in various operational units to be prepared to assist and respond to multiple, simultaneous terrorist CBRN incidents across the entire United States. The utter absence of any terrorist CBRN incident of any scale since

2001 does not seem to register as a concern, despite the significant resources and time involved in training these forces.

The debate over DOD's consequence management role has been controversial since inception in 1998. Following a CBRN attack or incident, the military has to restore critical services at its bases and installations (battlefield consequence management); support a host nation to reinstate its critical services (foreign consequence management); or support a state or local authority within the United States to regain its critical services (domestic consequence management). The US government has developed a "whole-of-government" approach to incident and disaster management using an "all-hazards" approach. Conversely, the Department of Defense's approach has been to assume that its forces are the only ones technically capable of executing the full breadth and depth of federal responsibilities while responding to multiple, simultaneous, mass-casualty CBRN incidents. The assumption is that no other federal agency or host nation will assist.

Developing a New National Strategy

Criticism regarding use of the term Global War on Terrorism should have reminded DOD leaders that they cannot fight a tactic or a weapon system. To counter the threat of WMDs effectively, one requires discrete and focused strategies aimed at specific adversaries who wish to employ such weapons. One needs to develop a strategy to counter CBRN terrorism that is distinct from the strategy to counter nation-state development of NBC weapons. This measure is necessary to stop the intradepartment and interagency squabbling over roles and responsibilities concerning counter-WMD issues, as well as to define a common lexicon on WMD terms and capabilities.[24]

A new national strategy to counter WMDs should be composed of four pillars: strategic deterrence (using nuclear and non-nuclear precision-strike capabilities), nonproliferation, counterproliferation, and related defense-industrial infrastructure. Nonproliferation mission areas should include security cooperation and partner activities (to include WMD interdiction) and threat reduction cooperation (to include WMD elimination). Counterproliferation mission areas would include offensive operations, active defense, passive defense, and incident management. This construct basically takes the "new nuclear triad" construct identified in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and adds nonproliferation activities.[25] The Obama Administration is developing its nuclear-weapons strategy as a complement to its nonproliferation goals. A counter-WMD strategy should similarly link the two topics. Strategic deterrence should be the primary counter to WMD capability, with tailored, regional plans against specific nation-states. These counter-WMD mission

areas are fairly well defined, if not robustly supported, and also require a tailored, regional focus.

The role of strategic deterrence needs to be intimately linked with the counter-WMD strategy. During the Cold War, US policy was definitive regarding the role of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to adversarial use of WMDs. Between 1992 and 2008, national policy on the employment of nuclear weapons failed to evolve with the transformation of the operating environment. The primary role of strategic nuclear weapons is to secure the United States from nuclear attack. This basic concept has to be addressed within a national counter-WMD strategy. This is not to say that global precision-strike capabilities (or, for that matter, the national missile defense program) should be subordinate to countering-WMD policy. The overall national strategy has to articulate and link all aspects of government interest and policy relevant to the two distinct goals of countering nation-state WMD programs and countering terrorist use of CBRN hazards.

The concepts of WMD elimination and interdiction need to be reviewed against their stated policy objectives. Despite statements of "successes" in the Proliferation Security Initiative, there has not been any significant interdiction of WMD material or related technologies since the 2003 interception of a German freighter headed to Libya with nuclear centrifuge parts. The initiative lacks clear authorities and transparency, and only addresses commercial, not government, transportation.[26] In addition, the maritime and ground interdiction exercises have been limited to nuclear materials and nuclear weapon-related technologies; there are no nonobtrusive scanners or sensitive monitors to detect the presence of chemical or biological materials. The current approach ignores more pressing global concerns of illegal arms shipments, drug smuggling, human slave trade, and other criminal activities. As global economies flourish and information technology continues to grow, nations desiring a WMD capability will merely develop indigenous means of production or rely on air transport from existing nuclear states.

WMD elimination is focused on addressing programs within "failing regimes" and loose CBRN hazards that might be found in the "global commons." In 2002, the Bush Administration wanted to quickly capture and assess aspects of Iraq's offensive CB weapons program prior to the completion of combat operations. With Iraq's WMD program dismantled, is there a new challenge? A WMD elimination capability might do nicely if North Korea collapses, but then what?[27] Pakistan's nuclear stockpile is much more secure than the exaggerated stories of its vulnerability to Taliban attacks suggest. No one seriously sees such an elimination capability as being required for Iran, China, Israel, Russia, or any other nation-state suspected of

having an offensive program. The elimination effort, however, would not be a US-only, DOD-led effort as were similar activities in 2003.

One has to question whether WMD elimination and interdiction are enduring missions or would be better developed as contingency plans focused on a few specific "rogue nations." If the DOD is required to interdict WMD material or technology or eliminate a nation-state's program, these efforts should be international and interagency-based. The required expertise and capabilities can be quickly developed and executed under an international task force as required. It is time to drop the unsubstantiated views on "rogue nation" WMD programs and their alleged use of international networks of commerce and information to funnel materials and technologies to terrorist groups. WMD interdiction and elimination are specialty functions, both of which could be subsumed within nonproliferation activities.

Addressing Consequence Management

This construct proposes that consequence management be integrated back under counterproliferation as "incident management," rather than standing as a unique and separate "pillar." To be clear, DOD requires a capability to restore critical services on US military installations and facilities that have been impacted by the use of NBC weapons or the use of improvised CBRN devices employed by terrorist organizations. Attempts to discuss WMD consequence management have been fruitless, because they take place outside of the context of overall incident management. It is the constant attempts to address CBRN terrorism response outside of the context of incident management, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief concepts and plans that regularly frustrate the DOD's attempts to rationally manage, resource, and execute this mission. The Department of Defense needs to stop the circular debates over "domestic versus foreign" consequence management by moving its technical specialists into the mainstream.

DOD support to a federal response to a domestic CBRN incident should be addressed as military support to civil authorities, and its support to a host nation affected by a foreign CBRN incident should be addressed as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief. These capabilities need to be designed to reflect realistic resource and time constraints that acknowledge DOD as a support, not lead, agency. In 1995, it was the only agency that had adequate technical capabilities and specialists trained to respond to these kinds of incidents. In part due to the efforts of DHS and private industry, that is not the case today. The role that DOD forces play in support to the federal response to a CBRN terrorist incident within the United States needs to be separately addressed under the counter-WMD terrorism strategy, as it

is in today's National Response Framework. Defense planners should focus on supporting the restoration of critical and essential government services by deploying its forces during the 72- to 96-hour timeframe of any future incident, rather than fixating on "saving lives," a role better left to the state and local emergency responders.

Examining the recent DOD support to relief operations in Haiti, it should be clear that the real value of defense's support to federal agencies responding to incidents, accidents, and disasters is its general logistics, medical, and security support, not its technical specialists. Because technical specialists are leading the consequence-management discussion, unique terms and concepts are developed outside of mainstream processes. The department's failure to realistically scope the problem and address CBRN hazards within the DHS National Response Framework, combined with an unhealthy penchant for redefining the concept every other year with little regard to resource constraints or to interagency and international partner capabilities, will continue to retard development of a sound incident management concept.

DOD does require a capability to restore mission-critical equipment and fixed sites that have been contaminated by CBRN hazards to pre-incident conditions. This capability is very demanding in terms of time, manpower, and resources; as a result, there has been little desire to invest the capital required to achieve this capability. In addition, the debate over "how clean is safe" (relating to standards for unprotected exposure to formerly contaminated material) has never been resolved into quantifiable standards. In 1997, US Transportation Command asked the Joint Staff to assist in developing decontamination standards and policies to address the issue of contaminated strategic airlift and sea transportation. While incremental measures have been taken, OSD needs to intervene in the polarized arguments between the medical community, which insists on very low exposure risks intended to protect an individual's health and future welfare, and the operational community, which wants to accept a higher risk of exposure in return for the ability to execute missions with less physical degradation. Until DOD develops quantifiable decontamination standards, the US government will lack necessary interagency and international CBRN standards for restoration and remediation.

A New Approach to Counter WMD Terrorism

A second national strategy to "counter WMD terrorism" should be similarly composed of four pillars: international cooperation and extremist group containment, combating terrorism, homeland defense, and

civil support/emergency preparedness. This construct promotes the goals of reducing the overall risk of terrorism through traditional diplomacy and combating terrorism efforts; developing measures to secure CBRN materials and "dual-use" technologies; protecting noncombatants and critical infrastructure; and improving societal resilience to the potential impact of CBRN incidents. The State Department and US Special Operations Command already recognize that the central approach to reduce the threat of CBRN terrorism is to, in fact, "deter, detect, defeat, and respond to terrorists and their facilitators."[28] The goal of reducing or deterring terrorism needs to be part of the overall counter-WMD terrorism strategy, but that is not to say that combating terrorism should be subordinate to countering WMD terrorism strategy.

Efforts such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism offer an international forum to develop cooperative practices for developing responses to CBRN terrorism. Creating a strategic national stockpile for both DOD and DHHS medical countermeasures makes good sense but remains a slow regulatory-driven process. Critical defense and civil infrastructure needs to be assessed for vulnerabilities to realistic CBRN hazards. National special-security events already include CBRN specialists and equipment, monitoring the environment and preparing to respond to any indication of an attack. DOD's technical support to federal agencies is designed to be interoperable with civilian emergency responder standards and practices. This is a unique and specialized mission area, distinct from the protection concept developed for military units operating on a battlefield that may involve the heavy use of NBC weapons.

Disassociating the term "WMD" from the word "terrorism" would immeasurably improve the effectiveness of a "counter-WMD terrorism" strategy. The 1999 Gilmore Commission on Homeland Security deliberately used the term "CBRN" in relation to terrorist capabilities, because it did not believe that "WMD terrorism" was an appropriate descriptor. The Central Intelligence Agency and Director of National Intelligence carefully avoid using the term WMD in their annual unclassified assessments of terrorist capabilities.[29] Terrorists will not have access to weapons causing "mass destruction," other than in the singular and extremely unlikely case of obtaining a nuclear weapon.[30] The most probable terrorist CBRN threats are toxic inhalation hazards, biological toxins and indigenous diseases, and radiological materials used in single, small-scale attacks. Despite the fascination with the extremely low probability that a terrorist might obtain a nuclear weapon, the fact remains that, with the exception of Aum Shinrikyo,

transnational extremist groups have been unsuccessful in obtaining or using CBRN hazards to cause a mass casualty event.[31]

Similar to the consequence-management issue, discussion of CBRN protection of US military installations and facilities has largely been developed without the active support of antiterrorism experts. Addressing the CBRN defense aspects of military installations, as a subset of homeland defense, becomes much easier if one uses an integrated base defense using an "all-hazards" approach. Every installation commander has a responsibility to protect people within a specific area of responsibility. That responsibility ends at the gate, in that the installation commander is not responsible for resourcing a response capability for the civilian community (although available resources can be made available under mutual aid agreements). Every installation commander has a limited budget to address a number of varied threats. Many installation commanders do not believe CBRN terrorism to be a top threat to their facilities and do not want to sustain expensive agent detectors and to stock medical countermeasures for a threat that may never appear. Each service and combatant command needs to determine what capabilities it requires to protect individuals and sustain critical services during peacetime and conflict.

Conclusion

The Defense Counterproliferation Initiative was a first step toward advancing strategies addressing adversarial use of WMDs to a "post-Cold War" concept. Given decreased concerns about Russia's NBC weapons and increased concerns about other powers obtaining that capability, it was appropriate to develop a counterproliferation strategy that did not address the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent. The joint operating environment has evolved, however. The "new nuclear triad" has addressed the role of nonnuclear strike capabilities as a facet of deterrence. Concern about transnational violent extremist organizations' use of CBRN hazards, while often unnecessarily exaggerated, has added a level of complexity to national security concerns. The US government's experience in Iraq, searching for a WMD program that did not exist, must be addressed and its lessons incorporated.

This is fundamentally a question of how the Department of Defense executes its roles and missions. The counterproliferation community watches trends in the development and movement of WMD-related materials and technology among nation-states who either have or might be seeking to develop military NBC weapons. The combating-terrorism community focuses on violent individuals and transnational groups who are attacking

US personnel and interests and who may be seeking access to CBRN hazards. The homeland-security community is concerned with protecting noncombatants and minimizing risk to emergency responders from domestic CBRN incidents, using occupational safety standards that are very different from military passive defense requirements. Responsibilities for these three functions fall under three different Assistants to the Secretary of Defense for OSD policy, rather than in one central office, with predictable bureaucratic results.

The DOD, and the US government in general, needs to stop treating the weapons of mass destruction issues as if they were a special case to be handled distinct from other national security issues. Far too often, these issues are discussed separately from conventional military operations or irregular warfare (that is, assuming WMD issues are not just dismissed away to begin with). As a result, many senior defense leaders push such issues to the side during war games, discussions on strategy and policy, and within other defense forums because "someone else" in the US government will handle them. Although the topic of WMD gets its perfunctory placement in strategy documents, the senior civilian and military leadership do not value the development of counter-WMD capabilities.[32] As a result, one sees the confusion, inefficiencies, and lack of readiness apparent in 1990 and again in 2002 when US military forces prepared for combat against an Iraqi regime thought to be ready to use CB weapons.

Attempts to redress the US military's nuclear weapons strategy and infrastructure are well under way. The Perry-Schlesinger Strategic Posture Commission has correctly identified the need to reinvigorate that capability, develop appropriate strategies, and ensure that there is an appropriate forum to discuss policy, budget, and acquisition issues within DOD.[33] Similarly, the dialogue on countering terrorism and insurgencies, and addressing other nonstate actors, such as pirates and criminals, continues to mature. In order to ensure that military forces are adequately prepared for adversarial states with offensive WMD programs as well as nonstate actors using CBRN hazards, the US government requires two distinct strategies—a counter-WMD strategy for states and a counter-CBRN terrorism strategy—that are linked through common command and control, intelligence sharing, and planning capabilities.

There are key commonalities to these two proposed national strategies. Both require command and control, intelligence, and planning capabilities to enable the authorized, combined, and effective use of offenses and defenses to counter WMD attacks or CBRN incidents.[34] Both

use and compete for similar WMD-focused plans and resources required in executing their operations. Both require aspects of CBRN defense and incident response but use differing risk management constructs and address differing populations. The two communities do need to coordinate their technical efforts, since NBC weapons effects and CBRN hazards are similar in their physical properties. But the goals and implementation strategies must be different to support the two distinct objectives of countering adversarial WMD capabilities on future battlefields and countering CBRN terrorism in a global environment.

In addition to separating the strategies addressing state WMD programs and terrorist CBRN ambitions, the US government needs to decide whether the WMD elimination and interdiction concepts are required as distinct missions. These concepts were developed with a particular worldview of national security in mind; that nonproliferation efforts were ineffective, that the number of state WMD programs was growing, and that military power was the only solution to limiting these materials and technologies from proliferating to other states and transnational extremist groups. These views are now suspect and may not be applicable for the future joint operating environment. A more rational and resource-friendly approach is needed.

It may be that the US government cannot change its current counter-WMD dialogue, disproportionately directed by nuclear weapons and arms-control experts. It is possible that the only strategic WMD discussions will remain focused on nuclear weapons, and that the services and combatant commands will continue to relegate WMD issues to a low priority. It may be impossible to moderate the overly excited security theater portraying terrorists as bringing ten-kiloton nuclear bombs to multiple US cities. But policy analysts need to take a serious, long look at the process by which the DOD developed its combating WMD strategy and understand its limitations and failures. With the arrival of a new administration, this is the time to push for a review on strategies to counter state WMD programs and terrorist CBRN threats.

NOTES

1. Associated Press, "President Barack Obama Calls Nuclear Terrorism the Top Threat to U.S.," 6 April 2010, OregonLive.com, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/04/president_barack_obama_calls_n.html.

2. Nonproliferation activities include those treaties and agreements developed to prevent proliferation of WMD by dissuading or impeding access to, or distribution of, sensitive technologies, material, and expertise. These activities are led by the State Department. Counterproliferation refers to active and passive measures designed to defeat the adversarial threat or use of WMD against US military forces.

3. "Counterproliferation Strategy," memorandum (Washington: Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 February 2001), http://www.dod.mil/pubs/foi/ojcs/ocjcs_counterproliferation_Strategy.pdf, 5.

4. "The Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review" (Washington: Department of Defense, May 1997), http://www.fas.org/man/docs/qdr/sec7.html, sec. VII.

5. Notably 1993 World Trade Towers, 1995 Aum Shinriko, 1995 Oklahoma City, 1996 Khobar Towers, 1998 US Embassy bombings, and 2000 USS *Cole*.

6. This article defines NBC weapons as those weapons developed by nation-states for use on the battlefield to cause significant casualties, while CBRN materials involve the use of improvised devices by terrorists, but not necessarily in quantities to cause mass casualties. This is in line with the findings of the Gilmore Commission's first report on homeland security in 1999. Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, *First Annual Report to the President and the Congress of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington: 15 December 1999), http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel/terror.pdf.

7. In 1997, the lead federal agency for crisis management of a CBRN incident was the Federal Bureau of Investgation. For consequence management, the lead federal agency was the Fedearl Emergency Management Agency.

8. See the "Terrorism Incident Annex to the Federal Response Plan" (Washington: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 7 February 1997), http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd39_frp.htm.

9. American Forces Press Service, "Cohen Vows to Combat Terrorism," 30 September 1998, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=41818.

10. "Counterproliferation Strategy," 2.

11. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Amerithrax Investigation," http://www.fbi.gov/anthrax/amerithrax-links.htm.

12. "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction," December 2002, http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-17.html.

13. Raymond J. Decker, "Combating Terrorism: Observations on National Strategies Related to Terrorism," testimony before the US House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations (Washington: General Accounting Office, 3 March 2003), http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03519t.pdf.

14. Compare the 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington: The White House, February 2003) and the 2002 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington: Office of Homeland Security, July 2002) to the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington: The White House, December 2002) and consider the different components within DOD, let alone the federal government, who all believe they have a significant interest in driving the combating WMD agenda.

15. Seth Carus, *Defining "Weapons of Mass Destruction"* (Washington: National Defense Univ., Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2006), http://www.ndu.edu/WMDCenter/docUploaded/OP4Carus.pdf.

16. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington: 13 February 2006), http://www.defense.gov/pdf/NMS-CWMD2006.pdf.

17. Paul Wolfowitz, "National Defense University Conference on Counterproliferation" (Fort Lesley J. McNair, 13 May 2003), http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=391.

18. CNN, "Text of David Kay's Unclassified Statement," 2 October 2003, http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/02/kay.report/.

19. Donna Miles, "Report Provides Strategic Vision for Countering WMD," American Forces Press Service, 24 March 2006, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15076.

20. This includes two mission areas within nonproliferation, five within counterproliferation, and consequence management, which is both a "pillar" and a mission area.

21. See Department of Homeland Security, "Homeland Security Presidential Directive 10: Biodefense for the 21st Century," http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/laws/gc_1217605824325.shtm.

22. Al Mauroni, "Progress of 'Biodefense for the 21st Century'–A Five-Year Evaluation," *The Other WMDs* blog, 24 March 2009, http://otherwmds.blogspot.com/2009/03/biodefense-monograph.html.

23. Gene Aloise, "Combating Nuclear Smuggling: Recent Testing Raises Issues About the Potential Effectiveness of Advanced Radiation Detection Portal Monitors," testimony before the US House of Representatives, Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight (Washington: Government Accountability Office, 17 November 2009); and *Combating Nuclear Terrorism: Actions Needed to Better Prepare to Recover from Possible Attacks Using Radiological or Nuclear Materials* (Washington: Government Accountability Office, January 2010).

24. This paper uses the term "counter-WMD" to refer to the Obama Administration's terminology, as opposed to "combating WMD," which was the former administration's term of art.

25. See Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Nuclear Posture Review Report," Foreword, http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2002/01/npr-foreword.html.

26. Mary Beth Nikitin, "Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)" (Washington: Congressional Research Service, 8 January 2010).

27. Michael O'Hanlon, "North Korea Collapse Scenarios," Brookings Institution, June 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/06_north_korea_ohanlon.aspx.

28. US Department of State, "Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism," http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c16403.htm.

29. Office of the Director on National Intelligence, "Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions, Covering 1 January to 31 December 2008," http://www.dni.gov/reports/Unclassified%20Report%20to%20Congress%20WMD%20Covering%201January%20to%2031%20December%202008.pdf, 7.

30. Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, ii-iii.

31. There is, of course, some debate over the term "mass casualty event" as to whether this is a flexible standard relating to the emergency care within a local jurisdiction or a set number such as 1,000 casualties in a single event.

32. As an example, combating WMD is an elective at service war colleges, rather than a mandatory course. Major defense acquisition programs routinely waive CBRN survivability requirements. Many other examples can be cited.

33. William J. Perry and James R. Schlesinger, *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), http://www.usip.org/strategic_posture/final.html.

34. Kurt Guthe, *The Nuclear Posture Review: How is the "New Triad" New?* (Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2002), 3. Guthe was referring to the 2001 posture review, but the observation is applicable here.