

CHAPTER 6

The threat is very real

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Editor:

1) What are 3 difficulties to use WMD?

- supply;
- demand;
- technical feasibility

“YES”

1) Do terrorists want nuclear weapons?

Osama bin Laden has called the acquisition of nuclear weapons a “religious duty,” and al-Qaeda operatives have made repeated attempts to buy the nuclear material for a nuclear bomb and to recruit nuclear expertise.

2) Could a terrorist group plausibly get the materials needed for a nuclear bomb?

No specific and binding global standards for how these stockpiles should be secured exist.

The highest risks of nuclear theft today are in the former Soviet Union, in Pakistan, and at HEU-fueled research reactors around the world.

make a crude nuclear bomb if it was able to steal or buy HEU (Highly Enriched Uranium) or separated

- EASY!!!

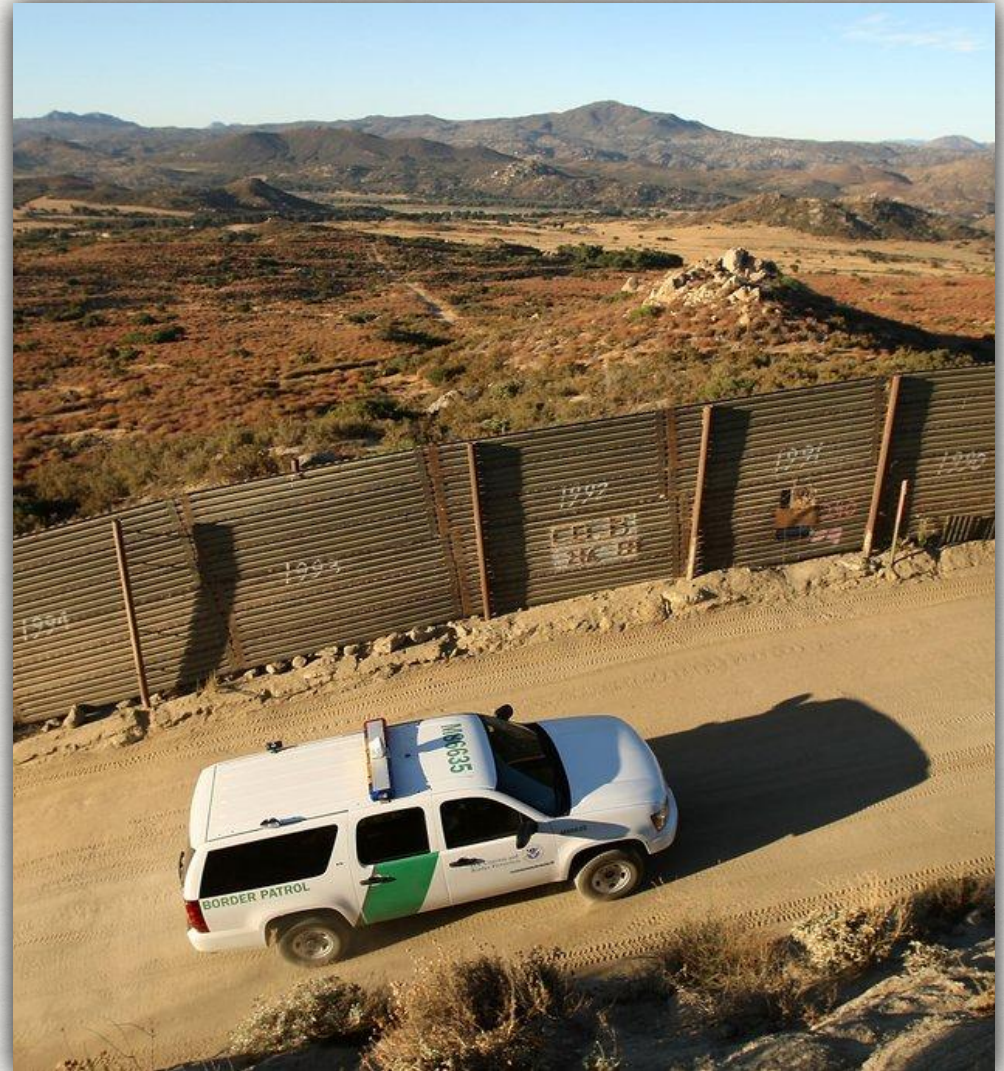
plutonium?

- The most difficult part of making a crude nuclear bomb is acquiring the nuclear material
- Making the most simple gun-type nuclear bomb, which involves just slamming two pieces of HEU together at high speed, is no more difficult than what people do in drug industry and for sure have been within al-Qa'ida's capabilities.



Could a terrorist group likely deliver a bomb to Washington, New York, or other major cities around the world?

- Too many holes in border's security of the USA: the length , the diversity of means of transport, the vast scale of legitimate traffic across national borders - building an overall control system is almost impossible.
- The ease of shielding the radiation from plutonium or especially from HEU



What would happen if terrorists set off a nuclear bomb in a U.S. city?

- The bomb with power of 10 kilotons (a little smaller than the Hiroshima's) than can easily be delivered in a truck, in midtown Manhattan: 500 thousands of deaths ; \$1 trillion in direct economic damage; radiation ; mass evacuations of major US cities; global effect - ten of millions of people in dire poverty; legitimacy of attacking foreign countries.



The Good News

- First, there is no convincing evidence that any terrorist group has yet acquired a nuclear weapon or the materials needed to make one, or that Al-Qaeda has succeeded in pulling together the expertise needed to make a bomb.
- Second, as already noted, making and delivering even a crude nuclear bomb would be the most technically challenging and complex operation any terrorist group has ever carried out.
- Third, as described earlier, the overthrow of the Taliban and the disruption of Al-Qaeda old central command structure in Afghanistan certainly reduced its chances of pulling of such a complex operation



- Fourth, there is now a very real debate, even within the community of violent Islamic extremists, over the moral legitimacy of the mass slaughter of innocents
- Fifth, nuclear security is improving
- Sixth, it is highly unlikely that hostile states would consciously choose to provide terrorist groups with nuclear weapons or the materials needed to make them
- **All of this good news comes with a crucial caveat: "as far as we know"**



What is *the probability* of a terrorist attack with nuclear weapons?

- The possibility of nuclear terrorism is real, but a terrorist attack using nuclear weapons is not inevitable and is in fact unlikely.
- The possibilities of a terrorist nuclear attack include food or water contaminated with nuclear material; an attack on a nuclear power plant; an attack with a stolen nuclear weapon and etc.

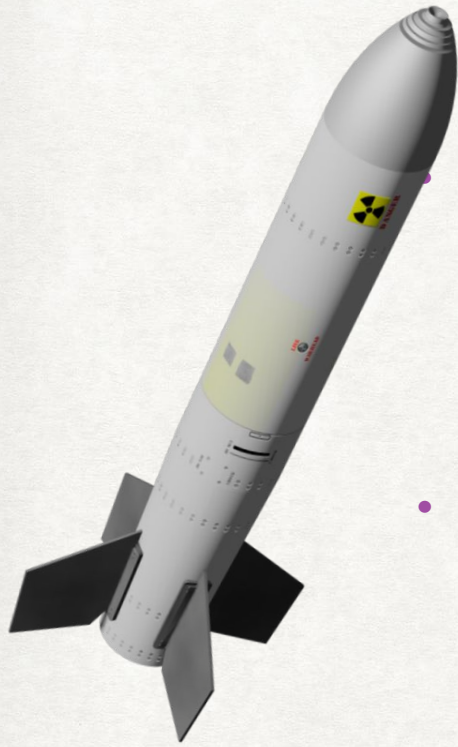


What is the probability of a terrorist attack with nuclear weapons?

- There are 2 opinions:
- For terrorist group would find it very difficult to steal or buy a nuclear weapon.
- It is possible to steal, buy or create necessary materials for nuclear weapon.



Building the bomb



How likely is it that, having acquired the requisite amount of nuclear material, a terrorist group would be able to construct a nuclear device?

- In practice, anyone can build a nuclear bomb, because of the lack of knowledge, time, experience and necessary materials.
- But even extremely difficult tasks can be accomplished if one is motivated enough.



WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES?

- Tactical aims
- nuclear weapons could be used for the prevention of harm (perhaps deterrence)
- Acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty.
- An attempt to justify the use of nuclear weapons on the United States by reference to Hiroshima and Nagasaki



- Al-Qaeda wants to punish the United States and to compel it to change its policies in the Middle East to end its support of Israel and corrupt
- Part of a defensive jihad against the West or a preventive attack, intended to prevent future attacks on Muslims.

