

Introduction

Canada's Global Partnership Program (GPP) aims to reduce the combined threats of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and terrorism. Terrorist attacks using WMD could kill and injure thousands of people, instill fear and panic in millions more, and cause massive economic, social and political disruption.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, are all designed to take a large toll on human lives. The threat also comes from "dirty bombs", in which traditional explosives are used to disperse highly polluting and lethal radiological materials, as well as from the spread of weapons-related expertise and knowledge.

The likelihood that terrorists could acquire and would use WMD or related materials against us is very real. Some terrorist groups have access to substantial funding and they show an ever-increasing will to inflict the greatest damage and casualties possible. By making the headlines through extremely violent attacks, they seek to promote their cause worldwide and spread terror.

The proliferation risk of WMD, related materials and knowledge increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the 9/11 attacks in the United States showed that certain terrorist groups are able and willing to kill thousands of innocent people at a time.

Under Canada's leadership at the 2002 G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction was created to prevent terrorists, or those that harbour them, from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical, radiological and biological weapons, as well as missiles and related materials, equipment and technology.



Troy Lulashnyk, Director General of the Global Partnership Program.

Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU) have vast stores of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological materials, and are home to thousands of unemployed or underemployed former weapons scientists (FWS). These countries are therefore a tempting target, and we are working with them to reduce the WMD terrorist threat.

During the 2008 G8 Summit, it was decided that the Partnership also needs to address threats outside the FSU. This decision was based on the fact that, while the Soviet legacy still presents a large risk, many vulnerable WMD and related materials remain throughout the world and, as a consequence, the G8 needs to expand Global Partnership (GP) operations globally. Many partners, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, already program wherever WMD threats arise.