

INTRODUCTION



Entrance to the Shchuch'ye chemical weapons destruction facility

The problems posed by WMD produced and stockpiled during the Cold War continue to represent a serious threat to global security and to our own national security. This threat has been exacerbated by the professed and demonstrated willingness of terrorist groups to use these weapons to inflict widespread damage. The events of 9/11 were horrific, but could have been far worse had WMD been used. The possible use of WMD by terrorists raises the seriousness of the terrorism threat to a new level, a danger that cannot be ignored.

The Russian Federation is in possession of the world's largest stockpiles of nuclear and chemical weapons (CW). In addition, Russia and many other countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU) have vast stores of vulnerable nuclear, radioactive and biological materials, and are also home to tens of thousands of scientists who developed weapons and are currently unemployed or underemployed. These countries alone do not have sufficient resources to eliminate or properly secure these stockpiles. Individual countries, including Canada and the U.S., had been engaged in cooperative threat-reduction activities to assist. But this new circumstance the world faced called for a more coherent and coordinated global response to address these threats.

This challenge was addressed under Canada's leadership. At its 2002 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, the G8 launched the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The G8 agreed to contribute up to US\$20 billion over a 10-year period for projects to address non-proliferation, disarmament, counterterrorism and nuclear security issues. The initial geographic focus was Russia; Ukraine has formally become the second recipient country.

The Global Partnership is a unique international cooperative undertaking that has evolved into a true international partnership. G8 member countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the U.K. and the U.S.) and the EU have been joined by 13 additional countries. Overall, US\$19 million has been raised to this point, and activities are under way in all priority areas of the Partnership. The Partnership was conceived as a 10-year undertaking, and its full life span and fulfillment of commitments by all participants will be essential to achieving its goals and making the world safer for all.