

INTRODUCTION



Entrance to the Shchuch'ye chemical weapons destruction facility

“Terrorism has become a global movement that has taken root. It is not a passing trend. It is in Canada, and it is a very real threat to our national security. The terrorist networks responsible for, or associated with, the 9/11 attacks have become more physically dispersed and, simultaneously, much more technologically sophisticated in many respects. We assess as well that their long-standing quest to obtain more horrific weaponry—be it chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear—continues unabated.”

— Jim Judd, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (Senate Committee on Anti-Terrorism Act, 2005)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE CHALLENGE

The problems posed by weapons of mass destruction (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. 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 under-employed. 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.