

plots/activities are more difficult to detect, take place within a shorter time frame, and are less dependent upon cross-border travel than was previously the case. Instances of American residents arrested for planning attacks at home and abroad highlight this domestic threat. Recent convictions of a group in Toronto planning attacks on multiple Canadian targets accentuate a comparable threat of domestic terrorism in Canada. While several domestic extremists have acquired capabilities, very few plots have succeeded. However, the terrorist threat continues to evolve in response to American and Canadian mitigation efforts.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Materials

There is a continuing terrorist interest in CBRN agents, most notably by al-Qa'ida and networks inspired by it, using relatively basic CBR materials. Many terrorist groups lack localized scientific expertise in producing or effectively delivering CBRN materials. Al-Qa'ida will likely continue its efforts to pursue mass-casualty capabilities, which have been disrupted by allied military and enforcement actions. Some chemical, biological or radiological attack scenarios affecting the U.S.-Canada border could disrupt commerce and result in localized restrictions on the domestic and transborder movement of people and goods.

Chemicals are generally the least difficult of CBRN materials to acquire; however, it is considered technically challenging for a sub-state group to develop stable, high-quality chemical agents in sufficient quantity to implement a mass-casualty attack. Effective dissemination of a toxic chemical is contingent on many factors including quantity, toxicity, dispersal mechanism and environmental conditions.

A biological weapon refers to the dispersal of a living pathogen, or a toxin derived from a living organism, with the intent to kill or injure. Examples include anthrax, botulinum toxin, and ricin. Pathogens such as bacteria and viruses self-replicate and do not normally require a large initial dose. One of the greatest challenges in creating an effective biological weapon is keeping the agent viable during dissemination.

A variety of radioactive materials could be used to disperse radiological contamination. High-level doses from radioactive sources can cause tissue damage, radiation sickness, and death. Chronic low-level doses, while producing no immediate symptoms, may increase the long-term risk of cancer or other health problems. A radiation-emitting device involves only the source material. A radiological dispersal device (RDD) utilizes a conventional explosive or other means to disperse the material over a wider area, and is commonly described as a "dirty bomb." Although an RDD is unlikely to cause many fatalities due to acute radiation, an RDD attack could contaminate a large area, rendering it inaccessible until significant decontamination has occurred.

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