

# **Biological Security: Prospects for International Cooperation**

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## **Speaking notes.**

My experience is from defence research and international arms control negotiations and treaty implementation primarily in the nuclear field. I will try to apply these experiences to the important issue on how to develop international cooperation in bio-security.

Bio-terrorism is a threat to all of us. The spread of diseases sees no boundaries. We are in this together; to cope with Bio-terror threats and increase bio-security for all of us.

Today a number of international cooperative BW activities take place, in addition to ongoing cooperation in the health sector. Such international activities include:

- G8 Global Partnership, at the highest political level, is setting political goals and committing financial support. Bio is getting increased priority on the political agenda but is today getting substantially lower funding than other WMD.
- The CSIS project to strengthen the Global Partnership is a cooperation among institutions around the world to follow up on the political commitments and the work conducted
- The three year review process under the BWC has meetings at diplomatic and experts levels. In 2003 this review focused on national implementation measures and this year the focus is on alleged use and issues related to protection, diagnosis and combating infectious diseases.
- Conferences like this and other international gatherings at even more technical/scientific expert levels
- National, bilateral and multilateral R&D projects involving research organizations and, to a limited extent, industry.

For reasons that have nothing to do with our joint efforts to combat bio-terrorism and increase bio-security there is a lack of trust and confidence among key actors in this field. Time has come to overcome these difficulties of the past and to put our joint focus on the bio-terrorist threat and to embark on a broad cooperation to reduce that threat and increase our security. Such an increased cooperation could include:

- Devote increased efforts and resources to combat the bio-terrorist threat. This area needs resources comparable to those devoted to other WMD areas. Bio-security is a difficult area but this should be an argument for more resources not less.
- Conduct joint strategic studies to come to a common view on key issues to increase biosecurity and identify how they are interrelated. The key issues could include
  - Early detection
  - Effective surveillance
  - Proper response
  - Training

The issues should relate not only to humans but to animal and agriculture as well.

- Establish a continued international dialogue as a sustained effort with a common agenda. This complex issue can not be resolved through activities conducted on an Ad-Hoc basis.
- Find or establish a proper forum for such a sustained international dialogue.
- Identify obstacles to an efficient international cooperation and propose measures to remedy the situation. This could relate to the exchange of information on pathogenic strains and a common code of conduct on how to handle such materials.
- Increase opportunities for scientists to work together in each others laboratories and maybe to establish joint international laboratories. Such hands-on work together will increase quality, stimulate creativity, increase cost-efficiency and will also be an important confidence-building measure.
- Involve industry to a larger extent to get research results transformed into products to increase bio-security globally, be it through new drugs or vaccines or new equipment to detect, diagnose or combat agents and diseases.

I am afraid the Bio-threat is here now. We see consequences of infectious diseases globally every day in human suffering and in severe economic and social consequences. It is hard to justify not taking immediate actions to increase resources and international cooperation to cope with the threat of bio- terrorism. The resources we invest in reducing the bio- terrorist threat – and the threats of other weapons of mass destruction – is not a miscellaneous activity it is an investment in our own security.