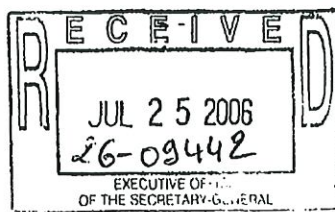


UN 2120

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Disarmament



ICL

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Note to the Secretary-General

WILL HEZBOLLAH USE BIOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL WEAPONS?

Summary

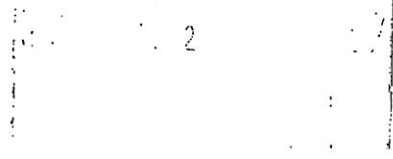
There is no proof that Hezbollah has biological or chemical weapons (CBW) or a credible means to deliver them. Some commentaries, however, do not rule out such a possibility, and a few have alleged that the group has such capabilities. This note summarizes for your information only such allegations and assesses their implications.

Allegations

1. Such claims have appeared on various web sites dealing with intelligence issues. Citing "US intelligence" as its source, one claimed in 2003 that "Scud missiles and parts for chemical and biological warheads are believed to have been moved to the Bekaa Valley, a stronghold for terror group Hezbollah" (Geostrategy-Direct.com). Also citing "intelligence officials", the "Galil Report" warned this month of "the possible possession by the Lebanese militia of missiles with warheads capable of carrying chemical and biological weapons."
2. On July 2006, the *Sunday Telegraph* (Australia) claimed that Hezbollah "has announced it has chemical and biological weapons" [yet provided no details].
3. On 5 August 1996, a Middle East review ("The Iran Brief") reported that then-Israeli Army Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak had informed Parliament that Iran had transferred missiles to Hezbollah with a "larger explosive device" than that used by the standard katyusha rocket. The report referred to "reports earlier this year" [1996] that "Iran had delivered 5 Scud-B missiles to Hezbollah through Syria" [no further details].
4. Hezbollah's supporter, Syria, is widely believed to possess chemical and biological weapons capabilities, and various types of Scud missiles. There are also many unsubstantiated claims that Iraq transferred various CBW or related components to Syria. There is, however, no evidence that Syria passed such weapons or related know-how to Hezbollah.
5. A Russian web site published a detailed article in December 2004 claiming that Hezbollah had flight-tested an "unmanned aerial vehicle" (called the "Mirsad 1"). The article noted that UAVs "can become a very attractive option for terrorists anxious to deliver a covert attack with the use of chemical or biological weapons."
6. Hezbollah is reportedly receiving about \$100 million in assistance annually from Iran – money is fungible, who knows for sure how such funds were actually spent?

Assessment

7. All together, these claims are highly suspect. They provide no substantiating evidence. They typically resort to the passive voice ("are believed to have been") and omit publication sources. They fail to identify any specific types of biological and chemical weapons – yet specificity is quite relevant: tear gas is not nerve gas. Also, the reports often



confuse actual weapon possession with possible capabilities to produce or use such weapons. They are vague as to the material source of such capabilities: are they indigenous or imported? These reports also omit evidence that does not point to possession.

8. Deploying CBW by missiles is not easy -- dispersion of a biological agent would require the use of "sub-munitions" that could release agent material at precisely the right time, altitude, and rate of dispersal, yet there is no evidence of any testing by Hezbollah, nor any evidence that it has acquired such a capability from elsewhere (e.g. Syria or Iran).

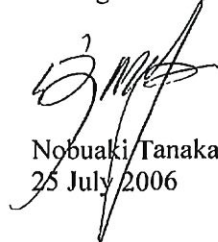
9. The reports also speculative on possible motivations -- if Hezbollah had possessed such weapons, why had they not already used them? How could Hezbollah use such weapons to its military or political advantage, given the credible military retaliatory options available to Israel and the likely political repercussions worldwide from such an attack?

Implications

10. If Hezbollah were to produce or acquire such a weapon and use it against Israel, the implications would be profound, on many levels. If the group acquired such weapons with imported technology or materials, it would be a blow to the credibility and effectiveness of the global CBW treaty regimes, which underscores the importance of efforts both to achieve universal membership in those regimes and to improve compliance. (The next BWC Review Conference is scheduled for next November.) It would show the limitations of the Australia Group, which is devoted to CBW export controls. It would simultaneously affirm the need for UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (against WMD proliferation and terrorism) while also demonstrating its limits in actually preventing such proliferation. It would testify to the inability of Lebanon -- a party to the BWC but not the CWC -- to prevent its territory from being used by a non-state group to launch such an attack. If the weapon had foreign sources, it could lead to general war throughout the Middle East, should Israel decide to strike Syria or Iran as a retaliatory move. Other non-state actors might try to emulate Hezbollah's action.

11. Use by Hezbollah of such weapons would also question the basic logic of "deterrence", which has been incorporated into the military doctrines of many states -- the group would have used such weapons against an enemy that had an overwhelming superiority in all types of weapons, reportedly including all types of weapons of mass destruction.

12. The Hezbollah CBW threat, in short, remains worth watching -- as would indeed any possible use of such weapons by anybody in the region including Israel. To date, however, it represents a worst-case scenario offering little basis for forecasting future events.


Nobuaki Tanaka
25 July 2006

Drafted by: R. Rydell

cc: Mr. Malloch Brown
Ms. Hoppe