Security in a Dangerous World

Objectives
- Explain why nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons threaten global security.
- Analyze the various terrorist groups and why they are becoming more and more dangerous.
- Describe the various ways in which the United States and other nations have responded to terrorism.

Terms, People, and Places
proliferate Afghanistan
terrorism Taliban
al Qaeda

Note Taking
Reading Skill: Compare and Contrast Use the chart to compare threats to global security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats to Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear weapons unsecured in former Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The end of the Cold War seemed to promise an end to global conflict and the threat of nuclear war. However, since the fall of the Iron Curtain, new and unpredictable threats continue to haunt the world.

The Threat of Modern Weapons
During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union built huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. When the Cold War ended, those weapons still existed. Since then, keeping nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons out of the hands of dangerous groups has become an important issue.

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty In 1968, during a thaw in the Cold War, the United States, the Soviet Union, and 60 other nations signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The purpose of the treaty was to ensure that nuclear weapons did not proliferate, or rapidly spread to nations that had no nuclear weapons. Since then, the treaty has been renewed, with 189 nations agreeing not to develop or possess nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitors nations regularly to check that they comply with the treaty. Three nations have not signed the NPT: India, Israel, and Pakistan. All three have nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan's testing of nuclear weapons in 1998 raised fears of a nuclear arms race in Asia. A few signers of the NPT, such as Iran, have tried to sidestep the treaty by acquiring nuclear technology that they claim is being used to develop nuclear power as an energy source.
Russia’s Nuclear Weapons During the 1990s, the United States and Russia agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia’s nuclear weapons were scattered across a vast territory. With aid from the United States and Europe, Russia dismantled, or took apart, some nuclear weapons. Despite the agreements, however, both the United States and Russia held on to their nuclear stockpiles.

Weapons of Mass Destruction As you have read, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) include nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons include the atomic bomb. Biological weapons refer mainly to germs that can be released into the air or into water supplies. Chemical weapons are toxins, such as nerve gas and mustard gas.

Recently, however, the danger from WMDs has grown, as terrorist groups and “rogue states”—nations that ignore international law and threaten other nations—try to acquire them. One concern is that terrorists will seize nuclear weapons during transport. Another fear is that terrorists, or those who sympathize with their causes, will gain access to nuclear weapons programs in countries with unstable governments, such as Pakistan.

Checkpoint What was the purpose of the NPT?

Terrorism Threatens Global Security

Since the 1990s, the world has witnessed a growing threat from terrorism. Terrorism is the use of violence by groups of extremists to achieve political goals. Terrorists’ goals range from getting political prisoners released to gaining territory or autonomy for a particular ethnic group. Terrorists have bombed buildings, slaughtered civilians, police, and soldiers, and assassinated political leaders. Although terrorists have seldom achieved their larger goals, they have inflicted terrible damage and generated widespread fear.

Terrorists use headline-grabbing tactics to draw attention to their demands. They might attack hotels and tourists in Mumbai, bomb commuter trains in Madrid, or blow themselves up as “suicide bombers” to kill Israeli or Iraqi civilians. Terrorism has led to greater international cooperation between governments in an effort to prevent further attacks.

Regional Terrorist Groups Regional terrorist groups have operated in the developed world for decades. For 30 years, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) used terrorist tactics to force Britain out of Northern Ireland. Protestant paramilitary groups loyal to Great Britain responded with the same tactics. During the Cold War, the communist Red Brigade in Italy used violence in an attempt to gain power. The ETA, a Basque terrorist group, wants the Spanish government to grant independence to the Basque region in northern Spain.

In South America, leftist groups like the Shining Path in Peru and FARC in Colombia use kidnappings, murder, and bombings to overthrow national governments. They finance their operations with the sale of illegal drugs. In Asia, terrorist activities were linked to the long conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

A Risky Situation
Vials of the bacteria that cause plague were left improperly secured in Kazakhstan by Soviet scientists.
Conflicts in the Middle East  Decades of conflict between Israel and its neighbors have fueled terrorism. In 1964, a group of Arabs founded the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with the goal of creating an independent Palestinian state. In its early years, the PLO used terrorist methods.

The PLO renounced terrorism in 1988. Meanwhile, other terrorist groups have emerged and continue their calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad are among the groups that practice terror to achieve their goals. They found support in poverty-stricken Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza and trained suicide bombers to attack Israeli targets.

Islamic Fundamentalism  By the 1980s, Islamic fundamentalism was on the rise. This conservative reform movement wanted to revive Islamic values and install governments that strictly followed Islamic law, or Sharia. The Islamist movement was partly a response to the rise of secular governments in many Muslim nations and the impact of Western culture. It was also a backlash against foreign support for Israel and the presence of foreign powers in the Middle East. Islamic fundamentalists made Israel or Western nations scapegoats for their problems.

The 1979 Iranian revolution brought an Islamist government to power. Later, an Islamist group called the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan. Fundamentalist movements have also emerged in countries from Algeria to Indonesia. Iran and Saudi Arabia have both provided financial support for terrorist organizations.

Al Qaeda Attacks  Some Islamic fundamentalists turned to terrorism. The most widely known Islamic terrorist organization is al Qaeda (ahl KY duh),
A Dangerous Leader

New York City police stand near a "Wanted" poster in 2001. How does bin Laden threaten the United States' security?

WITNESS HISTORY VIDEO

Watch The Taliban in Afghanistan on the Witness History Discovery School™ video program to learn about Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan.

Vocabulary Builder

priority—(pry uh tee) n. something deemed of greater importance than other things

which means “the Base” in Arabic. The founder and leader of al Qaeda is Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi businessman.

In the 1980s, bin Laden joined Muslim fighters battling Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Later, he broadened his goals to include the overthrow of governments considered “un-Islamic” and the expulsion of non-Muslims from Muslim countries. In the 1990s, bin Laden mobilized al Qaeda to expel U.S. interests and military power from Saudi Arabia.

Al Qaeda built a global network to train and finance terrorist activities. In 1998, al Qaeda terrorists bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. But the major blow came when al Qaeda struck inside the United States.

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda terrorists hijacked four airplanes in the United States. Most of the hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. They slammed two airplanes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and one into the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. Passengers fought the hijackers on the fourth flight, which crashed on the way to its target. More than 2,500 people were killed in the attacks.

**Checkpoint** What are the goals of Islamic fundamentalists?

Response to Terrorism

Al Qaeda’s attack on the United States triggered a startling global shake-up. Governments around the world questioned their ability to keep their citizens safe. U.S. President George W. Bush declared a “war on terror” in general, and against al Qaeda in particular.

**New Security Measures** After the 2001 attacks, the United States made national security a top priority. To this end, the government strengthened and reorganized its intelligence services and passed new counter terrorism laws. In the United States and elsewhere, there were more rigorous security measures at airports and public buildings. A long-term effort was launched to find out how terrorist groups were funded, with the goal of cutting off terrorists’ money supply and limiting their activities. The United States worked with other countries to coordinate intelligence about terrorist groups.

These measures were costly. In addition, some believed the federal government was using the threat of terrorism to increase its power and violate the constitutional rights and freedoms of its citizens. But many felt that the threat was serious enough to justify extreme measures.

**The Wars in Afghanistan** As part of its “war on terror,” the United States made it a priority to find and punish the organizers of the 2001 attacks. Osama bin Laden was based in Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan, an extreme Islamic fundamentalist group called the Taliban, refused U.S. demands to surrender the terrorists. The United States then formed a coalition of nations to invade Afghanistan. In 2002, with the help of Afghan warlords, American and allied forces overthrew the Taliban and drove al Qaeda into hiding or flight. Bin Laden and many Taliban leaders escaped capture.
Coalition forces helped Afghanistan hold elections for a new government. The new government lifted many harsh Taliban laws, such as those that forbid girls and women from getting an education. From hideouts along the Pakistan border, Taliban fighters resisted the new government and its Western allies. The war soon spilled into neighboring Pakistan, where Taliban and al Qaeda fighters took refuge.

**War in Iraq** In 2003, President Bush urged Congress to agree to an invasion of Iraq, citing intelligence reports that said Iraq was secretly producing WMDs. The Bush administration also suggested that Iraq was involved in the 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. The war was bitterly debated among Americans and around the world, because no WMDs were found after the U.S. invasion.

A 2008 report by the Senate Intelligence Committee said that prior to the invasion, the Bush administration had repeatedly exaggerated the threat posed by Iraq. The report also revealed that there had been no credible intelligence to support the Bush administration’s claims that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons, or that Iraq had longstanding ties to terrorist groups.

**Threats From Iran and North Korea** When Iran announced a plan to develop nuclear power plants in the early 2000s, the United States and other nations feared that Iran truly intended to develop nuclear weapons. Although Iran insisted its nuclear energy program was for peaceful purposes, the UN Security Council imposed some sanctions on Iran.

For years, North Korea violated its agreement under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and worked on developing nuclear weapons. Tensions grew as the United States tried to pressure North Korea to stop its nuclear weapons program. In 2003, North Korea withdrew from the NPT. In 2006, it tested a small nuclear bomb.

Many people feared that if Iran or North Korea developed nuclear weapons, that nuclear technology could be passed on to terrorist groups. A nuclear-armed Iran or North Korea also posed threats to their regions and to world peace.

**Checkpoint** Why did the United States invade Iraq?