



***Weapons of mass destruction* Online Lesson Plan**

Overview of Lesson:

Students will share their prior knowledge of WMD, discuss how the U.S. has responded to this threat and what changes, if any, the US should take for the future. Students will role-play as a NSA advisor while participating in a fictional WMD scenario.

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between conventional and non-conventional weapons.
2. Explain the concept of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
3. Identify current threats to American security and national interests resulting from proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.
4. Analyze current issues in the proliferation of WMD.
5. Identify and describe American national interests in the Middle East.
6. Apply principles of sound policy making in a crisis simulation.

Materials:

TV and Video: *The Rock*

Student Handout: *Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Scenario*

Activities/ Procedures:

Warm Up - [Journaling Prompt]

Write the following quote on the blackboard:

“A 1993 study by the Office of Technology Assessment concluded that a single airplane delivering 100 kilograms of anthrax spores - a dormant phase of a bacillus that multiplies rapidly in the body, producing toxins and rapid hemorrhaging - by aerosol on a clear, calm night over the Washington, D.C., area could kill between one million and three million people.”

(Source: U. S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Assessing the Risks*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993, p. 54)

--*What are the chances that such an event could occur? Why?*

--*What steps should we take to minimize the likelihood of the above scenario?*

Activity Two – [Video: *The Rock*]

If available and appropriate for the class, show the vx nerve gas scene (beginning of the movie) from the film, *The Rock*. After scene has concluded, ask students the following questions:

--*“Why is the FBI doing this research?”*

--*“How does it make you feel to you know that the United States and many other nations in the world possess weapons of this nature?”*

Activity Three – [Discussion]

Enter into a discussion in order to establish a vocabulary for the study of WMD:

- a. Ask students to create a list of weapons with which they are familiar. Place this list on the chalkboard.
- b. Discuss what makes a weapon conventional or non-conventional (i.e. a rifle versus an atomic bomb).
- c. Review the list on the board and ask students to categorize the listed weapons as conventional or non-conventional.
- d. Review the example from the movie in order to refine the concept further.
- e. Ask students to explain what they believe should be done to control the spread of WMD.

Activity Four – [WMD Scenario]

Divide the class into small groups of four or five students each, depending on the size of the class. Explain to the class that this is a foreign policy simulation exercise and that they are to assume the role of advisors to the President of the United States, where they will be required to suggest a particular foreign policy response to an emerging crisis. Distribute a copy of the scenario found in the Resource section of this lesson to each group.

- a. Within their groups, direct students to analyze the scenario, to debate the appropriate course of action based on the questions asked, to reach a consensus on a policy response, and to record their responses for presentation to the class.
- b. Allow 20-25 minutes for this activity
- c. Direct each group to select a spokesperson to present their findings to the class.

Activity Five – [Presentations]

Call on the spokesperson for each group to summarize the issues in the scenario, to define American national interests in this region, and to present the policy response decided upon by the group. Encourage students in the audience to ask questions clarifying the rationale behind the policy response. Ask presenters and/or audience to debate alternative responses to the crisis.

Wrap Up/Homework:

Based on their experiences in the scenarios and the policy making issues discussed throughout the lesson, direct students to write a comprehensive essay summarizing the dilemmas faced by American policy in implementing arms control and nonproliferation policies.

Direct students to compose a letter expressing their concerns about the issue of proliferation of WMD. They should include supportive information from their research and experience from participating in the WMD scenario. The letter may be sent to the local paper or their legislators.

Further Questions for Discussion:

--What agreements and treaties are in place to prevent the spread of WMD? What inspection protocols are in place to guarantee that arms control is effective?

--What procedures are in place to guarantee that WMD technology and delivery system technology are not accidentally exported? How is the “dual use” issue being addressed?

--Is diplomacy an effective nonproliferation tool? Can international organizations, such as the United Nations, continue to be used as an effective forum for nonproliferation issues?

--Are economic sanctions effective in preventing a nation from exporting WMD or delivery system technology? Are economic incentives a better approach to encourage nonproliferation?

--What security measures are in place to deter or confront the use of WMD? What further measures need to be taken?

--If WMD were used against American or allied military forces, how would we respond? What are our capabilities? Would we use conventional or non-conventional weapons?

--What if WMD were used against American or allied cities and civilians?

Extension Activities:

1. As a supplementary research activity, students can research some of the “smart

weapons” that were used by the United States during the Gulf War.

2. Divide students into groups. Assign each group a topic to investigate concerning the proliferation of WMD. The topics include, but should not be limited to: India and Pakistan’s nuclear rivalry, non-state actors (IRA, American Militia Movement, Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan, Palestinians, etc.), and any other proliferation issue currently in the news.

3. Using available library and Internet resources, instruct students to focus on the goals of the individual, nation, or group, the role that weapons of mass destruction could play in achieving these goals, and methods that have been used to try and prevent the spread of WMD to these nations or groups.

4. Compose a letter to a government representative or to the editorial section of the local newspaper concerning WMD.

Resources on Nonproliferation Issues:

Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies
(<http://cns.miis.edu>)

Henry L. Stimson Center
(<http://www.stimson.org>)

International Relations and Security Network, Switzerland
(<http://www.isn.ethz.ch>)

Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Scenario

(This simulation was prepared by Michael Moodie, President of the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, Washington, DC)
www.cbaci.org

As Senior Director for Nonproliferation of the National Security Council (NSC), you have just received a report from a sensitive source within the country that Iran has just had 32 tons of growth media delivered to the Imam Reza Medical Center at the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences. This media is used to produce biological agent, either for legitimate commercial/medical purposes or to make biological weapons. The destination of the delivery, however, is a facility long suspected of being a key part of an Iranian clandestine biological weapons program. Moreover, the amount is not consistent with, but far in excess of, commercial or medical requirements (which are met usually only in kilogram amounts). This report follows a story two weeks earlier in the London

Sunday Times that Russian dentists have been hired by Iran to work on its biological weapons program. Last week, the British shared information with you, from one of their sources whose credibility could not be confirmed, that Iran is developing plans for anthrax attacks against Saudi Arabian port facilities and possibly against U.S. military facilities in the Saudi desert. These reports come amid rapidly developing events in Iran that are leading to the hardliners gaining the upper hand in their competition with moderates. President Khatami is more and more isolated as his political allies - such as the mayor of Tehran and key government ministers - have become victims of courts controlled by the hardliners. In addition, President Khatami's efforts to begin a slow opening to the West, including the United States, have been shut down. The rhetoric from hardline leaders, such as religious authority Ayatollah Khomeini, is increasingly inflammatory, particularly against the Arab regimes across the Gulf, whom he accuses of being tools of "the Great Satan." Iran has reinforced its military presence on the disputed islands in the Gulf, adding missile defense units. Iranian naval vessels have also been more active in Gulf waters.

Iran is a party to both the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which it ratified in December 1997. Indeed, in August, as the CWC requires, Teheran submitted a declaration to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) - the international body responsible for overseeing implementation of the treaty - claiming that it did not have chemical weapons and never had produced any. The declaration was seven months late, however, and reasons for the delay - including the need to translate the document from Farsi into one of the OPCW's official languages - were not convincing. Iran has used its membership in the OPCW, as well as its participation in the ongoing talks, to negotiate a new protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), intensifying its calls for the elimination of discriminatory chemical and biological export controls applied by the Australia Group. Iran is the leader of a group of nonaligned states in these forums that claim that export controls, if necessary at all, should not be applied to states in good standing in the treaties. They also argue that any export control regime should be negotiated by the full international community on the basis of non-discrimination. The United States has long claimed that Iran has been developing chemical and biological weapons. Washington has contended since the Reagan administration that Iran used chemical weapons against Iraq

in retaliation for Iraqi CW use during their war in the 1980s. As Senior Director at the NSC, you also signed off on language in the latest Report to Congress by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency on "Adherence To and Compliance With Arms Control Agreements" that said: The Iranian biological weapons program has been embedded within Iran's extensive biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries so as to obscure its activities. The Iranian military has also used medical, education and scientific research organizations for many aspects of BW agent procurement, research, and production. The United States reiterates its previous finding that Iran probably has produced BW agents and apparently has weaponized a small quantity of those agents.

The National Security Advisor has asked you for an options memo for the President. He asks that you identify the critical U.S. interests at stake, the short- and long-term options available, the risks and benefits of respective options, and an action recommendation.