

US Policy to Combat NBC Terrorism

Martin Butcher

Abstract

The “War on Terror” is the framework for much of the security debate in the United States these days. That there is a threat of further catastrophic attacks like 9/11 is a given in the public discourse. That assumption is also made for attacks with nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological weapons. As a consequence, there is a vast new industry arising in the United States to combat this threat through both the Department of Defense and the new Department of Homeland Security. It is my contention that the threat is exaggerated, certainly when it comes to the use of NBC weapons, and that much of the effort into which Congress is pumping tens of billions of dollars is simply wasted.

The presentation will examine the character and scale of threat of terrorist use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons against US targets, both in the US and abroad. It will then examine US initiatives to counter this threat, both diplomatic and military. Finally, the presentation will deal in detail with conventional and nuclear weapons options for fighting NBC terrorism and assess the risks of current administration approaches.

My bio is:

Martin Butcher is Director of Security Programs for Physicians for Social Responsibility.

He has worked as an analyst of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction issues since 1983. Martin is the author and co-author of numerous publications on nuclear chemical and biological weapons, US nuclear policy, NATO strategy, NATO nuclear policy, French and British nuclear policies, the EU, nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.

He joined PSR in April 2000. For the previous 18 months Martin was working with the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) as Acting Director, during the Director’s sabbatical and as a Senior Fellow covering nuclear arms and disarmament issues.

For seven years, Martin was Director of the Center for European Security and Disarmament (CESD) in Brussels. There he carried out research on NATO and EU security, foreign and defense policies and directed a program work on nuclear arms and disarmament; arms transfer policy; EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), amongst other issues. Martin also acted as an advisor to the European Commission and Parliament.

Before CESD, Martin had worked in London for BASIC as Associate for European Affairs. His main areas of study during his four years with BASIC were NATO nuclear policies and nuclear weapons, and French nuclear weapons policies. Martin’s career began with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). At CND, amongst other things, he wrote a column for the monthly news magazine *Sanity*, organized a European Nuclear Disarmament Convention, and was involved in writing information briefs for Parliament.

Martin is 39 and married to Sandra Ionno Butcher, former Executive Director of Student Pugwash USA, the student affiliate of the Nobel Laureate Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. They have a son, Joey, born in the summer of 2002.