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A joint NATO-Russia and Human Factors and Medicine Research Task Group 172 (HFM-172) Workshop entitled, “Social Sciences Support to Military Personnel Engaged in Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism Operations” was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, June 18-20, 2009. This Workshop was an extension of several previous activities. In 2002, a NATO-Russia Advanced Research Workshop was held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, on the Social and Psychological Consequences of Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Terrorism. The Workshop was co-chaired by Simon Wessely and Valery Krasnov. The Workshop focused on the psychological and societal impact of terrorist attacks and the assessment of factors that could exacerbate the impact of these attacks including: inadequate and exaggerated emergency responses, inaccurate information and false assurances, lack of public confidence and trust, uncertainty and controversy about exposure and risks, worry, fear, rumours and hoaxes. The result of the Workshop was a document entitled, “Guidelines on Risk Communication: How to Inform the Public, Improve Resilience and not Generate Panic”. The Workshop also resulted in the formation of a NATO-Russia Advisory Group, which convened from 2002 to 2005 and has since communicated in a virtual forum (nrforum@listserv.cc.kuleuven.ac.be).

Subsequently, in 2004, an Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) was held in Lisbon, Portugal on “Suicide Terrorism, the Strategic Threat and Countermeasures”. This Workshop was co-chaired by Scott Atran and Ariel Merari and was attended by representatives from NATO Nations, Algeria, India, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, Russia and Sri Lanka. The Workshop assessed various aspects of suicide terrorism including: psychology, ideology and motivation, socio-economic, educational and demographic issues and organizational aspects such as recruitment and indoctrination. Counter-strategies were discussed including: pre-emption and penetration of organizations sponsoring suicide terrorism, protections and mitigation of the consequences of suicide attacks, and dealing with terrorism root causes and undermining popular support for suicide terrorism.

From 2003 to 2006, a NATO Research Task Group under the Human Factors and Medicine Panel, HFM-081, entitled “Stress and Psychological Support in Modern Military Operations”, met to discuss risk assessment, psychological preparation, screening, psychological support during and after deployment and psychological support for families. The group was chaired by Yves Cuvelier (Belgium) and had participating members from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. This group produced a document providing guidelines on the organization of psychological support (including structure, procedures and roles of professionals). This report is available on the NATO website (www.rto.nato.int).

In 2007 in Moscow, a Human Factors and Medicine Panel (HFM-145) Symposium was held entitled “Non-Lethal Weapons in Counter-Terrorism: Human Effects”. This Symposium was co-chaired by Michael Murphy (USA) and N. Obeziyaev (Russia). It included participants from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Symposium focused on various issues related to non-lethal weapons including: psychological and behavioural effects, medical issues, effectiveness, safety margins and acceptance. Counter-terrorism scenarios were discussed, as well as decision support tools, doctrine, education and training and differences between NATO and Russian approaches to non-lethal weapons.

Finally, from 2006 to 2009, a NATO Research Task Group under the Human Factors and Medicine Panel, HFM-140, focused on the Psychosocial, Organizational and Cultural Aspects of Terrorism. This group was chaired by Anne Speckhard (USA) and included participants from Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Israel, Jordan, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The group shared state-of-the-art knowledge, data and theories regarding motivations, ideologies, objectives, behaviour and operation

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of terrorists (including individual actors, leadership and networks), radicalization, recruitment, membership, disengagement, resilience to terrorism, social influence and perception management. Lessons learned were also shared, including understanding the impact of military posture and ways to minimize the negative impact of military operations, disengagement and deradicalization efforts, as well as the impact these factors might have on doctrine, training and education.