

# **Non-governmental Public Action Against Chemical and Biological Weapons**

## **Investigator**

Daniel Feakes

## **Aims and objectives of the research**

1. To generate new empirical knowledge and systematic analysis on non-governmental public action against chemical and biological weapons
2. To promote more effective non-governmental public action by empowering and connecting different research users through a deliberative and inclusionary process
3. To contribute to academic study of the role and influence of non-governmental public action generally in global security and improved public awareness and understanding of the issues relating to WMD in the UK
4. To investigate the use in relation to global security threats and public action of research methodologies more commonly used in other areas of social science

## **Key research questions and methods**

This project will:

- (a) investigate the global environment within which non-governmental public action against chemical and biological weapons operates
- (b) identify and analyse the non-governmental actors, processes and institutions involved
- (c) collect empirical data on two cases of non-governmental public action, one national and event-focused, the other global and process-focused
- (d) promote critical reflection by non-governmental actors of their role and activities with a view to encouraging more effective action.

Particular attention will be paid to the role of UK non-governmental public action in the months prior to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and to ongoing non-governmental efforts to contribute to the strengthening of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

The project will be conducted in a user-centred, participatory and action-oriented way. It will draw upon concepts of deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment which focus on how to engage 'the public' in policy formulation, particularly those involving scientific expertise.

## **Relation to the programme**

Unlike other areas of non-governmental public action, the significance of non-governmental public action in this field has barely been recognized. In most of the relevant literature the state remains the main focus of attention. However, from

personal experiences and discussions, it is apparent that a diverse range of public, private and civil actors is actually involved.

The project will link research and practice by promoting means of advancing non-governmental public action. It aims to improve public understanding in the UK of issues relating to WMD and to facilitate collaborative global non-governmental endeavours against chemical and biological weapons.

### **Relevance of this research to user groups**

User groups are seen as non-governmental organizations, academics, the media and government officials.

The UK research community on chemical and biological weapons has a strong record of providing policy-relevant inputs. By describing and analysing the dimensions and processes of this policy influence, and promoting its more effective employment, this research will reinforce the UK's capacity in this area, at a time when the community is faced with the retirement of some of its older individuals and the consequent loss of collective memory.

During 2005 there is heightened policy focus on chemical and biological weapons, with the UK chairing the G8, holding the EU presidency from July and chairing multilateral talks on biological weapons in Geneva. Then in 2006, member states of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention convene in Geneva for the sixth of their five-yearly review conferences.

### **Contact details**

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Please note that Daniel Feakes left University of Sussex on 22 May 2009

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Last updated August 2009.

