

IAEA Threat Assessment and Risk Informed Approach Course

Module I Skill Building Exercise Packet

Threat Assessment Methodologies

Instructor's Notes

Time breakdown:

1. Introduction (5 min)
2. Word Ladder (20 min)
3. Rate Adversary Characteristics (20 min)

Suggested debrief options:

1. Have each group present their word ladder. Discussion topics can include:
 - a. The rationale behind each description
 - b. The number of options (five) – was it sufficient? Would more be better? Would less?
2. Have each group present their ratings for the MAF
 - a. If there were differences between their ratings for capability and history, ask them why they chose that rating
 - i. Ask for strategies for combining these differences into one threat rating
 - b. Ask them why there may be differences in capability and history, but you can't compare the differences for motivation
 - i. Highlight the importance of using the same word ladder for all SMEs

One option for group moderators is to have each participant fill out their own words ladders and ratings and then have a discussion on why they chose that scale or rating, and then voting on what to present as the group (for example, if three members think the rating should be *high*, and two think it should be *very high*, the group should present the *high* rating).

Overview

This skill building exercise is comprised of two parts. In the first part you will be asked to develop a word ladder for assessing an adversary's motivation. In the second part you will be asked to use the word ladders from Part 1 to assess an adversary's capability, history, and intent to launch a radiological or nuclear attack.

Part 1: Word Ladders

For the first part of this skill-building exercise you have been tasked with creating the word ladder for the "capability" aspect of an adversary. To help guide you, the word ladders for intent and history have already been developed. The definitions for the three characteristics are:

Intent The willingness to employ nuclear or other radioactive material in a criminal act.

History Past terrorism activities, not just limited to radiological or nuclear threats.

Capability The components and expertise necessary to create a nuclear security threat device.

Rating	Intent	History
Very High	Has a stated desire to pursue radiological or nuclear terrorism.	Has successfully carried out attacks within the last year.
High	Is suspected of wanting to pursue radiological or nuclear terrorism.	Has attempted unsuccessful attacks within the last year.
Medium	Has a stated desire to inflict damage on the State through whatever means necessary.	Has attempted attacks (whether successful or not) within its history, but not within the last year.
Low	Is not suspected of wanting to use nuclear or radiological threat devices.	Has called in hoaxes or claimed responsibility for attacks that were carried out by other groups.
Very Low	Has stated that has no desire to use radiological or nuclear terrorism.	Has no history of planning or executing attacks.

Now design the word ladder for capability. Seven slots were created below, but feel free to use more or less to create your word ladder. When thinking about capability, consider whether or not the adversary has the following capabilities necessary to create a nuclear security threat device:

- Nuclear or radiological materials

- Non-nuclear or –radiological components (shielding, explosives, etc.)
- Technical personnel and expertise

Rating	Capability

Part 2: Rating an Adversary

In this section you are provided a brief overview of a fictional terrorist group and then asked to rate them utilizing the word ladders from Part 1.

ALL INFORMATION IS PURELY FICTIONAL

Security Briefing – Militant Armed Front (MAF)

The MAF is a non-state armed group opposed to national policies of the central government. The group is decentralized, with operating cells distributed in urban areas throughout the region. Law enforcement authorities have penetrated a handful of MAF operating cells, but intelligence on the group's activities remains incomplete.



Personnel

Membership in the MAF is estimated at less than 100 individuals, scattered in 5-10 person cells across urban areas. The majority of the group's personnel are believed to be concentrated in the region (including the interior and neighboring States).

Capabilities

The MAF has access to a variety of black market small arms including pistols, assault rifles, and rocket-propelled grenades. The group is also proficient in the construction and use of improvised explosive devices. The MAF has expressed interest in acquiring more destructive capabilities, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It is known that two MAF operatives have received extensive training on chemical and biological agents. It is rumored that the MAF is actively attempting to recruit a nuclear scientist.


Financing

The MAF is primarily financed by money acquired through black market activities, including drug smuggling and counterfeiting. The group utilizes a primarily road-borne supply network, bribing truck drivers to hide contraband in shipments of otherwise legitimate cargo.

Activity

The MAF remains active in the region and is engaged in the trafficking of guns, drugs, and other illicit materials to finance activities. In the past, the MAF has taken hostages and used armed attacks to further its political agenda. The most recent event occurred six months ago when a member of parliament was targeted in an assassination attempt. The MAF is also suspected of planting an Improvised Explosive Device in a public park eight months ago, however this remains unconfirmed.

Using the word ladders from Part 1, how would you rate the intent, history, and capability of the MAF to engage in nuclear or radiological terrorism?

	Intent	History	Capability
Militant Armed Front 			

Time permitting, please consider the following questions:

What are the options for combining the intent, history, and capability ratings into a single overall rating?

How would you rate the overall threat posed by the MAF?

What other aspects (besides intent, history, and capability) should the MAF be assessed against?

Were the word ladders from Part 1 able to capture the intent, history, and capabilities of the MAF? Why or why not?