**WMD MAPEX: Advance Student Briefing Document**

**Background**

This exercise is based on a classroom scenario developed at the UK Defence Academy in the early 2000s. It is designed to challenge you to analyze an escalating international crisis involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), using the frameworks of coercion and deterrence theory.

**Aim**

* **Explore political and military issues** related to military operations against adversaries armed with WMD.
* **Consider operational and strategic questions** about the use or non-use of nuclear weapons by Coalition forces in response to WMD threats.

**Scenario Overview**

* **Global Context:** Since 2002, international arms control has weakened. Multiple states are seeking WMD capabilities.
* **Key Actors:** Numidia and Malania, two newly independent states (formerly part of Kazakhstan), are actively pursuing WMDs as “force equalizers” against superior conventional forces.

**The Crisis**

**Terrorist Attack:** A radiological device explodes near Wall Street during anti-globalisation protests in New York City.

* **Casualties:** Over 400 dead; rapid detection of Plutonium-238.
* **Contamination:** Manhattan is heavily contaminated, with severe short- and long-term health impacts:
  + Inner region: 1 in 100 die within days from radiation.
  + Middle region: 1 in 1,000 develop radiation sickness or cancer.
  + Outer region: 1 in 10,000 face long-term cancer risk.
* **Economic Impact:** The attack triggers a US recession, with NYC facing years of fallout similar to Chernobyl.
* **Attribution:** Al Qaeda claims responsibility. Intelligence links the fissile material to Central Asia (former Soviet Union). NSA and GCHQ detect increased communications between Al Qaeda and the governments of Numidia and Malania prior to the attack.

**WMD Capabilities & Concerns**

* **Numidia & Malania:**
* Both are non-nuclear weapon states and signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
* **Malania:** Suspected of a covert nuclear program (via “research reactors”); not a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention and possesses a substantial chemical weapons arsenal.
* **Collaboration:** Evidence of Malanian-Numidian cooperation on chemical weapons.
* Both are signatories to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, but Malania is suspected of extensive biological weapons research and development.

**Your Task**

* As students, you will be asked to:
* Analyze the crisis as it escalates, considering the perspectives of coercion and deterrence.
* Explore the dilemmas faced by Coalition leaders regarding military intervention, deterrence, and the potential use of nuclear weapons in response to WMD threats.
* **Be prepared to discuss:**
* The challenges of attributing responsibility for WMD attacks.
* The effectiveness and risks of deterrence strategies.
* The political, legal, and ethical implications of military responses to WMD threats.

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Attribution and Responsibility**
   * How confident can you be in attributing the radiological attack to Numidia or Malania? What evidence would you require before taking action?
   * What are the risks of acting on incomplete or ambiguous intelligence?
2. **Deterrence and Coercion**
   * What deterrence strategies could the Coalition employ to prevent further WMD use by Numidia or Malania?
   * How might the adversaries attempt to deter Coalition intervention, and how should you respond?
3. **Escalation Management**
   * What are the potential consequences of escalating the conflict, especially if nuclear weapons are considered?
   * How do you balance the need to act decisively with the risk of provoking further WMD use?
4. **Legal and Ethical Considerations**
   * What are the legal and ethical implications of launching military operations without definitive proof or a UN mandate?
   * How should the Coalition weigh civilian casualties and long-term environmental impacts in its decision-making?
5. **Operational Challenges**
   * How would you protect Coalition forces and civilian populations from further WMD attacks?
   * What non-nuclear military options are available to respond to WMD use?
6. **Strategic Outcomes**
   * What would success look like for the Coalition in this scenario?
   * How should the Coalition prepare for the political and strategic consequences of either action or inaction?

**Be prepared to discuss these questions and apply them as the scenario develops during the exercise. This is a fluid evolving exercise.**

**REMEMBER: Coercion vs. Deterrence**

* **Deterrence** is about **preventing an adversary from taking an unwanted action** by threatening credible consequences if they do. The goal is to maintain the status quo by making the costs of aggression or escalation too high for the adversary.
* **Coercion** is about **compelling an adversary to take a specific action (or stop an action) through threats or limited use of force**. The aim is to change the adversary’s behavior, not just prevent it.

**In summary:**

* **Deterrence:** “Don’t do this, or you’ll pay a price.”
* **Coercion:** “Do what we demand, or you’ll pay a price.”

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29 September 2025