

The Federation of American Scientists

Amongst the various organizations devoted to spreading awareness regarding biological and chemical weapons issues, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) occupies a unique position. It was founded in 1945 by scientist who had worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the first atomic bombs.¹ The guiding philosophy of FAS has been to “warn the public policy leaders of potential dangers from scientific and technical advances and to show how good policy could increase the benefits of new scientific knowledge”.²

The Board of Sponsors of FAS comprises of 84 Nobel Laureates. The organization often addresses critical policy topics that are not well covered by other organizations.³ The FAS is funded by contributions from its members and public and private sector.

The three main programme areas under the FAS projects are organized as under:

- Energy and the Environment
- Learning Technologies
- Strategic Security

The strategic Security Programme pursues projects that can reduce the threat to the United States and the world from biological, chemical, conventional and nuclear weapons.⁴

The FAS Biological and Chemical Weapons Control Project falls under the Strategic Security Programme. The project “defines biosecurity challenges that face the nation, provides sound information and policy guidance and advocates for overall preparedness for public health emergencies and pandemics, disasters and terrorism event”. It covers all aspects of chemical and biological weapons and their control, but concentrates on researching and advocating policies that balance science and security without compromising national security or scientific progress.

The BWPP released the First Edition of its BioWeapons Report on December 9, 2004

Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in Geneva, Switzerland. The report highlights the dangers posed by both traditional and potentially new biological weapons, and delineates some of the measures governments can and should take to reduce the impending threat.

The Bioweapons Monitor is one of the leading publications of the BWPP. It is an online searchable database with open-source information on topics related to international accords controlling biological weapons and relevant developments in specific regions and countries. The BioWeapons Report is the more analytical component of the BWPP publications. It is an annual printed book containing contributions from various authors. The current Strategic Programme 2004-06 is a concerted effort to generate an agenda to monitor and strengthen the norms against the use of disease as a weapon for and beyond the 2006 Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention. BWPP aims to fill this gap by monitoring implementation of the legal and political obligations never to develop, produce or use biological weapons. Since April 2006 the BWPP has been involved in the technical implementation of the Joint Action in support of the BTWC, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union in February 2006. The activities involve the organisation of 5 regional seminars to promote the universalization of the convention and assist with national implementation legislation of States Parties to the Convention.⁴

BWPP has contributed significantly in spreading awareness regarding the threat of BW and is incessantly working in the same direction to curb the impending threat of the same.

Endnotes:

1. <http://www.bwpp.org/about.html>
2. www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/biochem/articles/bio_weapons_project_report/ -
3. www.bwpp.org/documents/2004-06BWPPstrategicprogramme.pdf
4. <http://www.bwpp.org/>