

“The Life Sciences, Biosecurity, and Dual-Use Research”

Workshop for Scientists on Preventing the Spread of Biological Weapons



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Since 11 September 2001 and the anthrax attacks that followed in the US, public and policy concerns about the security threats posed by biological weapons have increased significantly. With this has come an expansion of activities where the wisdom of applying national security controls is being considered. In particular, questions are being asked today in the UK and other countries about what novel threats might stem from biological research, how scientists can contribute to national defence, and whether some lines of investigation are too ‘contentious’ to pursue.

Our project, funded by the ESRC, examines a number of key questions:

- How can policy makers develop new approaches for minimising bioweapon threats through engaging with the bioscience community?
- How might regulatory controls challenge the existing practices of research?
- Could professional codes of conduct be an effective policy option and, if so, how should they be constructed and implemented?

This workshop is intended to engage practicing scientists in discussions about the wisdom of the national security inspired policies currently being proposed or implemented. We hope to provide an opportunity to both inform you about current national and international security activities relating to biological research as well as actively engage you in discussions about the merits of current initiatives. The workshop will consist of a semi-structured discussion centered on a number of key themes.

To facilitate our analysis, audio or video recordings will be made of the workshops. If you wish, you may write us anonymous comments on the attached PowerPoint slide pages. The recordings are necessary to facilitate research and the production of academic and policy orientated publications. Those interested in receiving feedback on the results of other such workshops and the development of the project overall should pass their details on to one of us.

All the data obtained will be held in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. This information will not be passed on to any third parties and kept under lock and key in a cabinet. The data will not be published or released in a form which would permit the actual or potential identification of participants by non-participants to the workshops. Anonymised workshop summaries will be deposited with the ESRC Qualidata Archive.

Any questions or comments should be directed to Brian Rappert; Department of Sociology; University of Exeter; Exeter EX4 4RJ *Tel:* (01392) 263353 *Email:* B.Rappert@ex.ac.uk