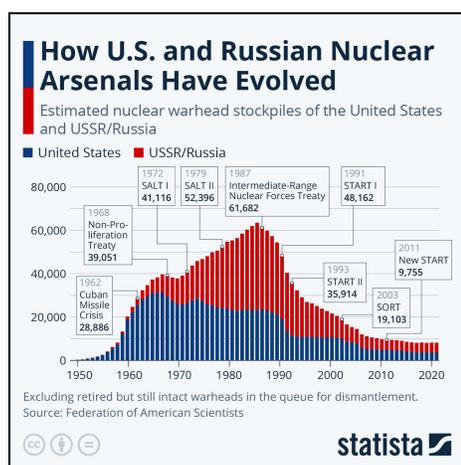


Introduction

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) are defined by the United Nations Commission on Conventional Armaments as nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other devices that are intended to harm a large number of people. Under this definition, weapons such as atomic bombs, mustard gas, and missiles are all considered WMDs. The definition is quite vague as the sentence “harm a large number of people” allows for weapons like handguns to also be considered WMDs. This makes the term WMD a particularly confusing one, thus for the sake of avoiding confusion, the definition of large in context means at least one hundred people at once.

On July 1, 1968 the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was introduced with the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States (US) being among the first nations to sign it. The intent of the NPT was to end the ongoing nuclear arms race and force the five nations with a nuclear arsenal (China, France, UK, US, and USSR) to disarm themselves. At the time of the signing, there were exactly 39,051 nuclear weapons in the world, but about twenty years after the signing there were 61,682 nuclear weapons in the world. While the five nuclear weapon states

did make some effort to disarm themselves, ultimately the NPT’s initial goal was a complete failure. The lack of strength behind the NPT allowed for four other countries to develop nuclear programs, those being India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea. Currently, the world is faced with a massive security risk due to North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons. Their arsenal threatens the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and most of the international community. Any small conflict



with them is capable of erupting into an extreme humanitarian crisis, and the longer their nuclear program continues, they pose to the international community increases.

Key Events

Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945):

The first use of atomic bombs was the dropping of *Little Boy* and *Fat Man* and the two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 6, 1945 the American bomber plane *Enola Gay* dropped the bomb *Little Boy* on the city of Hiroshima. Upon the explosion, 80,000 people were



immediately killed, and the ground reached the temperature of 7,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The entire city was reduced to rubble and an estimated 60,000 people were killed due to radiation, rubble, or other bomb induced hazards. On the 9th, the city of Kokura was supposed to be the target of the bomb *Fat Man*, but the pilot of the B-29 carrying the bomb determined it was too risky and decided to target the city of Nagasaki instead. 40,000 people died following the initial blast of *Fat Man*, but over the course of five years approximately 130,000 more were killed. These two incidents are the only times that atomic bombs have actually been used.

The Cold War (1947-1991): The bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki led to a nuclear arms race between the US and the USSR. The two nations began racing to develop a weapon stronger than the atomic bomb, that being the hydrogen bomb. The US wanted to use military force in order to contain the “Soviet Threat” while the USSR wanted to prove themselves superior to the US and show the world the strength of communism, which resulted in the two countries being in

a constant standstill. Several military flare ups occurred such as the Vietnam War, Korean War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, but no direct combat between the US and USSR took place.

Formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (1949): After World War II, most of Europe was completely wrecked and in desperate need of aid. Under the Marshall Plan, the US believed that an economically strong Europe was the best possible deterrent to the rise of communism. It promoted a strong sense of cooperation between the US and many European nations while also driving a severe divide between the Soviet nations which refused the aid and the ones that accepted it. After a series of conflicts between Europe and communism, the US President, Harry Truman, determined that an American-European alliance would be critical in security against the USSR. This led to the formation of NATO which insured immediate aid if any member of the organization were to be attacked. In retaliation the Warsaw Treaty Organization was formed between the Soviets and their satellite states. In the 1950s, it was agreed that if any member of NATO were to be attacked, the US would immediately respond with a large-scale nuclear attack.

The Korean War (1950-ongoing): The Cold War shaped the Korean Peninsula as it instilled the belief in North Korea that they must unite the entire peninsula under communist rule. North Korea was occupied by the Soviets who promoted communism there while South Korea was occupied by the US which promoted capitalism. On June 25, 1950, the Korean War began with a North Korean invasion and eventually led to a massive stalemate at the 38th parallel in Korea. Unable to achieve a conclusive victory, both sides agreed to an armistice on



July 27, 1953. The war is still technically ongoing as the two sides only agreed upon an armistice to stop the fighting but no peace talks were successful.

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962): On October 22, 1962, US President John F. Kennedy alerted the American public that the USSR had installed several nuclear bombs on Cuba. In response, the US set up a blockade around Cuba to prevent further nuclear weapons from reaching them. Two days later, Soviet ships nearly attempted to breach the blockade, which would have escalated the situation into nuclear war. The crisis was averted after the US withdrew their nuclear weapons in Turkey in exchange for the USSR removing their nukes in Cuba. From the initial discovery of the arsenal in Cuba to the settlement, the world was the closest it has ever been to an all out nuclear war.

Iraq War (2003-2011): US military intelligence reported that Iraq was developing several WMD programs, citing this as the primary motive the US invaded Iraq in March of 2003. The Iraqi military was quickly disbanded and with little resistance, Saddam Hussein's government was completely crushed. Hussein was captured and executed while democracy was established. Almost a year after the initial invasion, it was learned that Iraq never had any WMD programs in development or had any WMDs in general. A false report resulted in the deaths of 4,700 US and allied nations' soldiers and over 100,000 Iraqi civilians.

Current Tensions

After the Soviets pulled out of Cuba at the US' request, North Korea became increasingly worried that they would be disregarded just like Cuba. This fear motivated them into developing their own nuclear program to serve as a deterrent for their global enemies. They signed the NPT and joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and stationed a scientist at the

agency's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The goal of this scientist was to siphon information and report back to North Korea, ultimately allowing them to build a nuclear reactor. In 2003 they withdrew from the NPT and despite several denuclearization agreements with the international community, their nuclear program continued development until 2013 where they



tested a nuclear missile and declared themselves a “Nuclear Weapons State”. Last year, North Korea fired seventy missiles with two of those missiles flying directly over Japan. The nation regularly threatens Japan, South Korea, and the US with missile

strikes. These threats are among the biggest factors behind the Japanese and South Korean public's support for developing their own independent nuclear programs. 70% of South Koreans are in favor of their country developing an independent nuclear program. The constant escalation of nuclear threat by North Korea has quickly become a major problem to the stability of global nonproliferation programs, as the international community has failed time after time to denuclearize North Korea and now the existence of a nuclear program is seen as a necessary defense measure.

Currently, Russia has the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, with around 6,000 nuclear weapons in their possession. The size and strength of the weapons in their arsenal varies greatly, but among their weakest explosives is the equivalent of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Despite their large arsenal, Russia finds NATO to be a massive threat as the group is highly critical of Russia's recent actions in Ukraine and due to the fact that the organization provides a lot of supplies and training for the Ukrainian troops. Ukraine is currently working to become an official member of NATO, and if that were to happen, the entirety of the organization would be

drawn into the Russo-Ukrainian war. NATO has also removed one of the steps to becoming a member with the hope that it will speed up the membership process for Ukraine. In a recent interview regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war, former President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev said “Just imagine that the offensive... in tandem with NATO, succeeded and ended up with part of our land being taken away. Then we would have to use nuclear weapons by virtue of the stipulations of the Russian Presidential Decree.” This quote, coupled with the fierce belief that current Russian President Vladimir Putin will use nuclear weapons on Ukraine if the war seems unwinnable. This has led many members of the UN to believe that a modern nuclear war is possible. If NATO were to officially interfere, Russia would immediately retaliate with nuclear force. One small change in the situation for the Russo-Ukrainian war could result in all out nuclear warfare.

Emerging WMDS

Drones serve two purposes militarily, one being for surveillance and the other being an autonomous method of defense. Drone swarms are commonly used to suppress an enemy's air defenses, as drones can carry guns and missiles that can easily take down airborne targets. The same



technology that enables this also allows for drones to carry out “drone strikes” which is when a drone is used to carry an explosive and drop it on a designated location. The most prevalent issue regarding drone strikes is the high likelihood of a strike causing a civilian casualty. For example, out of the 10,000-17,000 people killed in US drone strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen, around 800-1,750 of those killed are thought to be civilians. Drones are capable of

targeting specific people of interest and eliminating any target all while being completely autonomous, thus posing an extreme threat to the lives and security of innocent civilians.

Biological weapons are pieces of military equipment that contain either a toxin or a disease with the intent of killing anything infected by the weapon. Typically, these arms have a weaponizing agent and a delivery mechanism. The weaponizing agent can be any contagion or bacteria either manufactured or naturally produced, with a famous example of a weaponizing agent being anthrax. The “delivery mechanism” is how the weapon is delivered, either through missile, bomb, sprays, injection, or other methods. Typically, biological weapons are used in assassinations due to the flexible nature of the delivery mechanism. Anything can contain a biological weapon, thus making them ideal for covert assassinations. Mail services are occasionally used for this express purpose; for example, the anthrax attacks in 2001 were carried out by anthrax being put in an envelope and sent to the targets where upon opening the envelope, the target would be exposed to the anthrax and die shortly after. The mass destruction capability of biological weapons is if the weapon is intended to unleash a disease. Usually, diseases infect a large variety of people completely indiscriminately, and the lethality of weaponized diseases leads to a staggering number of casualties.

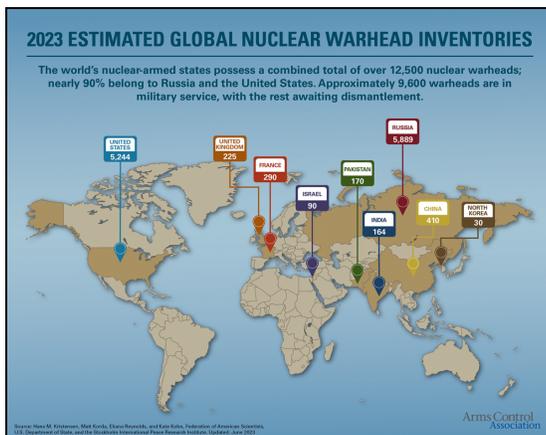
Chemical weapons are when a chemical is used to cause intentional harm or death through the toxic nature of said chemical. Chemical weapons are defined under three categories: those being riot control agents, herbicides, and central nervous system acting chemicals or incapacitating chemical agents. Riot control agents are used to control large groups of people but are meant to not cause any lasting damage, tear gas and pepper spray are prime examples of riot control agents. Herbicides are used to destroy vegetation in a hostile environment, either to remove a food supply or remove an enemy's cover if they are in a dense forest. The herbicide

Agent Orange was used by the US military during the Vietnam War. Its purpose was to clear the vegetation that was providing cover for the Viet-Cong forces, but long after the war it was discovered that Agent Orange causes severe birth defects. Children in Vietnam can be born without eyeballs, severely misshapen heads, or other extreme deformities. Agent Orange serves as a perfect example of a WMD. Central nervous system acting chemicals target the nervous system and are considered the most dangerous chemical weapon. These weapons consist of the chemicals sarin, soman, tabun, and VX, but the most well known chemical weapon is mustard gas. During the Syrian Civil War, the Assad regime used sarin on the rebels, who had no means of defending themselves against it. This is the most recent widespread usage of a chemical weapon during wartime. Additionally, Kim Jong Un, the leader of North Korea, used the chemical VX to assassinate his half-brother Kim Jong-nam. While not capable of the same level of destruction as biological weapons or drones, chemical weapons represent a swift and relatively unstoppable method of slaughter.

Previous Treaties

Geneva Protocol (1925): After the atrocities committed during World War I, the Geneva Protocol was created in order to prevent the cruelty that was seen during the war. It completely bans the usage of biological and chemical weapons in warfare. While it did ban the usage of those weapons, it did not ban the development, production, and stockpiling of them. This allowed for nations such as the US and USSR to build up a massive stockpile of them. Additionally, it did not prevent nations from claiming they could use these weapons in retaliation.

Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) (1968): The objective of this treaty was to prevent the spread of nuclear technology across the world, encourage nuclear disarmament, and open talks regarding nuclear energy. It is the only binding treaty regarding nuclear disarmament. The treaty also established the IAEA, whose responsibility is to inspect every nation's arsenals and ensure they are meeting the safeguards agreed upon in the NPT. The most obvious issue with this treaty is that there are still about 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world, though over fifty years ago it was agreed that every nation would work towards bringing that number to zero. All of the nuclear weapons states have no motivation to get rid of their arsenals because they serve as a perfect deterrent and provide a lot of strategic balance. It also failed to prevent nations like North



Korea from obtaining nuclear weapons; rather it actually helped that happen. When signed, there were only five nuclear weapons states, but now there are nine, with thirty other states possessing the means to become a nuclear weapons state themselves. This treaty has failed to prevent the transfer of fissile material and nuclear technology as the US blatantly ignored that

policy in the 1990s when they provided India with various nuclear technologies so they could strengthen their position in Asia. India now participates in a joint production and development program regarding military technologies such as miniature unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) (1972): The BWC fixed many of the problems regarding the Geneva Protocol regarding biological weapons. Under the BWC, the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons is prohibited. It forces nations that possess any weapon to destroy it or divert it for a

peaceful use within nine months of the initial discovery of the weapon. There is no group to enforce the BWC, which allows for flagrant violations of it to go unpunished.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) (1993): Much like the BWC, the CWC corrects some of the mistakes of the Geneva Protocol regarding chemical weapons. The CWC prohibits developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or retaining chemical weapons. It bans the usage of chemical weapons in warfare or when preparing for warfare, and it considers all riot control agents as weapons of warfare. The Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was formed in order to enforce the CWC. This is the most effective disarmament treaty created thus far, as it has eliminated 96% of all chemical weapons being stockpiled by the states that signed the treaty.

Questions for Debate

- How should nations with developing nuclear weapons programs be treated?
- How can we achieve full denuclearization?
- Should WMD receive a universal definition?
- How can aggressive nations with nuclear weapons be dealt with?
- What is an effective way to prevent the use/spread of all WMDs?
- Is an upcoming nuclear war a serious possibility?
 - If so, how can the war be avoided?
- Should we ban WMDs, or are they a necessary deterrent?

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