

Weapons of mass destruction

Mutual nuclear deterrence

Mutual nuclear deterrence: a state of affairs in which two or more powers are prevented from a deliberate nuclear attack due to the potential irrevocable nuclear retaliation

Mutual nuclear deterrence results from a mutual threat with nuclear weapons and the potential cost that goes beyond fantasy and is not acceptable. Nuclear weapons are primarily psychological weapons as they threaten the opponent with total destruction.

It is based on the will of each side and on the declaration that it will use its nuclear weapons in the event of an attack. If this use were impossible for natural or moral reasons, then prevention would cease to work.

It is essentially a state of belief on each side that the other has the will and the capacity to retaliate to a sufficient level. For mutual nuclear deterrence to work, the two sides don't need to have the same amount of heads or missiles since even a smaller number of these weapons can have devastating effects.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Weapons of Mass Destruction are atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) constitute a class of weaponry with the potential to:

- 1) Produce in a single moment an enormous destructive effect capable to kill millions of civilians, jeopardize the natural environment, and fundamentally alter the lives of future generations through their catastrophic effects;
- 2) Cause death or serious injury of people through toxic or poisonous chemicals;
- 3) Disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants;
- 4) Deliver nuclear explosive devices, chemical, biological or toxin agents to use them for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

Tactical nuclear weapons

There is no universally accepted definition for a "tactical," "nonstrategic," or "theater" nuclear weapons. There are many criteria which classify nuclear weapons as tactical, such as range, yield, target, national ownership, delivery vehicle, and capability. However, range is the most prominent one in order to make the distinction. In that context, 600 km are proposed as the maximum range for a tactical weapon by some.

Generally, tactical nuclear weapons refer to nuclear weapons designed to be used on a battlefield in military operations rather than against enemy cities or strategic nuclear forces.

For the most part, tactical nuclear weapons have smaller explosive power than strategic ones. Nevertheless, their yields can be relatively low (0.1 kiloton), equal to those of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (15-20 kilotons), or very large (1 megaton).

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