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Nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and missiles: Status and trends.

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Personal Author(s) : Kerr, Paul K

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Abstract : The United States has long recognized the dangers inherent in the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons, and missiles. This report, which analyzes NBC weapons programs potential threat patterns around the globe, is updated as needed.

The total number of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in the world is shrinking as the major powers scale back their inventories through unilateral reductions and arms control, but other countries and groups still try to acquire these weapons. There are five established nuclear weapon states (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). India and Pakistan declared their nuclear weapons capability with nuclear tests in 1998, as did North Korea in 2006. Israel is also widely believed to have a nuclear weapon arsenal. About a dozen countries have offensive biological weapons (BW) programs, and the same number have chemical weapons (CW) programs. That number could grow as new technologies are developed and the international flow of information, goods, expertise, and technology continues. While the United States and Russia eliminated intermediate-range missiles and are reducing their intercontinental missile inventories, China is modernizing and expanding its missile force. North Korea, Iran, Israel, India, and Pakistan are building short- and medium-range missiles and are developing longer-range missiles. Dozens of countries have or are developing short-range ballistic missiles and more are likely to buy them. Over 80 countries have cruise missiles; about 40 manufacture or have the ability to manufacture them. And terrorists continue their efforts to acquire NBC capabilities. Elements in North Korea, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and other countries continue to export weapons technology. The number of countries or groups that will acquire or produce NBC weapons may decrease if diplomacy, arms control treaties, nonproliferation regimes, and security and assistance strategies are effective.

Descriptors : *NUCLEAR WEAPONS , *FOREIGN POLICY , *GUIDED MISSILES , *THREATS , *CHEMICAL WARFARE , *MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS , *BIOLOGICAL WARFARE , *UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT , TERRORISTS , TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER , UNITED KINGDOM , INTERMEDIATE RANGE(DISTANCE) , CHINA , IRAN , TREATIES , INTERNATIONAL TRADE , SHORT RANGE(DISTANCE) , ARMS CONTROL , RUSSIA , FRANCE , LONG RANGE(DISTANCE) , RISK , NORTH KOREA , INDIA , PAKISTAN , ISRAEL

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Chemical, Biological and Radiological Warfare

Nuclear Warfare

Guided Missiles

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