

**Summary**

**Chapter 7: Weapons of Mass Destruction**

*EQ: How have weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons, changed the practice of international relations?*

* Nuclear weapons, first developed by the United States during World War II, use fission to create an explosion that is orders of magnitude more devastating than conventional explosives.
* Nuclear explosions have a blast effect that can level buildings for miles in any direction, a thermal effect, that can cause third-degree burns even further out, and a fallout effect that can cause cancer from radiation even hundreds of miles away from the point at which the bomb detonates.
* Nine states have nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.
* States with nuclear weapons try to ensure that they can each destroy the other and the other can destroy them to reach a point of strategic stability. This logic is called Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).
* Obtaining nuclear weapons is difficult, but it is not impossible, and many states have sought nuclear weapons for security and prestige.
* Chemical weapons use manufacture chemicals to kill people and biological weapons spread bacteria or viruses to kill people.
* While both chemical and biological weapons are dangerous, neither is nearly as dangerous as nuclear weapons.
* The specter of nuclear terrorism is one of the most frightening facing the world today. Nuclear-armed terrorists could potentially cause destruction unprecedented from non-state actors.
* The emergence of cyber-warfare is another new danger facing the international community today.