**AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY ADO EKITI**

**A TERM PAPER**

**TO**

**WRITE A COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY ON THE TERM “NUCLEAR WEAPONS”**

**BY**

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According to the United Nations office for disarmament affairs (UNODA) the defined nuclear weapons as Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects. The dangers from such weapons arise from their very existence. Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 about 14,500 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date. Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge.

Nuclear weapons are highly engineered and difficult to produce weapons that cause great harm by initiating a fission or fusion chain reaction explosion. Nuclear explosions are attainable only through the acquisition of construction of highly advanced weapons technologies, and using only the most refined nuclear materials. A nuclear blast emits intense light, heat, and damaging pressure and disperses radioactive debris over a widespread area, leading to the contamination of air, water, and ground surfaces for miles around. While the likelihood of a terrorist organization developing an operational nuclear weapon is almost nil, there is always the possibility that rogue states known to support terrorist organizations or states unable to monitor and protect their nuclear weapons caches could become a source of such weaponry for terrorist groups with great financial means.

There are approximately 17 000 nuclear weapons that are possessed by nine nations: the United States, Russia, France, China, the United Kingdom, Israel, India, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea. Most of these are strategic weapons, which are capable of intercontinental delivery. Others are tactical weapons with ranges less than 310 miles (500 km). Open-air testing of nuclear weapons has led to environmental contamination, with increased rates of leukemia and other cancers among populations who were downwind of these tests. Production of nuclear weapons has led to major environmental contamination, such as in the area around Chelyabinsk, Russia, which has been heavily contaminated with radioactive materials from the nuclear-weapons production facility in that area.

There is no comprehensive treaty that bans the use or mandates the destruction of nuclear weapons but rather a series of overlapping, incomplete treaties, which includes the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which was open for signature in 1996 and has not entered into force; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the Non-Proliferation Treaty), which was opened for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970; the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and Soviet Union, from which the United States has withdrawn; and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties Process.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is related largely to the existence of nuclear weapons and weapons-usable material available to states and nonstate groups that may be willing to use them for their own political agendas. To address the threat of nuclear terrorism, there is a need to develop a comprehensive primary prevention approach that includes (1) concerted international safeguarding of nuclear weapons and their constituent materials that are already dispersed throughout the world in nuclear power facilities and nuclear weapon stockpiles; (2) utilizing and strengthening of existing treaties aimed at curbing proliferation and promoting nuclear disarmament; and (3) moving beyond current treaty obligations to develop even stronger global agreemsssents to drastically reduce and ultimately eliminate materials in weapons that could have catastrophic consequences for humankind.

India, Israel, and Pakistan never signed the NPT and possess nuclear arsenals. Iraq initiated a secret nuclear program under Saddam Hussein before the 1991 Persian Gulf War. North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT in January 2003 and has tested nuclear devices since that time. Iran and Libya have pursued secret nuclear activities in violation of the treaty’s terms, and Syria is suspected of having done the same. Still, nuclear nonproliferation successes outnumber failures and dire forecasts decades ago that the world would be home to dozens of states armed with nuclear weapons have not come to pass.