

Effects_Of_Nuclear_Weapons_1999.txt

The Possible Effects of Nuclear Weapons & a Realistic Scenario for the Days after the Initial Offensive

(NOTE FROM SYSOP - this article has some SERIOUS errors, omissions, and falsehoods in it. I will try to add some footnotes on these later. I'm sure the author tried to do the best job he could. However, if the work that you use as a reference is wrong, your summation will be just as wrong.)

The largest bomb of the Second World War exploded with a force equivalent to thirteen kilotons, thirteen thousand tons, of dynamite (TNT). This bomb was called "Little Boy". The ironic thing about the name is that when the bomb is compared to the warheads of today, the only word that comes to mind is little. Most of our modern warheads are a hundred times as powerful, or more.

To give you a little perspective, let's say that a fifteen kiloton nuclear missile exploded over New York City while most of the population was out to lunch. A report from the Secretary-General of the United Nations says out of the eight million people in the city, approximately one million people will die on the first day. If a one megaton bomb was exploded over Detroit, approximately 640,000 people would die immediately. If a twenty-five megaton bomb exploded, approximately 3.2 million people would die out of the four million people living there.(1) A megaton is equivalent to a million tons of TNT. It would take 10,000 railroad freight cars to carry one million tons of TNT.(2)

The following is the possible outcome of an explosion of a one megaton nuclear warhead over the city of Detroit, Michigan. At ground zero, directly underneath the bomb, there would be a crater measuring one thousand feet wide and two hundred feet deep.(3) There would be a highly radioactive rim extending two thousand feet from the center,(4) this would keep unprotected persons from entering this circle for nearly twenty-five years. Up to 1.7 miles from the center you would not see any signs of

buildings. All buildings within this circle would be completely destroyed. Between 1.7 and 2.7 miles from the center, you might be able to see the infrastructures of the more heavily built buildings.(6) There would be almost no survivors until after 2.7 miles from ground zero.(6) Up until approximately eight miles out, houses would be flattened from the over-pressure produced by the bomb.(7) From 2.7 to 4.7 miles, all light walled structures would be destroyed and the contents of the top floors of the strongest buildings would be blown out into the street.(8) The over-pressure, about five pounds per square inch, would cause the windows and frames of all buildings to be blown out.(9) In the band from 4.7 miles to 6.3 miles out, the 3 p.s.i. over-pressure would cause people to be blown out of modern office buildings and would cause millions of flying projectiles. These projectiles are capable of killing anyone they hit. The winds would cause people to be blown against walls with a force many times greater than gravity.(10) Up to fifteen miles from the explosion, the winds would cause objects to fly with a force capable of fracturing the skull (of a human) fifty percent of the time.(11) The bomb would cause the death of approximately 640,000 people on the first day.(12)

There are approximately 2.75 billion people in the world. The NUCLEAR ALMANAC says that approximately 20 - 160 million civilians would be immediately killed by a nuclear attack on present United States' strategic weapon bases by one megaton warheads (as you know, the Soviets have 100 megaton warheads). the radioactive cloud produced by these weapons would cover about fifty percent of the United States.(13) Approximately 25 million more people would die to cancer and genetic defects caused by the nuclear weapons. Added to what is the predicted deaths of other countries, the total deaths would be from 120 to 260 million people.(14) This means that from 4.3 to 9.5 percent of the Earth's population would be killed within a couple of years after the war. (Remember, radiation causes sterilization. This was not placed into the above calculations.)

In 1958 there was a study on the possible fatalities in the United States during a hypothetical nuclear war. The explosive power totaled

2,500 megatons and the population 175 million persons. They figured that on the first day 42 million people would die. By the seventh day 17 million more would die. On the fourteenth day there would be a total of 71 million people dead and by the sixtieth, 83 million people would have died in the U.S. (Remember: the strategy of the time was military targets, now we go after large civilian populations, large industrial areas, etc.) There would be 25 million injured and 67 million left uninjured. (15) It is predicted that up to 2/3 of the injured would eventually die from their injuries. Almost half of the population of the United States would die. A so-called limited attack by the Soviet Union on ten U.S. refineries using about two percent of the nation's nuclear arsenal would kill more than 5 million U.S. citizens. (16)

The following is a summary of a fictional account of what may happen after a nuclear attack:

Almost right after the attack, people from all over crowded into the rural towns. They were escaping from the destroyed cities, looking for food, shelter, clothing, and medical attention. They had nothing except the clothes on their back. They had no where to go. After the first few days the hospitals closed their doors to new patients. Not only because of the high radioactivity outside, but they just did not have any room. The very sick were left to die. The others were left to fend for themselves.

Radio communications were nearly wiped out. The President came on the air once in a while. (Chances are no one would hear him: EMP) he would usually talk about the "cease-fire". He kept telling them about how the Soviets were hurt just as much as the U.S. He told them 100 million people were killed. He said the government was doing all they could. (Let's remember, the Pres. is a rather nice distance underground and most likely not seeing true reports on what is going on.)

Food became scarce. People raided the grocery stores and the houses of

the people living in shelters. Some were stealing the farmers' cattle. A few went out into the woods to try to find the few remaining wild animals. About two weeks after the explosions, the food did all but run out. People looked to the government, or what was left of it. The president said they were doing all they could.

In the spring, people changed their attitude. Crops were planted. Some even tried to rebuild the cities and factories. The government tried to stop the barter system and reinstate currency. People found the money worthless and kept trading. Some thought things were going to get better.

When winter came around, the food ran out. People started eating dogs, cats, and rats; animals by their habitat were protected from the fallout.(also cockroaches) The weak, the old, and young started to die. The first winter took its toll on the living. People were rebelling.

The government came together to figure out what to do. They could not come up with a decision that would agree with everyone. By then, no one knew what to do. The life they were used to: cars, computers, the office, golf, schools, the Superbowl, parties, all disappeared. What was left? Chaos.(17)

It is interesting how after our civilization becomes so technologically advanced and complex, we could destroy it all in a matter of moments. Our lifestyles would go back to the horse and buggy era. Most of our complexities, i.e. computers, would be forgotten. We would learn how to farm and care for animals. We probably would not be able to rebuild our previous civilization until after a few generations. The survivors would concentrate on survival, not worrying about selling stock for IBM or even going to school. There would be no use for them. Our country would be set back a couple of hundred years. People might even deny our previous civilization, and turn back to a more simple life: one in which there would be no offices, no taxation, no hostility. We might even become friends with the Soviets.

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Hopefully, we, the people of this planet, will one day realize the dangers of nuclear war, and will stop it. Hopefully everyone on this planet will become one family, working for the betterment of all. Maybe we will one day become the perfect civilization that only Karl Marx, Plato, and other philosophers have dreamed of.

Notes

- 1 Congress of the U.S., Office of Technology Assessment, THE EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WAR, 1980, pp. 27-33
- 2 ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA, 1985 ed., s.v. "Nuclear Weapons."
- 3 Neville Brown, NUCLEAR WAR: THE IMPENDING STRATEGIC DEADLOCK, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1964), p. 14
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Congress of the U.S., pp. 27-33
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Jack Dennis, ed., THE NUCLEAR ALMANAC (Reading, Mas.: Addison - Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1984), p. 101
- 8 Congress of the U.S., p. 31
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Dennis, p. 102
- 11 Ibid., p. 101
- 12 Congress of the U.S., p. 27-33
- 13 Dennis, p. 154
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Linus Pauling, NO MORE WAR! (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1983), p. 154
- 16 Dennis, p. 153
- 17 Congress of the U.S., pp. 124-138

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Effects_Of_Nuclear_Weapons_1999.txt

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What you have just read was written by yours truly in December of 1986
for people who have limited knowledge pertaining to nuclear weapons, etc.
To keep the feeling of the original script, I only made changes in
punctuation and added words in (). I apologize for some of them, it's
late and I am tired. I am sooner or later going to write another
"article" with newer data and maybe more info pertaining to blast effects,
radiation levels, current armament and strategies. I hope this will be
helpful. I will gladly accept any pros, cons or general howdies, etc.
from anyone who has read it. I'm Fred Witsl. Give a holler.

F.W.