

US Nuclear Weapons Capabilities and Purpose

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US Nuclear Policy

- * Only person who can order use of US nuclear weapons is the President of the United States.
- * Trump Administration undergoing Nuclear Posture Review, due late 2017 or 2018.
- * US forces are to deter attack on the United States or its Treaty allies in Europe and East Asia.
- * Current US policy is not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

US Nuclear Forces

Land-based Missiles	Submarine-launched Missiles	Strategic Bombers
400 missiles	14 boats, 248 missiles	60 bombers
400 warheads	1984 warheads	Undefined

- ❖ ICBMs can be launched with almost no notice, one submarine in Atlantic and Pacific at all times.
- ❖ New START agreement caps each side to 1550 weapons accountable.
- ❖ Tactical weapons not included, US has some – Russia has more.
- ❖ Total forces, including spares and extras just over 4,000.

Missions for US Nuclear Weapons

- * Broad mission is to deter use of nuclear weapons attack on us and our allies.
- * 2010 statement “United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.”
- * Long-standing goal to reduce role and number of nuclear weapons to a minimum.
- * Obama considered “Sole purpose” and came close.
- * Great difference from public and official views on nuclear weapons between US and France.

Targets for US Nuclear Forces

- * Three missions and target sets
 - * Deter (hold precious targets at risk).
 - * Reassure (ensure our allies don't need nuclear weapons, can rely on us). This is the main driver in numbers.
 - * Damage Limitation – if deterrence fails, be able to reduce the damage an attacked can inflict on US or its allies.

Future Policy Debates

- * Trump Administration review underway.
- * Less interested in connection between nuclear weapons and nonproliferation or disarmament.
- * Likely to propose development of new weapons and capabilities.
- * Will prioritize investments in nuclear systems, replacements of current forces – over \$1 Trillion over next 30 years.
- * Unknowns – commitment to zero, commitments not to target non-nuclear states, etc.

Future of Debate

- * Money will be a big factor, we cannot afford it all.
- * Public has little interest, knowledge to assess costs, benefits, strategy – an elite issue.
- * Democrats/Resistance focused on Trump judgment and stability – will be the lens through which they view nuclear weapons under Trump.