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Here's Every Nuclear Weapon in the US Arsenal

By Union of Concerned Scientists
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Union of Concerned Scientists

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There are enough nuclear weapons in the US arsenal to blow up the planet several times.

The explosive capacity (blast yield) of one W87 thermonuclear bomb is 300 kilotons of TNT, namely 20 times that of the "Little Bomb" (15 kilotons of TNT) dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, which resulted in the death of 100,000 people in a matter of seven seconds.

The World is at a critical crossroads. A nuclear war would be terminal. Why is it that there is no anti-war movement following Trump's statement to destroy North Korea?

A war against North Korea could escalate into a broader war involving Russia and China.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, September 27, 2017

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A nuclear weapon—the most destructive device on Earth. The US nuclear arsenal includes over 4,600 weapons.

These weapons are unlike any other.

Here's an average one, the W78. (image right) It causes a **mile-wide radioactive fireball** and can destroy most buildings—and humans—in a circle about 4 miles wide.

Hundreds can be launched within minutes.

About 400 nuclear-tipped missiles are stationed underground in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota. They're staffed 24/7 and kept on **hair-trigger alert**, ready to launch if and when they receive orders from the president.

Submarines carry hundreds more.

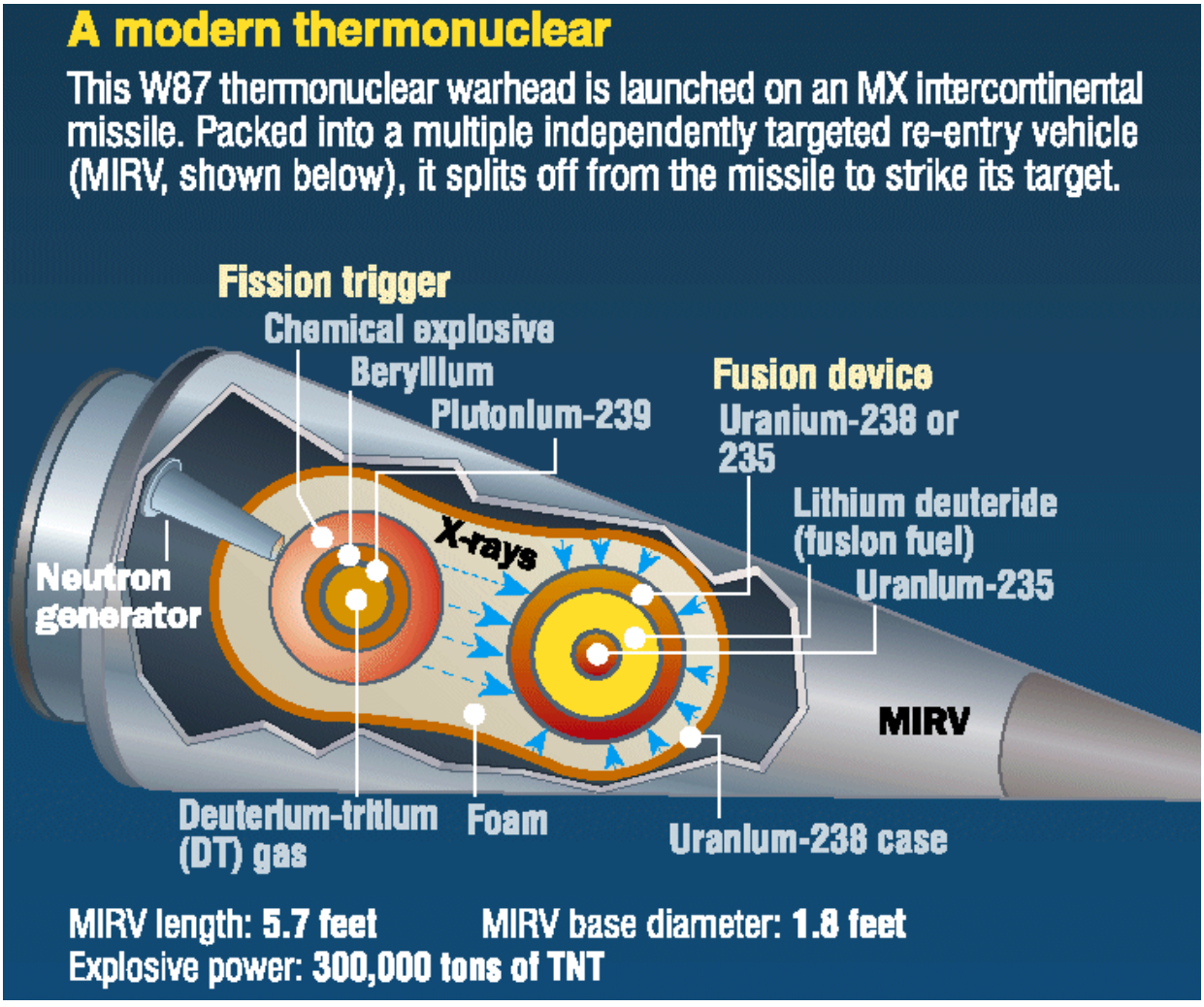
A single nuclear-armed submarine carries the TNT equivalent of roughly **seven** World War II's. About 10 such subs are at sea at any given time.

Aircraft are armed too.

About 300 bombs and air-launched cruise missiles are deployed on air bases in the United States. Another 150 bombs are in Europe. All are capable of smaller, lower-yield explosions, which may increase the risk that they'll actually be used.

The president can use them at any time.

As Commander in Chief, the president enjoys complete control over the US nuclear arsenal. No one in Congress, the judicial branch, or even the US military can legally prevent their use once the president's order is given.



More are in storage.

Thousands of backup weapons are kept in storage—the so-called nuclear hedge. In total, the US maintains about **4,600** nuclear warheads and bombs.

New weapons on the way.

The United States plans to spend a trillion dollars to rebuild essentially all of its nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Experts fear that the plan, which includes new designs and capabilities, will fuel tensions with Russia and China and ultimately undercut US security.

Concerned?

So are we. There are too many weapons, and our policies and plans around them—hair-trigger, presidential authority, the trillion dollar plan—are simply too risky.

US Nuclear Arsenal (as of January 2017)

Weapon Type	Yield	Number Deployed	Number in Storage	Total	Replacement Plans
ICBM warheads Intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs) are based in underground silos.					
W78	335	200	400		Slated to be replaced by the first Interoperable Warhead (IW-1), sometime after 2030.
W87	300	200	340	540*	Slated to be replaced by the IW-2, sometime after 2034.
Subtotal		400	740	1,140	
SLBM warheads Submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) have an intercontinental range.					
W76-0	100	0	385	385	Being replaced by the W76-1 warhead, under production now. Production is scheduled for completion in 2019
W76-1	100	506	709	1,215	Slated to be replaced by the IW-3, which is scheduled to start production in 2041.
W88	455	384	0	384	Currently undergoing an extensive "ALT" program to extend its lifetime. Half of the W88's are slated to be replaced by the IW-1, and half by the IW-2.
Subtotal		890	1,094	1,984	
Air-Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs)					
W80-1	5-150	200	328	528	Slated to be replaced by the W80-4, which will be deployed on a new ALCM--the long-range standoff cruise missile (LRSO).

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Strategic Bombs These would be delivered by long-range aircraft.					
B61-7	10-360	100	410	510	The B61-7 will be replaced by the B61-12 (which will consolidate the B61-3/-4/-7/-10 bombs). The B61-11 and B83 will be retired once the B61-12 is in service and the US has confidence in it (estimated mid- to late-2020s).
B61-11	400				
B83	Low to 1,200				
Tactical Bombs Tactical (or "theater) bombs are intended to be delivered by short-range aircraft. They are deployed in 5 countries in Europe: Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Turkey. The remainder are stored in the US.					
B61-3	0.3- 170	150	350	500	These three bombs are being consolidated to the B61-12.
B61-4	0.3-50				
B61-10	0.3-80				
Total		1740	2922	**4662**	

*The total number of W87's (540) differs from the total of 200 given in Table 1 in the article "United States nuclear forces, 2017" referenced in [1]. However, the authors note in footnote d of the table: "There are a total of 540 W87s in the stockpile. The 200 Mk21-equipped ICBMs can each carry one W87. The remaining 320 W87s are in storage." We use this information rather than that in the table.

Sources

1. United States nuclear forces, 2017, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 73:1, 48-57., Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, 2017

2. How U.S. Nuclear Force Modernization Is Undermining Strategic Stability: The Burst-Height Compensating Super-Fuze, Hans M. Kristensen, Matthew McKinzie, and Theodore A. Postol, 2017

3. Capabilities of B61-12 Nuclear Bomb Increase Further, Hans M. Kristensen, 2013