

The Nuclear Bunker Buster (flash animation): Simulation of Consequences of a Nuclear Bunker Buster Bomb Attack on Iran

By [Union of Concerned Scientists](#)
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Flash animation, click below

http://www.ucsus.org/global_security/nuclear_weapons/nuclear-bunker-buster-rnep-animation.html

please note: very slow download (But worth waiting for!)

Explanatory Note on the Simulation of the Consequences of a Nuclear Bunker Buster Bomb Attack on Iran

by Michel Chossudovsky

The statement of the Union of Concerned Scientists while acknowledging and illustrating the devastating impacts of a US attack, is nonetheless ambiguous.

According to the UCS, the threat of Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction, stockpiled in so-called bunkers is real. Implied in the video-montage is that Iran constitutes a WMD threat, when in fact there is no evidence to that effect.

The simulation in the Flash Animation pertains to a one megaton bunker buster thermonuclear bomb with an explosive capacity of 60 times a Hiroshima bomb.

Military documents distinguish between the NEP as in the case of the simulation, and the "mini-nuke" which are nuclear weapons with a yield of less than 10 kilotons (two thirds of a Hiroshima bomb). The NEP can have a yield of up to a 1000 kilotons, or 60 times a Hiroshima bomb.

In the showdown with Tehran over its alleged nuclear weapons program, the Pentagon is contemplating the launching of punitive bombings using "mini-nukes" or tactical thermonuclear weapons. While the "guidelines" do not exclude other (more deadly) categories of nukes in the US and/or Israeli nuclear arsenal, as envisaged in the simulation, Pentagon "scenarios" in the Middle East tend to favor the use of tactical nuclear weapons including the B61-11 bunker buster bomb with a yield of 10 kt.

This distinction between mini-nukes and larger NEPs is in many regard misleading. In practice there is no dividing line. We are broadly dealing with the same type of weaponry: the B61-11 has several “available yields”, ranging from “low yields” of less than one kiloton, to mid-range and up to the 1000 kiloton bomb. In all cases, the radioactive fallout is devastating. Moreover, the B61 series of thermonuclear weapons includes several models with distinct specifications: the B61-11, the B61-3, B61- 4, B61-7 and B61-10. Each of these bombs has several “available yields”.

What is contemplated for theater use is the “low yield” 10 kt bomb, two thirds of a Hiroshima bomb. The impacts in terms of deaths and radioactive fallout would be less dramatic than that contemplated in the simulation. It would nonetheless result in the deaths of tens of thousands of men, women and children

“The earth-penetrating capability of the B61-11 is fairly limited. ... Tests show it penetrates only 20 feet or so into dry earth when dropped from an altitude of 40,000 feet. ... Any attempt to use it in an urban environment would result in massive civilian casualties. Even at the low end of its 0.3-300 kiloton yield range, the nuclear blast will simply blow out a huge crater of radioactive material, creating a lethal gamma-radiation field over a large area “ ([Low-Yield Earth-Penetrating Nuclear Weapons by Robert W. Nelson, Federation of American Scientists, 2001](#)).

According to [GlobalSecurity.org](#) , the use of the B61-11 against North Korea would result in extensive radioactive fallout over nearby countries, thereby triggering a nuclear holocaust.

“... In tests the bomb penetrates only 20 feet into dry earth,... But even this shallow penetration before detonation allows a much higher proportion of the explosion to be transferred into ground shock relative to a surface burst. It is not able to counter targets deeply buried under granite rock. Moreover, it has a high yield, in the hundreds of kilotons. If used in North Korea, the radioactive fallout could drift over nearby countries such as Japan” (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/systems/b61.htm>)

If it were to be launched against Iran, it would result in radioactive contamination over a large part of the Middle East - Central Asian region, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, including US troops stationed in Iraq:

“The use of any nuclear weapon capable of destroying a buried target that is otherwise immune to conventional attack will necessarily produce enormous numbers of civilian casualties. No earth-burrowing missile can penetrate deep enough into the earth to contain an explosion with a nuclear yield [of a low yield B61-11] even as small as 1 percent of the 15 kiloton Hiroshima weapon. The explosion simply blows out a massive crater of radioactive dirt, which rains down on the local region with an especially intense and deadly fallout.”([Low-Yield Earth-Penetrating Nuclear Weapons, by Robert W. Nelson, op cit](#))

At present, the B61-11 is slated for use in war theaters together with conventional weapons. (Congressional Report“ [Bunker Busters”: Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator Issues](#) , Congressional Research Service March 2005). (Other versions of the B61, namely mod 3, 4, 7 and 10, which are part of the US arsenal, involve nuclear bunker buster bombs with a

lower yield to that of B61-11).

For further details, see

[The Dangers of a Middle East Nuclear War](#)

New Pentagon Doctrine: Mini-Nukes are “Safe for the Surrounding Civilian Population”
by *Michel Chossudovsky*

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