



NWIP FACT SHEET

The United States

Currently the US has 6,500 operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads and 1,120 non-strategic warheads. The weapons the US is currently removing from their arsenals under the SORT agreement are stored or moved to inactive capacity instead of being irreversibly dismantled. The US can therefore at anytime restore their nuclear might as it was during the height of the Cold War.

The US is currently modernizing its nuclear arsenals on several fronts. The intercontinental ballistic missile fleet, the guidance systems and its Trident submarine missiles are being replaced by a completely new generation of sea-based missiles. The US retains its sea-, air-, and land-based triad and in addition to the above the US is investing heavily in the development of new low-yield weapons called bunker busters and mini-nukes.

The US started the Manhattan Project in 1942 and had developed their first nuclear weapons in 1945. Shortly after they exploded two bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then the US has continued to build their nuclear arsenals, not only during the Cold War, but even today the US has aggressive plans for a continued nuclear policy to continue well into the 21st century.

A couple of things in the current US nuclear policies deserve special attention. In 2002 the US administration drafted the new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The NPR is a document prepared for the president regularly, but the 2002 NPR is famous for its new aggressive tone. It reaffirms that the US must rely on nuclear weapons as part of a strategy to ensure national security far into the 21st century and thereby is in breach with the Non-proliferation Treaty. The NPR advocates for renewed nuclear testings and development of small tactical nuclear weapons called bunker busters and mini-nukes, intended to respectively penetrate underground arsenals of WMD and be used in the battlefield. This will not only start a new arms race it also dangerously lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. Such weapons are not made as deterrents. They are made to be used!

The NPR also defines a number of so called Rogue States that should be targeted by US nuclear weapons. These include several non-nuclear weapon states and the US thereby acts against the negative security assurances of non-nuclear weapon states as defined in the NPT.

Finally the NPR recommends that the US should rely strongly on a so-called National Missile Defence System. Officially this system is intended as a defensive measure that should protect the US against attack with intercontinental ballistic missiles. But the system will also develop technologies that can be used for militarising outer space



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and the missile system can in principle be used as a political tool that will ensure national security despite aggressive US foreign policy. The Missile defence system not only increases the risk of militarization of space and will waste billions of dollars – it also seriously increases a risk for a new nuclear arms race and horizontal proliferation.

Finally a few words should be devoted to the new US policy of counter-proliferation. The US has accepted a certain degree of controlled proliferation, but also relies on a unilateral strategy of military attack on adversaries supposed to have programs for weapons of mass destruction. Most recently the US has deployed this policy in Iraq without the consent of the Security Council. Such unilateral actions damages international cooperation and international organs like the United Nations.

Unless the US dramatically changes its nuclear policies and starts living up to their obligations under the NPT and ratifies the CTBT the hopes for global disarmament are slim.

Key indicators of development

Life expectancy at birth: 76.9 years
Adult literacy rate: 99%
GDP per capita: 34,320\$
13.6 % of the population live on under 11\$ a day
Public health expenditure is 5.8 % of the GDP
Under-five mortality rate is 7 per 1000 live births

The US is a signatory to the NPT as one of the five official nuclear weapon states.

The US has signed the CTBT, but so far the Senate has not ratified it. Without US ratification of the Test Ban Treaty it will not enter-into-force