

Definitions of Nuclear Forces

References:

USIA : U.S. Information Agency – Arms Control and Disarmament – Glossary of Terms

USDOD : U.S. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms

CP&MT : NATO-Russia Glossary of Contemporary Political and Military Terms

<p>France</p>	<p>A strategic nuclear weapon is a weapon to whose use or threat of use only the highest authority of the State can resort, conceptually and structurally. The definition of the strategic nuclear weapon is fundamentally linked to France's doctrine of deterrence rather than to technical characteristics which, however important they may be, are merely consequences of that doctrine.</p>	
<p>Russian Federation</p>	<p>Non-strategic nuclear weapons Non-strategic nuclear weapons include all nuclear weapons which do not fall into the class of strategic nuclear weapons, that is, weapons with less than 5500 km ranges, to include Tactical and Operational nuclear weapons. (PJC Nuclear Experts, Oct 2000)</p> <p>Tactical nuclear weapons Tactical nuclear weapons are designed to engage objects in the tactical depth of enemy deployment (up to 300 km) to accomplish a tactical mission. Under certain conditions, tactical nuclear weapons may be involved in operational and strategic missions. (PJC Nuclear Experts, Oct 2000)</p> <p>Operational nuclear weapons Operational nuclear weapons are designed to engage objects in the operational depth of the enemy deployment (up to 500 km) with the purpose of accomplishing an operational mission. Under certain conditions operational nuclear weapons may be involved in the accomplishment of strategic missions and in exceptional cases, in the accomplishment of tactical missions. (PJC Nuclear Experts, Oct 2000)</p>	<p>Strategic nuclear weapons Strategic nuclear weapons are designed to engage objects in geographically remote strategic regions (over 5500 km) to accomplish strategic missions. In exceptional situations, strategic nuclear weapons may be used to accomplish operational missions. Strategic nuclear weapons are in service with the strategic nuclear forces. (PJC Nuclear Experts, Oct 2000)</p> <p>Strategic Missile Forces One of the services of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the mission of which is to deter possible aggression through the use of nuclear weapons or, in the event of such aggression to destroy, either alone or as part of the national strategic nuclear forces, the strategic installations that form the basis of the enemy's military and economic potential. In addition, the Strategic Missile Forces provide warning of ballistic missile attacks and maintain constant surveillance of space. They are charged with destroying enemy space installations and ballistic missiles and also give warning of foreign intelligence-gathering and other spacecraft. They support force groupings in the theatre at operational and tactical level. The essential characteristics of the Strategic Missile Forces are their enormous destructive capability, their high level of readiness and their extreme rapidity of action, combined with virtually unlimited range, high precision, the ability to prepare in secret, all-weather capability and a high degree of survivability. They consist of central military command and control organizations, major missile formations made up of missile divisions and regiments, tactical and major missile and space defence formations, as well as units and organizations responsible for launching and controlling spacecraft, agencies, production facilities, research organizations and military education establishments. (CP&MT)</p>

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<p>Russian Federation</p>		<p>Strategic forces That part of a nation's armed forces which carries out strategic missions in a war involving the use of nuclear weapons. Strategic forces are subdivided into offensive and defensive. The offensive strategic forces include units, tactical formations and major formations equipped with intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarines armed with ballistic missiles, as well as strategic air forces. The defensive strategic forces, which are responsible for aerospace defence, consist of strategic early-warning systems together with space and missile defence assets. (CP&MT)</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>Trident, the submarine-launched ballistic missile system, is the UK's only nuclear weapon system; it covers both strategic and sub-strategic requirements. Whilst Trident has a primarily strategic mission, a small number of UK Trident warheads will be assigned a sub-strategic role to retain the option for a limited strike that would not automatically lead to a full-scale nuclear exchange. (UK SDR, Jul 1998; Alliance Strategic Concept)</p>	
<p>United States</p>	<p>Non-strategic nuclear forces Those nuclear-capable forces located in an operational area with a capability to employ nuclear weapons by land, sea, or air forces against opposing forces, supporting installations, or facilities. Such forces may be employed, when authorized by competent authority, to support operations that contribute to the accomplishment of the commander's mission within the theatre of operations. (USDoD)</p> <p>Theater nuclear forces Nuclear forces designed for localized military missions. (USIA)</p>	<p>Strategic nuclear forces Land-based ballistic missiles with ranges over 5500 kilometres, modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers. (USIA)</p>

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NATO	<p>The terms "strategic" and "sub-strategic" have slightly different meanings in different countries. Strategic nuclear weapons are normally defined as weapons of "intercontinental" range (over 5500 kilometres), but in some contexts these may also include intermediate-range ballistic missiles of lower ranges. The term "sub-strategic nuclear forces/weapons" has been used in NATO documents since 1989 with reference to intermediate and short-range systems and now refers primarily to air-delivered weapons for NATO's dual-capable aircraft and to a small number of United Kingdom Trident warheads in a sub-strategic role. (Other sub-strategic nuclear weapons having been withdrawn from Europe.) (NATO Handbook/NPD)</p>	
	<p>Land-based nuclear weapons Nuclear surface-to-air missiles (air defence weapons for use against aircraft), nuclear land mines (also called atomic demolition weapons), nuclear artillery or tube-fired shells, and nuclear short-range missiles (up to 500 km range). Missiles with ranges from 500-5500 km are prohibited by the INF Treaty and were eliminated. (PJC Nuclear Experts, Oct 2000)</p>	<p>Strategic forces That part of a nation's armed forces which carries out strategic missions in a war involving the use of nuclear weapons. Strategic forces are subdivided into offensive and defensive. The offensive strategic forces include units, tactical formations and major formations equipped with intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarines armed with ballistic missiles, as well as strategic air forces. The defensive strategic forces, which are responsible for aerospace defence, consist of strategic early-warning systems together with space and missile defence assets. (CP&MT)</p>