Nuclear Deterrence,
Nuclear War Planning,
and Scenarios of Nuclear Conflict

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What Information is Public about Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear War Planning?

- Major themes: Nuclear War Planning; Nuclear Targeting; Command and Control of Nuclear Forces
- Country and Region-Specific Perspectives
- Three Basic Levels of Nuclear Targeting
- Important Outstanding Questions about Nuclear War: Prompt Launch; Delegation
Nuclear War Planning: United States

- Strategic War Plan: Operations Plan (OPLAN) 8010-12
- Replaced SIOP (after OPLAN 8044 transition plan)
- STRATCOM “is changing the nation’s nuclear war plan from a single, large, integrated plan to a family of plans applicable in a wider range of scenarios.”
- Provides “more flexible options to assure allies, and dissuade, deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries in a wider range of contingencies.”
- OPLAN 8010-12 is the nuclear employment portion (formerly SIOP) of OPLAN 8010 Base Plan, “a global deterrence plan” that represents “a significant step toward integrating deterrence activities across government agencies and with Allied partners.”
- Directed against six adversaries: Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and 9/11-type WMD scenario

- Includes four types of nuclear attack options:
  - Basic Attack Options (BAOs)
  - Selective Attack Options (SAOs)
  - Emergency Response Options (EROs)
  - Directed/Adaptive Planning Capability Options
- Strike options can range from one or a few to hundreds of warheads against:
  - Military forces (nuclear/conventional)
  - WMD infrastructure
  - Military and national leadership
  - War-supporting infrastructure
Nuclear War Planning: United States

- Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States
- Guidance is “consistent with the fundamentals of deterrence that have long guided U.S. nuclear weapons policy, but with appropriate changes to meet today’s strategic environment.”
- Determines that there are up to one-third more nuclear weapons deployed than needed to meet U.S. national and international commitments, but does not direct any changes to the currently deployed forces from the New START level
- Directs DOD to develop nuclear employment plans: update NUWEP (annex to GEF), JSCP-N, OPLAN-8010-12, regional plans (including in support of NATO)
- Requires United States to “maintain significant counterforce capabilities against potential adversaries.”
- Guidance “does not” rely on a ‘counter-value’ or ‘minimum-deterrence’ strategy.
- Rejects “sole purpose” role to deter only nuclear attack, but “reiterates intention to work towards that goal over time.”
- Rejects explicit targeting of civilians (i.e. city-busting)
- Directs DOD to “examine further options to reduce the role of Launch Under Attack in U.S. nuclear planning, while maintaining the capability to Launch Under Attack if directed.”
- Directs DOD to increase role of non-nuclear weapons
Nuclear War Planning: Russia

• Planning thought to be less counterforce focused and include more counter-value targets

• Military doctrine developments
  o 1993: Mainly deterrence of large-scale attacks but also removed no-first-use policy.
  o 2000: Noted decline in threat against Russia. Potential use of nuclear weapons “in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and (or) its allies, as well as in response to large-scale aggression utilizing conventional weapons in situations critical to the national security of the Russian Federation.”
  o 2010: Repeats declining threat but lists NATO military activities as problem for Russian security. Repeats potential use of nuclear weapons in response to use of nuclear weapons or other WMD against Russia or its allies, or in response to conventional aggression “in situations critical for the national security of Russia and its allies.” Rumors about preemptive use but not included in public version.
  o 2014: Update expected

Modernization trends:
  • Broad modernization of strategic Triad indicates continuation of current targeting policy
  • ICBM force level declining but with more of remaining warheads on mobile launchers
  • Increase in sea-based warheads
  • Some modernization of tactical weapons but overall decline

If we are fighting conventional weapons, then, as in time of peace, our task is strategic deterrence of the enemy. And if nuclear war breaks out, our main task is to carry out nuclear missile attack on pre-planned targets or those that will be re-scheduled.

SS-25 Division Commander Andrew Burbin, November 2014
Nuclear War Planning: Others

**Britain**: Minimum deterrence posture (Monad); targeting focused on counterforce against all forms of WMD; strategic deterrence and attack; status of sub-strategic mission previously described is unclear

**France**: Minimum deterrence posture (Dyad); targeting focused on counterforce against all forms of WMD; part of force modified against smaller scenarios

**China**: Long-held minimum deterrence posture (Triad); low numbers and low readiness (no alert); no-first-use policy and pledge not to attack non-nuclear countries

- Targeting strategy not based on counterforce but retaliatory “counter-attack” against cities and large military bases; mixing of nuclear and conventional forces raises crisis stability issues
- Issues: Modernization with solid-fuel road-mobile missiles; widespread (but not official) debate about conditions for no-first-use policy; emergence of SSBN force (role unclear); growing stockpile

**Pakistan**: Minimum deterrence posture (no alert) but growing force (Dyad); development of cruise missiles and short-range tactical weapons; focused on targeting Indian cities and large conventional military formations

**India**: Minimum deterrence posture (no alert) but growing force (Triad); no-first-use policy but retaliation against all WMD attacks; growing focus on targeting China (in addition to Pakistan); development of SSBN force and possible cruise missile

**Israel**: Minimum deterrence posture (no alert); rumors about nuclear cruise missile for submarines; targeting potentially focused on cities and large military facilities

**North Korea**: Ambiguous posture in development; nuclear tests but militarization of warheads unclear; targets of theatrical threats made in 2013 included cities
Three Basic Levels of Nuclear Targeting and Nuclear Conflict:

Level 1. Countries target each other’s non-strategic targets with nuclear weapons – for example: troop formations, military garrisons, conventional missile and air bases, conventional naval bases, missile defense systems, nuclear weapons production facilities or tactical nuclear weapons sites: escalation; potential for fallout on population centers.

Level 2. Countries target each other’s strategic nuclear weapons deterrent, including command, control and communications targets: severe escalation, targets in cities.

Level 3. Countries target each others cities directly.
Nuclear Targeting Level 1: Non-Strategic Targets
Nuclear Targeting Level 2: Strategic Targets
Nuclear Targeting Level 2: Strategic Targets

Fallout TEDE (48 Hour Exposure)
- Yellow: 5 - 25 cGy
- Orange: 25 - 100 cGy
- Red: 100 - 250 cGy
- Purple: 250 - 500 cGy
- Dark Red: 500 - 1,000 cGy
- Maroon: > 1,000 cGy

VIENNA CONFERENCE ON THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
8-9 DEC. 2014
Nuclear Targeting Level 3: Cities

Percentage of Population Killed and Injured as a Function of Peak Overpressure
Nuclear Targeting Level 3: Cities
Important Outstanding Questions about Nuclear War: Nuclear Force Modernization; Prompt Launch; and Delegation