

The Chart Page

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Characteristics for Nuclear Weapon Systems, Circa 2006

Key:

MM: Minuteman ICBM
SICBM: Small ICBM
ALCM: Air-launched cruise missile
SLCM: Sea-launched cruise missile
SRAM: Short-range attack missile
ACM: Advanced cruise missile
SS: US designation for Soviet ICBM
SS-N: US designation for Soviet SLBM
n.a.: Not applicable

Uncertainty about the capabilities of strategic weapons has long sparked heated debate. Breakup of the USSR puts the debate in a drastically new light, but many current weapon types probably will be deployed for years. The Congressional Budget Office recently estimated the capabilities of major systems fifteen years hence. The CBO report assumes that by 2006, SS-N-20 and SS-N-23 warhead yields could increase to 200 kilotons from current estimated values of 100 kilotons. Single-warhead kill probability incorporates net reliability plus accuracy plus yield.

Weapon	Throw-weight (kilograms)	Yield per warhead (kilotons)	Circular error probable (meters)	Single-warhead kill probability	No fratricide	Two-warhead kill probability	Fratricide
US WEAPONS	MM III	1,100	170	200	.26	.45	.31
	MM IIIA	1,100	335	200	.36	.59	.43
	Peacekeeper	3,600	300	100	.76	.94	.87
	SICBM	600	500	150	.65	.88	.74
	D5/Mark 5	2,400	475	150	.59	.83	.71
	D5/Mark 4	2,400	100	150	.31	.52	.36
	C4	1,400	100	300	.09	.17	.11
	ALCM	n.a.	200	100	.69	.90	.79
	SLCM	n.a.	200	100	.69	.90	.79
	SRAM	n.a.	200	350	.11	.21	.13
	ACM	n.a.	200	100	.69	.90	.79
	SRAM II	n.a.	200	100	.69	.90	.79
	Bomb	n.a.	1,000	150	.81	.96	.88
SOVIET WEAPONS	SS-24	3,600	100	150	.50	.75	.58
	SS-25	1,400	550	150	.80	.96	.91
	SS-18	7,600	500	150	.79	.95	.90
	SS-19	3,400	550	150	.75	.94	.90
	SS-17	2,700	500	150	.74	.93	.89
	SS-N-20	1,800	200	350	.18	.33	.22
	SS-N-23	1,800	200	350	.18	.33	.22
SS-N-18	1,100	200	350	.17	.31	.21	

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Start Treaty and Beyond*, October 1991.