**Tactical nuclear weapons**

Tactical or non-strategic nuclear weapons are "small" nuclear weapons regarded to be more "useable" in combat. During the cold war, the US stationed hundreds of these tactical nukes in Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nuclear umbrella sharing policy. There are at least about seven different factors are used by different authorities to define a tactical weapon: range, yield, intended target, national ownership, capability, delivery vehicle, or exclusion.

The United States now has approximately 1,100 non-strategic nuclear weapons, with a few hundred deployed with aircraft in Europe and the remaining stored in the United States. Estimates vary, but experts believe Russia still has between 2,000 and 6,000 warheads for non-strategic nuclear weapons in its arsenal. These weapons are outside of the agreements between the United States and Russia on the limits for nuclear weapons or reduction and verification measures.

US and NATO aircrafts regularly conduct nuclear strike exercises where they practice loading and delivering the weapons. The nuclear exercises include practicing "generation" of aircraft, during which the aircraft simulate taking off in strike formation with air-defense aircraft and conduct a simulated strike at a bombing range.

However, there is discussion within NATO about changing the role of nuclear weapons in its security defence doctrines and strategy. A majority of NATO countries do not explicitly want to keep US nuclear weapons in Europe. Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Poland have proposed a series of steps that NATO and Russia should take to increase transparency of US and Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Luxemburg, and Slovenia also supported the paper.

**Materials and resources**

- *Exit Strategies: The case for redefining NATO consensus on U.S. TNW*, IKV Pax Christi, April 2012
- *Federation of American Scientists Strategic Security Blog*

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