



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**STUDIES**

## **The Future of America's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent**

December 5, 2013 | **Evan B. Montgomery**

Resources: Forces & Capabilities

*Although nuclear weapons have played a critical role in American defense strategy for more than 60 years, there is a growing debate over the number and type of nuclear forces that the United States actually needs to maintain its security and protect its allies. Over the past several years, calls for Washington to substantially reduce the size of its nuclear arsenal have become more prevalent, while the combination of declining budgets and looming recapitalization costs have made nuclear weapons a popular target for potential funding cuts.*

This report addresses the following issues: Can the United States implement deep reductions in strategic nuclear weapons and still deter rivals, dissuade competitors, and discourage proliferation? Should it retain the strategic triad of bombers, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, and nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines? Finally, must it replace its aging nuclear forces?