

A Nuclear Weapons Chronology

- 1939 - Albert Einstein writes President Franklin D. Roosevelt to warn him about the possibility of a German atomic bomb and to urge the U.S. to develop such a weapon. World War II begins in Europe.
- 1941 - Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, and the U.S. enters World War II.
- 1942 - The U.S. establishes the Manhattan Project to develop an atomic bomb.
- 1945 - A U.S. plane drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6. Three days later a second bomb is dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrenders and World War II ends.
- 1946 - The cold war begins between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- 1949 - The Soviet Union tests an atomic bomb.
- 1952 - The United States tests the first hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb.
- 1953 - The Soviet Union tests a hydrogen bomb.
- 1957 - The Soviet Union develops the first intercontinental ballistic missile.
- 1958 - The United States develops an ICBM.
- 1963 - The United States and the Soviet Union agree to a Limited Test Ban Treaty that halts testing by them of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space, or underwater. Underground testing continues.
- 1972 - The United States and the Soviet Union agree to the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty which, for the first time, establishes limits on the number of missiles each side can have.
- 1991 - The Soviet Union collapses. Russia emerges as the largest of the newly independent republics and possesses most of the nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union.
- 1994 - The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty forbidding any nuclear weapons testing is agreed to by 149 nations. Neither the Russian Duma nor the Senate of the U.S. has ratified the treaty.
- 1996 - The UN General Assembly approves a resolution to work for an agreement to forbid the further development of nuclear weapons and to eliminate those that exist.