

Pakistan's Nuclear Forces

Pakistan tested its first nuclear weapon in 1998, becoming the world's 7th state to test a nuclear weapon. The exact yields of the weapons in the country's arsenal are not known, but general estimates are between [5-12kt](#). Pakistan has not declared a strategic nuclear policy, but appears to maintain "[minimum credible deterrence](#)" against India's nuclear and superior conventional forces. Pakistan has adopted a position of 'no first use' against non-nuclear weapon states.

How Many?

Pakistan is believed to have a stockpile of approximately [140](#) warheads, making it the 6th largest nuclear arsenal. Pakistan is still developing nuclear weapons, and [experts project](#) that it will have the 5th largest arsenal by 2025 with [220-250 warheads](#).

Pakistan has been working towards a sea-based deterrent, and announced that it had [successfully launched](#) a nuclear-capable submarine-launched cruise missile from a submerged platform in January 2017. Once this missile is fully developed and tested on-board a submarine, Pakistan will have a [nuclear triad](#).

Air

The [F-16 combat](#) aircraft along with some [Mirage III and V](#) aircraft are believed to be dual-capable (capable of both conventional and nuclear strikes) and constitute the air component of Pakistan's nuclear force. Pakistan has [approximately](#) 36 warheads for the nuclear air branch. The F-16 A/B has about 24 launchers and a range of 1,600 km while the Mirage III/V has approximately 12 launchers and a range of 2,100km. A new highly accurate air-launched cruise missile, the [Ra'ad](#), has a range of 350+ km.

Sea

In January of 2017 Pakistan tested for the first time the [Babur-3](#), the sea-launched version of the ground-launched nuclear-capable Babur-2. Because the test launch took place on a submerged platform, not a submarine, Pakistan is not yet considered to have a sea-based deterrent.

Ground

Pakistan's nuclear force consists of short to medium-range cruise and ballistic missiles. The ground arsenal contains about [92 land-based missiles](#) with yields of 5-12kt. Pakistan is in possession of several nuclear-capable [road-mobile](#) ballistic missiles, including the short-range Babur, Ghaznavi, Shaheen-1 and NASR and medium-range Shaheen-2 and Ghauri. Pakistan has [6 operational nuclear-capable ballistic missiles](#). The Shaheen III and Shaheen IA are under development with [ranges](#) of 2,750km and 900km respectively.

Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons has been criticized as destabilizing for severely lowering the nuclear-use threshold. Pakistan has developed the NASR cruise missile, which, with a range of just 60km, cannot hit strategic targets in India. The new weapon has been tested using a road-mobile launcher and is thought to have been created for combating conventional Indian forces.

Sources: Federation of American Scientists, Congressional Research Service, UK House of Commons Library, Reuters, and The Diplomat.