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Trident E-6

Country: United States of America

Class: SLBM

Basing: Submarine Launched

Status: Development

In Service: Exp. 2030

Details

The Trident E-6 is the next-generation US Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM). It will be an intercontinental-range, solid propellant ballistic missile. It will likely replace the current **Trident D-5** missile deployed in the modern US missile submarines and take a form generally similar to the previous Trident designs. It is planned to be placed on the next generation missile submarines though it is possible it will also be put in converted Trident E-6 tubes. As it is not planned to enter service for several decades, the program is entirely theoretical and no details have been released.

The Trident E-6 will be a strategic asset. Without knowledge of future technological advances, it is difficult to know the capabilities and design of the missile, so the nature of the system can only be estimated. The use of Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRV) systems will allow only a handful of missiles launched from a single secured submarine to cripple hostile nations. The range on the missile will likely be such that it will be able to strike all major strategic targets from international or US waters, allowing the submarines to be militarily secured while remaining within range. Placed on submarines, which are naturally stealthy and difficult to destroy, only a single submarine needs to survive in order to maintain a powerful retaliatory force. Modern accuracy systems provide sufficient accuracy to easily destroy hardened silos; time will likely increase this capability. A launch from near the coast will minimize the warning time and the effectiveness of missile defense systems, greatly increasing the probability of a successful first strike. However, unless technology also allows for the detection of road mobile systems and missile submarines, such an attack would be doomed to fail. In this way, it will probably remain targeted at civilian population centers and major strategic military targets. For political reasons, the number of warheads will probably be lower than fully capable.

The Trident E-6 has yet to enter full-scale development, so no details are known. As the military changes in both the missile and the submarine are unknown, the missile may or may not be similar to the Trident D-5. The E-6 will probably be similar to the D-5 which is 13.42 m in length, 2.11 m in width and with a launch weight of 59,090 kg. It will likely use a highly advanced inertial navigation system coupled with some form of terminal guidance, giving it an extremely high accuracy of 50

m CEP or better. It will probably carry eight MIRV warheads to abide by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), though it could potentially carry far more, depending on advances in nuclear miniaturization technology. The MIRV warheads will probably have a yield of 100 KT, in keeping with current nuclear doctrine.

The Trident E-6 is still a theoretical design. It is planned to replace the **Trident C-4** and D-5 in 2030. It will likely be placed onboard the next generation missile submarines.

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