

‘WE HAVE TO DESTROY THEM’ How the US hatched a secret plot to nuke Russia and China into oblivion at the height of the Cold War

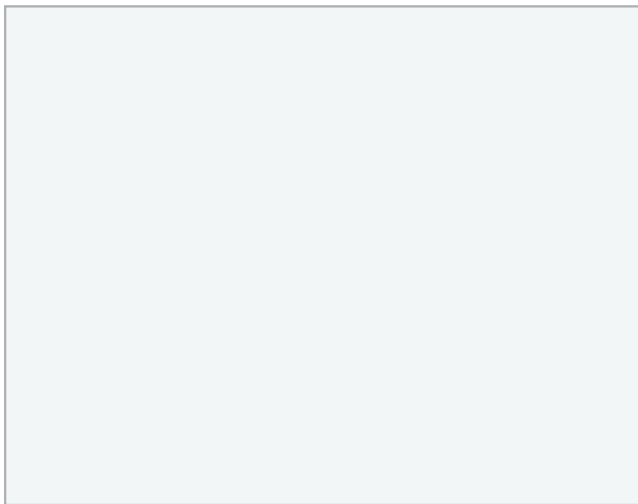
Terrifying newly declassified documents detail the Pentagon's plan in 1964 to wipe the Soviet Union and China as 'viable societies'

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THE US devised a Cold War plan to devastate Russia and China with an apocalyptic nuclear attack which would have “destroyed them as viable societies.”

Newly [declassified documents](#), published by George Washington University’s National Security Archive project, detail the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) devised by the Pentagon in 1964.



The US drew up a plan in the Cold War to destroy Russia and China with nuclear attacks

Credit: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

The strategy involved the US blasting the Soviet Union's urban areas and targeting its industrial centres.

According to the documents, America would also nuke 30 major Chinese cities killing 30 per cent of its urban population.

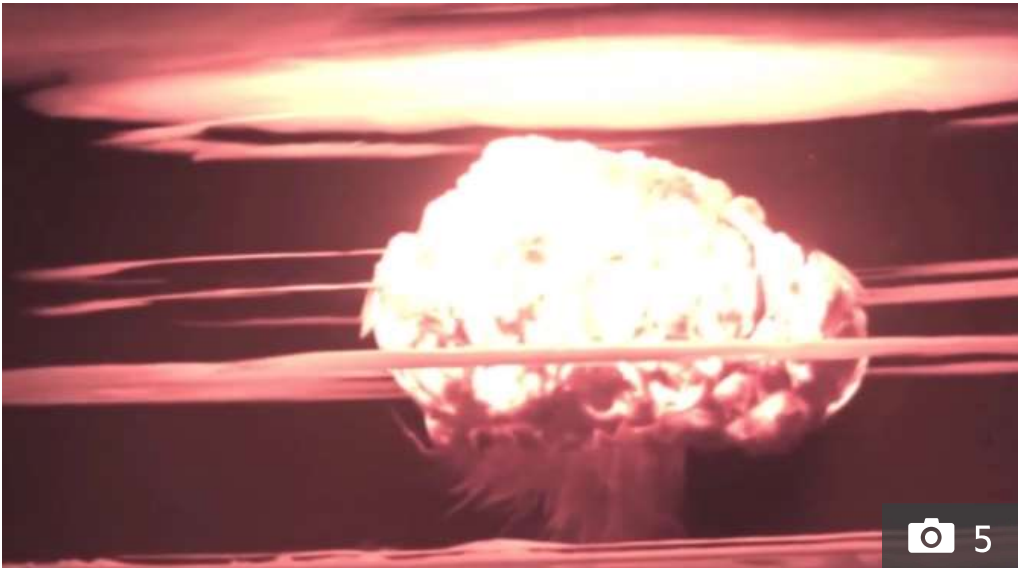
The aim of the horrific assault would be “to destroy the USSR and China as viable societies.”

Devised two years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the plans also suggested that the US use the “population loss as the primary yardstick for effectiveness in destroying the enemy society with only collateral attention to industrial damage.”



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In the documents, the Pentagon plotted to blast the Soviet Union's urban and industrial areas Credit: Getty - Contributor



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The plan aimed to wipe out the two countries' urban populations Credit: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory



While estimated casualties from such an attack were not specified, a 1961 estimate suggested that the SLOP could wipe out 71 per cent of Russia's urban population while killing 53 per cent of city dwellers in China.

A 1962 estimate said "no-warning US strike" on military and urban-industrial targets could kill 70 million people in the Soviet Union.

The disturbing documents shows how paranoid Washington was during the Cold War when America and Russia amassed tens of thousands of war heads between them.

In 1962, [the Cuban Missile Crisis](#) brought the world just seconds away from a nuclear midnight.



A 1961 estimate suggested that the US could kill 70 per cent of



The same report estimated that Washington could kill 53 per cent of people living in Chinese cities Credit: Alamy

On October 27, American destroyer USS Beale was paroling the US blockade around Cuba.

The ship clocked a Soviet B-59 nuclear submarine lurking beneath the blockade, and dropped a series of unarmed depth charges as warning shots to the Soviet sub.

But the submarine captain failed to realise the charges were non-lethal, and ordered the ship's nuclear-tipped torpedo to be prepared for launch.

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The mistake would have started World War Three, if only the submarine's launch protocol didn't need all commanding officers on-board the sub to sign off on it.

Vasili Arkhipov, B-59's second in command, refused to agree to the strike and eventually talked his captain down.

Without Arkhipov's cool head on-board the sub, the strike would have escalated the Cold War to a full-blown nuclear showdown.



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