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History of Nuclear Weapons Design and Production¹

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The nuclear build-up of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War is often portrayed as an arms race. Some part was indeed a bilateral competition, but much was the result of automatic application of technical advances as they became available, without careful consideration of strategic implications. Thus, the history of nuclear weapon design is partly designers responding to stated military needs and partly the world responding to constant innovations in nuclear capability. Today, plans for a new nuclear warhead are motivated primarily by the desire to maintain a nuclear design and production capability for the foreseeable future.

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