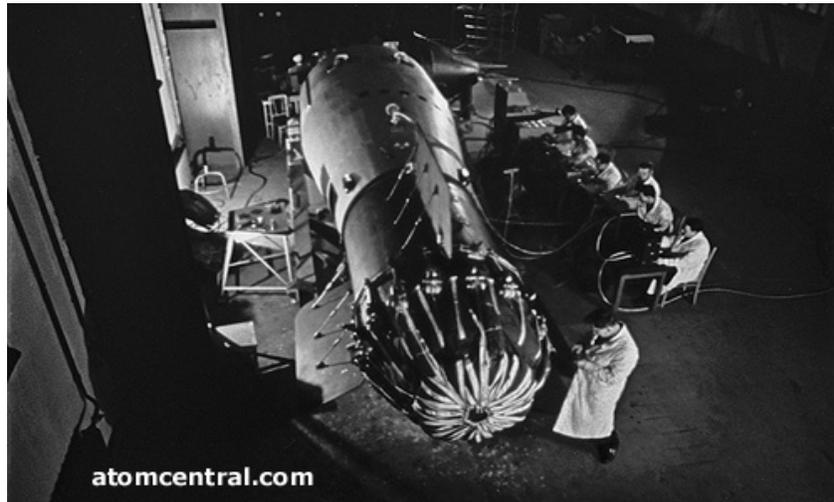


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Tsar Bomba - King of the bombs



On October 23, 1961, Soviet pilot A. E. Durnovtsev guides his Tu-95 Bomber towards the Arctic Sea above Novaya Zemlya Island. This day will make atomic history, not as an advancement in nuclear science, but rather as a statement of intimidation by the Soviet Union to the United States in those tense days now known as [The Cold War](#).

The bomber is carrying a secret cargo that will soon make the world take notice of Russia as a serious nuclear threat to the survival of mankind. For on this day a nuclear weapon rides into history as the largest thermonuclear bomb ever constructed and detonated named, "Tsar Bomba...King of the Bombs."

The events of the [Cold War](#) leading up to Tsar puts a strain on world peace as the U.S. and Soviet Union play a deadly game of military and political "cat and mouse".

- Jan. 1960 - Khrushchev's speech at the United Nations for support of "wars of national liberation" is viewed as Communist intervention into third world countries.
- Jan. 1961 - JFK's in his inauguration speech responds to Khrushchev's speech stating, "...oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty".
- April 1961 - CIA-backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs fails making the United States appear weak in military strength.



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On July 10, 1961 Nikita Khrushchev meets with Sakharov, then the senior weapon designer, and directs him to develop a 100 megaton bomb. This device had to be ready for a test series due to begin in September so that the series would create maximum political impact.

- Aug 1961 - The Berlin Wall is erected by the Soviets dividing Berlin into two separate cities: East Berlin (communist) and West Berlin (democratic).
- Sept 1961 - President Kennedy's letter in the Sept issue of LIFE advises Americans to build fallout shelters. For an entire year the American public is obsessed with "fallout shelter mania".

Tsar is developed in a remarkably short time, just fourteen weeks after the initiation of its design. It weights in at 27 metric tons!

A scaled down version of the original is produced by replacing the uranium fusion tamper (which amplifies the reaction) with one made of lead to eliminate fast fission by the fusion neutrons, hence reducing the power of the original version. A 50 megaton bomb was now ready to be detonated.

The [test method](#) for Tsar is to be a Parachute Retarded Airburst dropped from a bomber at 4000 meter altitude.

October 23, 1961 the Soviet Union unexpectedly explodes Tsar. The impact of a 100 meg ton atomic bomb startles the world because Khrushchev had assured President Kennedy in June 1961 that the Soviet Union wouldn't test nuclear devices if the United States didn't.

Some interesting facts resulting Tsar:

- 1/ A bomb this size is virtually useless militarily. The efficient method to destroy a city is with many smaller bombs rather than one huge bomb.
- 2/ If detonated at full scale the yield of 100 megatons (100Mt--equal to one hundred million tons of TNT). The explosive force of this bomb would have been approximately 6,500 times the 15-16 kiloton bomb detonated at Hiroshima. It would have increased the world's total fission fallout since the invention of the atomic bomb by 25%.
- 3/ The fabrication of the massive parachute disrupted the Soviet nylon hosiery industry. Commerical impact unknown.
- 4/ Bomber pilot A. E. Durnovtsev was made Hero of the Soviet Union.

Tsar was not the "end to all" in the days of the [Cold War](#). It proved that the delivery of nuclear weapons by long range aircraft was ineffient in time war. An immediate response to nuclear attack was needed, something that was fast, reliable and cost effective to maintain. The resulting solution was the creation of new nuclear weapons of war...the [intercontinental ballistic missile \(ICBM\)](#).

Exactly one year from the Tsar's detonation in October 1961 to October 1962 the United States is on the brink of nuclear war as the [Cuban Missile Crisis](#) marks another chapter in atomic history.

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