

# Nuclear Secrets, The B-2 Bomber & The End of The Cold War



Above: A picture of the Lafayette Class USS Sam Rayburn with all of its hatches open. Decommissioned in 1989, it had a capacity of 16 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and 21 torpedoes.

Right: An image of a B-2 Stealth Bomber in flight. The airplane was made by Northrop (later Northrop Grumman) and its 13 general purpose computers were designed by Sperry Univac. Production began around 1990, during a period of rapid change in the computing industry.



The B-2 project began under President Carter, but it was during the Reagan administration when the project finally got underway. As the Cold War was winding down, Congress reduced the original plan to build 132 bombers down to 21. While the bombers were initially intended to carry nuclear weapons, they began to be used for other purposes after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1999 they saw service in Kosovo, and more recently, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Below: An image of a B-2 Bomber taking off. The aircraft has a crew of two and can carry up to 16 2,400 lb nuclear bombs. It can fly at 50,000 feet and has a range of over 6,000 miles on one tank of fuel.



Many of UNIVAC's and its successor companies' products were part of U.S. Government efforts during the Cold War to stay ahead of the Russians. Many submarines, missiles, and other projects were part of the U.S. strategy to maintain military superiority. As such, these projects were top secret.

One such project was the B-2 Stealth Bomber. Sworn to secrecy, the now Unisys engineers working on the project were forbidden from talking about the project to anyone, even their families. The aircraft's Unisys designed computers were "nuclear hardened" – capable of withstanding radiation from a nearby detonation.

*About 20 engineers each individually knew their part of the design, but no one individual knew it all.*

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