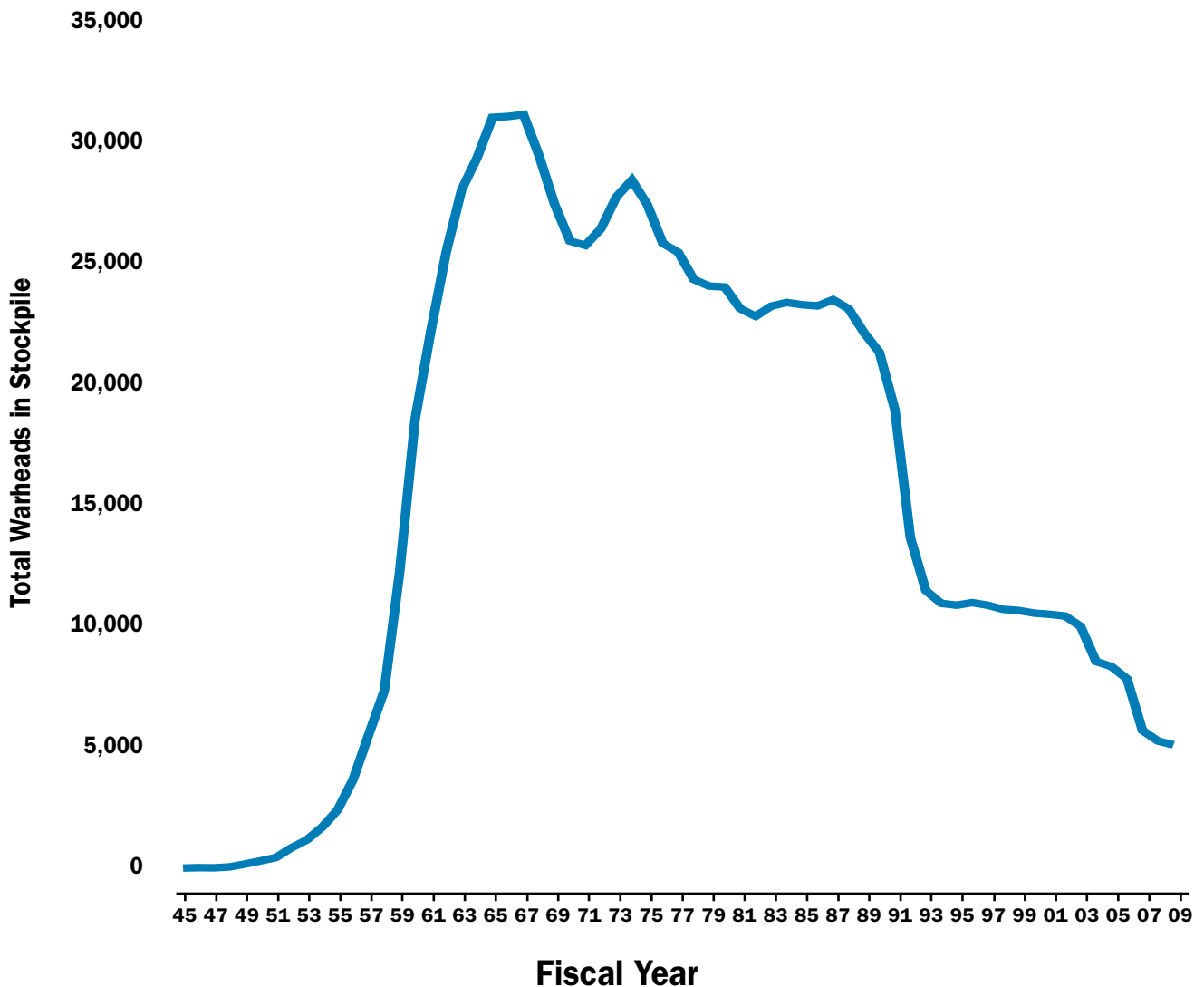


Atomic Boom and Bust

President Obama in May declassified some deep nuclear secrets. As a result, we now know that, on the last day of Fiscal 2009, the US nuclear stockpile had 5,113 warheads—deployed and nondeployed, strategic and nonstrategic. We also know the stockpile has seen a huge, decades-long decline. The warhead count peaked in 1967 at 31,255, meaning that the arsenal has undergone an 84 percent reduction, most of it in the past 25 years.

The last time the US released stockpile data was in late 1993; 1961 was the most recent year for which information was given. Never before has the government disclosed current figures. Obama officials said they did so in the hope that the US example would encourage other nations—in particular China and Russia—to be more forthcoming about their own arsenals. So far, the only taker has been Britain, which revealed on May 26 that its arsenal contains 225 nuclear warheads.

US Nuclear Weapons Stockpile, 1945-2009



Source: Data for years 1945-61 from "Summary of Declassified Nuclear Stockpile Information," Department of Energy, December 1993. Data for years 1962-2009 from "Fact Sheet: Increasing Transparency in the US Nuclear Weapons Stockpile," Department of Defense, May 2010.