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As the NonProliferation Treaty's 50th Anniversary Approaches U.S. to Soon Fund New Nuclear Warhead at \$1 Billion Per Year

Santa Fe, NM – This March 5, 2020, marks the 50th anniversary of the NonProliferation Treaty, whose central bargain was that non-nuclear weapons states forswore acquiring them in exchange for which nuclear weapons states promised to enter into serious negotiations leading to their elimination. Those negotiations have never happened.

The Trump Administration has marked the occasion by finally releasing the detailed fiscal year 2021 Congressional Budget Request for the Department of Energy's semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The NNSA's program for new and upgraded nuclear weapons gets a 3 billion dollar-plus mark up to \$15.6 billion, slated to jump to \$17 billion annually by 2025. This includes a new nuclear warhead, the submarine launched W93, initially funded at \$53 million in FY 2021, but slated to climb to \$1.1 billion annually by 2025. New warhead design and production typically take around 15 years or more.

In contrast, funding for dismantlement programs that eliminate nuclear weapons stays flat at \$50 to \$53 million annually for the next five fiscal years, a mere 3% of NNSA's proposed nuclear weapons budget. Some 2,500 retired nuclear weapons are estimated to be awaiting dismantlement, which would lower long term security risks and costs. Instead, the facilities used for dismantlements are too busy with "Life Extension Programs" that rebuild existing nuclear weapons, extending their service lives by at least 30 years while giving them new military capabilities.

NNSA's proposed massive investment in the new W93 may be particularly ironic given that its design appears to be based on an earlier "Interoperable Warhead" that the Navy did not support. To add to this, the Navy's W76 warhead has just completed a major Life Extension Program, including an arguably destabilizing low-yield variant (the "W76-2"). Moreover, the Navy's other ballistic missile warhead, the ~450 kiloton W88, is about to enter a ~\$3 billion "Alteration" that would refresh its initiating conventional high explosives and install a new arming, fuzing and firing set that will likely dramatically improve targeting accuracy, making it an even more fearsome nuclear weapon. Thus, it's not clear that the Navy would want and actually deploy NNSA's proposed W93.

Some other selected highlights of NNSA's FY 2021 Congressional Budget Request:

- The B61 Life Extension Program, which will create the world's first nuclear "smart" bomb, is funded at \$815.7 million, \$23 million above FY 2020. NNSA plans to spend \$2.2 billion on the B61 LEP over the next four fiscal years after FY 2021.

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- The W80-4 Life Extension Program for a new nuclear warhead for a new stealthy cruise missile (a perfect first-strike weapon) is funded at \$1 billion, \$101.8 million above FY 2020. NNSA plans to spend more than \$4 billion on the W80-4 LEP over the next four fiscal years after FY 2021.
- The W87-1 Modification Program for a new intercontinental ballistic missile warhead is funded at \$541 million, \$429 million above FY 2020. NNSA plans to spend more than \$3 billion on the W87-1 Modification Program over the next four fiscal years after FY 2021. However, this does not include the immense costs of production of new plutonium pit bomb cores for the W87-1.
- To upgrade the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL's) plutonium facilities for expanded plutonium pit production for the W87-1, "The FY 2021 Request for LAP4 [LANL's Plutonium Pit Production Project] is \$226,000,000. Out year funding amounts may be revised in future budget requests as NNSA baselines the project..." Separately, the Los Alamos Lab is funded \$610 million in FY 2021 for "Plutonium Operations" that include overseeing the establishment of redundant plutonium pit production at NNSA's Savannah River Site in South Carolina.
- "The FY 2021 Request for Savannah River Plutonium Modernization and Pit Production is \$441,896,000 of which \$351,896,000 is for line item construction and \$90,000,000 is for Plutonium Modernization work to support the production of 50 pits per year at Savannah River... Out-year funding amounts will be developed and refined in future budget requests..."

In other words, NNSA is still not disclosing the full scope and costs of expanded plutonium pit production at the Los Alamos Lab and the Savannah River Site even as it asks Congress for a near tripling of funding for "Plutonium Modernization" to \$1.4 billion in FY 2021. NNSA expects to spend \$7.9 billion on Plutonium Modernization over the next four fiscal years after FY 2021.

- "The stockpile is inherently moving away from the nuclear explosive test database through aggregate influences of aging, modern manufacturing techniques, modern materials, and **evolving design philosophies.**" (Bolded emphasis added.) This illustrates the danger of pursuing increasingly aggressive Life Extension Programs that are now morphing into completely new nuclear weapons designs, instead of conservatively maintaining tried and true, extensively tested nuclear weapons designs. In time, this could also prompt the US to resume nuclear weapons testing, which would have severe international proliferation consequences.

The future of the NonProliferation Treaty (NPT), regarded as the cornerstone of international nonproliferation, looks bleak given the aggressive "modernization" programs of the U.S. and other established nuclear weapons states. This is further compounded by the Trump Administration's disdain for arms control treaties. All of this is giving rise to a growing nuclear arms race.

Jay Coghlan, Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, will be attending the first week of the NonProliferation Treaty's (NPT's) Review Conference at the United Nations in late

April. He commented, “You can’t preach temperance from a bar stool, you can’t tell others to not have nuclear weapons when you’re busy “modernizing” your own. The NonProliferation Treaty could well fall apart at the Review Conference, which would spell a whole lot of trouble for the rest of the world. You got to practice what you preach, and Trump’s nuclear weapons budget is a big step backwards from reducing the global nuclear threat.”

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The National Nuclear Security Administration’s FY 2021 Congressional Budget Request is available at <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/02/f72/doe-fy2021-budget-volume-1.pdf>

For reference’s sake, budget data and quotes in the above are sequentially from NNSA’s FY 2021 budget request, pages 102, 105, 193, 199, 99, 106, and 236.