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## **A Preview of Trump's Budget: More Nuclear Bombs and Plutonium Pit Production**

***Santa Fe, NM*** - The nonprofit organization Third Way is claiming that it has received a leaked version of Trump's FY 2018 budget that is scheduled to be released this coming Tuesday. Assuming this leak is accurate, the proposed level of funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA)'s Total Weapons Activities is \$10.2 billion, a full billion above what was requested for FY 2017 (and presumably granted in the FY 2017 omnibus appropriations, for which details are not yet available).

Trump's "skinny budget" entitled "America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again", released on March 16, stated that it would increase funding for "the goals of moving toward a responsive nuclear infrastructure and advancing the existing program of record for warhead life extension programs." This is where the one billion increase will be largely, if not entirely, directed.

Concerning Life Extension Programs, rather than merely maintaining and extending the lives of existing nuclear weapons as advertised, they are being given new military capabilities, despite denials at the highest levels of government. A current example is the B61-12 Life Extension Program, which is transforming a "dumb" nuclear bomb into the world's first highly accurate "smart" nuclear bomb.

With respect to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), "responsive infrastructure" no doubt means accelerating upgrades to existing plutonium facilities and likely building two or three new underground "modules", all for the purpose of quadrupling plutonium pit production from 20 to 80 pits per year. (Plutonium pits are the fissile cores of nuclear weapons.)

Expanded plutonium pit production is planned despite the facts that:

- 1) The existing stockpile does not need pit production, and none is scheduled;
- 2) Nuclear criticality safety concerns are not fully resolved at LANL's main plutonium facility, which only recently restarted major operations after more than three years because of these concerns. Since then, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board has given LANL a "red grade" on nuclear criticality safety issues;
- 3) Disposal of radioactive wastes from plutonium pit production is still severely limited after a waste barrel improperly treated by LANL ruptured and shut down the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant for nearly three years; and
- 4) Future expanded plutonium pit production is for an "Interoperable Warhead" which the Navy doesn't want and has been delayed for five years.

Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch New Mexico director, commented, “Fattening up our already bloated nuclear weapons stockpile is not going to improve our national security. New Mexicans desperately need better funded schools and health care, not expanded plutonium pit production that will cause more pollution and threaten our scarce water resources.”

Nuclear Watch New Mexico will be spending next week in Washington, DC for the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability’s 29<sup>th</sup> consecutive DC Days to discuss Trump’s new budget with the New Mexican congressional delegation and key committees.

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Third Way’s press statement and budget spreadsheet are available at  
See <http://www.thirdway.org/newsroom/press-releases/third-way-statement-on-the-leaked-may-8-trump-budget>

For more on expanded plutonium pit production please see  
<https://nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/PitProductionFactSheet.pdf>