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Trump's FY 2021 DOE Nuclear Weapons Budget Sets Post-Cold War High New Nuclear Warhead Is Planned

Santa Fe, NM – Today the Trump Administration released topline budget numbers for fiscal year 2021 for the Department of Energy (DOE). This includes DOE's semi-autonomous National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), whose nuclear weapons programs are slated to receive the highest amount of taxpayer dollars since the Cold War ended nearly 30 years ago.

This year 2020 marks the 75th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 50th anniversary of the NonProliferation Treaty (NPT), which is commonly regarded as the cornerstone of international nuclear weapons nonproliferation. The NPT required the established nuclear powers to enter into serious negotiations leading to global nuclear disarmament, which they ignored. 2020 also marks the third anniversary of a nuclear weapons ban treaty that needs only 16 more nations to ratify before it goes into effect. The U.S. and other nuclear weapons powers vigorously oppose that ban treaty even as their "modernization" programs are fueling a new nuclear arms race and international arms control is collapsing.

Notably, the NNSA budget plans for a new nuclear warhead dubbed the W93 for the U.S. Navy's strategic submarines. There is no explanation why the W93 is necessary, and in fact the Navy declined to support an earlier NNSA proposal for an "Interoperable Warhead." It's not clear why the Navy would now support a new W93 warhead when its standard W76 warhead is completing a major "Life Extension Program" and its other warhead, the W88, is already undergoing major "alterations" to prolong its life.

Some DOE/NNSA FY 2021 Budget Highlights

DOE and NNSA have yet to disclose when detailed budgets that provide crucial information will be released. Some highlights from what is now publicly available are:

- The total DOE FY 2021 request is \$35.4 billion. Out of that, funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is increased by 20% from \$16.5 billion to \$19.8 billion, 55% of DOE's total budget.
- NNSA's budget increase is more than taken up by a big jump in funding for core nuclear weapons research and production programs under its "Total Weapons Activities" budget category, increased by 25% from \$12.4 billion to \$15.6 billion.
- NNSA's nonproliferation program is cut by 7% to \$2 billion to help pay for more nuclear weapons.
- Cleanup at DOE's nuclear weapons sites is cut by 20% to \$5 billion.
- Seventy per cent of DOE's total budget is related to nuclear weapons (NNSA and cleanup combined).
- In contrast, Renewable Energy is gutted from \$933 million to \$270 million, or just 1.6% of the funding for nuclear weapons programs.
- There is no dedicated DOE budget account that addresses climate change and global warming.

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Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch Director, commented, “Globally Trump’s nuclear weapons budget is fueling a new nuclear arms race, particularly with a new plan for a new nuclear warhead. It solidifies Los Alamos Lab’s future as a nuclear bomb plant, while nonproliferation, renewable energy and cleanup programs are held flat or cut. New Mexicans should insist that their congressional delegation provide bold leadership toward a different future instead of grabbing all the nuclear weapons pork money they can.”

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