



## **Trump Accelerates New Nuclear Warhead Production Nearly Doubles Funding for Plutonium “Pit” Bomb Core Production**

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*Santa Fe, NM* – The Trump Administration has released military budget numbers for the federal fiscal year 2027 (which begins October 1, 2026). This still current fiscal year 2026 is already a record breaker for military spending at one trillion dollars. Trump now proposes nearly \$1.5 trillion in military spending in FY 2027, of which \$1.1 trillion is base funding for the Department of War and an additional \$350 million is through so-called budget reconciliation. On top of all this, Trump will likely seek \$200 billion in supplementary appropriations for the war in Iran, for a potential total of \$1.7 trillion in military spending in FY 2027 (a 70% increase above FY 2026). At the same time, there is a 10% across-the-board cut to non-military spending. Much of the remaining discretionary funding for education, wildfire protection, environmental regulations, health care, etc., will be constrained by a focus on border control and immigration enforcement.

Trump proposes \$53.9 billion for the Department of Energy (DOE) in FY 2027. Sixty-one per cent (\$32.8 billion) is for its semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). DOE’s Office of Science is gutted by \$1.1 billion which “eliminates funding for climate change and Green New Scam research.” DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy is eliminated. Nationwide cleanup of legacy Cold War radioactive and toxic wastes at DOE sites is cut by \$386 million to \$8.2 billion (\$3 billion of which is reserved for the Hanford Site; other site-specific cleanup budget numbers are still not yet available).

With respect to the Department of Energy’s nuclear weapons agency, the Trump FY 2027 budget:

“... focuses NNSA on its most important mission—producing a robust, credible, and modern nuclear deterrent that protects the American people. The United States must maintain and expand its set of nuclear capabilities that allow the President flexibility to protect the homeland and deter adversaries. Specifically, the Budget makes strong investments to develop new warheads that would bolster deterrence, modernize NNSA’s supporting infrastructure, and extend the life of existing warheads.”

The Pentagon has always explicitly rejected “minimum-deterrence” in favor of keeping “counterforce” capabilities to wage nuclear war. This is why the U.S. has thousands of nuclear weapons and a \$2 trillion “modernization” program to keep them forever. Indefinitely maintaining and expanding nuclear capabilities is contrary to the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty, which required the nuclear weapons powers to “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear

disarmament...” After more than a half-century that has never even begun. An NPT Review Conference, held every five years, is scheduled to begin April 27 at the United Nations. It is widely expected to fail for the third time over fifteen years to make any progress whatsoever toward nuclear disarmament.

The Trump 2027 budget speeds up this backwards trend. For **nuclear warhead production:**

- A feasibility study for a new B61-13 limited earth-penetrating bomb is funded at \$46.4 million in FY 2027. A full budget request of \$1 billion is expected for FY 2028 followed by an average of \$870 million for each fiscal year 2029 – 2031.
- The W80-4 warhead for the Long-Range Stand-Off weapon (i.e., air-launched cruise missile) is funded at \$1 billion in FY 2027. There is an average of \$970 million in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- No funding is requested in FY 2027 for the W80-5 warhead for the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile. However, there is an average of \$1.4 billion in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- The W87-1 nuclear warhead program is for the new Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile, with likely multiple warheads for each missile (which is particularly dangerous and destabilizing). The Sentinel ICBM itself is already massively over budget. The W87-1 warhead program is increased 41% from \$650 million in FY 2026 to \$913 million in FY 2027, with an astounding average of \$3.5 billion in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- The submarine-launched W93 nuclear warhead program, which the United Kingdom has actively lobbied for, is increased 37% from \$807 million in FY 2026 to \$1.1 billion in FY 2027. There is an average of \$1.95 billion in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- There is a new “Future Programs” budget line item of \$99.8 million in FY 2027 for feasibility studies for other new-design nuclear weapons, followed by an average of \$92 million for each fiscal year 2028-2031.

**Plutonium “pit” bomb core production:** Plutonium pits are the essential “triggers” for modern nuclear weapons. Pit production has been the chokepoint for resumed industrial-scale nuclear weapons production by the U.S. ever since an FBI raid investigating environmental crimes stopped operations at the Rocky Flats Plant in 1989.

Trump’s FY 2027 budget proposes:

- An 83% increase in funding for pit production at the Los Alamos National Laboratory from \$1.3 billion in FY 2026 to \$2.4 billion in FY 2027. There is an average of \$2.3 billion in projected costs for each year FY 2028-2031. NNSA has directed LANL to double pit production to at least 60 pits per year because of increasing delays at the Savannah River Site (SRS).
- An 87% increase in funding for pit production at SRS from \$1.2 billion in FY 2026 to \$2.25 billion in FY 2027. There is an average of \$2.5 billion in projected costs for each year FY 2028-2031. The Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility’s upper range in estimated costs is now \$25 billion, which would make it by far the most expensive building in U.S. history. Gloveboxes

at SRS for canceled “dilute and dispose” of surplus plutonium are being diverted to “purification instead of disposition” to create feedstock for manufacturing new plutonium pits. There is only one glovebox left at SRS to process and remove excess plutonium, which could lead to resumed legal conflict with the State of South Carolina.

- Total “Plutonium Modernization” for expanded plutonium pit production at both sites is increased 87% from \$2.6 billion in FY 2026 to \$4.9 billion in 2027. There is an average of \$5.1 billion in projected costs for each year FY 2028-2031.

None of this future pit production is to maintain the safety and reliability of the existing stockpile, but instead is entirely for new-design nuclear weapons. This is despite the fact that in 2006 independent experts found that pits have serviceable lifetimes of at least 100 years. The average age of pits is now around 43 years. NNSA has avoided any full pit lifetime studies since 2006 (however, a new one is reportedly pending).

At least 15,000 pits are already stored at NNSA’s Pantex Plant. The independent Government Accountability Office has repeatedly reported that NNSA has no credible cost estimates for pit production, its most expensive and complex program ever. New pits cannot be tested because of the existing international testing moratorium, which could erode confidence in the stockpile. Or, conversely, new pits could prompt the U.S. to resume testing (which Trump has already threatened), after which other nuclear weapons powers would surely follow, thereby rapidly accelerating the new nuclear arms race.

#### **Other nuclear weapons production programs:**

- The “Tritium and Defense Fuels” program is increased by 79% from \$520 million in FY 2026 to \$881 million in 2027. There is an average of \$1.8 billion in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- “Non-Nuclear Capability Modernization” for non-nuclear components manufacturing, primarily at the Sandia National Laboratories, is increased 130% from \$195.5 million in FY 2026 to \$449 million in FY 2027. There is an average of \$370 million in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.
- “Weapons Dismantlement and Disposition” is increased 10% from \$82.3 million in FY 2026 to \$90.7 million in FY 2027 (a mere 1.3% of total warhead funding). Rather than being a worthy step toward nuclear disarmament, the stated objective of weapons dismantlements is to “recover critical components and materials to support existing weapon programs, Naval Reactors, and other national priority missions.” There is an estimated backlog of up to 1,500 retired warheads to dismantle and dispose. However, NNSA’s Pantex Plant is so busy rebuilding existing nuclear warheads with new military capabilities that dismantlements have been at a historic low since the end of the Cold War.

In all, NNSA’s budget category of “Total Weapons Activities” is increased 35% from \$20.4 billion in FY 2026 to \$27.4 billion in FY 2027. There is an average of \$29 billion in projected costs for each fiscal year 2028-2031.

Jay Coghlan, Director of Nuclear Watch, commented, “New nuclear weapons won’t give us more security as our nation is being hollowed out by tax cuts for the ultrarich, cuts to domestic

programs, and the gutting of programs to address adverse climate change. It is way past time for the nuclear weapons powers to honor their obligations under the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty to negotiate verifiable nuclear disarmament instead of keeping nuclear weapons forever. We should be cleaning up, not building up new nuclear weapons.”

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Sources:

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DOE’s FY 2026 “Budget in Brief” at <https://www.energy.gov/documents/doe-fy-2027-budget-brief>

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Warhead and production budget numbers from NNSA’s Total Weapons Activities FY 2027 Congressional Budget Request, PDF pages 16-23, <https://www.energy.gov/documents/doe-fy-2027-volume-1-wa>

SRS glovebox quote from NNSA’s Total Weapons Activities FY 2027 Congressional Budget Request, PDF pages 123-124, <https://www.energy.gov/documents/doe-fy-2027-volume-1-wa>

Footnote: NNSA’s Total Weapons Activities received an additional \$3.9 billion in FY 2026 from the deceptively named Working Families Tax Cut Act (WFTC) that “repurposed” money from Biden-era climate initiatives to prioritize nuclear weapons “modernization.” As two examples, the WFTC funded the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile nuclear warhead with \$400 million and gave an additional \$728 million to pit production at SRS in FY 2026.

Nuclear Watch New Mexico was a co-plaintiff in a lawsuit that forced the NNSA to complete a nationwide programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) on expanded plutonium pit production. A draft PEIS with public hearings at five locations across the country is expected in late May or June. Please stay tuned to [www.nukewatch.org](http://www.nukewatch.org) for ongoing developments.

This press release is available online at <https://nukewatch.org/trump-accelerates-nuclear-warhead-production-pr/>

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