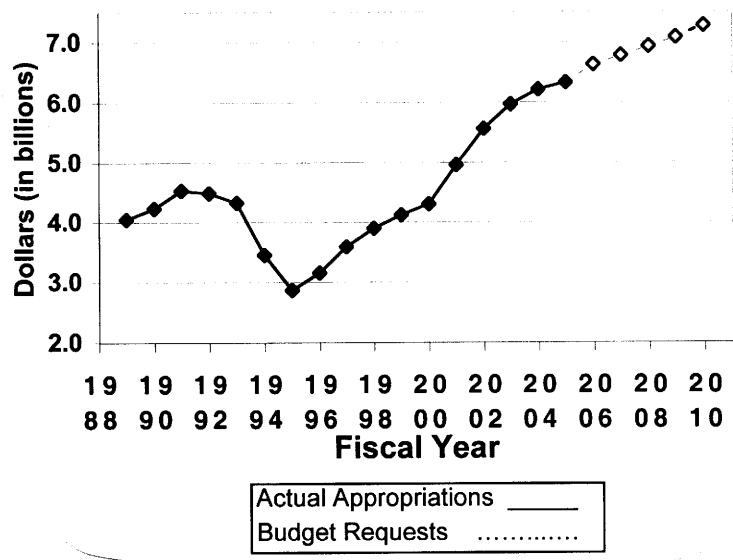


# America's One-Nation Arms Race

This is a summary of "America's One-Nation Arms Race: An Analysis of the Department of Energy's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request for Nuclear Weapons Activities", which was prepared for Tri-Valley CAREs by Dr. Robert Civiak. The full report is available from TVC or on the web at: [www.trivalleycares.org/TVC-Civiak\\_2006Rpt.pdf](http://www.trivalleycares.org/TVC-Civiak_2006Rpt.pdf)

The nuclear weapons budget is out of control. In a year when many government agencies are seeing large cuts in their budgets, including the Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management budget, DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is asking to increase its budget for nuclear weapons to over **\$6.6 billion**. This is the eleventh consecutive year of an upward surge in spending on nuclear weapons to well over twice what DOE spent in 1995 (\$2.9 billion) and to one and one-half times the average spending level during the Cold War (\$4.6 billion), even after adjusting for inflation.

**DOE SPENDING ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS ACTIVITIES**



NNSA uses those funds to support a vast research and manufacturing complex in which it is conducting a one-nation arms race to upgrade U.S. nuclear weapons and capabilities. NNSA is sprinting to build enhanced versions of thousands of nuclear weapons, even though the 2002 Treaty of Moscow, which was negotiated by and signed by President Bush, requires the U.S. to remove many of them from deployment by 2012. The NNSA is designing and installing new components to make weapons lighter, more rugged, more resistant to radiation, to improve the consistency of their explosive yield, to add new yield options, to alter the height of detonation, to conserve tritium, and to improve the accuracy of delivery. In essence, the labs are trying to upgrade every facet of the performance of existing warheads.

The NNSA labs waste hundreds of millions of dollars to stay on the forefront of diverse technologies and apply them to

nuclear weapons, including: development of supercomputers, microfabrication technology, lasers, particle accelerators, explosives, and measurement technology. In addition, the NNSA wants to design a weapon called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (or RNEP), and give it a new war fighting capability — the ability to thrust itself into the earth before exploding. The Administration also wants to make it easier to conduct a full-scale nuclear weapon's test, by reducing the time it would need to prepare for such a test. In addition, the Administration is laying plans for a \$5 billion plutonium pit factory to allow production of hundreds of new nuclear weapons per year.

This is an appalling waste of Federal funds. Beyond that, this massive nuclear weapons development effort belies an unequivocal commitment the U.S. made under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Administration's actions show that it puts a high value on nuclear weapons in contradiction to its claims otherwise. The NNSA's nuclear weapons development program undercuts international support for efforts to stem nuclear weapons development in countries like North Korea and Iran. By undercutting non-proliferation, **the Administration's approach to nuclear weapons diminishes our national security rather than improving it.**

Instead of the bloated, counterproductive approach to our nation's nuclear deterrent, which the Administration calls "Stockpile Stewardship," our report proposes a "Curatorship" approach to maintaining nuclear weapons. Under Curatorship, the United States would maintain the weapons that are deployable under the Treaty of Moscow with Russia and a few spares. However, the U.S. would refrain from upgrading its nuclear weapons or design capabilities. **The proposed Curatorship budget would cut \$2.0 billion from the Administration's \$6.6 billion request for Stockpile Stewardship.** And, perhaps even more importantly, it would be much more supportive of efforts to limit nuclear weapons proliferation.

The table on page 2 summarizes the 2006 budget request for Nuclear Weapons Activities. The first column is the amount mandated by the Congress for 2005. The second column shows the comparable amounts, which DOE estimates would have been the funding levels if its programs were organized in 2005 as DOE proposes to reorganize them in 2006. The third column is the Administration's FY2006 request and the final column shows our report's recommended 2006 funding level under a Curatorship approach to the stockpile.

(over)

## Funding for Nuclear Weapons Activities (dollars in millions)

	FY 2005 Actual	FY2005 Comparable	FY2006 Request	FY2006 Curatorship
Directed Stockpile Work	1,346	1,277	1,421	784
Campaigns (including ICF/NIF)	2,305	2,294	2,081	1,050
Readiness in Technical Base	1,657	1,786	1,631	1,340
Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements	314	314	284	250
Weapons and Materials Transportation	200	200	212	212
Nuclear Weapons Incident Response	98	108	119	119
Environmental Projects and Operations	0	193	174	0*
Safeguards and Security	752	752	740	740
Adjustments and Use of Prior Year Balances	<u>-41</u>	<u>-41</u>	<u>-32</u>	<u>-32</u>
<b>TOTAL Nuclear Weapons Activities</b>	<b>6,631</b>	<b>6,883</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>4,463</b>
Transfer of funds from Department of Defense	<u>-300</u>	<u>-300</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL Appropriated directly to DOE</b>	<b>6,331</b>	<b>6,583</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>4,463</b>

\* The \$174 million requested would go the DOE's Office of Environmental Management.

**In addition to identifying \$2.0 billion in budget savings, our report recommends that Congress and the NNSA take the following steps:**

- Close out the so-called "Life Extension Programs," under which the NNSA upgrades nuclear weapons that are nowhere near the ends of their lives;
- Cancel all work on the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator;
- Cancel the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program;
- Eliminate all new nuclear weapon design activities;
- Double funds to safely dismantle retired warheads;
- Cancel the Modern Pit Facility;
- Drop the unachievable goal of ignition at the National Ignition Facility (NIF) and cancel or drastically scale back the project;
- Prohibit funding for the Enhanced Test Readiness Program;
- Limit new infrastructure projects to those that replace existing facilities; and
- Keep responsibility for cleaning up all of DOE's sites in the Office of Environmental Management.

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been very little Congressional scrutiny of spending on nuclear weapons. As a result, **the NNSA has become an entrenched bureaucracy that maintains an outdated spending program solely for its own benefit.**

There is some hope that this situation is changing. Last year, the Congress reduced or eliminated funding for several controversial programs. This laudable effort to simultaneously cut the budget and improve national security was led by Representative David Hobson (R-Ohio), Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for the NNSA budget.

Last year's cuts were small in dollar terms, but hopefully they set the stage for more budgetary discipline this year.

Our report provides details on the most significant sub-programs within the nuclear weapons budget and provides rationales for the proposed spending cuts. As an example, one part of the section on Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF) and the National Ignition Facility (NIF) is summarized here.

### **Inertial Confinement Fusion and the NIF—**

This campaign seeks to create, on a small scale, the extreme conditions of temperature, pressure, and radiation approaching those in a **nuclear explosion**. The centerpiece of that effort is the NIF, which is being built at the Livermore Lab.

The NIF includes an enormous laser that would use light to compress and heat target pellets. If NIF can sufficiently heat and compress properly designed pellets containing fusion fuel, the pellets might achieve "ignition." Such ignition would reproduce certain characteristics of an exploding nuclear weapon. Achieving ignition was the primary justification for starting the NIF project in 1995 despite the belief among many scientists at the time that ignition could not be reached in that facility.

Last year, NNSA proposed delaying the goal of ignition from 2010 to 2014 and claimed it could obtain valuable data without ignition. In response to this flip-flop, Congress cut \$25 million from NIF's budget. This year, NNSA cut back its budget request for other fusion programs in favor of funding NIF and ignition. About \$373 million of the \$460 million requested for the ICF campaign this year is NIF-related. **Thus, in one year, NNSA has flip-flopped twice** between claims that achieving ignition is the key goal for NIF and that NIF is an essential tool for Stockpile Stewardship, even without ignition. **We doubt that NNSA can reach ignition at NIF...**