Biggest Nuclear Weapons Activities Budget Ever Proposed

For our full analysis of the fiscal year 2011 budget request for nuclear weapons activities, go to www.trivalleycares.org.

Here is an excerpt from Tri-Valley CAREs’ report, written by Dr. Robert Civiak, a physicist and former budget examiner for DOE nuclear weapons programs at the White House Office of Management and Budget.

“On Feb. 1, 2010, President Obama sent to Congress the first comprehensive budget prepared by his Administration. On the same day, the Dept. of Energy (DOE) released details about its budget request, including the budget for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-independent agency within DOE... The Budget requests a whopping 13 percent increase for the NNSA. The largest increase, 26 percent, is designated for the non-proliferation programs within the NNSA, many of which directly support the vision of a world without nuclear weapons that the President enunciated in Prague last April.

“Surprisingly, the 2011 Budget also requests a 14 percent increase in comparable programs to 2010 for NNSA’s [Nuclear] Weapons Activities. The total includes large increases for research and development in nuclear weapons science and technology and to build new infrastructure for the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium parts for nuclear weapons.

“Increasing funds for nuclear weapons appears to conflict with a vision of a world without them. The Administration claims that the upgrades are needed to preserve the safety and reliability of the U.S. stockpile until all nuclear weapons can be eliminated. However, many of the increases are inconsistent with expected reductions in the number of nuclear weapons and others support capabilities to modify and enhance nuclear weapons, which are not needed.

“It is now up to the Congress to review and make changes to the Budget as it passes appropriation bills for the next 2011 fiscal year, which begins on October 1, 2010...

“The Budget requests $7.009 billion (B) for the [Nuclear] Weapons Activities of the NNSA. That is an increase of $624 million (M), or 9.8 percent, above the 2010 appropriation.

“The Budget requests an additional $273 M in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NNP) Account for programs that were funded within Weapons Activities in 2010. NNSA is requesting $80 M in construction funds and $113 M in operating expenses for a Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility within NNP and another $80 M for preparation and transport of initial quantities of plutonium for disposition, including operation of the Advanced Recovery and Integrated Extraction System (ARIES) facility at Los Alamos. After correcting for those organizational shifts, the increase in weapons activities compared to comparable activities in 2010 is about $900 M or 14 percent.

“The... request is the largest ever for Weapons Activities. Even after accounting for inflation and ignoring the organizational shifts, the $7 B request for Weapons Activities is 40% larger than the $5 B/yr (in 2011 dollars) spent on similar activities at the height of the Cold War...”

Key topics in the full report include...

- Huge Increases for Weapons Upgrades
- Increases for New and Modified Plutonium Pits
- Cuts for Weapons Dismantlement and Disposition
- Campaigns Expand Weapons Science & Technology
- Tools to Certify Modified Nuclear Components
- National Ignition Facility Budget Growth
- Producing Tritium beyond a Reasonable Requirement
- Costly, Oversized, and Unnecessary Projects
- Chemistry & Metallurgy Research Facility Replacement
- Technical Area-55 Reinvestment Project Phase II
- Uranium Processing Facility at Y-12
- New Kansas City Plant Costs are not in the Budget
- Conclusions and Recommendations

Your team of experts and activists from Tri-Valley CAREs will take one hundred copies of the report with us to Washington, DC in mid-March. We will use the analysis and recommendations in meetings with Congress and the Administration. We aim to support the President’s vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, but emphasize that increasing the budget for nuclear weapons activities, including the capability to produce new design warheads, is incompatible with that goal.

Moreover, we will seek to increase the funding for activities that are consistent with our objectives, such as the monies needed for the dismantlement of retired warheads and for full cleanup of the contamination that the nuclear weapons cycle has caused in our communities. (See inside for details.)
Print Bites

- **Bombs Away?** Der Spiegel reports that German Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, is stepping up the campaign to get U.S. nuclear weapons removed from German soil. In Feb., Westerwelle and his counterparts in five European nations drafted a letter to the NATO commander calling for a discussion of how to move closer to a nuclear weapons free world at the next NATO conference in April. The U.S. is thought to have about 20 nuclear bombs in Germany and about 200 in Europe.

- **NIF Scandal Update.** Late last year, Tri-Valley CAREs released an internal National Nuclear Security Administration review of the National Ignition Facility’s overhead costs, which we had obtained from an anonymous source. The report revealed that Livermore Lab management was shifting overhead costs from NIF to other programs -- to the tune of $80 million annually and in violation of the law. We can now report that three investigations have been launched by federal oversight agencies.

- **Beryllium Accident.** A beryllium mishap in Feb. led to the exposure of yet another Livermore Lab worker. According to the summary report, a machinist was working on a part labeled “non-hazardous” that turned out to be beryllium, a hazardous metal used in nuclear bombs. Nasal swipes were taken, and the machinist tested positive for internal exposure. Beryllium exposure can lead to beryllium sensitivity and, ultimately, to beryllium disease, which is progressive and incurable. There have been five other beryllium incidents at Livermore Lab in recent years involving more than 200 workers.

- **Livermore Lab Budget.** The fiscal year 2011 Dept. of Energy budget request contains more than $1.2 billion for Livermore Lab. Of that, more than $1 billion is for nuclear weapons activities. The NIF funding is up (again). And, the Superfund cleanup gets the crumbs. The Livermore Lab Site 300 cleanup funding request is just under $10.7 million, or less than 1% of the total. And, the Livermore Lab main site is slated to receive $11.3 million, also about 1% of the Lab’s total funding. Further, there are groundwater projects at Site 300 that were not even included in the budget request. And, as we note on page 3, the budget request also does not include needed funds to clean up the leading edge of the contaminated groundwater plume that has migrated from the main site into the community. Nor does it contain any of the monies that will be needed to address Bldg. 212 and other vital tasks.

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Ugly Proposal to Relax Uranium Cleanup

Site 300, Livermore Lab’s high explosives testing range, is located in the hills near Tracy. Bomb tests there include open air detonations that wrap high explosives around Uranium-238, also called depleted uranium (DU), and other materials. Scores of radioactive and chemical pollutants have been released since 1955 into the air, water, soil and groundwater. In 1990, the EPA placed Site 300 on its “Superfund” list of most contaminated sites in the country.

Tri-Valley CAREs meets with the Lab and the state and federal regulatory agencies quarterly to discuss the Site 300 Superfund cleanup. In February, we received a briefing on seven of the most highly contaminated areas. While progress is being made in some locations, we are particularly alarmed by a Dept. of Energy proposal to weaken cleanup standards at the Building 812 “firing table.” This is one of the open air detonation sites that has been contaminated with DU and U-235 (enriched uranium), among other pollutants.

Studies show the uranium contamination has: (a) been driven straight into the ground by explosions on the outdoor firing table, (b) mixed with the gravers from the firing table that have been dumped into a nearby canyon, and (c) concentrated in the soils on nearby hillsides where the fallout landed.

The regulatory agencies, with community encouragement, have negotiated a stringent cleanup standard for the uranium contamination around Bldg. 812.

The current cleanup levels are based on the EPA “preliminary remediation goals” and “background” estimates. The cleanup alternative being considered at this location is “soil washing,” although other cleanup options are still on the table. The DOE report points to problems with soil washing at other locations, notably Fernald, Mound, Ashtabula and Hanford.

While the analysis of lessons learned at other sites is helpful in critiquing that particular remedy, it is the report’s conclusion to which we object.

The report recommends that the community and the regulators accept a lesser cleanup standard that will allow more of the uranium contamination to be left in the dirt for humans and other species to encounter.

Whereas the current proposal is for Livermore Lab to clean up to a contaminant concentration of 3.1 picocuries of DU per gram of soil and 0.42 picocuries of U-235 per gram of soil, the report recommends a massive relaxation of standards to allow contaminant concentrations of 163 picocuries of DU per gram of soil and 55 picocuries of U-235 per gram of soil. This change, if adopted, would permit more than 50 times the concentration of DU in soil -- and more than 100 times the concentration of U-235 in soil -- to be left in place.

Can anyone say “over our dead bodies”? So far, no regulator has agreed to renegotiate the cleanup standard. We will keep you informed.
March 1, 2010

For 27 years, we have worked tirelessly to "stop nuclear weapons where they start." Today our programs are needed more than ever.

Dear Tri-Valley CAREs supporter,

This is the hardest letter I have ever had to write. President Barack Obama has just proposed the largest nuclear weapons activities budget in our Nation's history.

It's is a whopping 40% larger than what the U.S. spent for nuclear weapons activities during the height of the Cold War, even after accounting for inflation. And, it's bigger than any of the Bush nuke budgets that we mobilized against and cut back so successfully.

Vice-President Joe Biden tried to justify the budget by suggesting the infusion of money will entice Senate Republicans to ratify the New START agreement with Russia when it is completed, and, maybe, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at some undefined later date. Assuaging congressional conservatives with money for nukes is like calming sharks by throwing bloody meat in the water. After the first taste of blood, they will want more.

I believe that we must immediately undertake the necessary work to alert the American people and press the Congress to cut this outrageous nuclear weapons budget, and I hope that you agree.

Tri-Valley CAREs is sending a delegation of experts and activists to Washington, DC in mid-March to hold scores of meetings with the Administration and Congress. We will speak truth in plain language to power. Yes, we will support the treaties we have worked so long to achieve, but we will also act in accordance with our principles to stop this nuclear weapons budget and the horrific bombs and factories it would be used to build.

I will be part of that delegation, and I promise you that we will work diligently to hold the government's feet to the fire and roll back the Fiscal Year 2011 nuclear weapons budget. In doing this work, I will be representing you and all of our colleagues in Tri-Valley CAREs.

I am asking you to join me by donating $10 or more to help cover airfare, production costs for the materials we will share with Congress, and other necessary expenses. Your tax-deductible contribution is urgently needed, and I thank you.

I also want to tell you about a new report that we have just published -- for you and for our Members of Congress -- analyzing the Obama nuclear weapons activities budget. Our report, written by Dr. Robert Civiak, is both comprehensive and reader-friendly. I invite you to download your copy at www.trivalleycares.org, or call me and I will mail it to you.

(turn over)
You know that Tri-Valley CAREs has been a leader in the grassroots movement to abolish nuclear weapons since 1983. I recognize that you are with us in this most important endeavor, and I encourage you to show your support financially at this crucial time.

Last year, in Prague, President Obama declared "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." We were with him then, and we remain dedicated to that goal.

It is the Administration that has veered off-course. I believe it is necessary for us to "keep our eyes on the prize" of a nuclear weapons free world, and to call our elected leaders to account for the growing distance between their lofty words and base deeds.

And, so, Tri-Valley CAREs will also go to the United Nations in early May to call Obama to account for the inconsistencies between the proposed nuclear weapons funding and U.S. obligations to disarm under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The occasion is the international NPT Review Conference, the first to take place since Obama's election.

We will have technical papers to share with all of the States Parties to the Treaty. Our goal is nothing less than global nuclear disarmament, and we will offer our praise where nuclear policy is moving in the right direction and our criticism (and recommendations) where it is not. Your contribution now will help us make the most of this unique opportunity.

Tri-Valley CAREs will also be taking action in the community. We will organize a public meeting on nuclear weapons and cleanup this summer. We will host a Hiroshima commemoration at the gates of Livermore Lab in August. We will continue our litigation against the Lab’s bio-warfare research, write technical comments on key environmental documents, respond to the Nuclear Posture Review when it is released, conduct a strategic planning retreat, hold monthly meetings, maintain and expand our website, publish our newsletter, Citizen's Watch, and much more.

Individual donations from supporters like you keep our valuable programs and services operating. I trust you will give as generously as you can. Whether you are able to contribute at the $10 level or at the $10,000 level, or at some point in between, let me assure you that your gift will be appreciated and put to immediate good use.

For peace, justice and a healthy environment,

Marylia Kelley,
Executive Director

P.S. You know that Tri-Valley CAREs delivers the biggest (non-nuclear) bang for your buck. We have very low overhead and no corporate perks, so that every dollar you donate goes into achieving the social and political change that you and I seek.

P.P.S. Please don’t set this letter aside and risk forgetting it. Your contribution is urgently needed in March to send our Tri-Valley CAREs delegation to Washington, DC to hold the government accountable and stop the biggest nuclear weapons activities budget in history. We have stopped nuclear bombs before and, with your help, we can mobilize to do it again.
Tri-Valley CAREs Executive Director Marylia Kelley called upon the White House Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accountability Office and Congress "to investigate this financial scandal and to hold Livermore Lab management fully accountable for the laws that have been violated."

"This illegal scheme circumvents the United States Congress, which sets NIF's budget each year, and violates our nation's most basic federal contracting laws," said Kelley, whose group is a frequent critic of lab policy and spending. Kelley said the NIF's funding for this fiscal year is about a half-billion dollars, and its projected costs for the next several years are more than $400 million per year. At that rate, she said, these unfair rates would hide about $2 billion of the NIF's actual costs.

L.A. Times
Miles To Go On Livermore Nuclear Lab Cleanup
Ralph Vartabedian 11/13/09

Quarrels remain as the Northern California community and the federal government search for an affordable and environmental solution.

The Energy Department is spending $328 million to clean up two separate areas of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory -- the agency's largest nuclear weapons clean-up project in California…

It took a court order for Livermore to cap private wells that drew from the contaminated plume, said Marylia Kelley, executive director of Tri-Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment, a watchdog group in Livermore.

Though Kelley said the cleanup at Livermore had been more competent that at other locations, she believes cleanup standards across the nation are too lax and fail to protect human health.

"There is no best solution for the cleanup, only bad solutions," Kelley said.
New Analysis Details Whopping Increase in Bomb Budget

Robert Civiak, physicist and former Budget Examiner at the White House Office of Management and Budget, has prepared a detailed analysis of the Fiscal Year 2011 budget request for nuclear weapons activities.

His analysis exposes the inconsistency of the Obama Administration policy of increasing funds for nuclear weapons while touting the vision of a world without them. The report includes recommendations to Congress for cutting the budget.

Your Tri-Valley CAREs team will be in DC in mid-March, and we will use this analysis to persuade Congress to curtail funding for nuclear bombs. Please give as generously as you can to help us succeed!

Our Mission

- **Convert** Livermore Lab from nuclear weapons development and testing to socially beneficial, environmentally sound research.
- **End** all nuclear weapons development and testing in the United States.
- **Abolish** nuclear weapons worldwide; achieve an equitable, successful non-proliferation regime.
- **Promote** forthright communication and democratic decision-making in public policy on nuclear weapons and related environmental issues, locally, nationally and globally.
- **Clean up** the radioactive and toxic pollution emanating from the Livermore Lab and reduce the Lab’s environmental and health hazards.

4 Ways to Support Tri-Valley CAREs

1. **Send** in your check today! Why put off until tomorrow the activism you can support today?
2. **Donate online** at www.trivalleycares.org. Use our online system to make a one-time contribution, or set up a regular giving program.
3. **Make a gift of stock.** Donating stock can create significant tax benefits. We have an E-Trade account and can process your donation simply and easily.
4. **Make a bequest** and include Tri-Valley CAREs in your will. The Department of Energy is going to leave a toxic legacy in our community; will you leave a positive one?

Thank you!

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Here is my tax-deductible donation of:

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City _______________________ State ______________Zip __________

____ I would like a member of the Tri-Valley CAREs delegation to send me a note from Washington letting me know how Congress and the Obama Administration are responding to demands to cut the nuclear weapons budget.

Here is my Email address_________________________________________________
Main Site Superfund

The Livermore Lab main site is about 1 sq. mile, located on the eastern edge of town. It was founded in 1952 to speed the development of ever more sophisticated nuclear bombs. Most of its budget remains dedicated to this purpose.

Decades of nuclear weapons work has heavily contaminated the air, soil and groundwater on and around the site. In 1987, the Lab was placed on the EPA’s “Superfund” list. (See page 2 for Site 300 Superfund information.)

In mid-Feb., we met with Lab and regulatory agency officials to discuss progress on the main site cleanup. First the good news: Soil and groundwater treatment facilities that had been turned off in prior years have been restarted, thanks in part to our members’ advocacy.

The exceptions involve four areas on-site where the mixing of toxic and radioactive pollutants in the aquifer has complicated the cleanup. For these locations, the Lab has put together a list of technologies it is considering. We offered a critique of several that we believe will spread rather than remediate pollution. Others are more promising, and we are continuing to evaluate them.

Another major issue involves the leading edge of the toxic plume extending off-site to the west of the Lab and contaminating the aquifer under homes, apartments, a city park and a community swimming pool. We are advocating for federal “stimulus” funds to accelerate cleanup of this area.

At the same time, we are pressing the Dept. of Energy to request “appropriations” funding from Congress to do the job. Following our Feb. meeting the EPA added its voice to ours, sending DOE a letter warning that failure to request adequate appropriations may put them out of compliance with the Law.

Another unresolved Superfund issue involves the Building 212 area, where mercury has been found recently in soils collocated with radioactive elements such as plutonium. Stay tuned!

Connecting the Dots... Continued from page 4

And, New START? As we go to press, this follow on agreement to the expired Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is not yet completed. Some reports indicate that the U.S. and Russia are within days or weeks of negotiating an agreement; other sources talk about snags over U.S. Missile Defense (the U.S. doesn’t want to talk about it), and over verification protocols (Russia would like them changed from old START to allow it to modernize missiles more freely).

Assuming an agreement is worked out, New START will likely provide modest reductions in both countries’ nuclear arsenals, to around 1600 deployed strategic weapons. New START is not slated to address either nation’s tactical nukes or reserve arsenals, leaving many thousands of additional nuclear weapons in place.

Our path is clear, if difficult. We will neither condemn too harshly nor praise uncritically, but hold our elected officials fully accountable. We will seek not rhetoric, but rather the genuine change to which the words allude. And, working together, we will make real progress toward disarmament in the age of Obama.

Tri-Valley CAREs Citizen’s Watch

Friday, April 2

Good Friday Witness and Action Music at 6:45 AM, Program at 7 AM Livermore Lab, corner of Vasco Rd. and Patterson Pass Rd. (510) 655-1162, (925) 443-7148

Peace advocates will gather at the northwest corner of Livermore Lab to protest the ongoing development of nuclear weapons. The program includes prominent Haitian Americans and a reflection on the connections between nuclear weapons, poverty and Haiti.

There will then be a procession to the West Gate. Those who choose may risk arrest by standing, sitting or kneeling in the gate. At 10 AM, Tri-Valley CAREs will host the community gathering where breakfast foods will be served.

Thursday, April 8

Hiroshima Action Planning Meeting 7 PM, Peace Action West offices 2201 Broadway, Oakland (925) 443-7148 for details

Act in solidarity with the Hibakusha (survivors) of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Take a stand for disarmament everywhere and against bombs anywhere. Join us in planning the August action at Livermore Lab. Volunteers are needed. Contact maryla@trivalleycares.org.

Alerts 4 U

Thursday, March 25

Tri-Valley CAREs meets Special report back from Washington 7:30 PM - 9 PM, Livermore Library 1188 So. Livermore Ave. (925) 443-7148 for details

Note: This special Tri-Valley CAREs membership meeting will be held on the 4th Thurs. (March 25) to welcome back your team of activists who went to Washington, DC in mid-March to meet with Congress and the Obama Administration.

The team’s goals include cutting funds for nuclear bombs and promoting cleanup of weapons sites, irresistible dismantlement of nuclear bombs, and disarmament.

Come and hear the team’s firsthand observations, and learn about the progress they made and the obstacles they encountered.

We will also discuss related nuclear policy issues, the Good Friday and Hiroshima actions being planned at Livermore Lab, and the May 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. New members and “old timers” alike are welcome. Call us for details.

Tri-Valley CAREs Citizen’s Watch
The London Observer recently reported that President Obama ordered a “rewrite” of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), frustrated that the version sent to his desk was mired in “Cold War thinking” and the George W. Bush policies it was supposed to replace.

Perhaps one reason the draft NPR is a warmed over Bush NPR is because Obama kept in place Bush’s Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, Bush’s head of Strategic Command, General Chilton, and Bush’s Head of the DOE National Nuclear Security Administration, Tom D’Agostino. All three are on record pushing for new and modified nuclear weapons and a continued reliance on them. Even the staff charged with writing the new NPR are part of the “old guard.”

Obama had promised a “transformational” NPR, one that would give substance to his Prague speech and aspirations to move toward a world free of nuclear weapons. What are we likely to get is an NPR that offers incremental change on specific Bush policies but fails to provide either the bold leadership or the concrete initiatives that are needed to create a fundamental shift in U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

The Obama NPR is foundering on the rocks of treaty ratification politics, the desires of the weapons labs and their cronies to increase the bomb budget, and the above-mentioned White House inattention to who they have left in charge of policy “on the ground.” If Obama wants a “transformational” NPR, he will need to make changes in these 3 interrelated areas. There is no current indication that he has the will to do so.

Kyl sent this letter as his opening bid on New START, but had one eye also on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, for which Obama has pledged to seek ratification at a future date. Rather than come out strong and trump Kyl it looks like Obama has chosen to fold.

The 2011 nuclear weapons budget, released Feb. 1, reads like the Kyl playbook. The proposed budget for new bomb plants — up. For development of new and modified bombs — up. For life extension programs — up. In fact, this is the largest such budget request ever.

The raw politics of treaty ratification can be seen in the letter that Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) sent to Obama in mid-December. The letter is signed by the 40 Republican Senators and Joe Lieberman.

The Kyl letter reads like a ransom note, saying, in essence, that the price of getting New START ratified is the “modernization” of U.S. nuclear weapons and the complex to produce them.

The letter demands the Bush-inspired “Bombplex,” including a new uranium facility at Y-12 and a new plutonium facility at Los Alamos. It demands a “modern warhead,” and specifies “new approaches to [weapon] life extension involving replacement...” (read as the Reliable Replacement Warhead program, but without the RRW name).

Continued on page 3