

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET REQUEST TO CONGRESS
FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS ACTIVITIES**

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Notes and Observations:

Top Line:

- The Budget requests \$6.618 Billion (B) for Weapons Activity within the Dept. of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). That is an increase of \$320 M (5.1%) over the 2008 appropriation. However, bottom line adjustments to the 2008 appropriation reduce the 2008 total by \$120 Million (M). Thus, in the program-by-program comparisons, the budget shows Weapons Activities increasing by only \$200 M or 3.1%. If the bottom line adjustments were spread throughout the programs (as they will have to be in the operating plan) the 2008 spending plan would appear to be \$120 M smaller and the program-by-program increases, noted below for 2009 in comparison to 2008, would, on average, be larger.

Reliable Replacement Warhead:

- The budget requests \$10 M for RRW under Directed Stockpile Work (where last year's request was) to proceed with the maturation of Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) design concepts, to address questions raised by the JASON review of RRW feasibility study activities, and to document the Phase 2A RRW work that has been completed through FY 2007.
- There is additional funding for RRW-related activities in the Advanced Certification program within the Science Campaign to "continue efforts begun in FY 2008 at the direction of the Congress to review, evaluate and implement key recommendations from the JASON Advisory Group RRW study regarding approaches to establishing an accredited warhead certification plan without nuclear testing." The Budget requests \$20 M for Advanced Certification.
- There is still more RRW-related funding in the Enhanced Surety program within the Engineering Campaign, to continue "evaluation of surety options for possible future

systems, whether LEPs or RRW systems." The Budget requests \$35.6 M for Enhanced Surety. [Note: Elsewhere in the Budget request, the NNSA culls out \$10 M of the \$35.6 M as, essentially, RRW-related.]

- While it is impossible to identify, there is likely an additional tens or hundreds of millions of dollars within other Campaigns that should be zero, unless NNSA plans to design and build new warheads. For example, much of the work in Primary Assessment Technologies, Secondary Assessment Technologies, and Advanced Simulation is probably to examine weapons configurations or capabilities that do not exist in the current stockpile.

Dismantlement and Disposition:

- The Budget requests a \$38.2 M increase to \$116.8 M for "Dismantlement and Disposition" operations. At first blush, this might appear to be good news. The kicker is that funding for "disposition" is now included in a line that previously was dismantlement only. This line now includes operating funds to support the Pit Disassembly and Conversion facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS); to support the continuation of ARIES testing and demonstration at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL); and operating support and construction funding for the Waste Solidification Building. The request for activities previously funded under the Dismantlement line-item is \$64.7 M, a modest increase from the \$51.3 M planned for 2008, but less than the \$75.8 M spent in 2007.

Directed Stockpile Work and Plutonium Pit Manufacturing and Pit Manufacturing Capability:

- There is a seemingly large increase (\$274 M) over 2008 for the full Directed Stockpile Work (DSW) sub-account to \$1,676 M in 2009. However, \$199 M of that is for Pit Manufacturing and Pit Manufacturing Capability, which were previously funded as an R & D Campaign. Now that manufacture and certification of a W88 pit has been completed, the program moves to the DSW sub-account.

Readiness in Technical Base and Facilities:

- The Readiness in Technical Base and Facilities (RTBF) sub-account increases by \$83 (5.1%) to \$1,721 M in 2009. That sub-account funds the basic operating costs of most of the complex. It is strange that the base operating costs need such a large increase, since the Budget states that it provides for implementing the preferred alternative for the future nuclear weapons complex, which proposes consolidations of missions, capabilities, and special nuclear materials. Indeed, in a separate line item, the Budget

requests \$77.4 M for Transformation Disposition. This is a new program to eliminate excess facilities through demolition, transfer, or sale in support of NNSA's strategic goal to eliminate excess real property. So, in addition to new spending of \$77 M to produce the promised future savings in infrastructure costs, NNSA must increase its infrastructure spending in 2009.

- The largest infrastructure spending increases, within RTBF, are for the Kansas City Plant (+37.3 M or 44% to \$122.3 M) and for the Nevada Test Site (+27.3 M or 42% to \$92.2 M).

Nuclear Weapons Incident Response:

- The Budget requests an increase in the Nuclear Weapons Incident Response program of \$63.3 M (40%) to \$221.9 M. However, most of this is not for the Nuclear Energy Search Team (NEST) or other incident response programs traditionally funded under this line-item. The increase includes \$51.8 M for Nuclear Counterterrorism, which funds efforts with the Department of Homeland Security and the intelligence community to examine nuclear weapons designs that terrorists might use. This activity was previously buried (i.e. not separately identified) within the Directed Stockpile Work sub-account and helps nuclear weapons designers improve and maintain their design skills.

The "Other Weapons Activities" Account and MOX:

- Construction of the MOX plant to make Plutonium-based fuel for nuclear reactors from surplus weapons plutonium is now funded in the "Other Weapons Activity Account." Previously, it was funded as a nonproliferation activity within NNSA. Congress directed that the MOX plant be managed by the Office of Nuclear Energy. While the Administration is abiding by Congress' direction for the management of the program, the funding does not appear in the same place as the majority of funding for Nuclear Energy. Rather, it is in a catchall account that also has funding for certain health, safety, and security activities, certain legacy management programs, and administrative support for defense programs in general.

"Complex Transformation" Activities:

- The "DOE Budget Highlights" state (p. 57), "The FY 2009 budget includes funding to pursue a program consistent with the preferred alternative for Complex Transformation, to be promulgated through a Record of Decision in 2008." The Complex Transformation initiatives it lists include:

- Consolidation of Category I & II special nuclear materials from seven to five sites by 2012.
- Designating Technical Area-55 at Los Alamos National Laboratory as the center for plutonium research and development and production. The Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement-Nuclear Facility would be built to support production at this site.
- Y-12 National Security Complex at Oak Ridge, TN, remains the uranium R&D and production center. The FY 2009 request includes \$96 million for design of a Uranium Processing Facility at Y-12.
- Pantex Plant at Amarillo, TX, remains the weapons assembly/disassembly center. Non-destructive surveillance would be consolidated at Pantex and SNM would be consolidated leading to the proposed elimination of the Zone 4 security area.
- Tonopah Test Range (TTR), NV, would cease operations and NNSA would conduct flight testing at Department of Defense facilities.
- Major environmental testing would be consolidated at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) in New Mexico, and high-consequence testing would be consolidated at the Nevada Test Site (NTS).
- Tritium experimental operations will be consolidated at the Savannah River Site.
- Missions and capabilities across the Complex would be consolidated to facilitate elimination of numerous buildings and structures from Weapons Activity budgets.

[Note: This list is less detailed than the "preferred alternatives" in the DOE NNSA "Complex Transformation" draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). Thus, some of the duplicative facilities and missions are in the draft PEIS, but not listed here in the "highlights" of the Budget request. --Marylia Kelley]
