

NO *new* NUKES

The United States currently maintains a nuclear arsenal equivalent to 130,000

Hiroshima-sized bombs. This is fire power enough to destroy the Earth, and all life on it, many times over.

While progress has been made toward arms control, the U.S. is now considering upgrading its nuclear arsenal and creating new nuclear weapons.

Making More Weapons

Despite our nuclear overkill, a number of new and proposed programs may lead the U.S. to a large-scale reinvestment in nuclear weapons.

Mini-nukes. The Departments of Energy and Defense are designing and developing “low-yield” nuclear weapons intended to be used in tactical warfare. These so-called mini-nukes would be designed to penetrate deep into the earth in order to destroy command bunkers. Development of this kind of weapon makes it much more likely that U.S. conflicts will escalate into nuclear war. While these weapons would be relatively low-yield, in use they would create widespread and intense radioactive fallout, and cause death, radiation sickness, blindness, and genetic defects in affected populations.

New Plutonium Pits. The Department of Energy plans to resume production of plutonium pits—the explosive cores of nuclear weapons— at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. While the program will initially produce up to 20 pits a year, a “modern” plant is being designed that would be able to produce hundreds of new plutonium pits each year.

Stockpile Stewardship. “Stockpile Stewardship” is a nuclear weapons research and

The Price Paid

Amount paid to U.S. citizens under the Radiation Exposure and Compensation Act:
\$225 million

Currency stored until 1988 by the Federal Reserve for use after a nuclear war:
\$2 billion

Average amount spent on nuclear weapons each year during the Cold War:
\$3.6 billion

Proposed yearly cost of the Stockpile Stewardship program to maintain the nuclear stockpile:
\$4.5 billion

Cost of the Manhattan Project:
\$20 billion

Estimated 1998 spending on all U.S. nuclear weapons related programs:
\$35 billion

**Total Cost of U.S. nuclear weapons:
\$5.5 trillion**

(source: *The US Nuclear Weapons Cost Study* by Stephen Schwartz)

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development program run by the Department of Energy. It can best be described as the nuclear arms race in the twenty-first century. When completed, it will combine the world's fastest supercomputers with the archived data from over 1,000 nuclear tests, raw data from facilities conducting high-explosive subcritical experiments, and the world's most powerful lasers to allow nuclear bomb scientists to develop nuclear weapons by simulating the very nuclear tests that activists have struggled for decades to ban.

The National Ignition Facility (NIF). The NIF is a multi-billion dollar project that is designed to simulate a nuclear explosion. Officials at the Department of Energy claim that the NIF is an important part of ensuring the reliability of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. However, experiments at the NIF are likely to cross the line between the maintenance of current weapon stockpiles and the development of new and more deadly weapons. Like the Stockpile Stewardship program, the NIF will likely be used to circumvent a ban on nuclear testing.

“Is it the last gasp of those who cannot envision a world without nuclear weapons - or is it the start of a new nuclear era, one based on the dangerous, destabilizing, and costly premise that nuclear weapons should be more usable?”

-Stephen Schwartz, from “The New-Nuke Chorus Tunes Up,” Bulletin of Atomic

Take Action

Concerned citizens must take action if we are to stop the U.S. from making the same mistakes that led to the Cold War. It is time for this country to end the era of nuclear weapons and to work toward nuclear abolition.

Sources:

The New York Times

The Toronto Star

Physicians for Social Responsibility

The Albuquerque Tribune

Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

Please take a moment to urge your members of congress to halt all research and development of new nuclear weapons.

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Local Contact: _____



Peace Action Education Fund informs the public, media, and policy makers about policy alternatives in order to cut military spending, end global weapons trafficking, and abolish nuclear weapons.

This publication was made possible due to the generous support of the Scherman Foundation, the Town Creek Foundation, the Bydale Foundation, the Colombe Foundation, and the Ploughshares Foundation.