

NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOREVER: THE “RELIABLE REPLACEMENT WARHEAD” AND “COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION”



THE RELIABLE REPLACEMENT WARHEAD PROGRAM

The Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) Program is a plan developed by the Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) “for improving the long-term safety, reliability, and security of the nuclear weapons stockpile.” It has been used to justify a massive overhaul of the nuclear weapons production facilities now called “Complex Transformation.”

Last year, Congress zeroed out funding, clearly stating that it was “prohibiting” the development “of a Reliable Replacement Warhead until the President has a post Cold War strategic nuclear weapons plan necessary to guide transformation and downsizing of the stockpile and nuclear weapons complex.” Despite that message the administration came back with a budget request for FY 2009 that includes more than \$40 million of funding connected to the RRW.

U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE ALREADY RELIABLE

Before the 1992 nuclear weapons testing moratorium, more than a thousand explosive detonations were conducted, building up a huge base of data. Since 1992, all three nuclear weapons labs have annually certified the arsenal’s reliability under the Stockpile Stewardship Program. Despite the investment of over \$70 billion, the labs now claim that Stockpile Stewardship is no longer sustainable.

AN EXPENSIVE PROGRAM THAT COULD LEAD TO NEW NUCLEAR TESTS

RRW will not be a single type of warhead. Instead, NNSA wants a “continuous design/deployment cycle that exercises design and production capabilities” for up to four RRWs. Changing delivery systems to accommodate the RRW program could cost hundreds of billions of dollars. NNSA and the nuclear weapons design laboratories at Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia have seized upon the RRW program to advance their own agenda. They want to produce more “usable” bombs for unspecified military requirements and protect their future funding.

Despite NNSA claims that the RRW program is needed to avoid future testing, new warhead designs may well increase internal pressures to resume nuclear tests before the military accepts them. If testing were resumed, other countries would likely follow suit. Should RRW spawn a nuclear arms race, the costs would be incalculable.

Recommendations

- Eliminate all funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program.
- Postpone all Complex Transformation decisions until a new *Nuclear Poster Review* is completed.

COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION

The "Complex Transformation" (formerly Complex 2030) plan ignores U.S. disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also threatens to derail diplomatic efforts with Iran and North Korea. At home, it creates serious environmental and health risks.

Complex Transformation involves a massive overhaul of U.S. nuclear weapons facilities. DOE's vision includes a continuous stream of new nuclear weapons designs and production, involving a host of new and "modernized" plants. Far from scaling back nuclear weapons activities, a new plutonium bomb core facility is planned (for which the DOE has requested \$100 million in FY 2009). With both the public and national security experts calling for U.S. leadership towards a world free of nuclear weapons, Complex Transformation is particularly counterproductive.

FINANCIAL COSTS

The estimated price tag for Complex Transformation starts at \$150 billion, according to the Government Accountability Office. Given DOE's documented history of cost overruns and the fact that current estimates do not include funds for eventual decommissioning and cleanup of the facilities to be constructed, the total cost may approach \$300 billion.

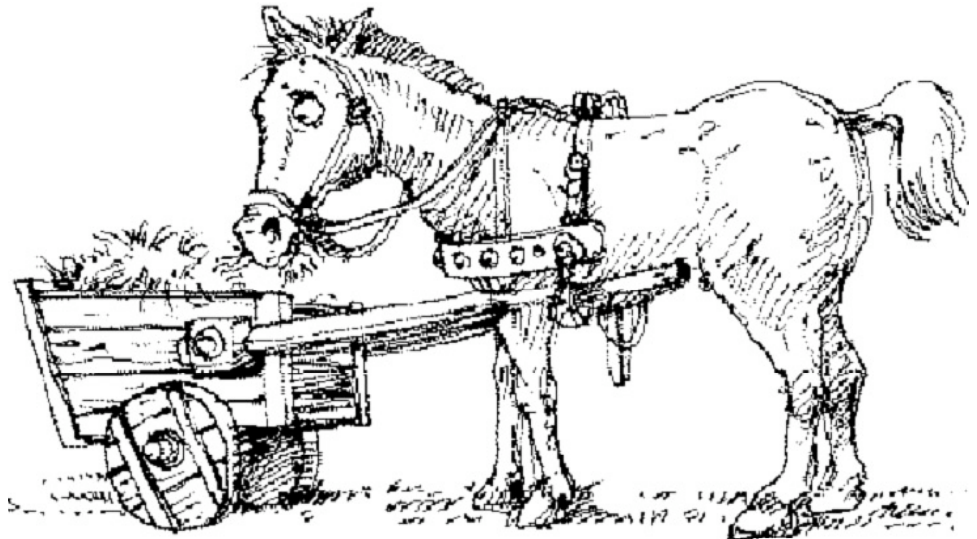
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH RISKS

Complex Transformation threatens the air, land, water, and health of communities around DOE's nuclear weapons facilities. All of the current nuclear research and production sites are polluted. New accidents, spills and leaks are common. Workers at the Livermore and Los Alamos National

Laboratories have suffered from plutonium exposure. Highly enriched uranium fires and leaks have plagued the Y12 Complex in Oak Ridge.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IMPACTS

Complex Transformation signals to the rest of the world that the United States is rebuilding a Cold War-size production capability. The U.S. cannot expect to convince nations such as North Korea and Iran to give up their nuclear programs while it plans for the production of a new generation of weapons. This provocative policy would increase the global nuclear danger, making our communities less safe.



PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

NNSA's Complex Transformation and the Reliable Replacement Warhead program are designed to indefinitely preserve nuclear weapons. This agenda is contrary to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which requires signatories to negotiate in good faith the elimination of nuclear arsenals. The programs also undermine the vision of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Senator Sam Nunn, and others who have recently called for a world free of nuclear weapons under the framework of the NPT to increase national security.