

Cancel the Plan to Replace the Entire U.S. Nuclear Arsenal With Enhanced Weapons

Over the next 30 years, the United States plans to spend close to \$2 trillion dollars to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles, and submarines that delivers the weapons with more capable versions.

The U.S.'s current nuclear arsenal is more than sufficient to deter an attack (and indeed sufficient to destroy life on this planet as we know it many times over), and the conventional military deterrent is also sufficient that we do not need additional nuclear weapons or upgrades.

<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/10/26/a-nuclear-arsenal-upgrade/a-trillion-dollar-nuclear-weapon-modernization-is-unnecessary>

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), notes that plutonium is dangerous material and making the plutonium nuclear weapon cores is difficult and time consuming. The GAO says the National Nuclear Security Administration (NSA) lacks both a comprehensive cost estimate and a schedule outlining all activities it needs to achieve the goal of turning out 80 plutonium cores per year by 2030. Some production costs at the Los Alamos site have doubled in the last 4 years.

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/syoung/why-is-congress-funding-nuclear-weapon-the-biden-administration-doesnt-want/>

Some experts are worried about the safety records of the two sites selected for plutonium pit production: Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, where plutonium parts have historically been assembled, and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, where other nuclear materials for America's bombs have been made since in the 1950s. <https://publicintegrity.org/national-security/key-sites-proposed-for-nuclear-bomb-production-are-plagued-by-safety-problems/>

Not only is there massive cost, but the workload involved in replacing every bomber, missile, submarine and warhead in the stockpile is enormous. Funding new weapons like the nuclear sea-launched cruise missile the Navy does not want and continuing to fund the nuclear capable F-35 fighter jet, which has been dogged by serious technical and operational problems, does not make us safer. Rather, it diverts money from badly needed human needs programs.

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<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/10/17/peace-activists-220-groups-demand-us-cancel-f-35-fighter-program>

A research analyst for the National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies, recently noted that canceling all U.S. student loan debt would cost about \$1.75 trillion, or about the same amount as the total cost of the F-35 fighter jet program. It would also be enough to be enough to reduce child poverty in the United States by more than 60% for the next two decades. <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/10/17/peace-activists-220-groups-demand-us-cancel-f-35-fighter-program>

If the United States continues to see its nuclear arsenal as central to its security, this will only encourage other states to believe that they also need to develop or improve their own nuclear arsenals, leading to dangerous proliferation and an accelerating arms race.

Instead, the United States should deemphasize the importance of nuclear weapons in its security policy as it works with the other nuclear armed states to eliminate these weapons altogether. And it should use the money spent on modernization to improve health care, food and housing security and education for its people.

