

# Nukes: The Ultimate In Waste

***“Perhaps the most egregiously wasteful defense expenditure is the excessive budget for the entire nuclear weapons complex...”*** Lt. Gen. Robert Gard, Jr. US ARMY (Ret.)

***“It is my view that there is no sensible military use for nuclear weapons...”*** Admiral Noel Gayler, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

**The definition of waste is expending resources on something you will not or cannot use.** Nuclear weapons can never be used. They are militarily useless and their simple existence increases the risk of catastrophe. Nukes are the only weapons that can destroy our country.

**Dollars wasted on nuclear weapons are not available for vital human needs.** Investing in people, education, healthcare or research and development produces future returns. Spending on war produces nothing but destruction and wasted resources.

**Our nuclear arsenal far exceeds what is needed for deterrence.** The U.S. made 70,000 nuclear warheads, more than all other countries combined. In 1957 Admiral Arleigh Burke (Chief of Naval Operations) said 720 warheads on invulnerable submarines would be enough to deter the Soviet Union. But excessive stockpiling of nukes continue today.

**No one knows the actual total costs.** Estimates are \$10.1 trillion (1940-1996 in today's dollars) including delivery systems and maintenance. There has never been accurate accounting. Return on investment was less safety, more risk and questionable deterrence.

**The Soviet threat was routinely exaggerated.** The bomber and missile “gaps” were untrue. Pork barrel politics, election posturing, excessive secrecy and the military-industrial-complex drove weapons acquisition that civilian and military leaders knew was unnecessary.

**Waste is endemic in military spending but nukes are the worst.** Waste, graft and lack of accountability are legendary in Pentagon spending. Single source, cost plus contracts with guaranteed profit and cost overruns are the norm not the exception. Procurement of nukes ***“...resembled...the Soviet Union where decisions were made...by a remote government, without reference to market forces, behind closed doors, for reasons that would not be made public.”*** Stephen I. Schwartz\*

**Hidden costs.** Cleaning up nuclear production facilities and eventually dismantling obsolete and unusable nuclear weapons will likely cost as much as building them.

**The Waste Continues** Rather than working with other nations to implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, **we are fueling a new nuclear arms race** by spending \$1.7 trillion to completely rebuild and “modernize” the entire arsenal and delivery systems.

***“...hundreds of billions of dollars were expended on programs which contributed little or nothing to deterrence, diverted critical resources and effort away from those that did or created long-term costs which exceeded their benefits.”*** \*Stephen I. Schwartz, *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940*, 1998

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