

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2017

The Honorable Keith Hall
Director
Congressional Budget Office
D St SW & 2nd St SW
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Director Hall,

We are concerned about the affordability and advisability of the complete recapitalization and expansion of the nuclear weapons enterprise as envisioned in the Department of Defense and National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA's) nuclear weapons enterprise modernization plan. We write to seek further information on the estimated costs of sustaining and modernizing the nuclear deterrent over the next two-three decades.

The nuclear modernization plan will require an investment of what has been estimated by independent groups, including the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, as \$1 trillion to sustain and modernize the nuclear triad. As we embark on significant investments, including tens of billions of dollars each year, information about the long-term costs and plans are deeply relevant to inform congressional oversight and near-term decisions on these programs.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO)'s most recent ten-year estimate covering 2017-2026 places the cost at \$400 billion, which is consistent with and may exceed the trillion-dollar estimate across 30 years. NNSA annually issues a long-term nuclear weapons modernization plan. However, we have not seen any detailed long-term planning by the Department of Defense.

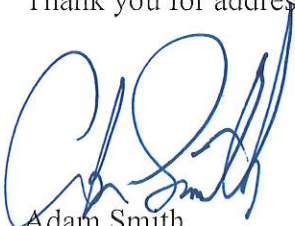
Compounding our concerns, former Department of Defense officials have noted the lack of planning related to nuclear modernization. For example, former Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Brian McKeon stated in October 2016, "We're looking at that big bow wave and wondering how the heck we're going to pay for it, and probably thanking our stars we won't be here to have to answer the question." Similarly, then-Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Frank Kendall stated in 2014 that he saw a "big affordability problem" with respect to looming nuclear modernization programs.

Addressing these issues effectively will require a clear understanding of the cost of U.S. nuclear forces, including long-term planning and projected costs of recapitalization programs, responsive infrastructure programs, and the deployment of nuclear weapons. We understand CBO is conducting a long-range cost and cost-savings study focused on nuclear weapons and delivery

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vehicles, including the cost and various options for sustaining a triad or a dyad. We would be very interested in the results of such a study. In addition, because CBO can provide an independent, impartial, and in-depth examination of the looming costs, we would be interested in your assessment of the cost to sustain and modernize the triad over the next three decades.

Thank you for addressing these issues and we look forward to seeing the results of your analysis.



Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee

Sincerely,



Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee