



Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

A national network of organizations working to address issues of nuclear weapons production and waste cleanup



June 25, 2020

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of Armed Services Committees:

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of Appropriations Energy & Water Subcommittees:

Dear Committee Members:

Re: Preventing FY2021 Funding to More Quickly Detonate a Nuclear Test

For more than four decades, Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) member organizations have monitored operations within the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. These are the sites around which our group members live and in some cases work. We have fought for and, with your help, often won improvements in local site operations and federal nuclear weapons policy.

Among the many changes we have witnessed, none has benefitted our members, our country, and the world in which we live more profoundly than the cessation of nuclear testing in Nevada. As you know Congress passed the moratorium with bipartisan support and President Bush signed it into law in 1992. It has held firm and made us all safer for the past quarter century.

We were dismayed when a May 22 Washington Post article reported that top national security officials in the White House had recently discussed detonating a U.S. nuclear test, with the flawed rationale it might create negotiating leverage in relation to China and Russia. While no decision appears to have been reached at that meeting, the article noted that according to a senior official exercising the option is “very much an ongoing conversation.”

Our dismay turned to alarm with the June 23 release of the full text of the Senate National Defense Authorization Act and its SEC. 3167, deeming that “not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available to carry out projects related to reducing the time required to execute a nuclear test if necessary.”

ANA unequivocally declares that resumption of nuclear testing at any yield is absolutely unacceptable. Even a hint of resumed nuclear testing by the U.S. could be dangerously destabilizing. If it were to occur, it would lead to testing by other states, likely including China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. It would accelerate the growing nuclear arms race, damage prospects for future nuclear arms control negotiations at the very moment when global arms control is gasping for air, and undermine, even fatally, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is already under great stress.

We note particularly the suffering of downwinders, including some of our members, who were grievously harmed by nuclear weapons testing. This suffering should never be repeated.

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability represents three-dozen local and national “watchdog” organizations. As noted, we address policy, safety and cleanup issues pertaining to the nuclear weapons complex. We speak with one voice in urging you in the strongest possible terms to block funding or other initiatives that lead toward a possible return to nuclear weapons testing by the United States.

In particular, the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization and Appropriations Acts should neither authorize nor appropriate funds that speed preparations to potentially resume such testing.

Rather, our country should seek to fully embrace the Non-Proliferation Treaty on this, its 50th anniversary year. Much can be done at the pending Review Conference and in other venues to ensure all of the treaty obligations are upheld, including those of the nuclear weapons states to negotiate and achieve elimination of their nuclear stockpiles.

We must safeguard and enhance the local, national and global measures for which we have fought and won while continuing to build a better future for our children and the generations to come. Nuclear testing is a charred and bitter bridge to the past, not the forward path we desire toward a more stable and healthy future.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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