



Peace and Justice Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR

March 20, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Submitted by: Manuel Hector Jr., Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission

Subject: Reliable Replacement Warhead Program

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution requesting that Representative Barbara Lee, and Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein not support funding for the “Reliable Replacement Warhead” program, or appropriations or other benefits to the civilian nuclear power industry; and requesting that the University of California not violate the Nuclear Free Berkeley Ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECT

Nuclear weapons play a key role in the United States (U.S.) security policy. During the Cold War, the United States, in an effort to achieve and maintain an advantage in the nuclear arms race, invested large amounts of money and technical resources into nuclear weapons design, testing, and maintenance. Many of the weapons designed required high-upkeep costs, justified primarily by their Cold War context and the specific and technically sophisticated applications they were created for. With the end of the Cold War, however, nuclear testing has ceased in the United States, and new warhead development has been significantly lessened. As a result, the need for high technical performance of warheads has decreased considerably and the need for a longer lasting and reliable stockpile has taken a high priority.

The Reliable Replacement Warhead is a controversial new design American nuclear warhead and bomb family that is intended to be simple and reliable, and provide a long lasting, low maintenance future nuclear force for the United States. It is also the project name for the ongoing United States Defense of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) design project, started in 2004, to develop these designs. The NNSA has raised concerns that maintaining current nuclear weapons will become increasingly difficult.

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At issue for Congress is how best to maintain the nuclear stockpile so that it will retain, for many decades, capabilities that political and military leaders deem necessary. There are three options under consideration: (1) extend the service lives of current warheads without nuclear testing; (2) develop, build, and deploy a new generation of warheads without testing to replace the current stockpile; or (3) resume nuclear testing, which the United States suspended in 1992, as a tool to help maintain existing warheads or develop new ones.

BACKGROUND

The concept underlying the RRW program is that weapons laboratories in the United States can design new nuclear weapons that are highly reliable, and easy and safe to manufacture, monitor, and test. If that proves to be possible, designers could adapt a common set of core design components to various use requirements, such as different sized missile warheads, different nuclear bomb types, etc.

NNSA officials believe the program is needed to maintain nuclear weapons expertise in order to rapidly adapt, repair, or modify existing weapons or develop new weapons as requirements evolve. They see the ability to adapt to changing military needs rather than maintain additional forces for unexpected contingencies as a key program driver. However, Congress has rejected the notion that the RRW is needed to meet new military requirements. In providing funds for 2006, the Appropriations Committee specified, “any weapons design under the RRW program must stay within the design parameters validated by past nuclear tests.”

Opponents of the RRW program believe it has nothing to do with making U.S. weapons safer or more reliable, but is merely an excuse for designing new weapons and maintaining jobs at the weapons laboratories. They note that the Secretaries of Defense and Energy have certified that the existing nuclear weapons stockpile is safe and reliable in each of the last nine years. The existing stockpile was extensively tested before the United States entered into the moratorium on nuclear weapons tests.

Critics maintain that the RRW program could significantly damage U.S. national security. Critics believe an expansive RRW program would anger allies of the United States as well as hostile nations. They worry that it would disrupt the global cooperation in nonproliferation that is vital to constraining rogue countries such as Iran and North Korea, and to controlling clandestine trafficking in nuclear materials and equipment.

Additionally, critics question whether or not the RRW program would force the United States to once again resume nuclear testing, as the United States is unlikely to consider the new warheads “reliable” enough unless they have been tested at least once.

At its meeting of February 5, 2007, the Peace & Justice Commission approved the following motion:

M/S/C (*Bohn/Cohen*) recommending that the City Council adopt a Resolution requesting that Representative Lee, and Senators Boxer and Feinstein not support funding for the “Reliable Replacement Warhead Program”, and requesting that the University of California not violate the Nuclear Free Berkeley Ordinance. **Ayes:** Bohn, Brody, Cohen, Freedkin, Litman, McDonald, Neola, Sherman, Sorgen, Wagley, Winkelman; **Noes:** Wornick; **Absent:** Seaton.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the recommendations of the Commission's report.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachment

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. -N.S.

OPPOSING FUNDING FOR THE RELIABLE REPLACEMENT WARHEAD PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Peace & Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code [BMC] Chapter 369.070); and

WHEREAS, the Nuclear Free Berkeley Act, Chapter 3.68.010 of the Berkeley Municipal Code (Ordinance No. 5784-NS § 3, 1986) found that, "A. The intentional destruction of cities in war is the rule and not the exception", B "State, national and international governmental bodies have failed to control war and in fact, have in many cases, been responsible for war and the conditions of war"; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 12.90.030 of the Nuclear Free Berkeley act says; "The people of Berkeley find that: The nuclear arms race poses an intolerable threat to humanity...." and that "the threat to use nuclear weapons is an integral part of United States foreign policy...." and "since the Nuremberg principles hold individuals accountable for crimes against humanity, and since nuclear weapons cannot be used without indiscriminately killing civilians and violating accepted international rules of war, then nuclear weapons are illegal, and should be prohibited within the City" and that "We will not remain silent while policies of global death and destruction are carried out in our name...."; and

WHEREAS, "Uranium mines, refining facilities, transportation of radioactive materials, nuclear reactors, and radioactive waste are part of a "nuclear fuel cycle" integral to nuclear weapons production"... and "Mining, refining, and transportation of radioactive materials directly endangers the health of the workers involved. Transportation of radioactive materials risks accidents releasing radioactivity into the environment. Radiation is routinely released from all operating nuclear reactors... while accidents such as Three Mile Island release still more. There is no safe means known for the disposal of nuclear waste..."; and

WHEREAS, the Nuclear Free Berkeley Act states that: "No person, corporation, university, laboratory, institution or other entity shall, within the City of Berkeley, knowingly engage in work for nuclear weapons;" and

WHEREAS, "The University of California's system-wide administration, which runs both Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories"...and ..."Numerous business firms that work under contract or sub-contract to produce nuclear weapons components," ... and...security requirements accompanying the nuclear weapons industry threaten the civil liberties of the people of Berkeley and restrict the freedom of information necessary to make decisions concerning the future of the community" (Ordinance No. 5784-NS § 3, Section 12.90.030 Findings.); and

WHEREAS, when the Unites States ratified the United Nations Charter, it made a commitment to Article 2.4 that states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations"; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the World Court unanimously ruled that: “There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”; and

WHEREAS, the Bush administration has laid out the “Reliable Replacement Warhead” plan to overhaul and upgrade the United States nuclear weapons infrastructure and expand the United States nuclear weapons arsenal with the construction of “Complex 2030”, a state of the art nuclear bomb factory, and has outlined the possibility of using these weapons in a nuclear preemptive strike.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley requests Representative Barbara Lee, and Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein not support funding for the “Reliable Replacement Warhead” program including the construction of “Complex 2030”, or appropriations or other benefits to the civilian nuclear power industry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Berkeley requests that the University of California not violate the Nuclear Free Berkeley Ordinance (Ordinance No. 5784-N.S.), and sends a copy of this Resolution to the University of California Board of Regents asking them to oppose the development of these weapons at any University of California facility.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to United Nations Secretary General Ban.

