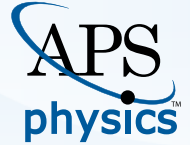




**PHYSICISTS COALITION
FOR NUCLEAR
THREAT REDUCTION**
physicistscoalition.org



December 3, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Durbin, Chairman Alexander, and Ranking Member Feinstein:

As you deliberate on the FY 2021 Defense and Energy & Water Development appropriations bills as part of a larger appropriations package, I ask that you keep Section 8133 of the House-passed Defense bill and Section 308 of the House-passed Energy & Water Development bill, both of which prohibits FY 2021 or earlier funds being used to prepare for or conduct a nuclear weapon test.

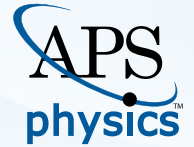
The leadership of the Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction unanimously agrees that resuming nuclear testing would threaten the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, while offering the United States no technical benefits.

Earlier this year, Sen. Tom Cotton amended the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to include at least \$10 million to “carry out projects related to reducing the time required to execute a nuclear test if necessary.” However, our Stockpile Stewardship Program has “allowed DOE and DOD to certify the safety, security, and effectiveness of the US nuclear weapons stockpile to the President without the use of nuclear explosive testing” for the last 23 years, according to the National Nuclear Security Administration’s FY 2020 Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan. Therefore, there is no technical need for a resumption in US nuclear testing.

The United States has conducted more than 1000 nuclear weapons tests, more than any other country in the world. Our last test occurred in 1992, after which we began negotiations for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Since CTBT opened for signatures and ratifications, the world has seen a new international norm against nuclear testing. Since 2000, only one nation - North Korea - has conducted



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nuclear tests with the last occurring in 2017. Should the United States resume testing, breaking this norm, other nations could follow our example, with our nuclear-armed rivals using the opportunity to improve their weapons while some non-nuclear states may begin developing weapons.

The lack of technical need and jeopardization of the international nuclear testing taboo make it clear that the FY 2021 appropriations package must include language to prohibit any use of current or prior year funds to prepare or conduct a nuclear weapons test.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stewart C. Prager'.

Dr. Stewart Prager
Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction
Professor, Princeton University