

From Lawrence J. Korb

According to the Bush administration's plans, this nation would maintain a strategic nuclear force of 2200 operationally deployed nuclear warheads and a reserve of 2400 active nuclear warheads. The cost of this program would be about \$31 billion a year.

If we were to reduce the nuclear force to a total of 1000, 600 operational and 400 in reserve, the cost would drop to about \$9 billion. Not only would this number be more than enough for deterrence, it would free up more than \$20 billion a year and actually enhance U.S. security.

By dropping down to 1,000 nuclear weapons, the U.S. would set an example for the rest of the world and allow us to lead the world in an effort to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and material, thus making it less likely that a nuclear weapon would fall into the hands of a terrorist group with global reach.

Moreover, if the U.S. spends the money saved on such programs as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR) and dealing with health and poverty in the developing world, our security will be further enhanced. Spending on the CTR programs, which buys up loose nuclear materials is actually scheduled to decrease in the FY 2009 budget. By allocating additional funds for poverty and disease, it will be less likely that states with these problems will become so unstable that they might become havens for terrorists.

Finally, by combating hunger and poverty the U.S. image in the world will be improved. This will help us win the battle of ideas with terrorist groups like al-Qaeda.