

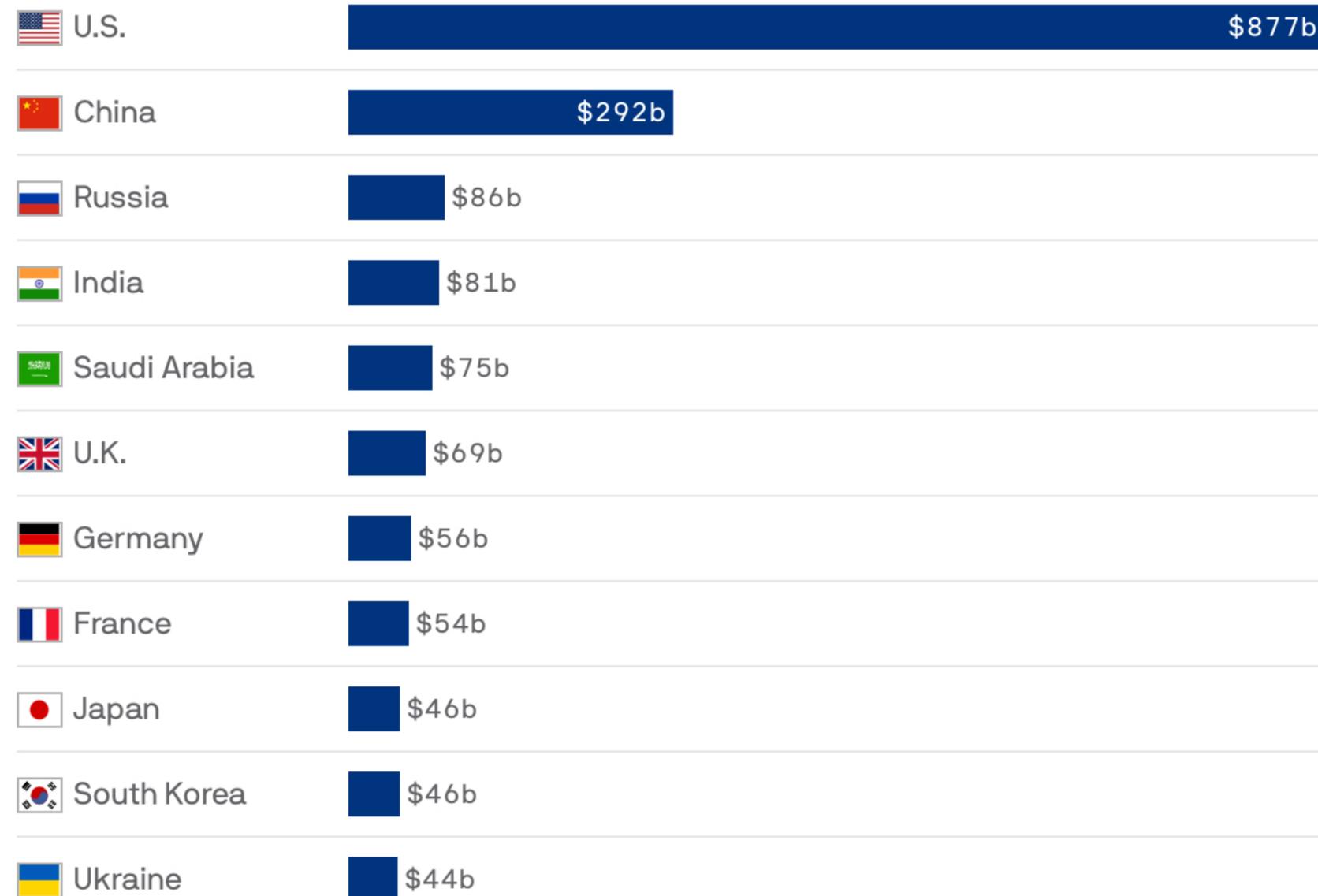
The US Nuclear Weapons Budget: The Sky's the Limit?

**Eryn MacDonald, Global Security Program, Union of Concerned Scientists
RECNA, Nagasaki, 16 October 2023**

The US Military Budget

- The United States spends more on its military budget than the next nine countries combined. And many of those countries are its allies.

Top countries in military spending, 2022



Data: SIPRI; Chart: Axios Visuals

The US Nuclear Weapons Budget

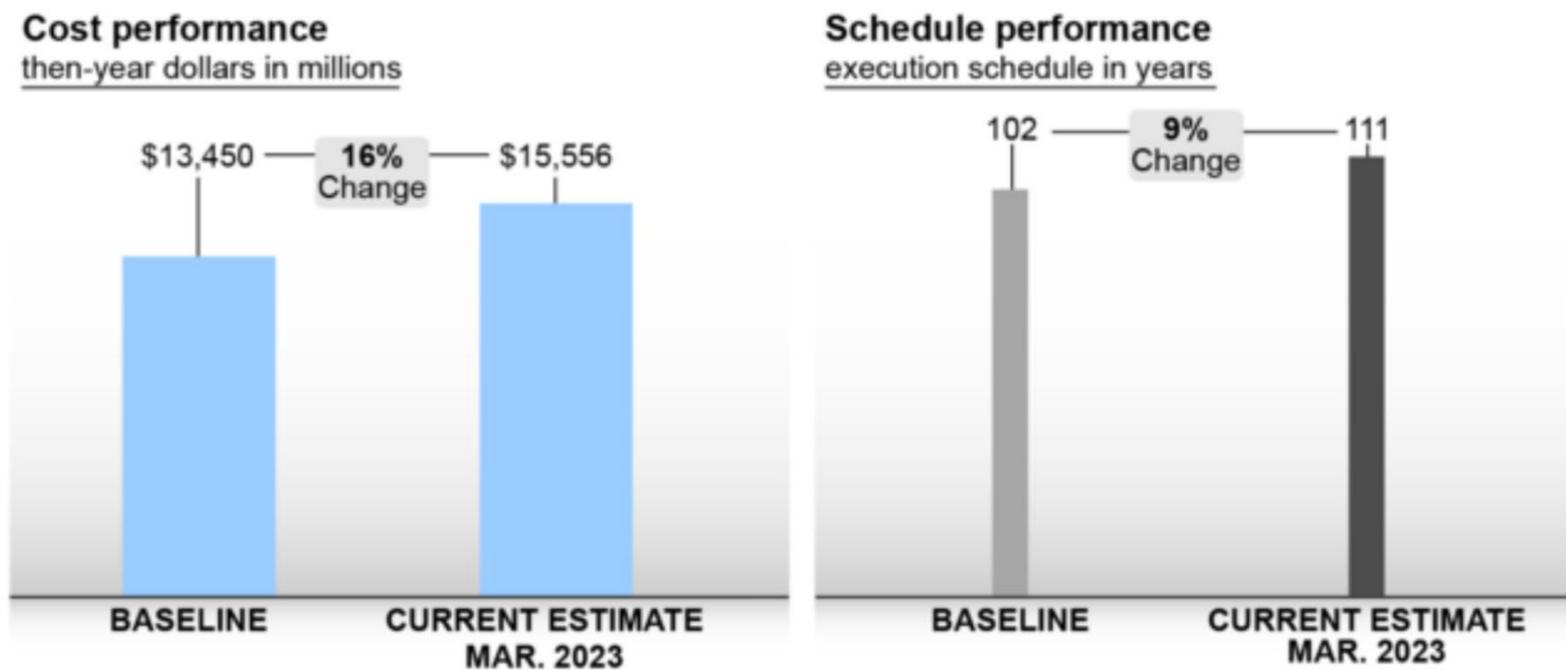
- What is the US nuclear weapons budget?
- Two main components
 - Department of Defense (DOD)
 - Delivery vehicles: missiles, planes, subs
 - Operations
 - National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
 - Semi-autonomous agency of the Department of Energy (DOE)
 - Warheads, bombs

Select Major Nuclear Weapons Modernization Programs

Triad Leg	Weapon	Plan	Estimated Request	FY23 Request	Total Cost Estimate
Air	B-21 Strategic Bomber	New	≥100	<u>\$5 billion</u>	<u>\$89.1 billion</u>
	Long Range Standoff Weapon	New	1,020	\$981 million	<u>\$16.2 billion</u>
	B61-12 Gravity Bomb	Modification	480	\$0	<u>\$8.3 billion</u>
	W80-4	Life Extension	N/A	<u>\$1.1 billion</u>	<u>\$11.2 billion</u>
Sea	Columbia Class Submarine	New	12	<u>\$6.2 billion</u>	<u>\$113 billion</u>
	Trident II D5 Missile	Modification	N/A	<u>\$1.1 billion</u>	<u>\$24.5 billion</u>
	W88	Life Extension	N/A	\$162 million	<u>\$2.7 billion</u>
	W93	New	N/A	\$338 million	<u>\$14 billion</u>
	SLCM-N	New	N/A	\$0	<u>\$30 billion</u>
Ground	GBSD (LGM-35A Sentinel)	New	>650	<u>\$3.6 billion</u>	<u>\$95 billion</u>
	W87-1	Modification	N/A	\$680 million	<u>\$12 billion</u>

Source: Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation

Cumulative Cost and Schedule Overruns for NNSA's Portfolio of Major Projects in the Execution Phase, as of March 2023



Source: GAO analysis of National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) project documentation and data. | GAO-23-104402

As of March 2023, NNSA's major projects collectively exceeded their cost estimates by over \$2 billion. They also surpassed their collective schedules by almost 10 years.

The US Defense Budget Process

- Military branches prepare budgets and submit to the President
- The administration prepares a Presidential Budget Request and submits it to Congress in early February
- House and Senate Armed Services Committees prepare the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)
- House and Senate Appropriations Committees prepare appropriations bills
- If no appropriations bill is passed by end of fiscal year (October 1st), Congress can pass a Continuing Resolution (CR), if it does not do this, the government will shut down until they do

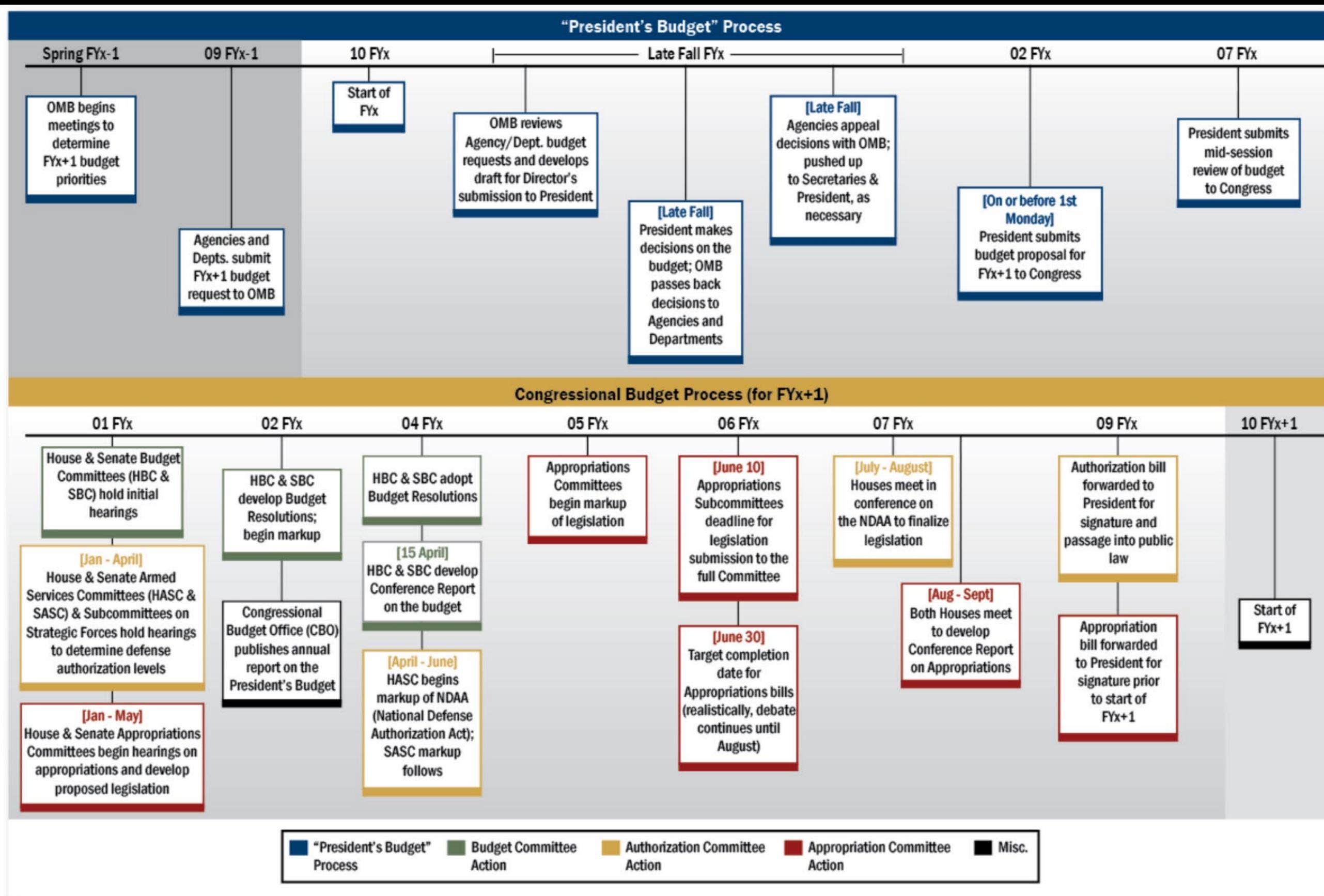
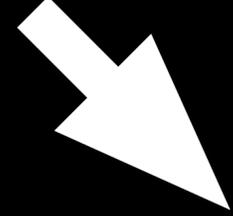


Figure 16.1 Congressional Budget Process for Nuclear Weapons-Related Programs

Military Contractors



Constituents

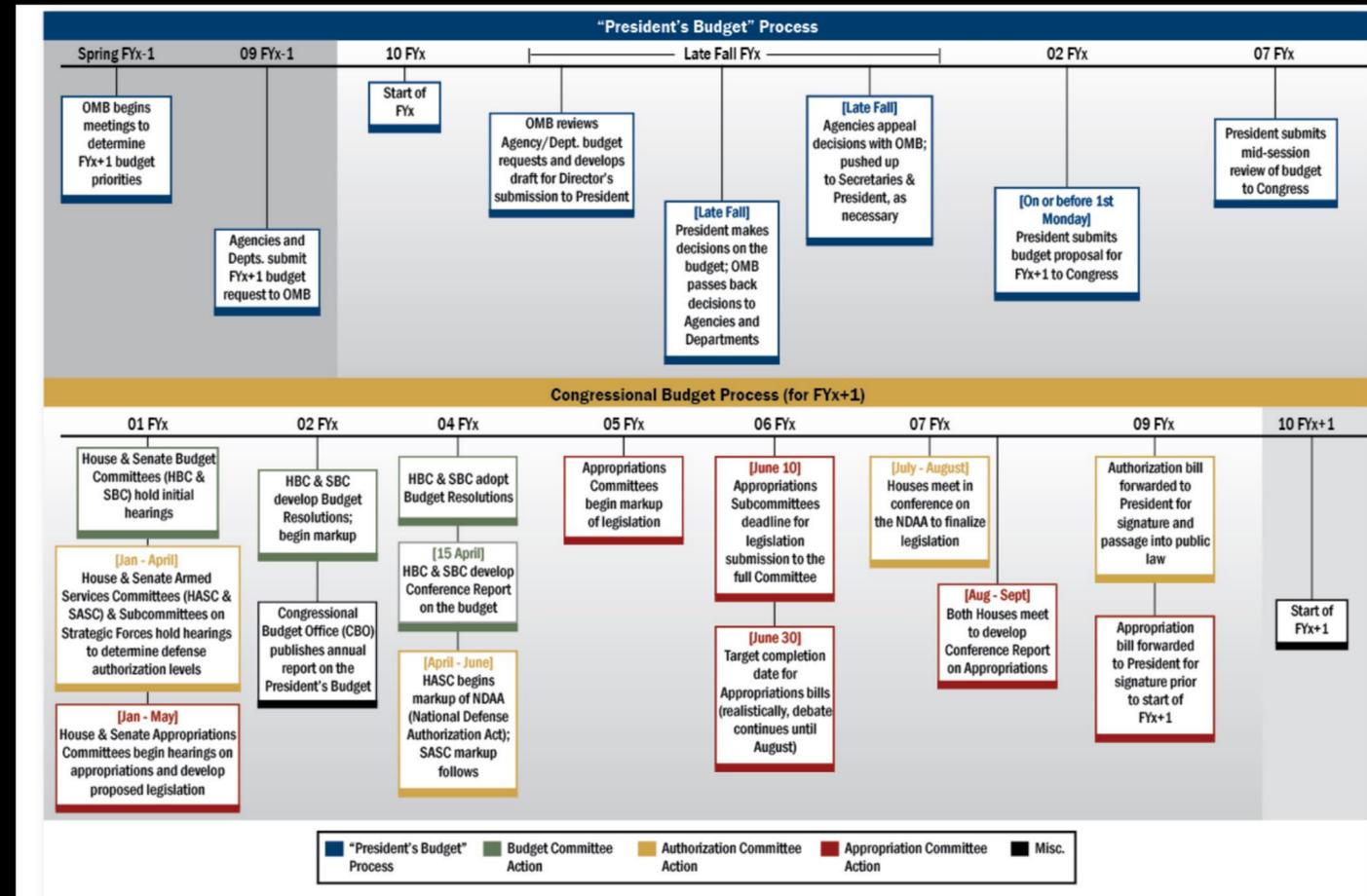
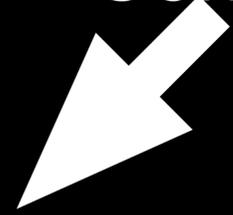
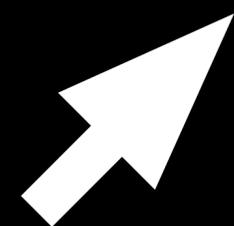


Figure 16.1 Congressional Budget Process for Nuclear Weapons-Related Programs

Outside Experts



Donors

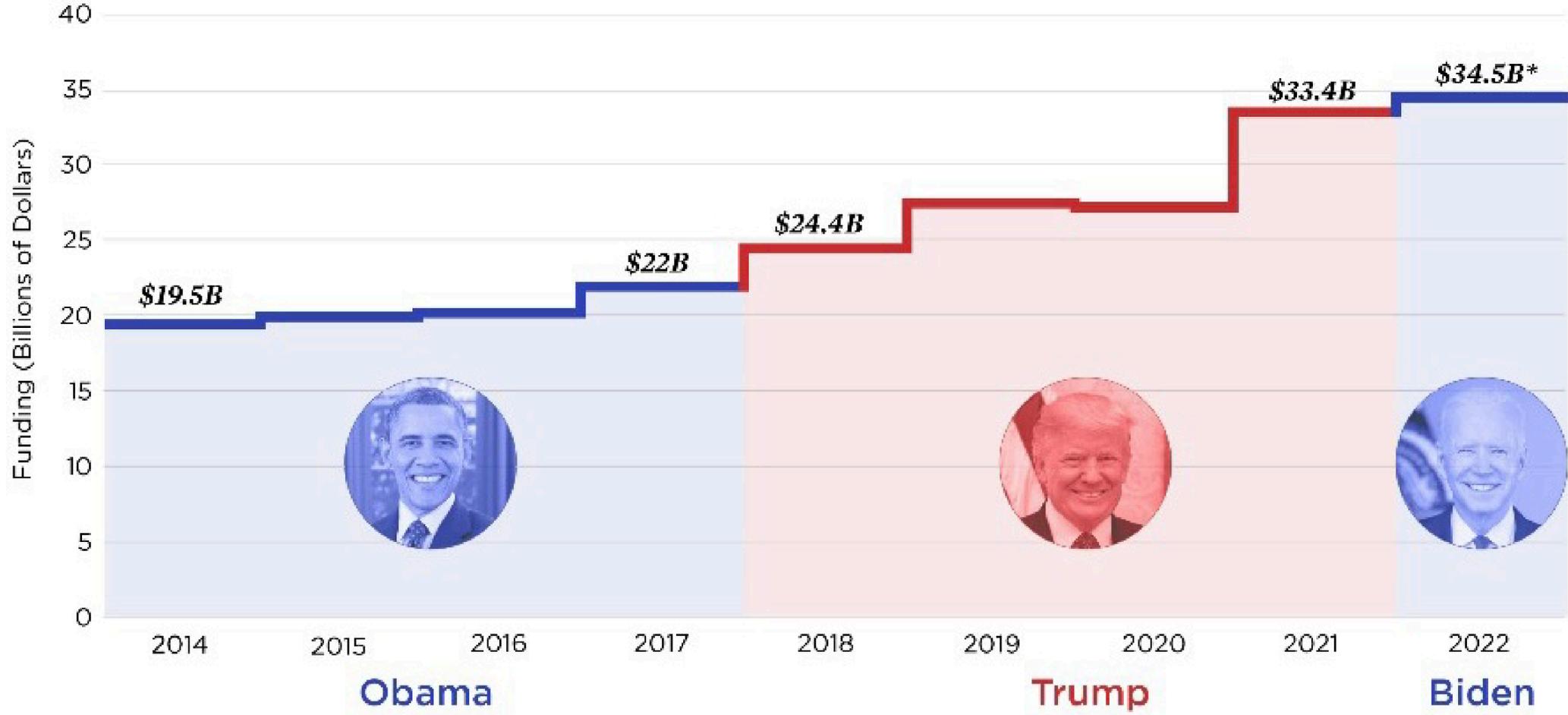


Defense contractor contributions in 2020 elections

Rank	Contributor	Total Contribs	To Candidates and Parties			To Outside Spending Groups
			Total	Dem%	Repub%	Total
1	Lockheed Martin	\$6,067,956	\$5,990,563	47.1%	52.6%	\$71,792
2	Raytheon Technologies	\$5,904,949	\$5,784,827	54.9%	44.8%	\$91,251
3	Northrop Grumman	\$5,324,075	\$5,274,019	54.7%	45.1%	\$42,728
4	General Dynamics	\$3,377,351	\$3,312,418	51.6%	48.2%	\$33,582
5	L3Harris Technologies	\$2,642,892	\$2,621,038	52.2%	47.7%	\$13,211
6	General Atomics	\$2,501,874	\$2,137,105	32.2%	67.8%	\$363,295
7	Anduril Industries	\$2,426,616	\$2,426,566	3.2%	96.7%	\$0
8	Leidos Inc	\$2,004,671	\$1,977,544	54.3%	44.9%	\$22,689
9	BAE Systems	\$1,533,585	\$1,524,809	54.7%	45.1%	\$8,405
10	COLSA Corp	\$1,459,223	\$433,720	3.3%	96.7%	\$1,025,563

Source: open [secrets.org](https://www.secrets.org)

The trend continues up



Fiscal year funding for National Nuclear Security Administration weapons activities and Department of Defense strategic forces.

Source: White House Office of Management and Budget

*Biden administration budget request.

What might affect future funding?

- October 2023 Strategic Posture Review
 - “The nuclear force modernization [program of record] is absolutely essential, although not sufficient.”
 - “The Commission is sensitive to budget concerns, but required adjustments to U.S. strategic posture are necessary and should be prioritized...the Commission is concerned that artificial congressional caps placed on spending for national security will undermine the actions the Commission recommends.”
- Expiration of New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in February 2026
 - Constrains US and Russia to 1,550 deployed nuclear weapons each
 - US modernization program was premised on continuation of some kind of limitation agreement with Russia, without this, there will be push for more