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Major Nuclear Sites and Cleanup Projects

The following is a brief summary of only a few of the DOE nuclear remediation projects as listed in the [Paths to Closure](#) report.

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), Carlsbad, NM

\$8.1 billion through 2034

This controversial nuclear waste storage site is the only location in the world designated for long-term storage of transuranic (TRU) nuclear waste generated by defense-related activities. Located 26 miles east of Carlsbad, New Mexico, WIPP project facilities include disposal rooms excavated 2,150 feet underground in an ancient, stable salt formation. TRU waste consists primarily of tools, gloves, clothing, and other such items contaminated with trace amounts of radioactive elements, mostly plutonium. WIPP began actual disposal operations of defense-generated nuclear waste on March 26, 1999.

Idaho Operations Office

\$21.4 billion through 2050

Involves cleanup, transport and storage of nuclear waste generated by operations of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), a site covering 890 square miles in a remote desert area in southeastern Idaho. The project involves nine operating areas at INEEL and several facilities in the city of Idaho Falls.

Richland Operations Office

\$55.6 billion through 2070

Involves cleanup of the [Hanford Site](#), an area covering 586 sq. miles in southeastern Washington state. The federal government built the world's first full-sized plutonium production plant at Hanford in 1943. Since then, Hanford has been used for a variety of purposes including further plutonium production, chemical processing, waste management and research. In 1944, plutonium from Hanford's first reactor was used in the Trinity test bomb detonated in New Mexico and in the "Fat Man" bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan in 1945.

Savannah River Operations Office

\$36.8 billion through 2070

The Savannah River Site (SRS) was established in 1950 produce special radioactive isotopes for national security purposes and to support research in nuclear medicine, space exploration and commercial applications. Since the end of the Cold War, program emphasis has shifted to environmental cleanup projects including nuclear material stabilization, facility stabilization and deactivation, environmental restoration and waste management.

Oak Ridge Operations Office

\$8.9 billion through 2014

Involves sites in Tennessee, Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri. The Oak Ridge Reservation in Oak Ridge, Tennessee has approximately 1,100 acres of unlined radioactive waste burial grounds, inactive tanks, surplus facilities and unlined ponds. As a result, soil, surface water, groundwater, and two major rivers in the area are contaminated. Weapons research facilities were established at the site of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in 1943 as part of the World War II Manhattan Project. The laboratory's original mission was to produce and chemically separate the first quantities of plutonium as part of the national effort to produce the atomic bomb.

Other sites involved include:

- **Albuquerque Operations Office - \$4.4 billion**
- **Chicago Operations Office - \$0.4 billion**

- **Nevada Operations Office - \$1.6 billion**
- **Ohio Field Office - \$6.1 billion**
- **Oakland Operations Office - \$1.1 billion**
- **Rocky Flats Field Office - \$7.7 billion**

Few of the above estimates include costs of monitoring the safety and stability of stored nuclear waste for hundreds, even thousand of years beyond 2070.

None of the above estimates include costs of taking apart about 7,500 nuclear bombs and warheads by 2003 according to the terms of the START II arms reduction treaty, or the [\\$475.5 million to help Russia dismantle and store its weapons stockpile](#).

According to the Department of Energy, the U.S. built a total of about 70,000 nuclear bombs and warheads between 1945 and 1990. According to history, exactly two of them have been used in battle.

At the same time, the Cold War lead to the development of a science that could wipe out human civilization -- atomic weapons -- and a science that may someday save it -- space travel. Indeed, the two were perceived as battles in the same war. Whether it was a bigger A-bomb or more days in orbit, it was a Cold War victory. What were we thinking?

Reference Links

[Nuclear Spring](#)

Some fascinating, often troublesome facts about all things nuclear collected by the Brookings Institute. From your About.com Guide.

[A Halloween to Remember: Cuban Missile Crisis](#)

Thirteen terrible days in 1962 when the U.S. and Soviet Union came close. Way too close. From your About.com Guide.

[Hanford: Past Horror, Future Hope](#)

Creating and cleaning up one of the worst environmental disasters in history. From your About.com Guide

[Cold War: Costs of Victory](#)

The Berlin Wall and communism fell, but now the U.S. is spending \$475.5 million to help the former Soviet Union dismantle and store its excess nuclear weapons. From your About.com Guide.

[Nuclear Waste: Coming sooner to a cave near you?](#)

Congress is considering a bill that will require the transportation and storage of highly radioactive nuclear waste 7 years sooner than under the original law. From your About.com Guide.

[Senate Fails to Override Nuclear Waste Act Veto](#)

The U.S. Senate has failed to override President Clinton's April 25 veto of the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000. However, Yucca Mountain, NV remains the location for permanent storage of high-level nuclear waste. From your About.com Guide.

[Nuke 'em?! - The problem](#)

Las Vegas Guide Robert Romano looks at the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste storage issue from the viewpoint of a next-door neighbor.

[Nuclear Waste in the US](#)

Links to articles and sites dealing with United States nuclear waste issues. From Environment Guide Patricia Michaels.

[US Government Job Openings](#)

Links to vacancy announcements at dozens of agencies and military branches.

[Huge Index of Government Web Sites](#)

One of the largest lists of agencies, bureaus and offices on the Web.

[Military Questions?](#)

Guide Rod Powers probably has the answers.

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