



Chairman Mike Simpson

*Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and
Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2015 Budget Hearing on Weapons Activities Programs

April 3, 2014

Opening Statement As Prepared

I'd like to call this hearing to order. Good morning, everyone.

Mr. Held, I'd like to both welcome you to your first appearance before the Subcommittee, and express our support for your work to steer the NNSA organization while we await Senate confirmation of an Administrator and Deputy Administrator. By all accounts you have provided leadership at a time when the Department is having to make some tough decisions, and your service is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Cook, welcome back. This is the fourth budget request for Defense Programs that you've submitted and the fourth time you've testified before this Subcommittee. And General Dawkins, welcome back. We appreciate your attendance today.

The activities funded under Weapons Activities are needed to sustain our nuclear deterrent and ensure strategic stability at a time when other nations are modernizing their nuclear stockpiles and enhancing their own capabilities. With the recent events in Ukraine and a resurgent Russia, the stability that our nuclear weapons stockpile provides our nation and its allies should be valued more highly than ever.

The President's Budget Request for Weapons Activities is \$8.3 billion, an increase of \$534 million, or 7%, over the fiscal year 2014 level. These increases are being requested in a budget year where funding for overall defense discretionary spending will be essentially flat. In the past, this Subcommittee has supported major increases to the Weapons Activities budget in order to make the investments that are needed to ensure our nuclear weapons stockpile is being effectively maintained. Under these tight budget caps, it's only going to get harder. Increases to the NNSA budget are available only because we cut national security funding elsewhere. This is a zero-sum game, and there are serious concerns about our ability to meet all our defense needs under these constraints. Only the highest priorities that provide the best value for our nation's defense will be successful in competing for this scarce funding.

The programs funded within the Weapons Activities appropriation are extremely important, and the Subcommittee has been very clear that the NNSA is expected to follow through and deliver on its promises in order to rebuild its credibility here in Congress. I am interested in hearing what progress you've made and how you plan to carry out the reforms that are necessary to improve federal oversight of the NNSA's programs, projects, and activities.

The budget request for Weapons Activities is being submitted on the heels of a number of recent decisions that are driving changes to your plans for modernization, such as the decision to defer work on the integrated warhead and to investigate additional alternatives for construction of the Uranium Processing Facility. I look forward to hearing from you on how those modernization plans are evolving and what work you've done to clearly articulate and justify those plans so that our nuclear weapons stockpile remains safe, secure, and effective.

Please ensure that the hearing record, responses to the questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from time you receive them. I also ask that if Members have additional questions they would like to submit to the Subcommittee for the record, that they please do so by 5:00 PM tomorrow.

With those opening comments, I would like to yield to our ranking member, Ms. Kaptur, for any opening comments that she would like to make.

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