



As Prepared

Chairwoman Marcy Kaptur
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Hearing on the Department of Energy's
National Nuclear Security Administration FY 2021 Budget Request
March 4, 2020

The Subcommittee will come to order.

Administrator Gordon-Hagerty, I want to thank you and your team for being here today. We continue our budget hearings with the Department of Energy's fiscal year 2021 request for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

The NNSA and its workforce are responsible for the consequential mission of ensuring the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nation's nuclear deterrent. This includes nonproliferation activities and powering the Navy's nuclear ships and submarines. I cannot overstate the enormity of this mission. I know that each of you here today feel that weighty responsibly.

I want to take a moment recognize two important milestones. Twenty years ago, Congress created the NNSA. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the science-based Stockpile Stewardship Program, which gives us confidence in our nuclear deterrent without underground testing, and allows for a reduced stockpile size.

I want to be clear – maintaining a safe, credible, and reliable nuclear deterrent is a national priority. But we must do so in a cost-effective, responsible manner. This budget request does neither.

I have serious concerns about this request. At this very hearing last year, I warned that the increases proposed then were not sustainable year over year. And yet, the Administration has doubled-down on its unrealistic request, proposing to grow the 12 percent increase in fiscal 2020 to 25 percent in 2021. Yes, I said that correctly, a 25 percent increase!

To put it plainly, this budget is not realistic or executable. It is based upon overly optimistic assumptions. In fact, I am becoming more convinced that Congress could write a blank check and NNSA still would not be able to deliver on its budget and schedule commitments.

In analyzing the budget justification documents – which were shared with us only hours before the Secretary testified last week – it is clear NNSA is trying to do far too much, too quickly. Past precedent tells us that when we try to go too fast and don't do the upfront planning, NNSA makes costly mistakes. The fact of the matter is that nuclear deterrence is too important to get wrong. We don't have an

unlimited defense budget, and as such, the answer cannot be limitless funding—making budgets require making strategic choices.

Turning to nonproliferation, deterrence and diplomacy are complementary. The Department's nuclear nonproliferation programs have been a cornerstone of our efforts to prevent nuclear material from falling into the wrong hands, both internationally and at home. Yet this budget request proposes cuts to the Global Material Security program that is so vital to those efforts. In addition to rectifying this, I also believe we need to take a fresh look at emerging threats as nuclear technologies evolve and as nations try to acquire them.

The NNSA makes up a sizable portion of this Subcommittee's bill. As such, we have a solemn obligation to the taxpayers to ensure that limited federal resources are provided as part of a balanced, coherent strategy.

Again, thank you for your service to our nation and for being here today.

With that, I'll close my remarks and turn to our Ranking Member, Mr. Simpson for his opening remarks.