

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON NUCLEAR FORCES AND POLICIES IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM**

---

**WEDNESDAY, April 17, 2013**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Mark Udall (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Udall, Sessions, and Fischer.

Majority staff member present: Jonathan S. Epstein, counsel.

Minority staff member present: Robert M. Soofer, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Lauren M. Gillis.

Committee members' assistants present: T. Finch Fulton and Lenwood Landrum, assistants to Senator Sessions; and Peter Schirtzinger, assistant to Senator Fischer.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARK UDALL, CHAIRMAN**

Senator UDALL. The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces will come to order. This afternoon we will receive testimony from the Department of Defense regarding nuclear matters for the fiscal year 2014. Let me thank all of our witnesses today for taking time from your busy schedules to testify.

Let me start with a quick administrative note. Following this open session we will move down to Senate Security Room SVC-217 for a closed session. To accommodate that, I'd like to wrap up this open session by 3:30 p.m. So that I'd ask that we go straight into questions after Senator Sessions and I make some brief opening remarks here. If you have any opening statements, we'll be happy to enter those into the record.

In that spirit, I'm going to keep my remarks very brief. I want to start by saying that I'm honored to chair this subcommittee and to work with the distinguished ranking member Senator Sessions. He is deeply rooted in these policy matters and he's going to have to train me over these next months as we work together and create a partnership.

I don't have to tell you here today that the Strategic Forces Subcommittee oversees some of the most critical and sensitive elements of our National security infrastructure. Colorado and Alabama have key roles to play in those no-fail missions. I'm looking forward to working with Senator Sessions and all of our members in the bipartisan fashion that's been a hallmark of SASC and this subcommittee for many years as we pursue our important work.

With that, let me make some short comments regarding the fiscal year 2014 budget. The 1251 report which was originally required by the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act and then was revised in Section 1043 of the fiscal year 2012 NDAA is required to be part of the President's annual budget submission. The report gives a 10-year projection into the investments being made in our nuclear deterrent by the Departments of Defense and Energy.

As was the case last year, the report is late and we understand it may be June before we see it. I believe that Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe intend to mark up the SASC bill in June, so I'll be asking assistant Secretaries Creedon and Weber to talk about that issue, explain what happened, and give us some idea of when the Congress might see the report.

The fiscal year 2014 numbers do show that even in times of sequestration we are making the best possible effort to move forward with a strategy to keep our deterrent maintained. And the fact that we were able to fly our B-2 and B-52 bombers in the recent joint exercise Full Eagle with South Korea was an important sign of the many nations that rely on the U.S. deterrent as a part of their overall national security strategy.

I want to commend today's witnesses, those that serve under them, and the Department as a whole for the hard work put into that effort. I know it was not easy, but it was important.

On a final note, to my knowledge the Congress has yet to see any changes to the nuclear force structure as a result of New START. We thought that was coming in the fiscal year 2013 budget, but we're still waiting for that information. It is important—I know my ranking member agrees—that the commitments made as a part of New START are upheld, so I'll be looking for some updates on when that guidance might be expected.

Finally, I would like to say a word of thanks to all of our witnesses for your longstanding commitment to ensuring the safety and surety of our nuclear deterrent. You and the military men and women that you lead do demanding and often unsung work to keep our country safe around the clock. Thank you for your service.

With that, let me turn to Senator Sessions for his opening statement and then we'll move on to questions.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JEFF SESSIONS**

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Senator Udall. It's a pleasure to have you here.

In a very odd way perhaps, I believe what we'll do this year, maybe next year, is very, very, very significant as to what our nuclear situation is going to be in the years to come, because there's real ambivalence in the White House, there just is. I was disappointed and concerned about the Secretary of Defense. He an-

swered the questions pretty well at his confirmation hearing, but the Nuclear Zero report I consider well outside the mainstream of American nuclear policy. It's bipartisan.

Ben Nelson and I got passed "America's Strategic Posture," the final report of the Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. We required that because we thought the Cold War is over and the war on terrorism was evolving and our weapons are aging; what are we going to do? So we put the best minds, I think, in the world—you had William Perry, who challenged nuclear weapons, he thought we could reduce nuclear weapons. He was President Carter's Secretary of Defense—right, Secretary of Defense under President Carter; James Schlesinger, who was—Perry was Clinton's and Schlesinger was Clinton and Reagan—I mean, Carter and Reagan. And you had John Glenn, Morton Halperin, Lee Hamilton, Fred Ikle, Keith Payne, James Woolsey.

So they came out with a report that acknowledged changes, but concluded we should maintain basically our bipartisan long-term strategy for defending America and that nuclear weapons weren't obsolete, they do play a role in the world today that cannot be wished away, that our allies are worried about our commitment with regard to nuclear weapons to protect them and to use them, and we're behind on modernization, which they said had to be fixed.

So they reached a very valuable bipartisan recommendation. And then with New START, as you mentioned, we reached an agreement that, with the President, to begin the modernization proliferation. We talked about, had a commitment to funding.

I have acknowledged—but I don't want to see this as any kind of weakness in my view, but, Mr. Chairman, I've acknowledged that maybe we don't need to build, spend 10, \$11 billion on two buildings. You know, I saw the biggest steel mill, the virtually newest, the biggest industrial project in the United States, several years ago. It was near my home town. It was a \$4.7 billion steel mill. It was unbelievably big. So to say each one of these buildings are going to cost more than that made me a bit nervous.

So I'm not saying we can't save some money. But the production, the ability to guarantee that we modernize and be able to produce new pits and do the things that are necessary has to be there. I'm willing to work with you if we can keep the costs down some, but I really think that we're going to have to—if we're not able as a Nation or as I guess Congress and the administration to reach an accord on this, it may become a big issue for us. We may have to have a big national discussion about this whole issue and take the cases to the American people and see where it comes out. We've been able to avoid that for a long time. We've had a pretty much bipartisan agreement.

So as I raised it with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman this morning, we are behind on the ballistic missile submarine and the air-launched cruise missile by two years behind schedule. The decision has not been made on the following ICBM program, follow-on ICBM program. The life extension program for the B61 bomb and the W88 and W77 warheads are two years behind schedule.

So we want to talk about where we are on these programs, because if this continues then we will have reached a permanent fall-behind level and I think it would be hard to catch up.

Thank you for letting me go a little bit longer than I would normally do. But I've tried to just lay out the fact that we'll have an important year, Mr. Chairman. You're not new to all these issues and you know what's going on. So I look forward to working with you.

I would just say this. As I said at an international conference, nuclear weapons in a limited number of nations' hands cannot be said to have caused wars or certainly it hasn't caused a nuclear war yet. There's been a certain degree of uneasy stability in the world, but it's been stability to the degree we normally haven't seen throughout history.

So I think a case can be made that nuclear weapons are a force for good, but if we allow North Korea to have them and Iran to have them and then the South Koreans and the Japanese and the Saudis and the Egyptians—everybody wants nuclear weapons and we've got a problem out there. And if we keep reducing our numbers and it gets so low that a competing nation thinks, well, we can be a peer competitor of the United States of America, we can build that many weapons and put us in a situation that creates instability in the world that doesn't now exist.

So as we wrestle with how to make the world a safer place, let's be careful we don't do something that's counterproductive.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

We're going to, if it's acceptable to the Senator from Nebraska, go right to questions. We want to welcome the Senator from Nebraska to the subcommittee, to our first hearing of this Congress. We know Nebraska has long had an influence in this subcommittee and we look forward to working with you.

I'm certainly inclined to defer to you if you'd like to start off the questions, Senator Fischer. I know your time's valuable. Senator Sessions and I will be here for the entire hearing, but if you'd like to begin by asking some questions, please. The floor is yours for five minutes.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to be on this subcommittee. As you know, it is a very important subcommittee, not just for our country, but also for the State of Nebraska. So I thank you for your kind welcome. It's good to be here. And thank you, Ranking Member Sessions, as well.

There's just a couple things I wanted to touch on today if I could. First of all, with the Minuteman III ICBM. Madam Secretary, if I could visit with you about that I'd appreciate it. Exactly a year ago your prepared statement before the House Armed Services Committee stated: "A two-year Air Force study examining options and required capabilities for a follow-on system is nearly complete." This year your statement reads: "A two-year Air Force analysis of alternatives, examining options and required capabilities for a follow-on system ground-based strategic deterrence is projected to be complete in 2014."

So have we examined the options and required capabilities for that follow-on system?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MADELYN R. CREEDON, ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR GLOBAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS**

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you, Senator, and I will also ask General Kowalski to weigh in on this as well as he's closer to the actual conduct of the study.

I know this has taken a lot longer than we anticipated, but one of the things that we want to make sure that we fully examine is all the options. So that ranges from a complete replacement to additional ways to extend the current 2030, which is when—which is when it will—the current system in its present condition will be sustainable.

One of the other things that is also going on in the context of the Air Force, which is also a little bit why this study has taken a bit longer, is the Air Force is also very carefully analyzing exactly how the current system is degrading, so that they have a much better understanding of how they might extend the life of this if that is the alternative that's chosen.

So we really need to do this, finish the study. As the President has said, this is an integral part of the triad and the present policy, obviously, is to maintain the triad.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Creedon follows:]

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. JAMES M. KOWALSKI, USAF,  
COMMANDER, AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND**

General KOWALSKI. Senator Fischer, the 2-plus years really encompasses two studies. The first was what we often called the pre-analysis of alternatives or capabilities-based assessment. During that assessment you sort of survey the entire universe of possibilities for a follow-on weapons system and then you scope it down so that you've got a reasonably sized number of alternatives to look at as you go into the analysis of alternatives.

So that was completed. It was signed out by the chief of staff of the Air Force back in October 2012, and then we went into the analysis of alternatives. We had some bureaucratic delays as the study plan went back and forth. The study is about to begin. It will take about a year and it will report out next year.

But we've put a lot of work into this and we're comfortable that we have a very sound and structured plan to go forward with this analysis and truly look at all of the possible alternatives out there and to weigh all the different attributes that we think we'll need as we think about this weapons system beyond the year 2030.

[The prepared statement of General Kowalski follows:]

Senator FISCHER. And you do anticipate then that 2014 will be the completion date?

General KOWALSKI. Yes, Senator.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Then for the entire panel, I would like to address the triad. The Air Force Secretary Donley has stated that as our nuclear forces get smaller, quote, "It's all the more important that we maintain a balanced triad." General Kehler, who I have had the honor to meet and visit with, has repeated similar statements about the need to maintain all three legs of our nuclear triad.

Could each of you give me your quick opinion: Do you think that the triad is still the best configuration that we have for our nuclear

forces, and do you see any reason or would you ever that you can foresee suggest that we should abandon the triad that we have? Madam Secretary, if we could start with you, please.

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you. The nuclear posture review made clear that it is the position of the administration to maintain the triad. That continues to be the position of the administration and even, although we've not completed the study on new presidential guidance, nevertheless maintaining the triad is also an element of that study.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANDREW C. WEBER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR, CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS**

Mr. WEBER. Yes. I would just add, Senator, that last year under the auspices of the Nuclear Weapons Council we developed a 25-year strategy that aligns our warhead plans as well as our platform and delivery system plans. That strategy, known as the 3 Plus 2 Strategy, which was briefed to the Senate last year, very much maintains our triad as part of our safe, secure, and effective deterrent.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Weber follows:]

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL TERRY J. BENEDICT, USN, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC SYSTEMS PROGRAMS**

Admiral BENEDICT. Senator, the triad is complementary. It's not redundant. When you look at the risks to our nuclear force, the three major risks that were outlined in the nuclear posture review was: one, the risk of a technological disruption; second is a risk of a technical failure with one leg of the triad; and the third is a risk of geopolitical breakout or change in the world.

When you evaluate all of those risks and then you look at the legs of the triad that we have today, that's a good balance and a good mix and a relatively inexpensive way to provide that sense of the ultimate guarantee of national sovereignty.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Benedict follows:]

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Admiral BENEDICT. Senator, I fully support the concept of a triad and I foresee no issues that would change that status in the future.

Senator FISCHER. Good to hear. Thanks.

**STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL GARRETT HARENCAK, USAF, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, STRATEGIC DETERRENCE AND NUCLEAR INTEGRATION**

General HARENCAK. Senator, the triad is one of those enduring ideas that, regardless of the fact that the world has changed many times since we first embarked on a triad, it has proven itself to be one of those ideas that time has not come to get rid of it. It is as relevant today as it was when we first embarked this decades ago.

[The prepared statement of General Harencaak follows:]

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, General. Thank you to all the panel.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Secretary Creedon, let me turn back to you. I want to ask you about the fiscal year 2014 budget. Does it—I should say, how does the fiscal year 2014 budget request reflect force structure changes associated with the New START treaty?

Ms. CREEDON. The way that the fiscal year 2014 budget request is structured is it allows both the Air Force and the Navy to continue their preparatory work that will support a decision that will be made in the context of fiscal year 2015 to implement either a reduction in the total number of deployed and total number of delivery systems. So that could be reductions in ICBMs or that could be reductions in the number of tubes, in other words on submarines, so that the tubes could be modified so that they would no longer be capable of launching an SLBM.

The decision as to which of those options we choose has not been made yet, but the way that the '14 budget structure is designed is to preserve the option as we get closer in time, as we understand more about the pros and cons of each option, and frankly also as we get more into where the whole geopolitical situation is going, where we're going with further discussions with Russia, it allows us to maintain that flexibility for as long as possible before we make a decision.

Senator UDALL. Let me talk about the recent ICBM test launch out of Vandenberg that was cancelled in an effort to prevent escalation of the current tensions with North Korea. Those launches have been under way for 20 years, you well know, and they're important to ensuring the reliability of our deterrent. Do you anticipate any additional delays for this testing program?

Ms. CREEDON. At the moment, Senator, as you indicated, we thought it was wise to postpone for a while the last launch because of the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Right now it is the plan of the Department and it's the plan of the Air Force to do the next launch on time. We have a window of May 21 to 23. That is the current schedule.

What we've actually done is the system that was going to be launched—so that this particular launch is actually just going to move to the right, and so we'll move everything to the right a little bit. We also—we do recognize very much the importance of these tests, not only to the Department of Defense, but also to DOE, because they're also a significant participant in these tests.

They do provide valuable information and we need to make sure that these go forward. It was a situation that we just wanted to deal with in a way that we didn't increase the provocation cycle that's been going on on the Korean Peninsula. So we thought it was a prudent idea to postpone for a short while this test. But at the moment, as I say, we're on track to do the next—to do it again in May.

Senator UDALL. That update's appreciated.

Let me stay on the subject of North Korea. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, this crisis has again underlined the importance of our deterrent. Very recently three B-2 and then four B-52H aircraft participated in a joint training exercise on the peninsula, and this was especially important as I see it to South Korea as a demonstration of our nuclear umbrella.

Do you see any signs that nations that are protected by our nuclear assurance are questioning our resolve in this area? Should they have any reason for concern?

Ms. CREEDON. They should not. We have a very extensive dialogue. There are two sets of bilateral dialogues, one with Japan and one with the South Koreans. We spend a lot of time on these dialogues. They're extraordinarily important that they have complete and total confidence in our strategic deterrent.

Last week we just had yet another one of these dialogues. They were with the Japanese and we took them up to Bangor. The Navy was quite an extraordinary host in terms of providing an insight into the capabilities of the Navy. Previously we had had the South Koreans out at STRATCOM.

So we have put a lot of emphasis into this, into these dialogues. It's extraordinarily important that they feel confident in this deterrence and that they are completely and totally assured at all times, because we recognize that either of these countries if they wanted to could develop nuclear weapons and it would be extraordinarily important for them not to and would really increase the tensions in that part of the world if they decided that this was a road down which they wanted to go.

So it's a vitally important series of dialogues.

Senator UDALL. Thanks for that update.

Let me turn to Senator Sessions and recognize him.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you.

Secretary Creedon, there's a problem there. A March 10th New York Times report said that: "Now this new sense of"—this is talking about North Korea and South Korea, South Koreans specifically. "Now this new sense of vulnerability is causing some influential South Koreans to break a decades-old taboo by openly calling for the South to develop its own nuclear arsenal, a move that would raise the stakes in what is already one of the world's most militarized regions."

It goes on to say: "While few here think this will happen any time soon, two recent opinion polls show two-thirds of South Koreans support the idea, posed by a small but growing number of politicians of columnists, a reflection, analysts say, of the hardening attitudes since North Korea's underground test."

And I remember talking with members of this commission, talking about our other allies in the region. I don't know that it's appropriate to mention them. But they expressed concern about this immediately. They're worried about it. When you have the President saying—goodness. When the President said in South Korea just a few weeks ago, or last year, he said:

"As President, I have changed our nuclear posture to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in our National security strategy. I made it clear the U.S. will not develop new nuclear warheads, we will not pursue new military missions for military weapons. We have narrowed the ranges of contingencies under which we would ever use or threaten to use nuclear weapons."

That was March 2012 in South Korea. So I think you need to work extra hard right now because you're correct, we've got a lot of allies that could produce nuclear weapons. And if the goal is to



constrain the number of nations that have them—and I think that's a good goal—then we need to be sure. South Korea can't be sitting there with North Korea with nuclear weapons and they don't have them and not have confidence that the United States—or have confidence the United States won't be there.

Can you share with me a little more of your thoughts on that?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. That was part and parcel of why not only did we carry on the exercise, the Full Eagle exercise, but also why we had very visible presences of the bombers, particularly the B-2 bomber, because it's not just the nuclear umbrella that provides the assurance and the deterrence to our allies in the region. It's the whole package. It's all the conventional forces, it's the ballistic missile defense forces. We have Aegis cruisers over there in the region.

We're in the process of putting in place a second TPY-2 radar to provide not only for the defense of Japan, but the defense of our assets in the region. There's already one TPY-2 radar over there. We're moving a THAD battery to Guam. That's in—parts of the battery have already been delivered. We're providing a broad package of assurance.

So it's not just nuclear; it's everything. Even the decision that we took to add 14 additional GBI's in Fort Greely had a reassurance effect to our allies because it also makes it very clear that we take the threat from that region very seriously.

So this is something that we've had a lot of focus on. It is part of a much larger package. Nuclear is an important part of it, but it's all the conventional systems, it's all the assets. It's also very much the reason why the Department has increased focus and will continue to increase focus on that part of the region generally, as was outlined.

Senator SESSIONS. For the South Koreans and the Japanese, having a nuclear-armed North Korea and them not having nuclear arms and to have any uncertainty about the willingness of the United States to defend them is a dangerous thing. That's how the Korean War broke out to begin with, a misunderstanding as to what the United States considered its vital national interest.

So I just worry about that and I think we've got to get that clear. We need to get moving with a—so my time is about up, but we'll have another round, I guess.

But thank you for sharing that. We need to air it. We need to be honest about it. This is not a little bitty issue, and that's why it's so important with Iran. I wish we could just look the other way, but it's not going to be good for the whole region if Iran gets nuclear weapons either. And it's a matter of great strategic importance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. Senator Fischer, back to you.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Kowalski, do you think that the Minuteman III ICBM still provides value to our nuclear forces, and do you see that value—if so, do you see that value diminishing any time soon?

General KOWALSKI. I think absolutely it provides value. As we look at the nuclear powers of the world, you have the major nuclear powers, Russia and China, and then you have these regional powers, clearly North Korea being the latest to demonstrate both a

weapon and potentially a capability to deliver that weapon. We have Iran on a trajectory where they have the potential to have both weapons and already the delivery systems with their space program.

So what the ICBM provides in a world that is increasingly complex is, first, that ready, responsive, deterrent posture against the major nuclear powers. Second, what it provides is an assurance that no nuclear power can exercise nuclear coercion or blackmail on the United States. There are 450 hardened launch facilities in the heartland of this country and if we did not have those we need to think through what that scenario looks like in 15 or 20 years.

So I continue to be a strong advocate for the ICBM.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

In your prepared statement, you talk about extending it until 2030, I believe. Yes, 2030. There's some concern about the components aging out. Do you think that the missile can be extended far into the future? Are we going to be able to do that?

General KOWALSKI. I think I am confident we can get the missile as it is to 2030 with the programs that we have in place or the programs that we don't have funded yet, but plan to pursue in the next couple years. For example, the propulsion replacement program. We know we're going to have to replace the propellant. We're not really sure when that will age out and when that program needs to start. We're taking a little bit of risk because we think the propellant can last 30 years, which puts at about 2025, 2027. If it doesn't, if it needs to be done sooner, then we'll need to start that in a couple of years.

We'll be starting that. That is actually a program that we are aligned to execute with the Navy so that we can go to a common propellant. These are some of the things that we're examining and in particular the Air Force Acquisition and Material Command is examining with Admiral Benedict's team.

The missile guidance set is another area that we're looking at for commonality. But all of the things that we plan to invest in the Minuteman III are things, are specific subsystems that we intend to dovetail into the ground-based strategic deterrent, so the follow-up. So we will get—with the analysis of alternatives, we'll have a better sense of what ground-based strategic deterrent is going to look like. And as we develop the next missile guidance set, the next propulsion replacement for the Minuteman III and we look at the launch facility equipment, then what we intend to do is do that adaptation, so that we're not paying for the same thing twice with the follow-on.

Senator FISCHER. Do we have the resources to do all that?

General KOWALSKI. I'm confident that we do. All of Global Strike Command is less than one percent of the Department of Defense budget, and I think when you look at the surety and the security that our nuclear forces provide I think it's a sound investment.

Senator FISCHER. And do you think that the priority will remain that into the future that you see?

General KOWALSKI. Senator, that's not a decision I get to make.

Senator FISCHER. Come on.

General KOWALSKI. But I'll continue to advocate strongly for it.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Did anyone want to add anything to that? [No response.]

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Secretary Creedon, let me come back to you for a final question. In the NDAA last year we established a commission to examine the role of the National Nuclear Security Administration, NNSA, in meeting DOD's stockpile requirements. DOD is tasked with setting up that commission. Can you update us on the status of the commission?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. First, we understand that of the 12 members that need to be appointed 10 are appointed. There are two left that need to be appointed. When the direction was provided in the NDAA for the Department of Defense to fund this commission, this panel, it was considered a new start under the budget and so because we were operating under a continuing resolution at the time we couldn't move forward with the funding for the new start, as you're well aware of all this history with the new start.

Now that we have a budget in place, we can now go forward with the reprogramming to support this. So what we're doing right now is finding the money to be able to include either in a below-threshold reprogramming or in an above-threshold reprogramming so we can get the commission started, hopefully in time with the full commitment of the members of the panel.

The other thing that we've been looking at is talking to several federally funded research and development centers to see what their capabilities are to support this panel, for lack of a better description, the sort of care and feeding of the panel, taking care of the logistics, helping with the writing, that sort of thing. So we're trying to get that teed up so when the chair and the co-chair are designated that we can meet with them and present some options to them.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that update. Also thank you for reminding those of us sitting at this end of the table that continuing resolutions, although they're seductive in that you can think they're saving costs, they actually can add costs. I know my colleagues believe the regular order makes more sense up on the Hill and when we appropriate in the right way.

Let me turn to General Harencak. Are you satisfied with the Air Force's relationship with the Nuclear Weapons Council and would you make any recommendations to improve it?

General HARENCAK. Senator, I think if you look back at the history of the Nuclear Weapons Council, there have been times where there has been a lot of inactivity. I think recently, in the past few years, the Nuclear Weapons Council has been making some—lots of decisions, which is necessary, lots of great interaction. I believe overall the relationship is very strong between the U.S. Air Force and the Council. Recommendations would be, to the extent at all possible within the framework of how it was birthed and how we staff it, that the more continuity we can give, through either a professional staff or a group of people who maybe might be assigned to it for extended periods of time, would be helpful, simply because of the fact that there's nothing we do in the nuclear enterprise that can get done in 2, 3, 4 years. Most of what we work on have very

long lead times. It takes a long time for a lot of good reasons. To the extent that we could provide any type of continuity throughout periods of the timeframes necessary to get the nuclear enterprise to accomplish things would be helpful.

Senator UDALL. As you think further about that, if you do have additional recommendations or thoughts we'd certainly be open to hearing those.

Let me turn to another relationship, that that you have with the Navy. Are you satisfied with the progress on the common Navy-Air Force warhead system and would you make any recommendations for its improvement?

General HARENCAK. Senator, I'm very satisfied with the relationship that we have with Admiral Benedict and the Navy. I think we're making huge, huge breakthroughs, if you will, on working on a very difficult and complex set of problems as we look to have adaptable external systems that we could both use in the future.

My recommendation would only be that, while we believe it will be successful, I am very optimistic, the United States Air Force is very optimistic, that this will be a successful endeavor, I think we have to be mindful of the fact that should there come a time where we believe for whatever reason that it not be feasible or affordable to do so, that we have the good sense, if you will, to say hey, we tried it, it may not work for a host of reasons, maybe technical reasons, or just the world has changed, so to speak.

I think we have to be ready to have some offramps on that. But right now I remain very optimistic, and I will tell you the Navy is very supportive of what we're doing and we're working extremely well together on it.

Senator UDALL. Admiral, you want to comment briefly and follow on?

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir, if I may. I appreciate the Air Force comments. We are fully supportive of a common warhead moving forward. I will tell you in all honesty we had challenges this year. Specifically, we did not have a prior line item, budget line item. So again we were significantly impacted under the continuing resolution in our ability to move forward under no new start authority from an acquisition standpoint.

Now that we have an appropriations bill, the Navy is aggressively attempting to solve that and we will. We do have money in the 2014 budget to support the IW, Interoperable Warhead, 78/88 LEP.

But I also echo what General Harencak said. I think it is prudent that as we move forward we have offramps. This is an extremely technically challenging proposal and I have advocated and the Navy has advocated that we do have a—we do look at a stand-alone 88-1 as a potential offramp. But the bottom line is we're fully supportive of this effort moving forward.

Admiral BENEDICT. Thank you.

Senator Sessions, the floor is yours.

Senator SESSIONS. All right, thank you.

Well, the Nuclear Weapons Council we hope will have good benefits. There has always been in my view some disconnect between DOD and the Department of Energy, NNSA, and all the processes

that go into long-range planning and production of nuclear weapons.

So, Secretary Creedon, are you satisfied or can you speak for the Department of Defense; are you fully satisfied? Could there be improvement in having more transparency within NNSA in the decisionmaking process?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, over the course of the almost two years since I've been there, so having watched this and being able to compare when I participated in the Weapons Council 14 years ago, it's actually much more aggressive. The relationship is much better between DOE and DOD. We meet regularly and, thanks to a lot of Andy Weber's good work—Andy's the Executive Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council—and the participation with pretty much everybody on this panel, it really has been much more of a forum for a lot of really good discussion.

It truly ranges from agreement to the knockdown-dragouts that sometimes has to happen to get you to agreement. That's been with and amongst the services and DOE and all of the various components. So I think we've made a huge amount of progress. It's been, frankly, a little bit painful, but we really have made a lot of progress.

I think CAPE, the group at DOD, the Cost Analysis Program Evaluation group, also has brought their cost expertise to this, too, and has shared a little bit of that with NNSA. So we're making progress. We're not there yet, but we're making a lot of progress.

Senator SESSIONS. One of the dysfunctions to me has always been it's really the DOD that's the customer because the weapon is being produced for them, and Energy just produces it and they don't have sufficient incentive in my opinion to reduce cost. And the Defense Department doesn't have that much incentive because if Energy produces it at less cost it doesn't go to the Defense Department; it just is lost to the Energy Department.

So the Energy Department it's just pretty obvious to me has not had a sense of intensity. If the Defense Department were making these weapons and they needed more money for ships and they could save money in making the weapons, they'd be saving the money and trying to move it over to make ships with. It's just a bureaucratic problem here in my view.

I think the Weapons Council, Secretary Weber, should be aggressive. You should bring cost controls to it, and I salute you for that and the taxpayers need that.

On the nuclear modernization, Secretary Creedon, in 2010 the President promised to increase spending for NNSA weapons activities by \$4.1 billion over 5 years, less than a billion a year, 2012 through 2016, fiscal year 2012 through 2016. Including the 2014 budget request, however, we're now \$1.4 billion, 34 percent, below that promised target at the rate we're going.

There are a series—Congress was responsible for one of the reductions and some of the others. The Life extension program on the B61 slipped by two years. The program to examine a common warhead and to extend the life of the W78 and W88 may be three years, I understand, behind schedule. Delivery systems, development of a replacement for our nuclear ballistic missile submarines, that are at an average age of 23 years, is 2 years behind schedule.

Replacement of the nuclear air-launched cruise missiles, average age 31 years, are at least 2 years behind schedule. There's no commitment yet to follow up on the Minuteman ICBM, average life 34 years. The new strategic bomber will not be nuclear-certified at the outset.

So with respect to Secretary Creendon and the service witnesses, would you comment on these weapons systems? Can we expect further delays and what is the risk and how can we catch up?

Ms. CREEDON. Well, Senator, I want to go back a little bit to what you said about the Weapons Council. So almost every of these, every one of these decisions that have been made with respect to the timing of all of these, both the warheads and the platforms, have all been made in the context of Nuclear Weapons Council discussions.

Senator SESSIONS. Could I just say, that is good to hear. I think that's a positive step. When you go to them and say, we don't have any money, can we go another year, they tend to want to go along with you. But it doesn't necessarily mean that that's what they'd prefer. And we are getting at a point where it's worrisome.

But go ahead. I'm sorry.

Ms. CREEDON. No, that's fine. So let me just use the 61 as an exemplar of this, because otherwise we'd be here for quite a while. On the 61, the NNSA made a proposal to the Department of Defense based on guidance that the Department of Defense had provided. The Weapons Council looked at what the scope of this life extension program would be, and then we also looked at what we thought the life of the B61 would be.

So STRATCOM and the Air Force went back and did some careful analysis and said: Okay, based on the various components, this is when we think this program is going to age out, this is when we think we have to start this life extension program. Then the Weapons Council looked at the scope of the life extension program. They went back and looked at the scope of the life extension program and decided that it was too technically challenging and it was too expensive.

So with this iterative work that was done, the scope got narrower, the understanding of the life of the 61 got better, and so we combined the 2 and said: Okay, this first production unit in 2019 is good, STRATCOM said this is good, and the scope of this life extension is good, this is what we can afford, we believe. So the NNSA went off and they're now in the process of refining the costs, because right now the range of estimates is pretty big. So that's what the NNSA is doing, and they will come back to the Weapons Council and we'll review this again.

So we'll look at both the timing and we'll look at the scope again, because we want to make sure that it's affordable, because now, as you know, DOD is also providing money directly to the NNSA to help them with this whole enterprise.

So I think just using that as an exemplar kind of explains how we are in fact working together, how we're making some of these tradeoffs and we're providing incentives on both sides to look at where is the—where is the affordability and where is the requirement.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Senator Fischer, we're back to you.

Senator FISCHER. I'd like to discuss Oak Ridge and CMRR, those facilities. This is new to me, so hopefully you can enlighten me on some of this. I understand that those facilities need to be replaced and it's very expensive to replace them; is that correct? And we're looking at pit production numbers. There's some discrepancy there on what the Department of Defense say is needed compared to the Department of Energy; is that correct? Who wants to tackle this one?

Mr. WEBER. I'll volunteer, Senator.

Senator FISCHER. Okay. Do you know what I'm referring to on the discrepancy in the numbers from 50 to 80 or 20 to 30, what we're talking about there, and where you stand on that and why you probably have a different position, if you could explain that?

Mr. WEBER. Yes, Senator. The Nuclear Weapons Council spends a lot of time working with the Department of Energy on the recapitalization of the infrastructure. Based on the good work of the Strategic Posture Commission, we really have a bipartisan path forward. We all agree we need to modernize this complex, retain and train the next generation of first-class scientists and engineers who make it work.

The facility at Oak Ridge, the uranium processing facility, is a very high priority because the building that is currently used for production of the secondaries is at risk and is old and we need to replace that as soon as possible. So in our prioritization we worked with NNSA to accelerate completion of that new uranium processing facility.

We accepted at least a 5-year deferral in the CMRR facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory, which does the analytical chemistry to support pit production. We all agree we need a pit production capacity and the discrepancy in the numbers is more about timing and I don't really believe it's a discrepancy.

We need—and the Department of Energy has sent to Congress last year a reprogramming request for \$120 million to meet near-term pit production needs and to allow us to get up to the 30 per year by 2021 for these very important life extension programs, especially the Interoperable Warhead one or the 78/88 life extension program for the ICBM and the SLBM legs of our triad.

We are—the Nuclear Weapons Council was briefed recently on what looks like a more affordable long-term plan for plutonium pit production. The concept is for modular facilities, that the first one could come on line sooner. Our initial reaction is we support that. It needs more study. We are launching, together with NNSA, a 60-day study to do a business case analysis for that.

But there is no daylight between the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense on the need for both a near-term pit production capacity of 10 to 20 and then 30 by 2021, and then in the longer term for a pit production capacity of 50 to 80 per year.

Thank you.

Senator FISCHER. Do you think that you'll need to cannibalize some of the older stockpiles that we have in order to keep our capabilities at full strength? Do you think that's going to happen? And is it feasible that that would work? Do you know if those pieces are going to fit into the other warheads?

Mr. WEBER. One of the very good news stories in recent years based on the work of the stockpile stewardship program, our understanding of nuclear weapons and how they work is better than it's ever been. We are now confident that we can reuse plutonium pits as we implement these life extension programs.

Senator FISCHER. May I interrupt you and ask, how are you confident that you can do that? Have you run tests on it or just in theory you're confident?

Mr. WEBER. Yes, the Department of Energy has a continuing program of experiments to provide the data that gives the director of Los Alamos National Laboratory and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to confidence to say that they can do that.

In addition to reusing existing pits, we need that capability to re-manufacture additional pits based on those designs of the pits that we will be reusing. That's why I would urge you to approve the \$120 million reprogramming request, which is essential for getting that near-term capability which is needed for these vital life extension programs.

Thank you.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator UDALL. General Harencak, let me come back to you again. It's our understanding that as the New START Treaty is implemented Air Force missile wings would like some flexibilities in determining which silos to shut down. As I understand it, some of the silos are worse off than others. Do you support that approach?

General HARENCAK. Absolutely, Senator. I believe it's critical that we have the flexibility to do what's most cost-effective, what's most efficient, which makes the most sense, so we can accomplish the mission while also having the flexibility to look at and say, okay, are there silos that have more water intrusion than the other ones, and just go across the force and say, hey, it's smart to pick this silo or that silo. So the United States Air Force certainly supports having the flexibility to do that, sir.

Senator UDALL. It makes sense to me as well.

Talk, if you will, about sequestration and what do you see as the biggest effect of sequestration and what do you see as the biggest effect of sequestration on the Air Force nuclear enterprise?

General HARENCAK. The Air Force nuclear enterprise, sir, remains safe, secure, and effective. We are absolutely prepared to do the mission. We're doing it each and every day, despite sequestration. However—and I'll defer this to General Kowalski, who can probably tell you more—obviously, as the longer it goes on there is going to be other issues besides a readiness issue. There's going to be issues of if we have money to take care of our people, to train them, to send them to schools, all that.

So right now readiness is not a factor, but sequester could obviously have long term on the overall health of our people and our processes and our facilities.

Senator UDALL. I think my worry, and it's shared by a lot of my colleagues, is that we're all told to save and you'll compound your investment because of the compounding effect of interest, but you can see the opposite effect with sequestration, where you get a neg-



ative compounding of the effects. But we'll be talking about that more and more as sequestration takes hold.

Secretary Weber, let me come back to you, and I know you've touched on this. But are you comfortable with the relationship that the services have with the Nuclear Weapons Council? I know Senator Sessions commented earlier as well.

Mr. WEBER. Yes. During my 4-year tenure it's been an excellent relationship. We have active participation of the Service Chiefs and the Service Secretaries in the Nuclear Weapons Council meetings and I think that's essential. The Vice Chairman represents their interests, but having them at the table when we discuss strategic programmatic decisions is very important, and that is a habit, a tradition now that we will continue.

Senator UDALL. I'm going to exercise my prerogative as chairman and end this open portion of the hearing now and we'll head over to the secured facility to continue the hearing. I don't think—I'm going to look to my team here—I have to actually adjourn the committee. We'll move over to the closed session. We look forward to the testimony over there and we'll reconvene as soon as we possibly can.

Senator SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, could I ask one thing?

Senator UDALL. Sure, Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. With regard to these buildings, I really want to be clear about it. Modular and that kind of thing—modernizing effectively our nuclear weapons arsenal is essential. It's the right thing to do, and it's not too much money to spend if it's necessary. But I would be willing to listen to ideas you have for modular or other things that I think ought to be examined carefully to see if we think those are feasible and will not result in further delays and uncertainties in this program. I'm sure the chairman would be delighted to have more information on it, but that's my firm view, that we need to be on track with this. I suspect we might could do it with less expense, and if so I'll be supportive of that.

Senator UDALL. I look forward to working with the ranking member.

We will reconvene down in the secured facility.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]