

Advance Policy Questions for Robert L. Smolen,
Nominee to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs,
National Nuclear Security Administration

Duties and Qualifications

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

The Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs is primarily responsible for maintaining a safe, secure and reliable nuclear weapons stockpile. This is accomplished by ensuring the safe and efficient operations of the nuclear weapons complex, and preparing Defense Programs for the future, to include both a transformed nuclear weapons complex and nuclear weapons stockpile, to better meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Is it your understanding that the duties of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs will change or remain the same as those of your predecessor?

If I am confirmed, my duties as Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs will remain generally the same as those of my predecessor. Relatively recent actions to place the Site Office Managers under the Deputy Administrator and to create one organization responsible for Readiness in Technical Base and Operations are settled.

If you are aware of any proposed changes to the duties and functions of the Deputy Administrator, what are those changes?

I am unaware of any proposed changes to the duties and functions of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs.

What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualify you to perform these duties?

I recently retired from the United States Air Force with over 33 years of service and in seven of the 10 years I was directly involved in operational and policy issues relating directly to the duties of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs. I began my military career with operational experience in ground and airborne nuclear missile command and control. I have served on the staff of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I have also worked in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force in Legislative Liaison; first in the House of Representatives and later as the Chief of the Senate office on Capitol Hill. Most recently, I served as Deputy Director and then Director of the Air Force Office of Nuclear and Counterproliferation in the Pentagon. At the conclusion of

those assignments, I served as the Director of the Strategic Capabilities Policy in the Executive Office of the President, and was responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of national security policies to support the President and the National Security Council. In that capacity, I was the senior ranking military officer in the White House complex. During the course of my career, I have commanded units at the squadron, group, wing, and major command levels while on assignment at Air Force Space Command, Pacific Air Forces Command, Air Force Materiel Command, and Headquarters in the Air Force District of Washington.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

I trust that my background and experience show me to be appropriately qualified to be the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, and I hope the Senate will agree. To enhance my expertise and knowledge, if confirmed, I plan to immediately engage with those people who can help me better understand the complexities of the issues and prioritize the challenges before Defense Programs. This will include meeting with staff and managers in key parts of the program, both at Headquarters and in the field, along with NNSA and DOE management, key partners such as the Department of Defense, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and Congress. I realize that if I am confirmed, I will be leading an organization with a proven track record of success—my immediate challenge will be to learn how I can continue to lead this exceptional group and to help build upon processes that can make the organization even more productive .

Assuming you are confirmed, what additional or new duties and functions, if any, do you expect that the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) would prescribe for you other than those described above?

I am unaware of any additional duties and functions that the NNSA Administrator would prescribe for me, other than to continue his efficient and effective management of Defense Programs operations. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator to clarify his expectations and strive to be a valued part of the team.

Relationships

If confirmed, how will you work with the following officials in carrying out your duties:

The Secretary of Energy

I have great respect for the Secretary and look forward to working with him through the NNSA Administrator on Defense Programs issues. The NNSA is

very fortunate to have a Cabinet Secretary representing us in the Administration who can work with the Secretaries of Defense, State, and Homeland Security on cross-cutting interagency issues and policies concerning the nation's security.

The Deputy Secretary of Energy

The Deputy Secretary serves as the Department's Chief Operating Officer and I expect to have regular interaction on issues that affect both NNSA and other organizations within the Department. From major construction projects to cyber security to pension policies, there are many issues in which the Deputy Secretary plays a key role.

The Other Deputy Administrators of the NNSA

The Deputy Administrators for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation and Naval Reactors would be my peers if confirmed. I have known both of these individuals for several years during my military career. In fact, I regularly worked with the Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation while we were at the National Security Council. Both of these individuals bring a great wealth of knowledge and policy expertise in their assigned areas. I have been meeting with the Deputies and Associate Administrators to better familiarize myself with the individuals and their specific program responsibilities. I look forward to leading those in Defense Programs if confirmed.

The Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management

The Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs needs to have a special working relationship with the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management (EM) in ensuring that NNSA supports and facilitates the cleanup of legacy waste and contamination at NNSA sites. As we move towards a smaller stockpile, decrease the number of sites with special nuclear materials, and consolidate these materials across the complex we will need to work hand-in-hand as one Department to meet our goals.

The other relevant Assistant Secretaries of the Department of Energy

I look forward to working with the other Assistant Secretaries within the Department of Energy, if confirmed. The Department of Energy is a unique place with many talented leaders in both NNSA and other DOE organizations. Thus, in order to be most effective, there will need to be close collaboration. As we move towards further diversification at our National Laboratories, I see myself working with the Office of Science in particular for the greater good of NNSA, the Office of Science, and the nation.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

I have personally known the prior two individuals confirmed to this position and worked closely with them. As Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AT&L), Dr. John Young, is the Chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) – focal point for the relationship between the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Defense (DoD). My role would be to support the NWC collectively by dealing directly with the Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L), the NNSA Administrator (as DOE's voting member to the NWC), and the distinguished members from U.S. Strategic Command, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on all NNSA-specific matters relevant to the NWC. Specifically, I would work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics by attending NWC meetings and being heavily involved in all NWC matters. As a former Director for Air Force nuclear programs, I am quite familiar with this process.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Ambassador Eric S. Edelman, is a member of the NWC - focal point for the relationship between the DOE and DoD. While the NNSA Administrator serves as the NWC voting member for DOE and would most likely deal directly with the Under Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Administrator manages all NNSA issues relating to Defense Programs.. Specifically, I would deal directly with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on nuclear weapons policy matters, in coordination with the NNSA Administrator.

The Secretaries of the Navy and the Air Force

Relationships with the Secretaries of the Navy and the Air Force are important when dealing with issues related to nuclear security and Defense Programs. Defense Programs generally deals with the uniformed Services more than the Service Secretaries through the Nuclear Weapons Council system. As a retired Air Force senior officer, I am well aware of the importance of civilian control of the military and can use my experience to help NNSA better understand relationships between the Services and their respective Departments. I have had regular personal contact with the Secretary of the Air Force who I have known for several years. If confirmed as the Deputy Administrator, I would seek to further cooperative relations with the Secretaries of the Navy and the Air Force.

The Commanders of U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Northern Command

The Commander of U.S. Strategic Command is a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council. The current nominee, General Chilton, is a personal friend. The NNSA Administrator and I would deal directly with the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command. The Deputy Administrator is fundamentally important to the Strategic Command relationship for all nuclear weapon program activities. One

of the Commander's most important duties related to NNSA is providing the Annual Assessment Report to the President – a candid report on the safety, reliability and expected performance of the nuclear weapons stockpile, based on information from Defense Program advisors and the national laboratories. As the Commander is responsible for deploying the nuclear weapons stockpile, Defense Programs and Strategic Command must have a close relationship at many levels. I expect that, if confirmed as the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, I would spend a significant amount of time working with the Commander and his staff, particularly during this period of stockpile transformation. The Commander of U.S. Northern Command is also a personal friend and colleague. All issues related to carrying out his responsibilities with regard to homeland defense would receive my focused and complete attention.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities

Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict are included in NNSA's overall support to and coordination with the DoD in a number of areas. As part of our support, we have provided a full-time resident liaison to Special Operations Command to facilitate its access to the unique capabilities of DOE's national laboratories and to enhance the already close working relationship with DOE and NNSA. If confirmed by the Senate, I will ensure DOE's unique nuclear capabilities; skills and assets are properly available to the Department of Defense and other federal entities.

The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs

The Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs deals with the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs on a regular basis. The Assistant to the Secretary is the Chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) Standing and Safety Committee, the flag officer or Senior Executive Service "working level" group in the Nuclear Weapons Council system. In this capacity, even though the formal communications path to the Assistant to the Secretary position is through the Principal Deputy Administrator for Operations in Defense Programs, I would expect to spend a significant amount of time working with the Assistant to the Secretary, particularly during this period of stockpile transformation.

The Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) works with the NNSA's Offices of Defense Programs, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, and Emergency Operations on a number of issues, ranging from individual weapon system Project Officer Groups to hosting DTRA-sponsored work at NNSA sites and

collaborating on nonproliferation issues. If confirmed, I would work directly with the Director of DTRA to further our common goals.

Officials in the Intelligence Community

The Department of Energy is a member of the Intelligence Community. Within DOE, the Director of the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence has primary responsibility for Departmental interactions with the Director of National Intelligence and other Intelligence Community components. Each of the NNSA national laboratories maintains a Field Intelligence Element, responsible for conducting analysis and technical work to fulfill DOE's intelligence responsibilities. If confirmed, I will give my strong support to this cooperation and ensure that the Intelligence Community continues to have excellent access to the national security laboratories and other assets of the Office of Defense Programs.

Officials in the Department of Homeland Security with responsibilities for nuclear related homeland security matters

NNSA has a close working relationship with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at many levels, most notably led by NNSA's Deputy Under Secretary for Counterterrorism. If confirmed, I will draw upon these working relationships, continue them, and try to improve upon them through closer coordination on matters affecting national security. If I am confirmed, Defense Programs will continue the cooperative relationships prevalent since the creation of DHS. We will continue to work closely in updating the National Response Plan (NRP) to define and refine the Federal government's responsibilities in the event of radiological or nuclear emergencies and incidents. We will continue cooperative efforts on the Homeland Security Exercise Program, where we test our abilities to respond to many types of incidents in addition to radiological and nuclear emergencies. We will continue to work closely with DHS's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) as partners to assess the Nation's radiological or nuclear vulnerabilities and risks, to mitigate radiological or nuclear threats, and to develop a robust technical nuclear forensics capability in cooperation with DNDO's National Technical Nuclear Forensics Center (NTNFC). Finally, NNSA stands ready to execute our responsibilities under the National Response Plan to deploy our Nuclear Incident Response Team (NIRT) and fulfill our responsibilities under the Homeland Security Act for domestic radiological or nuclear events. For example, should an improvised nuclear device be discovered in the United States, Defense Programs is the lead technical office that would support the overall Federal incident manager and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its role as lead law enforcement agency. Defense Programs has worked hard to forge these cooperative relationships and I can assure you that I would continue this collaborative approach.

Officials in the Department of State with responsibility for nuclear nonproliferation matters

NNSA works closely with the Department of State in the area of nuclear nonproliferation. If confirmed as Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs I would continue to do so, most notably through Defense Programs' Nuclear Counterterrorism Design Support Program and NNSA's Office of Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation. We will always be mindful of the potential or perceived impacts to arms control and nonproliferation of initiatives such as the Reliable Replacement Warhead and Complex Transformation. The Department of State can be a valuable resource to assist with other countries' concerns.

Major Challenges and Problems

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

In my view, the major challenges confronting the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs are complex and stockpile transformation. NNSA needs to continually articulate and refine its plans to transform the stockpile and complex through the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program and Complex Transformation. Defense Programs, unlike many Federal organizations, is requirements driven. While Defense Programs has made significant improvements in meeting near-term commitments, relief on legacy stockpile requirements has not been provided. At the same time, modernization of many nuclear facilities is necessary due to aging and growing safety and security concerns.

If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

If confirmed, I plan to meet the challenges of combining near-term success with long-term transformation by setting clear expectations and constant, clear communications. I was a tough "customer" while serving as the Air Force Director of Nuclear and Counterproliferation, but NNSA consistently met my expectations. I attribute that mostly to the good lines of communication established between the Air Force and NNSA, from the depot level, through the Project Officers Groups to the Commanders. I believe my Air Force experience can help greatly in keeping those lines of communication open. If confirmed, I would also continue to strengthen the notion of an integrated nuclear weapons complex where everyone has measurable metrics, is rewarded for success, and accountability is clear.

If confirmed, what management actions and time lines would you establish to address these problems?

If confirmed, I would immediately work to identify and knock down barriers to success in the program. I do not yet have a specific timeline in mind with regard to management actions. I will develop one as soon as I am confident I understand the specific challenges we face collectively and in the individual programs. If desired, I believe that approximately 90 days after confirmation, I could be prepared to share with Congress any specific management actions anticipated for the near term.

If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish to address the issues that would confront the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

My highest priorities would be the same as my predecessors have had – to maintain the safety, security and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile while positioning the complex for future transformation. NNSA must continue to meet its near-term deliverables to the Department of Defense while looking to the future. I believe NNSA can adequately do both - and must in order to fulfill its responsibilities to the nation.

Overall Management

Do you believe that there are any organizational structure issues in the NNSA that should be addressed to improve management and operations of the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, or that you would address if confirmed? If so, how would you address these issues, if confirmed?

Constant improvement requires innovative thinking and fresh ideas. I do not believe in changing just for the sake of change, but if confirmed, I will assess the organizational structure and make recommendations to the Administrator and Principal Deputy Administrator. I will seek their thoughts on potentially improved ways of doing business – if changes will be beneficial, cost effective, and streamline the management.

Do you believe that the expertise of Department of Energy personnel serving outside the NNSA can be helpful to you if confirmed?

I strongly believe this to be true and very beneficial. If confirmed, I will work with the entire Department of Energy and make full use of the resources available within and outside of NNSA. Not only is it required that we cooperate in many areas with other parts of the Department, but I know there are many personnel that can provide assistance and advise helpful to Defense Programs.

If so, what expertise do you believe would be helpful and how would you utilize this expertise if you are confirmed?

If confirmed, I will make it a high priority to understand the full scope of the Department of Energy's available resources. I understand that Defense Programs works closely with many offices, such as the Office of Engineering and Construction Management; the Office of Health, Safety and Security; the Chief Financial Officer; the Office of Environmental Management; and DOE's Chief Information Officer. These offices, and others within the Department, have expertise that can contribute to the success of the missions of the Office of Defense Programs and NNSA.

Are you aware of any limitations on the authority of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs to draw on that expertise?

There are no limits that I am aware of to drawing on the expertise of other offices in the Department of Energy. I view these other offices, such as the Office of Engineering and Construction Management and the Office of Health, Safety and Security, as invaluable assets to the NNSA and Defense Programs. For example, both of these Offices provide valuable external reviews and recommendations regarding our activities and facilities.

What is your view of the extent to which the NNSA is bound by the existing rules, regulations, and directives of the Department of Energy and what flexibility, if any, do you believe you would have in implementing such rules, regulations, and directives that would pertain to the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

My understanding is that NNSA must comply with rules, regulations, and directives issued by the Secretary of Energy and the Deputy Secretary. The NNSA Administrator is responsible for ensuring that NNSA and its contractors comply with these requirements, and that responsibility flows down to the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs. Some rules and regulations provide specific exemption procedures that NNSA can invoke if the NNSA Administrator concludes an exemption is warranted. In addition, the DOE Departmental Directives Program Manual provides a general exemption procedure that allows NNSA to deviate from DOE directives. This manual also permits Departmental elements, including NNSA, to issue "supplemental directives" that may be used to implement requirements in directives, assign responsibilities and establish procedures within a particular Departmental element. Finally, under the NNSA Act, the NNSA Administrator has authority to issue NNSA-specific policies, "unless disapproved by the Secretary."

NNSA, in large measure, was created in response to security lapses at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. However, security lapses, particularly at Los Alamos, have continued to occur. Section 3212(b)(10) of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act provides that "the Administrator has authority over, and is responsible for all programs and activities of the Administration, including

administration of contracts, including the management and operations of the nuclear weapons production facilities and the national security laboratories.”

If confirmed, how would plan to assist the Administrator of the NNSA to make sure that security lapses do not occur at the NNSA facilities?

Security of nuclear weapons, nuclear material and design information is an extremely important challenge of paramount importance to national security. I have extensive experience in this area, from the early days of my career as a Minuteman missile system crew member, instructor and evaluator, to my command assignments, and most recently as the Commander of the Air Force District of Washington. My knowledge and emphasis on nuclear security will help the Administrator, the Chief of Defense Nuclear Security, the Associate Administrator for Defense Nuclear Security, and the Site Office Managers focus appropriately on the importance of security at our sites and while nuclear material is on the road in the control of the Office of Secure Transportation. Any breach in security could bring grave consequences to our nation, and if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to ensure that the complex remains safe and secure, and we will take immediate actions to remedy any marginal system. Practically speaking, some initiatives such as leveraging technology to the fullest extent possible and consolidating nuclear materials to fewer locations will take time and funding. I will be a strong advocate for creating the most secure nuclear weapons complex possible. We need to change the culture at our national laboratories, and I understand that NNSA and the Secretary have made great progress in this by holding the current and former contractors at LANL accountable for this lapse and by improving federal oversight of cyber security and the protection of classified information, integrity, responsibility, and accountability are key aspect of a successful security program and I will do everything possible to continue the efforts currently underway.

The Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs is responsible for activities occurring at NNSA laboratories and production sites across the country.

What are your views on the appropriate roles and responsibilities of field managers relative to those of Defense Programs Headquarters managers?

If confirmed, I look forward to gaining a thorough understanding about the perspectives of both field and Headquarters managers. There is a close cooperation between field and Headquarters managers in Defense Programs, but generally Headquarters sets expectations through a number of program and contract mechanisms. Field managers provide daily oversight of the contractors, since they are closest to the work being performed. I realize there are formal delegations of responsibilities between the field and Headquarters, especially since the Assistant Deputy Administrators and Site Office Managers all report to

the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs. There needs to be a high degree of integration of efforts and constant communication. As a senior military commander, I am familiar with the normal friction that often exists between field and headquarters. Trust and communications are vital to success and essential to productivity and smooth operations.

What is your view of Defense Programs' organizational structure?

My understanding of the Defense Programs organizational structure is that it works reasonably well, especially considering the scope of the mission. I do not see any major disconnects, duplication of effort or insurmountable barriers to communication. If confirmed, I would soon take a hard look at the structure and look for potential improvements. I think it very important that I understand why and how the current structure operates and what potential improvements might be cost effective before recommending any change.

In your view, is there a well-delineated and consistent chain of command and reporting structure from the field staff to headquarters staff and from the contractors to federal officials?

From what I have learned to date, I believe there is an established chain of command and reporting structure in place at NNSA, but to remain strong and effective with new personnel, it needs to be constantly utilized and reinforced. Based on my Air Force experience, I am comfortable with the chain of command and I know the consequences of deviating from the prescribed path. Everyone must know and learn their roles. If confirmed, I will emphasize the necessity of using the chain of command for passing information and formal guidance in both directions.

Weapons Programs Personnel

If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to retain critical nuclear weapons expertise in both the NNSA and the contractor workforce?

If confirmed, working to retain and develop critical nuclear weapons expertise in both the NNSA and the contractor workforce will be a high priority of mine. When I was in charge of the Air Force nuclear program I had very similar concerns and our office reinstated a fellowship program with five DOE laboratories to provide 10 young officers each year with specialized nuclear experience while working at the labs. Simply put, the most advanced experimental and computational facilities are not worth much without the right people to use them. As the nation's "brain trust," NNSA must continue to strive to make itself and its contractors "Employers of Choice". I am impressed with NNSA's Future Leaders Program, and want to do everything in my power to support it. My personal experience in identifying development opportunities for

officers within the Air Force nuclear program showed me the value in identifying critical personnel and taking positive steps to retain them. I also like efforts such as mentoring young weapon designers, many of whom have never participated in a nuclear test, with real work such as the Reliable Replacement Warhead program. I also appreciate the fact that NNSA realizes it faces a real challenge with a large retirement-eligible portion of the Federal and contractor workforce and is taking steps to address it.

Do you support retaining the capability to re-manufacture every component expected to be found in the stockpile in the near term?

First and foremost, I support maintaining the safety, security and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile. This often requires the re-manufacture of components, but sometimes that is not the most prudent approach. Stockpile and Complex Transformation are trying to eliminate the need to retain the capability to re-manufacture every component expected to be found in the present stockpile. In fact, many components cannot be reproduced because the materials are no longer available due to prohibitions on their use by regulation or to loss of the technologies that precede them. Several existing components are problematic to make or involve hazardous materials that NNSA wants to eliminate. If RRW proves to be a viable alternative, this would also help in eliminating the need to re-manufacture each and every component.

What do you see as the most pressing re-manufacturing needs?

In discussions with Defense Programs staff, the most pressing re-manufacturing needs appear to involve secondaries made at the Y-12 National Security Complex and plutonium pits. These are extremely intricate nuclear components that cannot be made today in quantities high enough to satisfy the projected need, especially if a problem develops in the stockpile. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about these and related issues and contributing to a solution.

Stockpile Stewardship Program

The Stockpile Stewardship program has successfully supported the annual nuclear weapons certification effort for the last 15 years.

Other than the National Ignition Facility, in your view, what other capabilities, if any, would be needed to ensure that the stockpile is safe, secure and reliable without nuclear weapons testing?

In my view, the Stockpile Stewardship Program (SSP) has been successful and is on an appropriate path for continued success. Due to the highly integrated nature of the SSP and constrained budgets, Defense Programs has not planned for much redundancy in capabilities in the future. The National Ignition Facility and other high profile facilities and capabilities each play a complementary role in the SSP

and the transformed nuclear weapons complex; confidence in the safety, security and reliability of the stockpile could be adversely affected if parts of the program are not seen to completion. This confidence is subjective and not “pass/fail”. I trust the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the people who make up the SSP will meet the challenge to continue to support the stockpile, and if confirmed, I will work to provide the most appropriate tools for them to do so.

In your view is the Stockpile Stewardship program fully coordinated with the Department of Defense, and if not what would you plan to do if confirmed to improve the coordination?

In my view, the Stockpile Stewardship Program appears to be well coordinated with the Department of Defense (DoD). There is constant communication between the Department of Energy and DoD at many levels, ranging from routine tasks such as warhead maintenance and surveillance to more policy-oriented issues such as stockpile and complex transformation. I know from my experience as the Air Force Director of Nuclear and Counterproliferation that open communication is key to mutual DOE/DoD success, and if confirmed, I will make every effort to foster good communications between the Departments.

The NNSA is in the early stages of an effort to develop a new nuclear warhead to be a replacement for an existing warhead, without nuclear weapons testing. This effort is the reliable replacement warhead program (RRW).

Do you believe that the Stockpile Stewardship program is capable of meeting this new challenge in the coming years?

I believe that the Stockpile Stewardship Program is capable of meeting the challenge of transforming the nuclear weapons stockpile through a Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) strategy in the coming years. The RRW strategy appears to hold great promise for many reasons. The top three in my view are: 1) an opportunity to reduce the numbers of currently stockpiled weapons with RRWs that are less sensitive to aging effects or manufacturing variability; 2) incorporating advanced safety and security features to maintain positive assurances against theft, loss, and/or misuse of these replacement warheads; and 3) improved confidence in the reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile, through increased performance margins and reduced uncertainties, allowing these weapons to be certified without conducting an underground test, through the use of the advanced Stockpile Stewardship tools. There are a multitude of other good aspects to RRW that show it to be an idea with great merit.

If you are confirmed, and if during your tenure NNSA concludes it is not possible to develop or deploy an RRW without full scale nuclear weapons testing, would you recommend cancellation of the RRW program?

I understand that a fundamental tenant of the RRW strategy is to certify and field the warheads without the need to conduct nuclear testing. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about RRW and the relationship of performance margins versus uncertainties. Determining RRWs viability from the standpoint of the required science is a valuable endeavor. The decision to proceed to production, with or without testing, would be a matter for debate at the highest levels and involve a value judgment relative to a policy decision. If an RRW design leads to a recommendation to conduct a full scale nuclear test, there is certainly the option to do a modification to the design rather than a cancellation of the RRW program. The prudent course of action, in my view, requires us to know the full range of alternatives and only then choose a way ahead based on a critical analysis that considers our national security needs. The premise of RRW is sound, if the U.S. is to maintain a long-term safe, secure and reliable nuclear deterrent; it may need adjustments rather than cancellation.

Complex Reconfiguration

If confirmed you will play a key role in the steps to modernize and downsize the nuclear weapons complex. This is a needed but difficult process.

If confirmed, would you review whether an external commission such as a Base Realignment and Closure-type process would be helpful or is needed to accomplish such downsizing and modernization?

If confirmed, Complex Transformation will be a key initiative that I will pursue as Deputy Administrator. As part of that process, I understand that external commissions such as a Base Realignment and Closure-type process have been considered but not thought to be appropriate for this situation. While I am not yet in an informed enough position to challenge that position, I will discuss the issue carefully with those who came to that conclusion. I also understand that NNSA is following the well-established National Environmental Policy Act process for informing its decisions on Complex Transformation, and there will be opportunities for comment by the public and other interested stakeholders.

Third-Party Financing

If confirmed, would you agree to carefully review all proposals for third-party financing and ensure that before implementation the proposal will be cost effective and is consistent with all Department of Energy, Office of Management and Budget and General Services Administration rules and regulations as appropriate?

Yes. If confirmed, I would carefully review all proposals for third-party financing of Defense Programs facilities to ensure that before implementation, the proposal is cost-effective and consistent with all applicable rules and regulations.

Facilities and Infrastructure

The Facilities and Infrastructure Recapitalization Program (FIRP) was established to address long-deferred maintenance backlogs in the nuclear weapons complex, particularly at the manufacturing facilities.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that surplus buildings are torn down or transferred so that they will not need long-term maintenance?

If confirmed, Complex Transformation will be a key initiative that I will pursue as Deputy Administrator. A central part of Complex Transformation is ensuring that surplus buildings are torn down so that they will not need long-term maintenance or transferred to other programs that are committed to their proper maintenance. I expect to work closely with the Offices of Infrastructure and Environment within the NNSA and Environmental Management in DOE (and other organizations) to achieve these objectives. I understand that both of these Offices have well-established programs for dealing with excess facilities. If confirmed, I will work with them to ensure that surplus buildings are torn down or transferred so that they will not need long-term maintenance funded by the Weapons Activities account. During the course of my military career, I served as a base commander on at least three occasions. While the governing directives are not exactly the same, I am familiar with issues like this and I will make every effort to pay close attention to these concerns.

Would you support including the cost of tearing down those buildings that are being replaced within the total project cost of any new construction?

If confirmed, I would support steps to minimize financial liabilities on the Weapons Activities account, including the cost of tearing down those buildings that are being replaced within the total project cost of any new construction. To portray the full scope of projects, we must present the full scope and cost of new construction, to include demolition of old buildings.

What is your understanding of the schedule for tearing down the old administration building at Los Alamos National Laboratory?

I understand that the Nuclear Security and Science Building (NSSB) project at Los Alamos National Laboratory was completed on schedule and approximately \$5 million under budget in 2006. Once the remaining personnel have been relocated from the old Administration Building in early FY 2008, NNSA's plan is to close the entire facility and prepare it for completion of Decontamination and Demolition (D&D). NNSA's current strategy is to empty the facility by the close of FY 2008 and complete D&D by FY 2011.

DOE and NNSA often build one of a kind or first of a kind buildings.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that NNSA construction projects are managed to be completed within budget and on time?

If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to demand accountability across the nuclear weapons complex, in both the Federal and contractor workforce. We must keep commitments, to include meeting key milestones for cost and schedule on construction projects. I understand that improving project management is one of the six “Focus Areas” that is already being emphasized by NNSA. I will quickly learn more about this and the other focus areas, and ask fundamental questions such as: 1) do we have the right people in place to do the job; 2) are we using all available resources, within NNSA, within DOE, and even outside DOE; and 3) are the commitments we have made still reasonable (have circumstances or requirements changed)? I will work with the Federal Project Directors within NNSA and look for help from all available sources. Recognizing the importance of project management, in addition to my usual “courtesy calls” as the nominee, I have met with staff from the Office of Facility and Infrastructure Acquisition and Operations and the Office of Infrastructure and Environment to discuss both general project management within NNSA and to review progress on specific high-profile projects.

What additional costing, project management and design skills do you believe are needed in the federal staff of the Office of Defense Programs or in the NNSA?

I am not yet in a position to say what additional costing, project management and design skills are needed in the Federal staff of Defense Programs or NNSA, but I do understand this is an area of emphasis within NNSA. Because this is such an important area to the success of Complex Transformation and the very future of the nuclear weapons complex, I will ensure that good project management within Defense Programs remains a high priority and I will make every effort for the Federal and contractor staff to obtain the skills that are necessary for success. I also believe there needs to be a forum where all parties can bring suggestions forward to both arrive at the right conclusion, and to ensure the needed buy-in and cooperation that will garner broad support.

At what point in the Critical Decision time line do you believe an independent cost estimate should be performed for a construction project, and why?

Based on my understanding of the Critical Decision timeline, I believe an Independent Cost Estimate should be performed for complex and high cost projects prior to setting the project baseline at Critical Decision 2 (Approve Performance Baseline). This is early enough in the process to make an impact and correct issues, but far enough along that there is appropriate fidelity in the estimated project design, scope, and schedule.

If confirmed, will you work to ensure that all design issues impacting operational safety requirements are fully resolved before Critical Decision 3?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all design issues impacting operational safety requirements are fully resolved well before Critical Decision 3 (Approve Start of Construction). Due to the importance of operational safety requirements, they should be resolved as soon as possible in the design process, and certainly before construction begins. This is also consistent with the Department's draft standard, *Integration of Safety into Nuclear Facility Design*.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that nuclear and other operational safety issues are fully addressed in the design of new NNSA buildings?

If confirmed, I intend to have Defense Programs follow the Department's standard, *Integration of Safety into Nuclear Facility Design*, once it is final. I understand that NNSA has been complying with the draft of the new standard and will operate in full compliance with the final version when implemented. This new standard requires early identification of Safety Class systems and other safety related requirements early in the project life cycle, just after approval of Mission Need. These measures ensure that all safety requirements are articulated, validated and understood early in the project life cycle.

Life Extension Programs

If confirmed, you will be responsible for managing the life extension programs for existing nuclear warheads.

What is your general assessment of the effectiveness of the ongoing and planned life extension programs?

I believe the Life Extension Programs (LEP) are highly effective for extending the near-term life of warheads in the nuclear weapons stockpile, but I also strongly support transitioning the stockpile based on a Reliable Replacement Warhead strategy. Based on my Air Force experience, I am intimately familiar with the LEPs for the W87 (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile warhead) and the B61-7/11 (strategic bombs). I understand there are production challenges with restarting a unique component needed for the W76 (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile warhead) LEP, but that is being appropriately addressed. I understand that more and more aging defects are being discovered in the legacy stockpile so refurbishment schedules will need to be closely coordinated and updated with the military service if an RRW strategy is not pursued. With smaller numbers in the existing stockpile inventory, the ability to substitute is almost not at option. Therefore the need for flexibility becomes increasingly important.

How well, in your view, does the nuclear weapons complex -- encompassing the laboratories and the production sites -- function as an integrated complex and, externally, with the Department of Defense in executing the life extension programs?

My impression is that the nuclear weapons complex, including all the sites, works relatively well together and with the Department of Defense. In learning more about Defense Programs, I have been struck at how often I hear about the integrated complex succeeding together. I understand that there is a strong emphasis on complex-wide milestones and that even performance fees at each of the sites are inter-related. That is an extremely strong motivator for integrated success, and one that I would plan to continue, if confirmed. Thanks to the vision of the current leadership in DOE and NNSA, I see an even stronger partnership with the Air Force than when I was Director of Nuclear and Counterproliferation.

Do you believe the efficiency with which NNSA manages the execution of the life extension programs can be improved, and if so, how?

I am yet not aware of a specific way to improve the management of the Life Extension Programs (LEP), but because of their importance to Defense Programs and the continued health of the nuclear weapons stockpile, I expect to personally review the execution of the LEPs, if confirmed. My fresh perspective, coming from the outside of NNSA and as a former Department of Defense "customer" may allow me to identify areas for improvement.

Notification of Congress

If confirmed, would you commit to promptly notifying Congress of any significant issues in the safety, security or reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile?

Yes. If confirmed, I would promptly notify Congress of any issues affecting the nuclear weapons stockpile and nuclear weapons complex. I understand that the officials in the Office of Defense Programs often brief Congressional members and their staffs about the state of the stockpile and complex. I would continue that practice, both when there are emerging issues and even there are not. Continuous communication is to everyone's advantage. Having served in the Air Force Congressional Liaison offices of the Senate and the House, I am a strong believer in open dialogue. I pledge to make myself and/or a knowledgeable staff member available at any time to address any issues of concern.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the

Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.