

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NUCLEAR FORCES AND POLICIES IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM**

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**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2012**

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:29 p.m. in room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator E. Benjamin Nelson (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Nelson, Reed, Sessions, and Cornyn.

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

Minority staff member present: Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member.

Staff assistant present: Hannah I. Lloyd.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Ryan Ehly, assistant to Senator Nelson; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; and Dave Hanke and Grace Smitham, assistants to Senator Cornyn.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR E. BENJAMIN NELSON,  
CHAIRMAN**

Senator NELSON. Let me bring today's hearing to order. This hearing will receive testimony from the Department of Defense as it pertains to nuclear matters for fiscal year 2013. First I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today. I know taking time from your schedule is not the easiest thing to do, but we appreciate very much your doing that.

We're going to have a closed session on the Long Range Strike Bomber program. It'll be in Senate Security, Room SVC-217, and to accommodate the closed session we'll try to wrap up by 3:30 here; and after Senator Sessions and I give some brief comments we thought it might be best to just go straight to some questions.

But before we have a—before I begin, I have a letter to Senator Sessions and to me from eight of our fellow Senators supporting sustainment for our ICBMs, that I ask consent to enter into the

record. And I think you may have a copy of the letter as well. Without objection, it'll be.

Senator SESSIONS. No objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator NELSON. And also with that, let me make just a couple of short comments before I turn it over to Senator Sessions for some comments as well. The 1251 report was revised in section 1043 of the fiscal year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act to include additional data and make it part of the President's annual budget submission.

I have a letter to Chairman Levin dated March 2, 2012, signed by Secretaries Chu and Panetta, that states that they can't submit a unified DOD-DOE ten-year plan. Instead, the DOD will submit its ten-year plan "in the coming weeks"; and then "over the next several months" the DOD and DOE will submit a plan consistent with the spending levels of the Budget Control Act.

I ask that this letter be entered into the record as well.

Senator SESSIONS. No objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator NELSON. Congress is now left without the long-term data to determine whether we are making the investments to ensure our DOD delivery platforms and DOD infrastructure are on a sustained path for modernization. I'm hopeful that Assistant Secretaries Creedon and Weber can explain what happened and when the Congress might see the funding data requested in section 1043.

The W76 warhead refurbishment was decremented some \$80 million in the NNSA budget to help cover cost increases for the B61 refurbishment. And of course, Admiral Benedict, we want to know, does that affect our posture? Also, how does the two-year delay in the *Ohio* replacement submarine affect your program?

The B-52 fleet is not getting the CONECT system upgrade to overhaul its aging analog controls and help it retarget. General Kowalski, can you help explain the implications on our force posture?

The B-2 and B-52 are not getting terminals to communicate with the AEHF satellite for nuclear command and control. This was a STRATCOM requirement. So, General Chambers, I guess we ask what is the fix and will it suffice over the long haul?

The NNSA has decided to defer the CMR replacement facility at Los Alamos to help store and test plutonium. The laboratory director has flatly stated he cannot meet the DOD's 50-80 pit requirement for the W78 warhead life extension. So, Secretary Weber, can you help us explain its impacts to DOD readiness? I hope you're not going to change the 50-80 pit requirement to meet the NNSA decision, which might be one of the options that could be looked at.

Finally, Secretary Creedon has had more time before this committee than almost anybody else here recently. 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 haven't heard anything about that, and hopefully you will be able to help us with that.

Now, having said all those things, there's still more to be said, I'm sure. So I'm turning to my good friend and co-chair Senator Sessions for any comments that you might wish to give.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR JEFF SESSIONS

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's been such a great pleasure to work with you. Maybe this will be our last one together.

Senator NELSON. Maybe.

Senator SESSIONS. Last markup, but not the last roundup, for Senator Nelson.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assess the fiscal year 2013 request for the sustainment and modernization of the triad of nuclear delivery vehicles. Unlike the National Nuclear Security Administration's budget, I applaud the Defense Department. You have done I think a good job of maintaining a clear commitment to modernization despite tough budget times.

While the DOD budget is not immune to cuts, the key elements of the plan appear to be intact. Risk will increase with this budget and, while I have not yet concluded whether all these risks are acceptable, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses why they believe the increased risk and the possibility of not meeting future Strategic Command requirements is manageable.

The sustainment and modernization of the triad will not be cheap, will require long-term sustained commitments spanning future Congresses and administrations. Last year the cost for just ten years was projected to be over \$120 billion. And while the most recent estimate has not yet been provided, I am unaware of any major changes in the plan that would significantly alter that.

Nevertheless, our next generation nuclear capabilities must be affordable and every effort must be made to ensure each dollar is spent wisely. A robust triad of nuclear delivery vehicles is essential and I believe that uncontrollable costs perhaps more than anything else could be a threat to our ensuring it in the future. I think that's what Admiral Mullen meant when he said the greatest threat to our National security is our deficit because the numbers are so bad and so serious that it's forcing cuts in areas that we would rather not do.

Mr. President, Chairman, I will just briefly conclude and note that we've got much to do. I would offer my remarks for the record, look forward to hearing from the witnesses. I believe that the Defense Department has every right to be deeply engaged in the production of the weapons you will use, and I think we need transparency on the producing side and we need influence and leadership from the consumer side.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Sessions follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Let me first start with Secretary Creedon. Number one, the New START force structure. Can you tell us when we can expect to see the nuclear force structure sent to the Congress from the New START Treaty? Do you have a timeframe?

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

Ms. CREEDON. Sir, as you know, the central limits of the New START Treaty have to be met within seven years from entry into force, which occurred in February of 2011. So at the outset the Department, the services, are focused on getting rid of those assets that would count under the treaty, but are, as we refer to them as, phantoms. In other words, they're previously retired and can be retired now without any initial impact on the actual active forces.

So this would include 50 previously retired Peacekeeper silos, 50 previously retired Minuteman III silos, B-52H bombers that are at Davis-Monthan. So that's the initial focus, is addressing these phantoms, systems that are no longer in active service.

After that, then we'll move on to what the active reductions will be. The assumption at the moment is that the active reduction decisions will be made after—at the end of the year, shortly after the year, but in the context of the fiscal year 2014 budget.

[The prepared joint statement of Ms. Creedon and Mr. Weber follows:]

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

In terms of the ten-year funding plan, as you know, Secretary Creedon, Secretaries Chu and Panetta sent the letter that I referenced before to Chairman Levin dated March 2, 2012, explaining basically that they can't give the Congress the 10-year funding projections from the revised 1251 plan, now known as section 1043 of the fiscal year 2012 NDAA.

Maybe you can tell us what happened and when we might be able to see something from the Defense Department on that 10-year projection?

Ms. CREEDON. We obviously recognize that the report is late. With the reductions that needed to be made in the defense budget, there were also obvious adjustments in the strategic enterprise. So we needed some time to look at the long-term impact of the reductions that were made in the 2013 budget, for instance the 2-year delay of the SSBNX. And we are right now in the process of completing that report, so hopefully, if it doesn't take too terribly long to get through all the various review procedures in the Department, we would hope that it would be provided in weeks.

Senator NELSON. Weeks?

Ms. CREEDON. Weeks, not months. So hopefully in April.

Senator NELSON. All right, thank you.

Then, Secretary Creedon, in terms of the nuclear employment strategy, the President stated in a speech just here this week in Korea that the administration is almost finished with the nuclear employment strategy that was originally called for in the 2010 nuclear posture review, and again in April of last year by National Security Adviser Donilon.

Do you have any idea when we might see that strategy?

Ms. CREEDON. Again, Senator, I think that, as the President said, we are in the final throes of concluding that work. Obviously, it's difficult to tell when the President himself will be making the final decision, when this will happen. But here again, the hope is that it will be within the next couple weeks.

Senator NELSON. Secretary Weber, the Department signed an MOU with the Department of Energy to transfer some \$8 billion in DOD budgetary authority to increase the top line of the NNSA budget. The MOU requires construction and operation of a new Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Facility, or CMR, by 2022. Are you going to have to go back and renegotiate the terms of the MOU with the 5-year deferral of the CMR replacement facility proposed by NNSA in fiscal year 2013? A lot of concern has been raised about the CMR building and the proposal here. Can you tell us what might happen in terms of having to renegotiate?

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

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Senator. We will not have to renegotiate the MOU. Through the Nuclear Weapons Council, which is the vehicle that the Departments of Energy and Defense use to coordinate between, as Senator Sessions said, the consumer and the producer of the weapons in the stockpile, we had to make some hard choices this year in the President's 2013 budget request. One of those was the deferral of construction of the CMR replacement facility at Los Alamos for at least five years. The requirement for pit production capacity of 50 to 80, which is based on the current stockpile size, remains, so we accepted some schedule slip in order to sustain the critical life extension programs, such as the B61 gravity bomb life extension program, which will enter the engineering development phase this year.

The uranium processing facility at the Y12 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, this budget request actually accelerates construction of that facility, which the Defense Department recommended to the Department of Energy as a higher priority of the two facilities because we have an urgent need. The current building where secondaries are produced at the Y12 plant dates back to the 1950s and is at risk. So we essentially staggered those two facilities, putting more of a near-term emphasis on the uranium processing facility.

As far as the plutonium production capacity and capability, the revised NNSA plutonium strategy will give us some near-term capacity, we hope up to 20 to 30 pits per year, within the next five years, and that's very important in support of the life extension program for the W78-W88 common ICBM-SLBM warhead that we're currently studying.

Thank you.

Senator NELSON. I'll come back to that in a minute. Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Secretary Creedon, how do you—how does the Department of Defense interface with DOE as you move forward with these issues like this building? It's really not your choice whether Oak Ridge goes or Los Alamos first, is it, or is it? Are you consulted as to what you think the priorities are?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, the Nuclear Weapons Council is a statutorily mandated body that is actually chaired by the Department of Defense and is also populated by the Department of Energy. It's through that body that a lot of these decisions are made. So it's

through that body that there was a joint decision that the uranium processing facility, the facility at Y12 that Andy Weber was talking about, that builds the uranium secondaries, there was a decision that of the two buildings, if we couldn't afford to build both at the same time, which was at one point the plan, if we had to pick who goes first, and the Weapons Council said plutonium goes second, uranium goes first. So that was in fact a joint decision of the Weapons Council.

Senator SESSIONS. A joint decision, but the money is in the DOE budget. But you participated in that decision.

Do you have any ability—I suppose you really don't, but what ability might you have to examine the plan for construction and see if it can be done at less expense? I have to say I believe we need to do whatever it takes to modernize our nuclear weapons, but I have been taken aback by the cost of these construction projects.

And the Department of Energy seems to be not as responsive as I would like to see them and as intensely interested in trying to accomplish the goal at the least possible expense, if you will forgive me. I'm sure they don't see it that way, but I haven't sensed the kind of intense interest in it.

So where is that headed?

Ms. CREEDON. Again, in the context of the Weapons Council, there has been a lot of discussion about these two buildings and also about the cost of these two buildings, about the overall NNSA budget. In the memorandum that Senator Nelson mentioned last year, there was an agreement for DOD to actually transfer money to NNSA, do some top-line transfers, to provide some more money to NNSA so that they could meet some of these obligations.

DOD in particular, through the Weapons Council, but DOD independently has also been engaged pretty closely with NNSA looking at the costs of things like the life extension program for the B61, also for the uranium processing facility. So for instance, the Corps of Engineers did a pretty comprehensive study on the costs of the uranium processing facility and their estimate in their study was about \$4.1 billion. The building is not yet—

Senator SESSIONS. 4 point—

Ms. CREEDON. \$4.1 billion.

Senator SESSIONS. And what was the DOE estimate?

Ms. CREEDON. The DOE estimate actually had been a little bit lower originally. So the Corps, by the time—

Senator SESSIONS. It was about 8 or 10 total. Was that for both buildings?

Ms. CREEDON. That's about right, because the estimate at this point is they're about 4 to 4.5 apiece. That's sort of where we were right now.

So the Corps' estimate when they went through it, having also built in a contingency, was actually a little more than the initial DOE. But one of the things that's really important that NNSA is doing that DOD has encouraged NNSA to do is complete the design to the 90 percent level so that you can get a really good cost estimate.

One of the historic problems with NNSA in some of the construction projects is they didn't have a good completed design, so that they didn't have really good costs. So for both these two buildings

they're going to get to that 90 percent design level to do real independent cost estimates, so they have a real no-kidding baseline.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I'm not—I know I'm the Budget Committee member here, but I'm not interested in buildings. I'm only interested in what we need, which is the weapons being modernized. And if we have to have buildings, I guess we have to have buildings. And if we have to have them, they should be as cost-effective as we possibly can get them and as more of the money as possible directed to the product that you need, the American people need, and not just for building buildings.

The fiscal year 2013 budget for NNSA makes a number of changes. During a hearing yesterday General Kehler, head of Strategic Command, testified that he is concerned with the lack of a plan and strategy to meet STRATCOM requirements. According to General Kehler, he will be concerned—he will “be concerned until someone presents a plan that we can look at and be comfortable with and understand that it's being supported.”

Secretary Weber, do you want to comment on that? Do you agree with the commitment to modernize the nuclear weapons complex was a key element in ratification of the START Treaty, and do you agree that the fiscal year 2013 budget does not meet the terms of the plan that was committed to at that time?

Mr. WEBER. As Secretary Panetta and Secretary Chu indicated in their letter to Chairman Levin, modernization remains a firm commitment for them and for this administration. We are dealing with a difficult budget situation in the country and that forced us to accept a little bit of schedule risk. And we are comfortable with the President's fiscal year 2013 budget request, which actually increases the NNSA funding by \$363 million, about a 5 percent increase.

Where we need to do work and, as General Kehler indicated in his testimony yesterday, we need to work closely with NNSA, and we've established a joint issue team to develop an executable, affordable plan for the out years, 2014 and on, that meet our highest priorities, which are the weapons, the life extension programs for the weapons and the capabilities in the complex, in the National laboratories, that support certification of the stockpile and design and production of the actual weapons.

So we work very closely through the Nuclear Weapons Council, with General Kehler, with the Navy and Air Force secretaries and service chiefs, to make sure that the Department of Energy maintains its focus on what the Nation needs for its safe, secure, and effective deterrent.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I guess two questions. First, I think you said you agree that modernization is universally recognized as essential to the future viability of the nuclear weapons complex, and is a prerequisite for future reductions in our nuclear arsenal; is that correct?

Mr. WEBER. Yes, Senator. Modernization is essential, and as the stockpile—

Senator SESSIONS. Now, the Department of Defense, for the record, of course, doesn't do this. The Department of Energy does this. And I understand General Kehler is saying that he's not comfortable with the plan that he's seen. And he's the man that has

the responsibility of receiving the weapons and he has to certify that they are ready to be used effectively if such an event were to occur.

Do you think—would you say you agree that this budget does not honor the commitments that we need to achieve that goal? It's not your fault the money is not there. I'm just asking you your professional opinion. The goals that were laid out by DOD, does this budget meet those goals?

Mr. WEBER. The fiscal year 2013 budget request does meet those goals. It's the out years that General Kehler and I and other members of the Nuclear Weapons Council are concerned about, and we owe you, together with NNSA, as the two secretaries described in their letter, we owe you by this summer a solid, executable plan that will ensure in the long term that the modernization objectives are met and that we have a sustained, safe, secure, and effective deterrent for the Nation.

Senator SESSIONS. My time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator NELSON. Well, thank you, Senator.

There's no question that General Kehler was uncomfortable with the expectation that the future might not deliver what is needed. At best, it seems that you may be able to manufacture 20 to 30 pits per year in five years, whereas the MOU requires the NNSA be able to have the capacity to produce 50 to 80 pits per year in the 2022 time frame.

Has the 50 to 80 pit requirement changed? The second question is, has the time frame when the capability is needed in 2022 changed? Secretary Weber?

Mr. WEBER. No, the Department of Defense requirement has not changed. However, the Nuclear Weapons Council did accept some schedule risk. We accepted deferral of the CMR facility. What we need is a capability to produce plutonium pits in the near term, and the revised plutonium strategy that NNSA presented to the Nuclear Weapons Council will provide a 20 to 30-pit per year capacity in the near term, within five years, and that will support the life extension program for the common warhead that is among our highest priorities for the deterrent.

Senator NELSON. Well, obviously everybody is interested in meeting the timeframes and meeting the other requirements.

Let me switch now briefly here. Secretary Weber, my understanding is the initial estimates from the NNSA for the B61 gravity bomb that were submitted last fall by the NNSA were far too expensive and they are now having to revise downward, a less expensive option. Can you explain what's happened from your perspective as executive agent for the Nuclear Weapons Council?

Mr. WEBER. Yes. The life extension for the B61 gravity bomb, which is used for both the B-2 strategic bomber as well as our dual-capable aircraft that support the deterrence mission in Europe, is critical. It's an aging weapon and we need to have a life extension program under way.

Last summer the NNSA, based on the work done at the National laboratories, presented essentially three options for the life extension program. The high cost option exceeded the threshold military requirement and clearly was not affordable. The Nuclear Weapons



Council settled on the middle option that meets our military requirements, that will enhance the safety, security, and reliability of that warhead, and that will allow for consolidation of four variants into one, which we're calling the B61-12. This is synchronized with the tail kit program that the U.S. Air Force is initiating.

Senator NELSON. Admiral Benedict, on the W76 warhead refurbishment delay, I understand the NNSA has delayed the rate of refurbishment of the W76 Trident D5 warhead. What impact does this have and what kind of risk does it create for the fleet?

**STATEMENT OF RADM TERRY J. BENEDICT, USN, DIRECTOR,  
STRATEGIC SYSTEMS PROGRAMS, U.S. NAVY**

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir. Mr. Chairman, as Secretary Creedon and Secretary Weber have discussed, as part of the budget discussions through the Nuclear Weapons Council, the decision was made to essentially re-phase the program. The Navy will receive all operational reentry bodies and assets from NNSA by 2018. What we accepted was a 3-year delay in completing the total delivery, the last three years, which were the hedge requirements which we're required to have.

So in terms of impacts to the fleet, sir, there are no impacts from an operational warfighting requirement due to the readjustment of the schedule.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Benedict follows:]

Senator NELSON. Then delay of the *Ohio* replacement. Admiral Benedict, I understand that that *Ohio* replacement's going to be delayed 2 years. Once again, can you explain what impacts this may have on the common missile compartment program that you manage with the British, and how old the first *Ohio*-class boat will be when it's retired?

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir. Today the *Ohio* replacement program will have 12 submarines, which will replace the 14 existing *Ohio*-class submarines. You're correct that the decision was made to delay by two years. Having 12 *Ohio* replacement submarines will give us the 10 operational that we require in order to support the STRATCOM at-sea requirement.

We will have a period of time, essentially through the 30s, when we will be at that ten minimum number in order to sustain the warfighting requirement. That will impose additional risk on the Navy. We believe that is manageable. And essentially, all *Ohio*-class will be, give or take a number of months, sir, within about 42 years of age at their retirement.

Senator NELSON. My time has expired. Senator Cornyn.

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just have a few questions with regard to nuclear modernization funding. As you know, when the New START Treaty was ratified in the Senate there were certain representations made by the administration, as well as assurances given by the appropriators in the Senate. And I think—I hear Senator Sessions may have touched on this some.

But during yesterday's full hearing of the Armed Services Committee, General Kehler at STRATCOM expressed his concerns about the funding shortfall in the current, in the President's budget

request. Using the 1251 modernization plan as a baseline, the fiscal year 2013 request falls \$372 million short and funding between fiscal year 2012 and 2017 could fall \$4 billion short on the 1251 commitment.

General Kehler noted the slips to the B61 and W75 life extension programs indicated that, while it would increase risk, it would be manageable, which I appreciate always. When our military says it's manageable, that's your job, to manage with the resources that you are given; not that it's optimal, but that it may be manageable.

He was concerned about deferring the start of construction of the plutonium handling facility, the CMRRR, and, perhaps more important, was uncertain about the administration's alternative course of action for producing the necessary number of nuclear pits to maintain a responsive infrastructure. It seems odd to me that the Department of Defense would agree to the fiscal year 2013 funding request and alternative to CMRR without knowing whether it's technically feasible or cost-effective or whether the funding will be provided in the out years necessary to accomplish these tasks.

So I would ask, Secretary Creedon and Secretary Weber, perhaps in light of these comments can you tell us whether you share these concerns and what the state of thinking of the Pentagon is with regard to the way forward. How could the Nuclear Weapons Council approve the fiscal year 2013 budget request with so much uncertainty?

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you, sir. In general terms, yes, we do share the concerns of General Kehler. To focus on the 2013 budget request, at the moment the 2013 budget request is okay. We've made some adjustments in some of the scheduled programs, but 2013 is okay.

Where we are all concerned and where we have work to do is in the out years.

Senator CORNYN. If I may just ask for clarification, you say you're okay in fiscal year 2013, and that is because the funding request meets what was represented to be the prospective funding at the time the New START Treaty was ratified?

Ms. CREEDON. 2013 is a little bit less than what was projected to be in 2013 in the 1251 report, but it's only a slight degree. It's only a little bit less, and it's more than the appropriated amount in 2012. And with some schedule adjustments to some of the systems, specifically the 61, the 76-1 life extension, there's been some opportunity to have this reduction and have 2013 be okay.

Now, one of the big issues obviously is the issue of not doing both the plutonium building and the uranium building simultaneously. And that was the decision that the Weapons Council made, so to put the uranium building first and the plutonium building second, with some adjustments that the NNSA is going to do in their overall plutonium strategy to allow an increase in production at the PF4 facility where the pits are actually made. So PF4 is the facility where pits are actually made and the CMRR, in other words the replacement facility, is where they do a lot of the analytical work, they store the plutonium, and they do a lot of the support work to allow the production of the pits.

So with some adjustments in the PF4 building and some adjustments throughout the complex, there is an ability to increase the production at PF4 in the near term to about 20 pits and possibly a little bit more in the near term, until we can get the plutonium building completely designed, the uranium building built, and then we'll go back—then the plan is to go back then and pick up the construction and funding of the CMRR, the plutonium building.

So that's the current plan. But we need to fit this in the out years budgets, because right now the out years budgets are, as General Kehler said, they are not a reliable plan at the moment.

Senator CORNYN. So if I understood you correctly, there is a potential of producing as many as 20 pits using the current operations facility?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Senator CORNYN. But the requirement is multiples of that, is it not?

Ms. CREEDON. The requirement—the objective requirement is 50 to 80, based on what the longer term life extension decisions are. So right now, with the decisions for the life extension on the 61 and the completion of the 76-1, the capability at PF4 that will be provided in the interim is adequate. It's the decision on the next round of life extensions that starts to then generate the requirement for pits at PF4.

Senator CORNYN. Mr. Chairman, can I have one last question, if I may, please?

Senator NELSON. Sure, sure.

Senator CORNYN. I'd like to ask whether the Department of Defense would be willing to help our committee identify efficiencies within the National laboratories or NNSA that would free up funding for the important weapons life extension programs or perhaps even to fund the construction of CMRR on its original schedule. In other words, about \$300 million is needed in fiscal year 2013 and \$1.8 billion over the next five years.

First of all, do you believe that there are efficiencies that could be identified within the National laboratories and NNSA? And if there are, would you be willing to work with us to try to find those in a way that keeps the original commitment, that I believe a lot of Senators relied upon in voting to ratify the New START Treaty?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, we would be happy—in fact, the Department is working very closely with the NNSA right now, going through a process to try and identify efficiencies. But at some point, it really depends on what the annual budget is as to what we can accomplish. I mean, even with efficiencies, there's only so much you can do with efficiencies based on whatever the out years top line is. But we would be more than happy—in fact, we've already started that process internally.

Senator CORNYN. Well, we'd be happy—I appreciate that. We'll be happy to work with you to find those, and if there's money that's not being used to good purpose it seems to me that that's something—that's a commitment that was made that we need to make sure is kept.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Senator Cornyn.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, witnesses. I think the chairman touched upon the delay of the *Ohio*-class submarine, but I want to ask a few more questions. When General Kehler was before us as STRATCOM commander, in response to Senator Blumenthal he pointed out that survivability of the deterrent is one of the key factors that must be considered. My understanding of this conversation was that he saw the submarine as providing the most survivable deterrent and therefore the *Ohio*-class replacement is the top priority in terms of the rebuilding or refurbishing the nuclear triad.

Madam Secretary, can you talk about this priority in the context of support by the Department of Defense to the Department of the Navy to make sure we get this done? Because I think one of the issues that we're running into, and I think similarly with respect to the other services, these platforms, this replacement, is expensive. It crowds out shipbuilding and other key aspects that we have to do, unless there's some support from the Department of Defense because of the strategic nature of the platform.

Can you comment on that, Madam Secretary?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. From a policy perspective, maintaining all three legs of the triad is the Department and the administration's commitment, and the submarine, as you mentioned, is the most survivable leg of the triad. So from a policy perspective, the ability to maintain and fund that leg of the triad is critical.

But, recognizing the fiscal constraints, the decision to slip the first Trident—to slip the program by 2 years and then save about \$4 billion within the fyDP, was also a—that level of risk was acceptable. We recognize the fiscal constraints and it still maintains the commitment to the triad.

For any operational specifics, I think I'd rather defer, though, to Admiral Benedict.

Senator REED. And I'd be happy to hear from Admiral Benedict. One further sort of elaboration is that this slip is just for 2 years, so we will begin in earnest the R and D, construction, etcetera. But what happens still, even though we've pushed the problem back two years, at some point you've got a lot of different platforms, ships in this case, that have to be built and, given the strategic nature of this system, the Navy top line might have to be adjusted upwards by DOD resources to make sure it can be done to maintain the triad, all three parts of it, but leading with the submarine.

Admiral Benedict, please, your comments?

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir, Senator. As Mr. Stackley and Vice Admiral Blake described this morning, the Navy is in conversation, Navy leadership, with OSD on the potential to do that. Those discussions are ongoing. It's clearly recognized within all levels of leadership the pressure that the *Ohio* replacement program puts on the total Navy shipbuilding program, and I believe that those discussions will run their course in due time, sir, as Mr. Stackley described.

Senator REED. Thank you.

A final—and this goes back to the very difficult budget choices you have to make. And I get the sense—and you might want to comment, and this is not particularly profound—we're going to have to do some prioritizing in terms of what we build and the se-

quence of building these platforms. So that the goal is, and I agree with you, maintain the triad, but the pace of replacement of air and land-based systems and sea-based systems is something that you're going to have to consider because of the budget. Is that fair?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. Looking from a policy perspective, again looking at all of the systems in the triad, looking at what their current life expectancy is, when we need new ones, that's part of the overall OSD discussions in terms of maintaining the triad. And at the moment it was clear that, based on the extended life of the hull of the Tridents, that was an acceptable risk, to slip it by 2 years.

On the other hand, the bombers stayed on schedule and we're continuing with the Minuteman life extension program to get the Minuteman up to 2030.

Senator REED. One final question. That is, there's a new—I guess it's not that new, but there's a new factor. That's cyber, in terms of development of systems, the deployment of systems, the survivability of systems. I'm old enough, you know, in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, this was not a significant factor. I'm talking about the effect of a cyber attack, not on military installations directly, but the utilities that serve it, so that your power's down, disrupting communications, etcetera.

Is that being weighed also, and does that go to the point that General Kehler made about the survivability of the seaborne deterrent because of its potential to withstand cyber? And conversely, are other systems more vulnerable to cyber? It's a big question, but if anyone would like to comment. If not—

Ms. CREEDON. Other than just generally, yes, we are looking at that. Nuclear command and control is extraordinarily important. But in terms of the specifics for the platform, I would prefer, frankly, to defer to my colleagues from the services.

Senator REED. Let me—General?

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

General KOWALSKI. Yes, Senator. We just wrapped up a study of the cyber vulnerabilities of the ICBM and the conclusion of the study was it was an invulnerable system in terms of getting into the actual command and control. I take your point, that some of the supporting systems might be vulnerable. In fact, we've already taken measures to close those gaps. It was a worthwhile effort. It took us about a year.

In our other systems, we have looked at the same thing and we're pretty confident where we're at.

[The prepared statement of General Kowalski follows:]

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator SESSIONS.

Senator SESSIONS. Secretary Creedon, does the Department of Defense agree that the 5-year delay in the CMRR is acceptable?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. We looked at the budgetary constraints. We looked at the requirements for pits. We looked at the conditions, the relative conditions of the two buildings, and looked at

some of the efficiencies that actually NNSA has identified, and decided that we can't build two—there's not enough money to build the two buildings concurrently and the most critical—

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I know that. You're saying we don't have the money.

Ms. CREEDON. We don't have the money.

Senator SESSIONS. You had a requirement. Has the requirement for 50 to 80 pits per year changed?

Ms. CREEDON. No, sir, that requirement has not changed. But the timing of when we need 50 to 80 pits has also moved—has also moved.

Senator SESSIONS. So that—but you had a requirement to have the 50 to 80 within a time period that's no longer going to be met, is that right?

Ms. CREEDON. That's true.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, that's basically what I was asking. So you have a requirement. We've run out of money and now you say we've changed, and it's not meeting the requirement we had just recently. So this worries me.

With regard to—isn't it true—and I'm not sure I should get our military people involved in this. But, Admiral Benedict, is it true the budget would result in a two-year delay of the B61 life extension program, moving the production from 2017 to 2019? Or is that General Kowalski?

Admiral BENEDICT. Senator, that's the Air Force.

Senator SESSIONS. All right.

General KOWALSKI. Senator, yes, it does delay it from 2017 to 2019. But that's still consistent with the lifetime of the current mods of the B61 that we have out in the fielded force.

Senator SESSIONS. Is it true the budget would delay the completion of the W76 by four years and the Navy in response has publicly expressed concern? Is that right, Admiral Benedict?

Admiral BENEDICT. Sir, as I explained earlier, it will delay the final numbers, which are my hedge requirements, by three years, but the operational requirement numbers will be met on the baseline schedule.

Senator SESSIONS. Did the Navy express concern at one point?

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir, the CNO did.

Senator SESSIONS. Is it true this budget would delay the previously agreed-to schedule for the W78–W88 by 3 years, to 2023?

**STATEMENT OF MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM A. CHAMBERS, USAF, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR STRATEGIC DETERRENCE AND NUCLEAR INTEGRATION, U.S. AIR FORCE**

General CHAMBERS. Yes, Senator, that's true.

[The prepared statement of General Chambers follows:]

Senator SESSIONS. Is it true the budget does not provide the resources necessary to meet a DOD requirement for developing pit production capacity to 50 to 80 pits that you had previously declared would be for 2022? You'll not meet that goal?

Ms. CREEDON. Sir, that's correct. But because of what General Chambers has said, the actual time when that requirement becomes an essential requirement has also slipped.

Senator SESSIONS. And the Navy, Admiral Benedict, previously had stated that the schedule for the SSBN, the new *Ohio* replacement, and the 12 follow-ons, 12 of them, is “inextricably linked to the legacy *Ohio*-class SSBN requirements,” and that there is “no leeway in this plan to allow a start or any delay in the procurement plan.” Did the Navy make that statement in previous years to your knowledge?

Admiral BENEDICT. Sir, I don’t know who made that statement, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. You didn’t make that statement?

Admiral BENEDICT. No, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. You’d remember, I know. But that’s the information I have.

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir.

Senator SESSIONS. So I’m just saying, gentlemen, one thing sometimes in uniform you don’t focus on and maybe you shouldn’t, but the problem is that when you keep moving things to the right all of them don’t get completed. If you don’t get started and you don’t do them and the Congress comes along or some other problem or something, the next thing you know a program that was designed to be completed isn’t ever completed, number one; number two, you don’t really save \$4 billion when you move a submarine one year, or \$8 billion when you move it two years. What you do is you create a hole that’s got to be filled because you spent that money on something else.

So we’ve got to have from you realistic testimony concerning the threat. I’m going to take you at your word based on what I know today, but fundamentally what I’m saying is when we keep moving things to the right we’re endangering our defense capability, and I’m worried about it. And it’s for one reason. As Admiral Mullen said, the debt is a great threat to our National security. So we’ve got money shortages.

Then I also have to say that I’m uneasy because this administration has not been strongly committed on the strategic issues, whether it’s National missile defense or whether it’s nuclear weapons. The President said recently that we’ve got more weapons than we need, and General Chilton, when asked about this in 2010, said, by Senator Feingold: “I do not agree that it is more than needed. I think the arsenal that we have is exactly what is needed today to provide the deterrent.”

So I think the President better communicate with our Defense Department to make sure that he knows what he’s saying. So I don’t—and he’s proposed and openly and repeatedly stated he’s in favor of moving to a world without nuclear weapons.

So this makes me concerned that our nuclear triad submarine is being delayed, modernization is being delayed, that agreements we thought we had are not being followed. So that’s the problem, Mr. Chairman. I know it’s a challenge, but these issues are so important that I do feel like I should express them.

Senator NELSON. Well, thank you, Senator Sessions. I think we’re all concerned about slippage on time frames, because it just can slip right into the future, and we all know that the future doesn’t become the present and will remain the future, obviously. That’s what our concern is.

Then when it comes to the CMR and the building, not having enough to construct both buildings, with respect to the Strategic Command headquarters, we've got phased-in or incremental funding. Has the Department looked at incremental funding? Because once you start the building it's not going to finish in a single year, but you could get at least started?

I think the fear is that it'll just keep going, slipping off into the future. In the next budget, there won't be anything; there will be other reasons. And it looks like we've got a plan for fiscal year 2013. What's the plan for fiscal year 2014 and beyond?

I guess any one of you that might want to respond to phased-in or incremental funding would be fine with me.

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, unlike the Department of Defense, where incremental funding is the exception to the rule, at the NNSA the way the budget is structured at the NNSA the construction projects are always incrementally funded. So the NNSA budget is built in a way that, particularly because they tend to do—because NNSA tends to do very large, one of a kind, first of a kind, technically complex, very expensive buildings, that you couldn't possibly fund, nor do you need all that money in 1 year because they take so long to build. NNSA is always incrementally funded.

So the uranium processing facility, the money for that that starts in 2013, that will both be—well, assuming that it's appropriated, but it's requested over a period of years and we hope that it will be appropriated over a period of years.

Senator NELSON. Well, wouldn't it be possible to get started with the planning or some of the basic requirements that are almost always initial funded? I mean, I guess everybody seems to be concerned—I know General Kehler was concerned, we're all concerned—about not having the building. We're concerned about slipping, dropping down the number of pits that will be taken care of. And so we don't just slide way off into the future, I would hope that maybe with what Senator Cornyn was saying about getting together and looking at other ways to do this, to find a way to put us into a position to begin moving forward.

I know we're not talking about tens of millions. We're talking about a lot more money than that. But it does seem that that is desirable to at least explore.

I've got a question for the record here. Admiral Benedict, if you will for the record, I understand that NNSA is now undertaking a common warhead design for the W88 Trident D5 warhead and the W78 Minuteman III warhead. For the record, will you tell us whether you think it's possible to have a single warhead for both families of missiles and what is the risk to the Navy for a common design of sorts?

Admiral BENEDICT. Yes, sir. I do believe it is possible and the Navy does support that program. Right now it is envisioned that the Air Force would lead that and we would be in a supporting role as that effort rolls out.

As in any program right now, which it's in the initial 6.1 phase of development, there are programmatic and technical challenges which we are exploring today. I do believe that it is the intention of the Department to go to the Nuclear Weapons Council in fiscal year 2012 and ask for permission, authorization to proceed to



phase 6.2, at which time we would go into further development and design understanding.

Of course, in this type of a program a common warhead will need to be able to meet both the Navy requirements for the SLBM as well as the Air Force requirements for the ICBM. That's never been done before. I do believe that, given the right time and talent, we can achieve those requirements, sir.

Senator NELSON. Thank you.

General Kowalski, what impact will delaying the installation of the B-52 CONECT system have? And I understand it was to provide a digital backbone for the B-52 and provide rapid retargeting recognizing moving from analog to digital. What will that involve?

General KOWALSKI. Mr. Chairman, the B-52 combination of its extremely long range—it has the longest range of any of our bombers—along with the wide variety of munitions it carries—it has the widest variety of any of our bombers—makes it extremely well suited for the role of a standoff weapons platform, especially in the more high- end conflict, where we're going against a denied air space environment with this proliferation we have of anti-access and area denial kind of weapons.

So as we think about what that joint force looks like, we need that standoff platform to be fully integrated into that joint force, meaning that we can communicate to it and pass it information related to threats, related to retargeting, etcetera, as it moves to be able to access global targets. So that requires beyond line-of-sight communication.

So that digital backbone is going to be important as we think about the future employment of the B-52. The reality that we're in is that the combination of budget pressures and problems with the program has caused us to restructure the CONECT system. We've separated it from the AEHF part of that, the Advanced Extremely High Frequency radio and communications systems, and we are looking now at options to bring it back in.

The bottom line is the requirement for that capability remains and we're going to continue to advocate for it.

Senator NELSON. Well, should the requirement remain to do the CONECT as well?

Admiral BENEDICT. The requirement remains for that kind of capability. So as we go through and we look at the funding that we have for 2013 and we look at what we can get outside of 2013 for the rest of the program, we'll be able to come back with a better answer. But right now we're reviewing all our options.

Senator SESSIONS. Senator Sessions, I notice the time. Do you have some more?

Senator SESSIONS. I really don't. I thank all of you for your excellent testimony and service to the country. I believe that all of us in Congress need to examine carefully the financial restraints that are falling on this part of our strategic forces. It's a key component of our strategic forces and as we make choices, difficult choices, I don't think we need to allow too much to fall on this aspect of our defense posture.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator NELSON. Well, thank you, Senator Sessions.

Let me add my thoughts. We ask you to reduce budgets, to watch the growth, and then when you come before us after you've done it then we question why you've done it and whether you've done it right or not. But thank you for your explanations. We appreciate it very much. Thank you for your service.

[Whereupon, at 3:31 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]