

OPENING STATEMENT

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen

Chairman, Energy and Water Development
Subcommittee

House Committee on Appropriations

NNSA Weapons Activities
FY 2013 Budget

February 29, 2012

This hearing will come to order.

Administrator D'Agostino, it's good to have you back once again. This will be the sixth year that you will testify before this subcommittee, which must be quite a penance to pay after your considerable service in the United States Navy. Welcome back, Dr. Cook and General Finan. I thank you all for your service to this country, and we look forward to your remarks.

It is no surprise to anyone on this dais, or in this room, that I hold the nuclear security enterprise to be the single most important mandate of the Department of Energy. However, given that, let me disabuse

everyone of any notion that I would write this Department a blank check for anything. It is the responsibility of this Committee to take apart each and every budget line, scrutinize it, analyze it, and ensure that taxpayer dollars would be well and rationally used. Last year, that put us at odds with those who felt that our national security enterprise simply had to have a much higher level of funding. However, we were able to show that our strategic security could be maintained, and even strengthened, within constrained resources. We need both a credible and affordable strategy for maintaining our nuclear deterrent.

However, I am concerned with this Administration's blind push for cuts to our military budget, across our defense programs. While your current budget request recognizes, finally, that tough decisions must be made in the long-term interests of this country, it will be your task to show that those tradeoffs do not jeopardize our strategic security.

Mr. Administrator, I don't need to remind you that the nuclear weapons efforts under your responsibility often entail billions of taxpayer dollars. I want to take a moment to note the importance of the financial reporting requirements instituted in the fiscal year 2012 conference report. These are

intended to provide this body, and the taxpayer, with a greater level of transparency into the full costs of your efforts and the effectiveness of your project management. They're also in place to ensure that the full Administration – including your organization, the Defense Department, OMB, the Nuclear Weapons Council, and others – has come to an internal consensus on the requirements for your major initiatives. Properly followed, these requirements will help build consensus and confidence here in Congress. Please take them to heart as you and your colleagues develop your work plan for the next few years.

I have heard many speak recently about potential new cuts to the nuclear stockpile, and these reports give me great pause. The goal of our nuclear force structure is deterrence – preventing any adversary from even thinking that they could minimize our attack options. We must take great care not to encourage our enemies to make foolish decisions. Most importantly, we must make sure that the warheads we now have actually work reliably, and I have made it my top priority to ensure you have the budgetary resources to do this. The country has placed in your capable hands the responsibility to use these resources properly and efficiently. I trust that today you and your colleagues will explain to the

subcommittee how your budget request supports this critical goal.

Mr. Administrator, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until close of business tomorrow to provide them to the subcommittee office.

With that, I will turn to Ranking Member Visclosky for any comments he may have.