



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein at Appropriations Hearing
On Funding of Next Generation of Nuclear Weapons
March 23, 2004

Washington, DC -- *The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water today held a hearing on the budget for the National Nuclear Security Administration, which is engaged in research into a new generation of nuclear weapons. The following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein's statement:*

“Preventing the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and the means to deliver them should be a top priority for American’s national security policy. But for much of the past three years, the Administration’s policy on nuclear weapons has:

- Engaged in unnecessarily belligerent unilateralist rhetoric and action;
- Dismissed arms control and nonproliferation as ineffective;
- Emphasized the role of pre emptive military action; and,
- Pursued new nuclear weapon capabilities.

I believe that if the United States is ultimately to be successful in our efforts to keep WMD out of the hands of terrorists we must reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our own thinking as a core element of our non-proliferation strategy.

For the U.S. to be increasing funding for the research and development of a new generation of nuclear weapons in its own arsenal even as we are telling others that they should not pursue these weapons themselves may well provoke the very proliferation we seek to prevent.

And well there is no question that in the post-9/11 era a full range of policy options for dealing with new and uncertain events should be on the table I am gravely concerned that this Administration’s efforts to reopen the door to develop and deploy a new generation of nuclear weapons may make the United States less safe and secure, not more.

Now, when we discussed these issues in the context of last year’s budget request, representatives of the Administration, including both the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Energy, assured the Senate that the research proposed on new nuclear weapons was just that, research and studies.

Well, in both politics and government if you really want to know what is going on often the best thing to do is simply to 'follow the money.'

And if there is any question about the Administration's true intent the budget requests before the Congress this year makes it perfectly clear that despite last years protestations of innocence there are those in this Administration who are deadly serious about the development and deployment of a new generation of nuclear weapons. This year's budget request includes:

- \$27.5 million for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator;
- \$9 million for Advanced Concepts Initiative, which includes so-called 'low yield' weapons; and,
- \$30 million for the Modern Pit Facility, a plant to make up to 450 new 'pits', which trigger nuclear weapons, per year. You don't need that much production unless you are going back into the nuclear business in a serious way.

And this year's request is just the tip of the iceberg. The Congressional Research Service now reports that the Administration's own long-term budget plans, which includes \$485 million for the RNEP between 2005 and 2009, 'cast doubt' on the contention that the study of new nuclear weapons are, in fact, only a study.

And to my mind the ramp-up in funding represented by the Administration's request can mean one thing and one thing only: That the Administration is determined to develop and field a new generation of nuclear weapons.

I strongly support a robust military to safeguard America's National Security interests. But by seeking to develop new nuclear weapons -- and, as indicated in the Nuclear Posture Review, a new doctrine that considers nuclear weapons in the same category as conventional weapons -- the United States sends a message that nuclear weapons have a future battlefield role and utility. By doing so, I believe we will make our nation and our allies less secure - not more - if the United States opens the door to the development, testing, and deployment of new nuclear weapons."

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