As a testament to the character of the workers who built many of our Nation's great warships, the shipyard almost came to a standstill, leading to the monument's eventual return.

The ''Good Ship'' motto is a lesson for us all, but especially for the F–35 Program Office and its industry partners. We should all rally around a ''Good Strike Fighter'' motto. After all, these jets are being built for our men and women in uniform, to protect our rights and liberties as well as those of our allies.

The fighting spirit of the United States and her allies can enable the F–35 Joint Strike Fighter to emerge from its challenges like the mythical phoenix: reborn, regenerated and renewed. But for this to succeed, we must commit ourselves to excellence—in essence, the ''Good Strike Fighter'' motto. The war fighter, the American people, our allies and partners, and the whole free world are depending on it.

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

We're here today to review the president's fiscal year 2016 budget request for the National Nuclear Security Administration, which is a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy that is responsible for managing our nuclear weapons stockpile, reducing global dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, and providing the Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion.

This is the subcommittee's third hearing this year on the president's budget request, and I look forward to hearing our witnesses' testimony.

The NNSA, has an important national security mission, but faces many challenges. That's why we need to do what we were sent here to do—to govern.

Governing is about setting priorities, and we are going to have to make some hard decisions this year to make sure the highest priorities are funded.

The president's 2016 budget request for defense spending is about $38 billion higher than what is allowed under the spending caps in the Budget Control Act.

In fact, if spending this year is consistent with the Budget Control Act, fully funding NNSA's budget request alone would require almost the entire increase in defense spending for all defense programs—including the Department of Defense.

We will work with Senator Cochran and Senator Mikulski to increase the subcommittee's defense spending allocation, but we're going to need your help to understand the NNSA's most urgent priorities, and that is why we are holding this hearing.

I'd like to focus my questions on three main areas, all with an eye toward setting priorities:

Keeping large construction projects on time and on budget; Senator Feinstein and I have worked pretty hard on that.

Effectively maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile; and

Supporting our nuclear Navy.

The NNSA is responsible for three of the largest construction projects in the federal government: the Uranium Processing Facility in Tennessee; the MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility in South Carolina; and the Plutonium Facility in New Mexico.

Combined, these projects could cost as much as $20 billion dollars to build, and over the past four years, Senator Feinstein and I have worked hard with the NNSA to keep costs from skyrocketing and to make sure hard-earned taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. We need to make sure these projects are on time and on budget.

Senator Feinstein and I have focused much of our oversight on the Uranium Processing Facility, because costs had increased every time we would get a status update.

Three years ago, we began holding regular meetings with the NNSA administrator and his team.

We said we wanted 90 percent design completed before we began construction and urged the NNSA to take aggressive steps to get costs under control.

The administrator asked Thom Mason, the laboratory director for Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee to head a Red Team to review the project. The result of that review may be a model for how to keep these kinds of projects on time and on budget.

The Red Team's report included 17 recommendations, nearly all of which the NNSA has now adopted, to keep the uranium facility within a $6.5 billion budget with completion by 2025.

Based on these recommendations, the Uranium Facility will now consist of at least two buildings—one with high security and one with less security—with construction of these buildings to begin once their design is at 90 percent.

As I understand it, NNSA recently completed a portion of the site preparation for this project under budget by $10 million. That's a good start, but there's a lot more work to be done.

I'm going to ask you more today about the uranium facility, particularly about your schedule for completing the design and when you anticipate construction can begin.

I also want to ask you about how you are applying the lessons we learned from the Red Team Review Team and to the other big construction projects, and look forward to any updates you can provide.

General Klotz, I know you plan to go to Tennessee tomorrow to see the progress on this project. I appreciate your hands-on approach to making sure this important project is delivered on time and on budget.

Another large portion of the budget request is the work NNSA is doing to maintain our nuclear weapons stockpile, and I want to make sure we are spending taxpayer dollars effectively.

The budget request includes $1.3 billion to continue the four ongoing life extension programs, which fix or replace components in weapons systems to make sure they're safe and reliable.

These life extension programs are needed but they are very expensive, and I will ask you today whether you will be able to meet your production deadlines on time and on budget.

Naval Reactors is responsible for all aspects of the nuclear reactors that power submarines and aircraft carriers. Naval Reactors is currently designing a new reactor core that will not need to be refueled during the life of the ship.

This work will save taxpayers billions of dollars because we won't have to build two extra submarines to make up for those that are not in service when they are being refueled.

The small nuclear reactors that Naval Reactors designs have had an impeccable safety record for more than 60 years; there has never been a reactor accident.

I also want to hear more about your plans for storing the Navy's used nuclear fuel.

We talked a lot in our hearing last week with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission about Yucca Mountain and storing used nuclear fuel from commercial reactors, and I'd like to hear from you how this issue impacts your operations.

With that, I would recognize Senator Feinstein to make her opening statement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LINDA HODGDON

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I congratulate New Hampshire commissioner of administrative services Linda Hodgdon on her retirement and to recognize her nearly 30 years of dedicated public service to New Hampshire and our Nation.

Commissioner Hodgdon has distinguished herself as an extraordinary public servant. Linda's administrative and analytic talent, commitment to the prudent use of tax dollars, and her exceptional work ethic resulted in her holding increasingly challenging and responsible positions throughout New Hampshire's State government. She started her service in 1985 as a financial analyst in the Governor's office, and has since served in various positions with the Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Department of Justice. In 2008 she was appointed to serve as the commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services. Throughout her career serving the people of New Hampshire, Linda has earned a reputation for her exemplary commitment to fulfilling the fiduciary duty we all have to spend tax dollars wisely, and she has worked to boost efficiency and increase accountability.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to work with Linda when she served as the director of administration for the New Hampshire Department of Justice from 2004 to 2006. During my tenure as attorney general I came to value and greatly appreciate Linda's work managing our budget and many other administrative functions within the office. Her skill, dedication, and hard work played an integral role in the success the office enjoyed. When Linda took on a task you knew it would be done thoroughly, professionally, and on time. Linda was a trusted member of my leadership team, who was greatly appreciated by all of the members of the office.

As Commissioner Hodgdon retires from public service, I commend her on a job well done. The government of the State of New Hampshire and the lives of the people of our State are better off because of her exemplary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking

Linda for her service and wishing Linda, her husband Mark, and their daughter well in all future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN ANDY BLOMME, COMMANDER DANIEL WALSH, AND LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT POTTER

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize CAPT Andy Blomme, Chief of Congressional Affairs for the U.S. Coast Guard; CDR Daniel Walsh, U.S. Coast Guard Senate Liaison; and LCDR Robert Potter, U.S. Coast Guard Deputy Senate Liaison, for all of the hard work they have done for me, my staff, and other members of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee over the past several years.

Captain Blomme graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1985. His illustrious, 30-year career includes nearly 12 years of sea duty and command of three Coast Guard cutters, command of Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville, FL, and service as Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security during the terms of Secretary Chertoff and Secretary Napolitano.

Commander Walsh graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1993. His distinguished career includes service aboard U.S. and allied vessels, multiple assignments as a Coast Guard aviator, and service as Military Aide to the President of the United States during the terms of President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. Commander Walsh will next assume the Coast Guard Service Chair at the National War College in Washington, DC where he will serve as a service representative and instructor.

Lieutenant Commander Potter graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1999. His noteworthy career includes 2 years aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton, operational assignments at two air stations, and service as an MH–60T flight examiner at the U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Center in Mobile, AL. Lieutenant Commander Potter will be assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Diego where he will serve as the sector response chief.

I congratulate Captain Blomme and thank him for his selfless and dedicated service to our Nation. I wish him and his family all the best in their future endeavors following his retirement from the Coast Guard this spring.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Commander Walsh and Lieutenant Commander Potter for all of the fine work they have done and for their continued service to our Nation. I wish them further success in the years to come.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:46 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 233. An act to allow reviews of certain families' incomes every 3 years for purposes of determining eligibility for certain Federal assisted housing programs.

H.R. 360. An act to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 301 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381), as amended by Public Law 114–6, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate jointly reappoint the following individuals on March 23, 2015, each to a 2-year term on the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance: Mr. Alan V. Friedman of Los Angeles, California, Ms. Susan S. Robfogel of Rochester, New York, and Ms. Barbara Childs Wallace of Ridgefield, Mississippi.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 233. An act to allow reviews of certain families' incomes every 3 years for purposes of determining eligibility for certain Federal assisted housing programs; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 360. An act to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–995. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2-Propenoic Acid, Polymer with Ethenyl Acetate, Ethenylbenzene, 2-ethylhexyl 2-propenoate and ethyl 2-propenoate; Tolerance Exemption'' (FRL No. 9923–63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–996. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Sodium L-lactate and Sodium DL-Lactate; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9924–24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–997. A communication from the Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's biennial strategic plan; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–998. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Defense 2015 Major Automated Information System (MAIS) Annual Reports (MARs) and an index of the 39 MARs; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–999. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Housing Trust Fund'' (RIN2590–AA73) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 20, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1000. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission's Rules'' (FCC 15–28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1001. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revocation of Significant New Uses of Metal Salts of Complex Inorganic Oxyacids'' ((RIN2070–AB27) (FRL No. 9924–09)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1002. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Implementation Plans; California; Regional Haze Progress Report'' (FRL No. 9924–64–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1003. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Mississippi Infrastructure Requirements for the 2008 Lead National Ambient Air Quality Standards'' (FRL No. 9924–99–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1004. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; State of Missouri; Reporting Emission Data, Emission Fees and Process Information'' (FRL No. 9924–44–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1005. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; District of Columbia; Preconstruction Requirements—Nonattainment New Source Review'' (FRL No. 9924–57–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1006. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Laboratory Investigations of Soils and Rocks for Engineering Analysis and Design of Nuclear Power Plants'' (Regulatory Guide 1.138, Revision 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 20, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1007. A joint communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and