



NEWS

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Bryan Wilkes
(202) 586-7371

Administration Plans Significant Reduction In Nuclear Weapons Stockpile

WASHINGTON, D.C. – National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Administrator Linton F. Brooks, on behalf of the Secretaries of Energy and Defense, has submitted a classified report to Congress showing a significant reduction in the nation's total nuclear weapons stockpile by 2012.

The stockpile contains reserve warheads that back up the operationally deployed nuclear weapons. In 2001, President Bush announced that the operationally deployed force would be reduced to 1,700 – 2,200 nuclear weapons by 2012. His decision was later codified in the Moscow Treaty.

The following is the unclassified cover letter:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Defense, I am pleased to submit a report on a revised nuclear weapons stockpile plan as requested in the conference report to accompany the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2004.

The President on 13 November 2001 announced his decision to reduce to 1700-2200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads by the end of 2012—a two-thirds reduction from then-current levels. This dramatic reduction in nuclear forces—the most significant in the nuclear age—was codified in the Moscow Treaty.

Historically, deployed nuclear forces have been supported by a stockpile reserve that ensures that America's military readiness is not compromised. As the number of operationally deployed warheads declines, stockpile reserves take on even greater importance. The Nuclear Posture Review calls for a nuclear stockpile that supports the operationally deployed force and includes a reserve of warheads that could be used to augment the operationally deployed force or to provide replacements for warheads that experience safety or reliability problems.

The President's decision to reduce the number of operationally deployed weapons has laid the groundwork for a major reduction in the size of the total nuclear stockpile. The size and composition of this stockpile has been the focus of a great deal of analysis in the Administration. Recently, the President approved a stockpile plan that would substantially reduce the current stockpile. Detailed information about this plan is included in the enclosed report.

By 2012, the United States’ nuclear stockpile will be the smallest it has been in several decades. In recommending this stockpile plan to the President, we recognize that maintaining the nation’s nuclear deterrence with a much smaller stockpile means that we must continue Administration efforts to restore the nuclear weapons infrastructure. The Nuclear Posture Review calls for a “responsive infrastructure” to ensure that we retain the ability and expertise to respond to geopolitical changes that may challenge American security in the future or to address potential problems that affect the safety or reliability of weapons in the current stockpile.

The Administration’s work to restore a modern infrastructure includes, among other things, three ongoing initiatives: (1) planning for a Modern Pit Facility to restore the nation’s ability to manufacture plutonium parts for nuclear warheads; (2) an advanced concepts program to enable scientists and engineers at the national nuclear weapons laboratories to retain critical skills and to provide the United States with means to respond to new, unexpected, or emerging threats in a timely manner; and (3) enhanced test readiness. Completion of these programs and the realization of a responsive infrastructure will offer opportunities for the United States to reduce further the nuclear stockpile secure in the knowledge that the nation has enhanced its capabilities to respond to possible future challenges to its security.

Sincerely,
//s//
Linton F. Brooks
Administrator

Enclosure

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