

# **Crisis of Inspiration: The Relationship Between Nuclear Strategy and the Technical Minds Behind the Deterrent**

## Outline:

1. Stockpile Confidence
2. Sleepwalking
3. Urgency, not complacency

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June 26, 2007

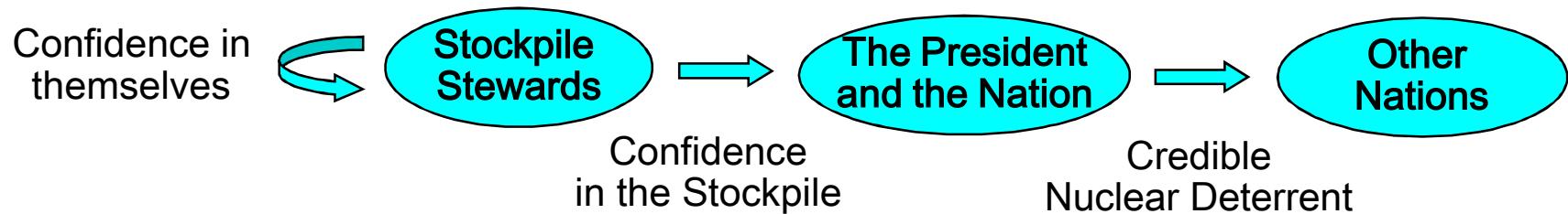




# Stockpile Confidence

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Stockpile confidence today is ultimately about human judgment

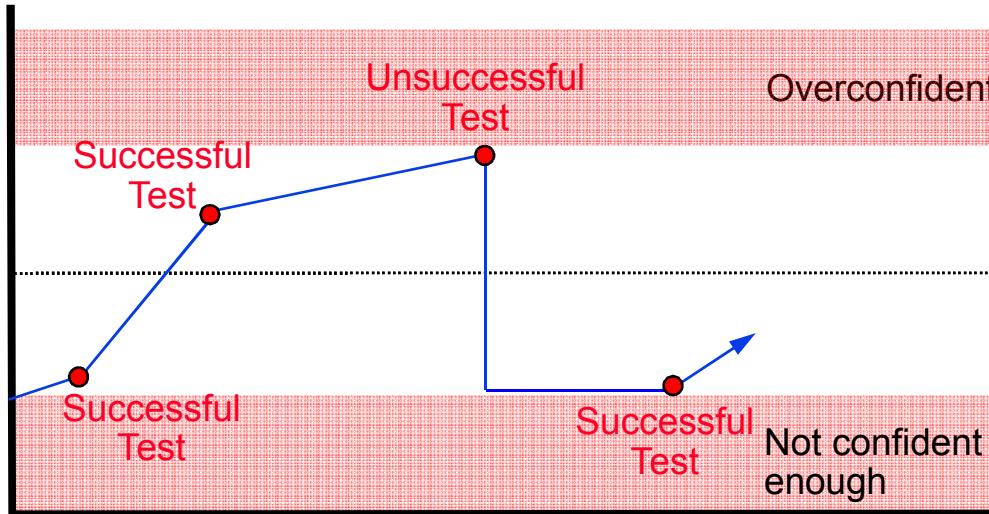


Inescapable uncertainties of the future necessitate the highest technical competence, credibility, and knowledge surpassing all others

# Nuclear Testing: A “Calibrator” of Stockpile Confidence

## Confidence in an Era of Testing

NOTIONAL FIGURE



- Personal Accountability
  - Prediction → “Public” failure/success
  - Cost of test
- Humility sharpened by surprises

“This Panel has warned that a sense of false confidence or complacency may be the greatest danger facing the program in the long run.” – Foster Panel, 2002

# Sleepwalking

## The consensus is...no consensus



“America is sleepwalking through history, armed with nuclear weapons...”

- Hamre, May 2005



“...little genuine debate aimed at forging a new consensus...”  
December 2006



“...no presidential or cabinet-level statement... that clearly lays out the role of nuclear weapons...”  
April 2007



“What are nuclear weapons for?”  
- Drell, June 2007

110TH CONGRESS } 1st Session } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES } REPORT  
110-185

110TH CONGRESS  
1st Session

SENATE

{ REPORT  
110-127

“...policy vacuum”  
June 2007

“...should have a more vigorous analysis and debate...”  
June 2007

To a young scientist or engineer contemplating his/her career, what message does this send about a future devoted to ensuring the technical credibility of our nuclear deterrent?

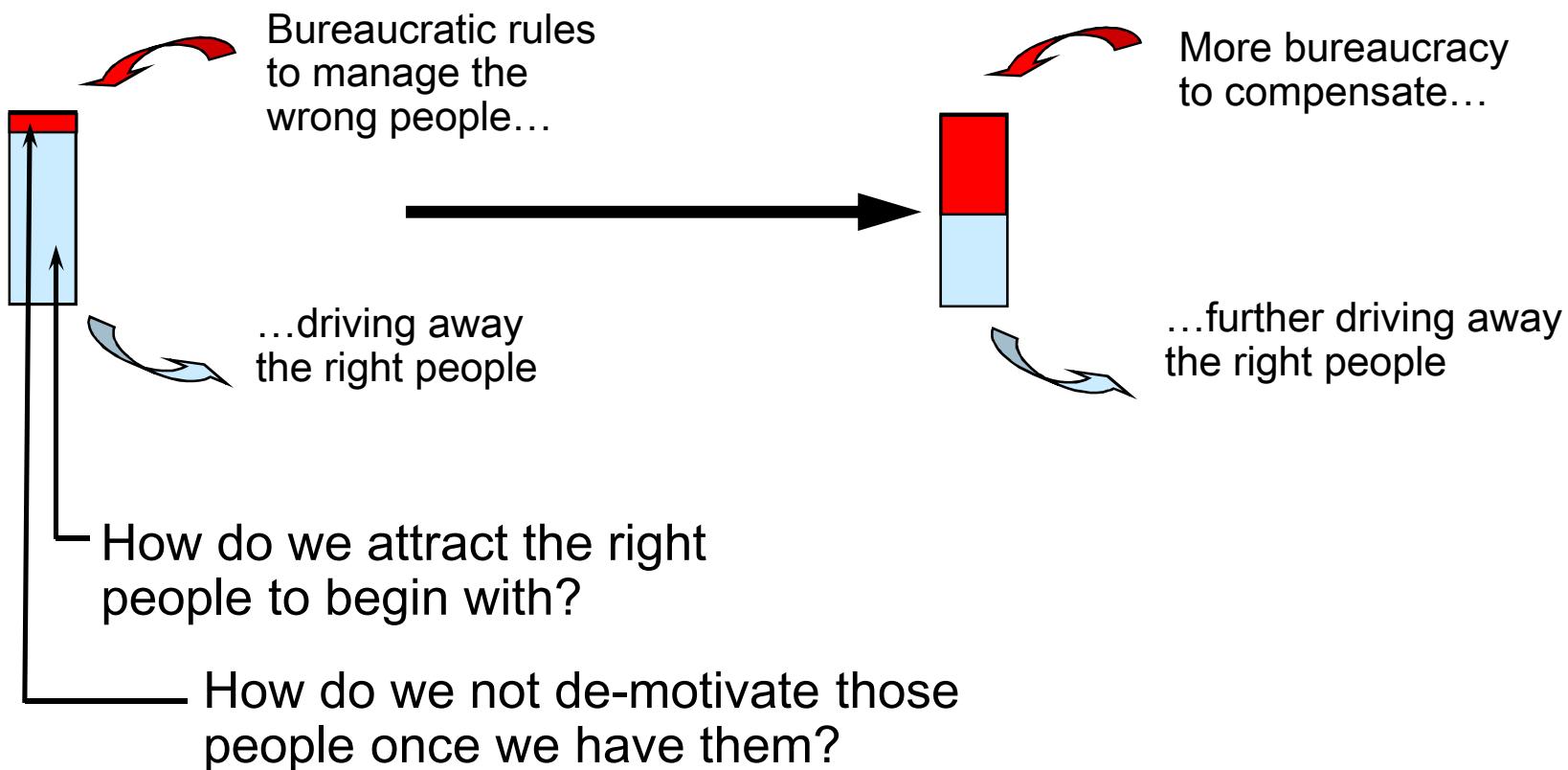


# Jim Collins meets John Hamre

## Sleepwalking does not get the “right people on the bus”

percent wrong people  
percent right people

(...nor does it keep them on the bus)



“The only way to deliver to those who are achieving is to not burden them with the people who are not achieving”  
– Paul Hazen, Wells Fargo, as quoted in *Good to Great*



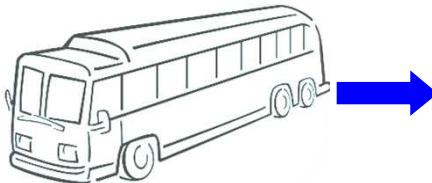
# Critical mass: Who is already on the bus matters

Talent pool  
(not the limiting factor)

Best and brightest

- Innate capabilities and intelligence
- Self-motivated
- Inner drive to be part of something great

People get on the bus because of the people already on the bus



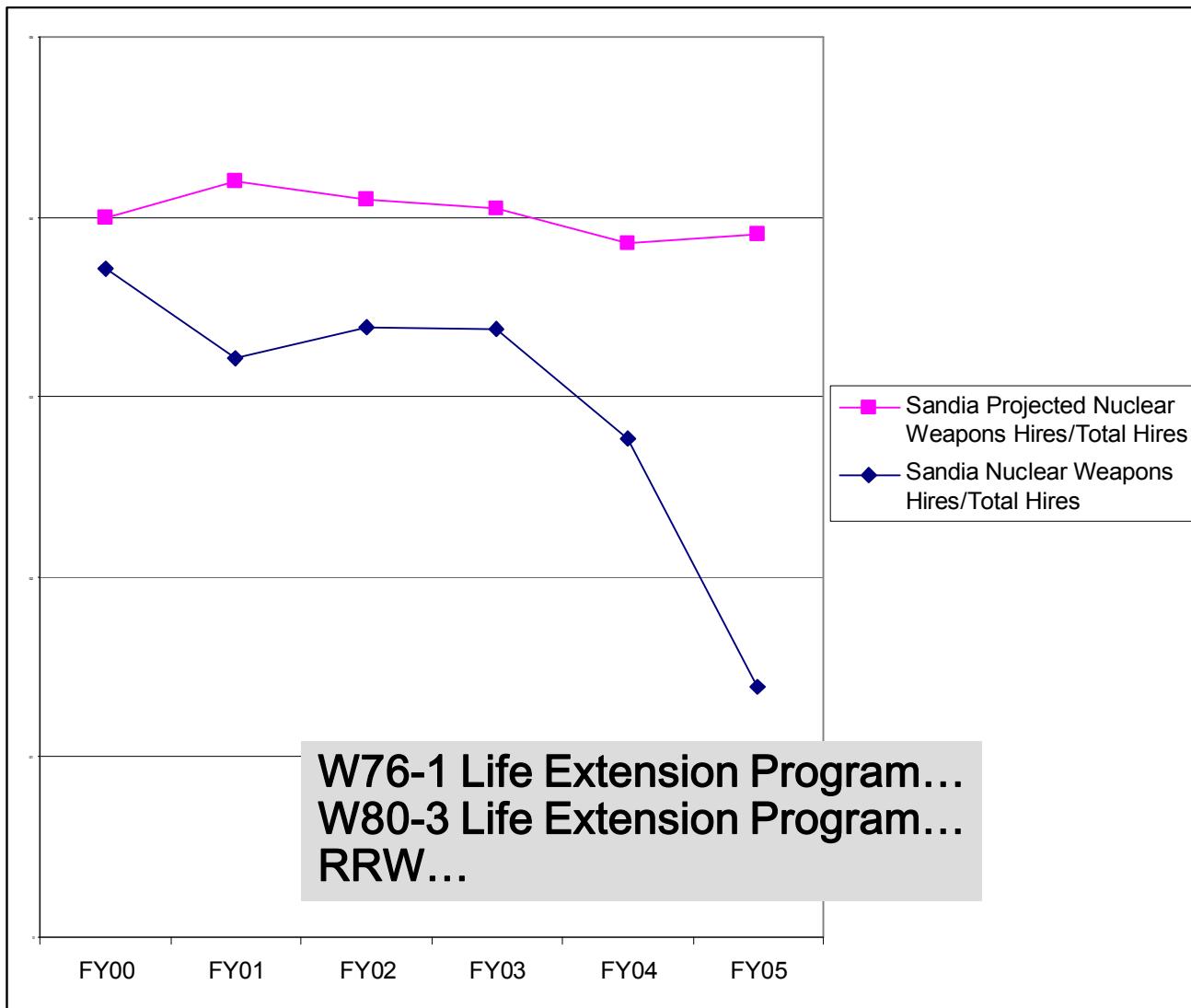
Get 'em on, before the experienced people get off!

1999: Chiles Commission anticipates retirement losses from Nuclear Weapons Complex **~60-150% higher** than economy at large

Today: In 5 years, >40% of Sandia tech staff will be retirement eligible...

...in 10 years, >58%

# Getting the right people on the bus: The work matters





# The “War for Talent”\*

## The role of a coherent nuclear strategy

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Chiles Commission, 1999

### CONS

- Secrecy
- Dangers and risks
- Limited opportunities for peer interaction and review
- Downsizing
- “Sunset” industry
- No testing
- No “new designs”

*...counter-balanced by...*

### PROS

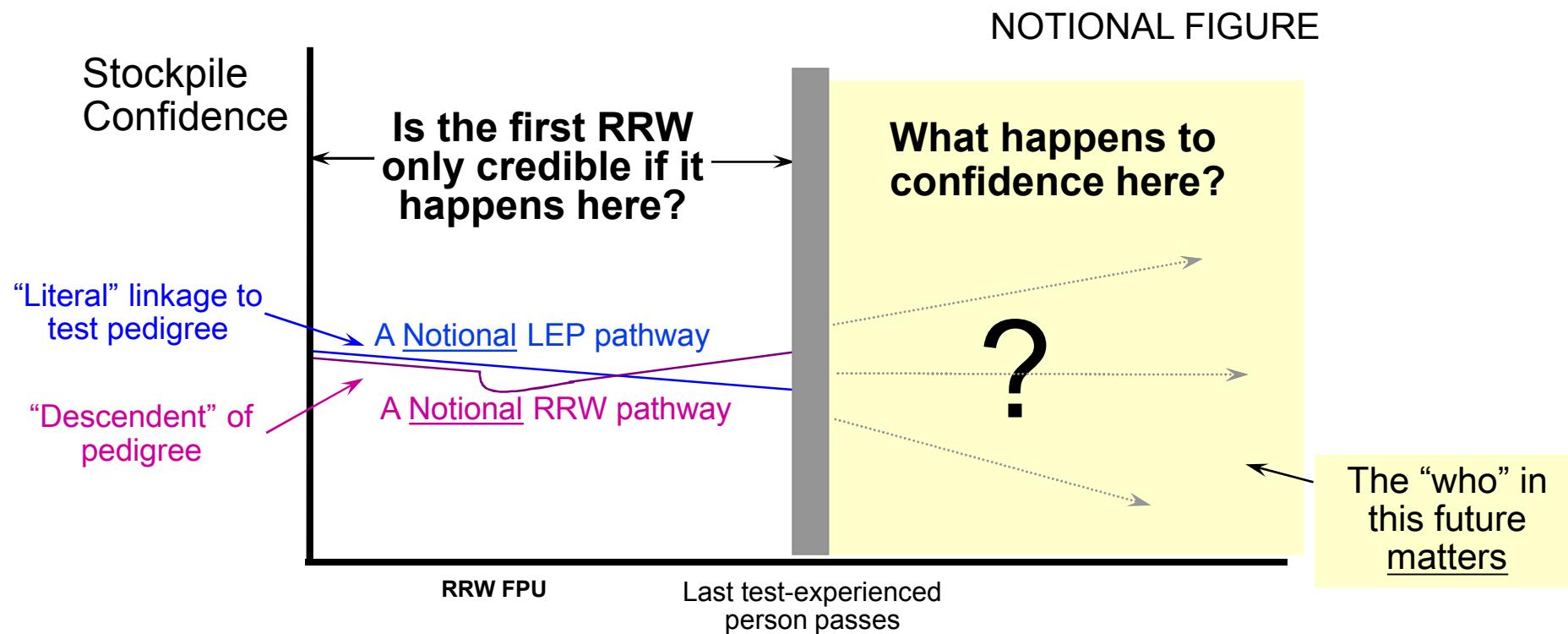
- Not simply scientists and engineers, public servants inspired by a sense of purpose and mission of national import



**“The key more than ever before to the success of maintaining a safe and reliable stockpile is the quality of people who make the expert judgments necessary to the endeavor and their sustained dedication to their work”**



# It's the “who” that matters





# As we struggle for a “new” nuclear policy...

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- We should be disciplined in asking ourselves, over and over (before we “arrive”), will this policy:
  - Get the right people on the bus?”
  - Keep the right people on the bus?
  - Inspire the very best from those on the bus?
  - Demonstrate urgency, not complacency, in doing these three things

**Clear, compelling, tangible, and **inspiring**.**

