Oral Statement of Dr. Paul Hommert, Director
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Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
United States House of Representatives

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and distinguished members of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. I am Paul Hommert, the Director of Sandia National Laboratories. I have submitted written testimony, which I ask be made part of the record. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I'd like to begin by congratulating General Kehler on his upcoming retirement and thank him for his leadership of the Strategic Command. He has been a great partner for those of us working in the nuclear security arena.

My testimony today will focus on the B61 warhead system and the B61 Life Extension Program. In this regard, I'd like to make the following key points.

In order to sustain high confidence in the safety, security, and reliability of the B61 into the next decade, it is our technical judgment that we must complete the life extension program currently being executed. I make this statement for reasons that have been documented in annual assessment letters by me and my predecessor for a number of years now, all having to do with either

technology obsolescence or aging—not surprising for a system the oldest units of which were manufactured and fielded in the late seventies, with some components dating to the sixties.

We are well into the full-scale engineering development phase of the life extension program, with the baseline design review scheduled for September 2015. This program addresses all known aging or technology obsolescence issues and is the minimum program that addresses the threshold requirements that have been provided to us by the Department of Defense and the NNSA.

To date, we have costed $253 million of the $2.65 billion estimated incremental cost for Sandia on the B61 LEP, which was specified in the Weapon Development Cost Report (WDCR) provided in June 2012.

At Sandia, **we met all major FY13 program milestones for the B61 LEP** on (or under) cost although sequestration caused some of the work scope to be deferred to FY14.

We have put in place rigorous project management expertise to ensure **ongoing adherence to plan for all our modernization efforts**.

We have drawn upon resources and expertise nurtured through interagency work on broader national security challenges at our

Laboratory to meet the urgent demands of our core nuclear weapons mission, most notably staffing.

However, the impacts—both to schedule and lifecycle cost—of ongoing FY14 budget decisions have yet to be established. From what I know now, it is likely that we will have delays in schedule and higher costs.

Finally, I want to end on a personal note. In a professional career now spanning more than 37 years, I have had the extraordinary privilege to work at three institutions whose core responsibility is nuclear weapons: the Atomic Weapons Establishment in the United Kingdom, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and of course Sandia National Laboratories. In that time, I have worked with many exceptional individuals who have dedicated their professional lives to the innovation, science, and engineering excellence required to ensure that these unique devices of mankind are safe, secure, and reliable. I fully recognize the fiscal environment in which we are operating, and throughout my testimony I have indicated our focus on cost management and cost efficiency. However, my experience deeply reminds me that nuclear weapons are the last place for half measures or corner cutting. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to your questions.