

# Center for American Progress



**PRESENTS:**

**“HOW CONGRESS CHANGED ADMINISTRATION  
POLICY ON THE BUNKER BUSTER BOMB: A CASE  
STUDY IN EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT”**

**MODERATOR:**

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**FEATURING:**

**REP. DAVID HOBSON, (R-OH)**

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MR. SCOTT LILLY: Thank you all for coming this morning. I'd like to ask everybody to turn off electronic devices so we don't have any disruptions during it. We're very happy to have Congressman Hobson here, and we hope this will be enlightening to all of you.

And I wanted to start out by pointing out the – probably without any question, the most popular political novel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was Alan Drury's *Advise and Consent*. And there's a passage in that that states that the real political parties in Washington are not Democrat and Republican, but rather congressional and presidential. And that's probably an overstatement of even the way Washington was in the 1940s and '50s. But for a very long period, members of Congress were imbued with a clear sense that regardless of their partisan affiliations they had an institutional responsibility to ask tough questions and to make certain that those executing the laws knew what they were doing before they went forward.

Our founding fathers were men of the Enlightenment and they believed that decisions should be based on all available information. Making certain that all information was available was something that they decided could best be ensured by having competition for power and open debate.

In August we at the Center sponsored a symposium with American University on checks and balances in the U.S. government and a wide array of speakers raised serious questions about whether the current Congress is fulfilling that function. One of our speakers at that I think was going to be here: Walter Pincus. But at any rate, Congress as a whole has not been asking the tough questions that are needed, but there are exceptions. And it's important in oversight, whether it's congressional oversight or somebody like the Center that's trying to do some oversight of the Congress, to recognize success as well as failure.

Dave Hobson is, I think, a lot like Jack Murtha. He's a guy that not many people hear about. Murtha was somebody that most people hadn't heard about, but as it turns out he's somebody who has a lot more to say about the way the government works than a lot of the people you hear from constantly, and the same thing is true of Dave Hobson. He's chairman of the Energy and Water Resources Committee of the House Appropriations Committee, and therefore has as much to say as anybody in our government about issues ranging from the safeguarding of nuclear weapons both here and overseas, how to rebuild the Gulf Coast levees and environmental habitat, whether our national laboratories are maintaining the level of scientific excellence that we should expect from them, ensuring the conditions of our nuclear weapons and deciding how and when they should be replaced.

But the issue that we've asked him to address today is the proposal which the administration put forward several years ago to build a nuclear weapon capable of

penetrating deep underground bunkers, such as those constructed by Saddam. This is a fascinating story and underscores the importance of oversight. It is also a story that demonstrates that oversight is not beanbag, just as politics is not beanbag. You must be tough, you must be determined, and you must be powerful. Dave Hobson is all three and I think he's a model that we should ask other members of Congress to emulate.

I also think he is a much-needed model in one other respect. In a town that now reeks of partisan bitterness, he has a man who has always realized that partisan opponents do not need to be enemies. There has to be two sides before there can be a debate, but a debate is not warfare. Its purpose is to allow both sides to learn. That is the spirit which he has represented in his district and managed the affairs of this committee, and we desperately need more people to adopt his approach.

Congressman Hobson?

(Applause.)

REP. DAVID HOBSON: Thank you, Scott, for that kind introduction. Scott and I have been friends for a long time and he did it just as I wrote it – or my staff, probably. (Laughter.) But we have been friends. I think one of the first places we went on a trip was to Bosnia or Kosovo many years ago, and we took staff and members from both committees, and I think there's somebody back here that was also with us on that trip, and I saw Charlie over there. We've got a lot of places with Charlie; too many to tell. But we are friends and we all work together. I think that's one of the great things about the committee I'm on. We do work together.

I've got a great ranking member. I couldn't – and I've got great staff on both sides. One of them's here. The weapons guy is here today, Scott, and so if I – we get into questions that I don't know the answer, he'll try to step up for me on some of those technical things.

I'm a real estate guy by background and I'm on Defense Approps as well, so I get a little perspective there on some of this stuff. And I used to be MILCON chairman and those who dealt with me in MILCON know that I don't like reprogrammings. And I actually read them, and I sent letters back, and the previous administration said – it happens in both administrations – saying – this wonderful guy, I said, “You obviously didn't read this because the first paragraph says one thing, the second paragraph says another thing, and I'm not going to do either one of them because I can't understand either one of them.” So he said, “By God, I didn't read those.” So they started reading them better. And especially when you call them over sometime and they have to try to explain them to you, and I tried to carry that through. Corps of Engineers sitting down here in front, and they've experienced that same type of thing with me.

There's an interesting article in the *Wall Street Journal* this morning that's very apropos. You never know in the world where you're going to run into people again. The woman who wrote this article came out and toured my district with me about ten years

ago, and I hadn't seen her since and she shows up and wrote this article. And it talks about the nuclear warheads and where we're going and some of this stuff that we're going to talk about today.

Let me get – give you this, Scott, if you don't mind. He's still staff. But I want to – some of this stuff I may – I'd rather just talk to you a little bit, but there's some things in here that I need to say. I don't do this very often and I try to send some messages in this, and I hope somebody's listening, not just here but elsewhere, when we do some of this stuff.

But I totally agree that there needs to be more oversight in Congress. When we got a look at taxpayers' dollars – I was number two to at Kasich when we did the balanced budget agreement, so people forget – they think I'm an appropriator. I do like to spend money; it's more fun than not, but on the other hand I think they've got to pass the smell test. And I drove everybody nuts on the committee because the first time I did it, I read all the earmarks and I read the bill, and I got in a fight with some other people in another body and they hadn't read the bill and I had. And unfortunately, I told them that and that didn't go over very well.

But my new chairman of Approps, Jerry Lewis, one of the things he told us – the cardinals is that he wanted more oversight, and he's charged us with more oversight. We've done it a little differently in our committee and we've gotten sidetracked a little bit on some of this stuff that's been going on. Katrina took a lot of – or Karita, as they call it down in Texas – took a lot of starch out of our oversight right now on some of the things we want to do.

But what we've done is there's a tendency in these committees for the committee to do no oversight or just the chairman do it. And what I – and then there's a tendency to people be on a committee that have – that are interested in water or interested in the weapons labs and things of this sort, and they don't want to learn about each other's side, especially if you fund their projects. They just – that's all they – so what we've done is I've said you can go and be on the water side, but you're also – I split them up into committees and they can pick, but the water people also had to pick an energy thing and the energy people had to pick a water thing because I can only be chairman of this committee under the rules we have for six years, but the people can stay on the committee longer than that.

When I'm not chairman anymore, I want to leave a better educated committee than I found when I went there. And you've got to remember, when I became chairman of this committee, I just walked in the door. I'd never been on the committee. I'd never been in the room before, and I came in as chairman and so I had a lot to learn.

I've been out and we've looked all kinds of things all over the country. We've visited most of the major sites all over the country – scared the heck out of them when we're showing up. And I ask a lot of questions because the one way to learn is to ask. And what I don't like – and this is another common trait with Jack – I don't like flip

charts. And I don't like these little red pointers and it is just so dumb to do that, but they send the general officers to school to do that. And if you can't tell me about it or give me that ahead of time and let me read it and they talk about what's going on, but it doesn't – and I'm a lawyer by background and a real estate guy, but I never tell anybody I'm a lawyer because it doesn't impress anybody down here and I lose votes at home when I do that, so I just kind of go out there and do that. (Laughter.)

I really wasn't prepared for what I found at DOE or the Corps when I got there. And there is a history that goes back for some time in which the House members just did the water side basically and the Senate did the energy side, and I thought, well, I don't like that. I don't think – I think we have an obligation to look at both and so I started to do that, and that created some problems.

But I'd have to tell you as I've gone around in the field looking at things, I've been impressed by the people out in the field and what they do and how they step up, and that has been the one positive in a lot of this. And I didn't really understand the nuclear weapons in DOD when I was doing it there, but when I got over here I began to look at it in more and more detail. And I sensed when I looked at this – and sometimes we have a fresh look and you're not – I don't have any projects in my district or my state very much – same way in water. That drives people nuts, because I don't have a lot of this stuff in my district, so they can't threaten me. First they say, "Well, we're not going to have a bill if we don't get it." And I said, "Fine, we won't have a bill." The "Well, wait a minute. It's too early for that," so we worked it out and we had a bill, but I'm different in that respect because if we don't get a bill and we just do a continuing, I don't think that's good, but I can live with that, and that's different than most chairmen from the past.

What I've found was that we lived in a Cold War era. Our whole weapons complex, our whole thinking is still in the Cold War and RNEP, in my opinion, is a prime example of living in the past and not the future. And it's a lack of recognition by a lot of people that the world watches what we do, the world reacts to what we do, and if you're going to be the leader in the world I don't think you can go out and propose a whole new weapon and then tell everybody else, "Don't you do it. We're superior to the rest of you and we're going to build a new weapon, and we're going to reduce the time for testing," which we didn't allow them to do in the Clinton administration, and previously it was 24 to 36 months. There are people who want to take it down to 18 months and we said no to that. And frankly, I've talked to one of the former heads of the agency who said he agrees with me way back, and this is a guy way back that everybody respects, and so we've resisted that. And we've resisted the nuclear bunker buster because I don't think intellectually it's credible to do. I also think it's a waste of money to do – to build a weapon that you don't need, but – and we had thought we had killed it, but it keeps getting a life of its own from time to time.

I don't understand why we want to build a weapon that we would never use and why we'd want to waste money and precious assets when – and so we had a meeting after I thought it was dead. I don't remember whether Walter wrote the article or somebody wrote an article and this little note. It wasn't in the pass-back from DOE, but Secretary

Rumsfeld apparently wrote a handwritten note and somebody got ahold of it and they posted it in the paper, and the next thing I know it appears in the bill. And so we went down and had a meeting. A whole breakfast was spent on discussion of this \$4 million, and they had the secretary of energy, Secretary Rumsfeld, and they had about nine people and they were just going to have me. I said, "Oh, no, no, no. I'm not going by myself to this. I've got to have bodyguards for this," so I took the clerk and my weapons guy and we went at it for about this whole breakfast over this issue.

And I finally said to him, I said, "You know, I'm more of a hawk than you guys," and they looked at me like I jumped out of a tree and I said, "Well, look. I want to build a weapon that the president can actually use. I want to be able to say to an adversary, "You do this stuff, we're going to hit you with this," but I don't want to kill a million or two people above ground and I don't want to screw up the atmosphere with it, and we don't have to do that. Why don't we put our efforts there in something that we would give a president, whether it's this one or another one, and he could say we can hit these deep targets?"

And I meet with guys that retire – I'm went out to STRATCOM for a whole day. Nobody ever told me why we needed the bunker buster at STRATCOM for a whole day, and I thought what a wasted day. Guy had more charts – I almost left. He had too many charts, but I tried to be kind and listen, which is hard for me sometimes they'll tell you. But I thought we would get beyond that, but it just keeps rearing its head.

If you look at the bills this year – let me just talk about this in a minute. What I've tried to do is take the N-word out of the penetrator, so it would be – and if you look at the House bills, both the authorizing bill and the appropriations bill, the N-word isn't in there in either bill. And in the approps bill, Senator Domenici announced that there wouldn't be a nuclear penetrator and I thought, boy, that's a win. I'm fine with him announcing it. Fine, the more people who want to announce it, it's great with me.

I think when you see the final bills, the N-word won't be in either bill and there will be no money in the House bill for a nuclear penetrator in either one. There will be money for a conventional test, and we had a – and I've been worried that they were going to try to do the nuclear – the nonnuclear test at Sandia, and I got a problem with that because – and I won't go into why, but there's, in my opinion, a violation of the law or the understanding or the protocols on building a wall that got built out there and so I don't think we should use that wall at this time for this stuff and it sends the wrong messages. And we have a commitment from the secretary of energy that he will not allow that test at Sandia. And I don't care where else they do it, as long as they do it at a DOD site because I think that if they do it at a DOD site, that sends the right messages that it's not a nuclear test and I think if they do it at a national lab, it sends the wrong problems.

So we think we've worked this pretty well. It's been a bipartisan effort and the bills should be done – well, I thought they were going to be done by now, but we're hung up over another issue in both of those bills. But from what I can find out, I think where

we are – we're there. I don't know why it takes me two kicks, but I'm a pretty stubborn guy, so if I have to kick three times or four times I'm going to keep kicking at it until we think we've totally gotten it out of the way.

I do think that we probably have the best secretary of energy that we've had in – since maybe Admiral Watkins and Mr. Schlesinger. I think this guy intellectually, experience-wise is really right for this job. The problem is, he only has about three years and he's got an agency that's got a lot of problems in it, but there are some good things happening. As appropriators, we forced the competition of the labs for the first time in the history of some of these. I asked the question some years ago when I first took over this committee – I said to my staff, "How many – we should compete some of these contracts," and they said, "Yeah, we should compete all that are ten years or older." I said, "No, no, no. That won't pass the smell test. How many do we have 50 years or older?" thinking there would be none. There were five big ones that had never been competed, so we got them. They're now being competed.

I asked about business plans. There were none, although some people will tell you there are, but there really weren't. And the labs need to find out where – what they're going to be and where they're going to go. And they need to look at that because they just see a pot of money in Homeland Security and they all run to Homeland Security. They see another pot here and they all run there. Well, that's not the way to do business and, frankly, the bean counters will get them if that happens that way.

We've also forced some other things in there. As I started, I told you in the beginning that I talked about the – looking at the complex overall and that we were in this Cold War scenario. And it's been 15 years and we ought to start looking to see where we're going to be in the future, and there's generations of people going away. And I don't want to do testing, either underground or above ground. I don't think we have to. If we get the machine done out at Livermore, which the Senate agreed with us and finally funded – and I think we'll finish that machine, we don't have to test. I'm told by the scientists we don't have to test, and we can do some things.

I think we need to do the reliable replacement warheads, and I'll talk a little bit more about that. But what we did is ask the department a couple of years ago to set up a group to look and see what the weapons complex should look like over the next 25 years, and they got – they called us – and you can find this online. It was really stupid. This could be online, but the secretary couldn't be told about it. I mean, it's really nuts the way this protocol stuff goes, but anyway you can find it online now. This is the secretary of energy's advisory board report on a nuclear weapons complex infrastructure task force, and it was chaired by David Overskei. And it's really a – I mean, some people aren't going to like it; some people will like it, but I think it's giving some thoughts to people.

And basically it does three things, or four, that I think really set a pattern for the future. It would propose to consolidate special and nuclear material inventories to improve security and reduce the costs related to the security. It would accelerate warhead

dismantlement of surplus nuclear weapons to strengthen the existing stockpile, which we've been promoting in our bill. And we'd begin a design competition for reliable replacement warhead. Now, that's the newest DOE acronym, RRW, for future stockpile requirements that'll allow improved manufacturing practices, lower costs, increased warhead performance margins while staying within the military requirements of existing deployed stockpile and within design parameters validated by past nuclear tests. And four, it would reconfigure the weapons complex to consolidate operations and create a responsive infrastructure.

I think if we did that, we would be – if we could get moving in this, I think we would be a much more secure nation, and we would have a better understanding of what everything can do. There's – the reliable replacement warhead part of this tends to get some people concerned that we're going to get into building a whole bunch of new stuff with new capabilities and that they'll run amok with this, and I think that's where the oversight comes from. I think we need to make sure that we don't do that, and we need to have a commitment that that's not what this is about.

But as I understand it, and there's – we don't understand totally plutonium aging. A lot of these weapons are old and they were built – you know, they've been building a pit at Los Alamos and the cost of that thing is unbelievable and it's still not certified, as I understand it. And they still design it with the flaws that were in the original ones or the later ones because they're worried if they leave them out – somehow we don't know something – maybe it wouldn't work. So we do it with the old way and we'd use old machining and all kinds of stuff.

What I want to do is let's get in the modern world. Let's design these using modern technologies. Let's let a new generation work with this older generation to design these weapons so we keep the infrastructure for the future. Yeah, sure, I'd like to get rid of all nuclear weapons, but I'm also a realist. We're not going to do that and we can't do that probably. So that ain't going to happen, so what is the responsible way to do this?

I think the debate ought to be about rebuilding reliable replacement warheads, not about underground testing, not about new ways of new weapons, and I think we can justify that intellectually in the world. And I think we ought to work together in the world better on this than we do today, and I think you can do that.

One of the things that I've had a problem with is that we have too many systems and we have too much redundancy in our nuclear weapons today, and you really don't get any savings in this area until you take down some of those systems. And I think there are some consensus of what ones can be taken down. And I don't know why the president and his people don't take more credit for what they've done so far, because they have reduced the number. We've been after them to not just move them from one building to another and put up a different sign to say these are out, these are in, these are maybes. Actually, break them up, tear them up, and get rid of them. And there is response to that; maybe not enough, but there's some response to that. But there's still a hesitancy to get

rid of a system, and you don't really achieve any savings until you get rid of a system. And we don't need all the systems. We've got a lot of redundancy. Everybody likes redundancy, especially the military, but I think we can move away from that and we can do it.

I think this contract competition is going to be good for the labs. Los Alamos's should be out in the next few weeks. There've been a lot of problems at Los Alamos. Lot of great stuff done, great science, lot of mismanagement.

And maybe I shouldn't say it, but I'm going to say it anyway. I – to show you how poorly things are managed within the department as a whole, they were going to give a contract – there's a bonus deal in the contract with these labs. And they were going to give a bonus – the full bonus, and they'd had all kinds of security problems, they'd had all kinds of management problems, and they were going to give the full bonus. I said, "You guys are nuts." And so – and this is before the new secretary got there – so they cut it back, and which sends a better message.

We have contracts today with contractors, and I tend to go back and look at contracts because – contracts drive me nuts, because most of the government doesn't write them correctly and they don't look at how we get out of things. And it's my understanding in some of these contracts – the Army and the military does them terribly. I mean, it just drives, again – thank God I'm not the chairman of defense approps or I'd be driving people really nuts on contracts, but defense contracts are crazy. But let me give an example.

As I understand it, in DOE if the contractor makes a mistake in dealing with his personnel and gets a fine, do you know who pays that fine? You and me. Why should we pay because the contractor didn't follow the law and got nailed by his employees? That should come out of their profit, not out of us and it shouldn't be added to it. And I've – and I've told the Corps, I've told everybody, "Look at your contracts. Look not how you get in the deal, but how do you get out of the deal, and how if it doesn't work, and what happens if there are overruns. Why do we always wind up paying for the inefficiencies of the contractors?" So we're poking at that.

I want – I think forums like this help. I don't do a lot of these, but I'm trying to – I try to do a few to try to get people thinking about some of the things we're doing so you understand and you see why we're poking at this side or why we're complaining about this that there's an understanding here. I don't want to break up everything and throw everything overboard, but I'd like to see taxpayers' dollars getting results and that causes a lot of problems some places because they want same old, same old. These are job preservation programs. That's a problem.

There're some things that need to be done on storage. We need to get back into nuclear power. That's the only – you can do wind power and if you could do all the ones that were in Congress, we might be able to do something, but there's not enough wind power out there to handle this. The only viable large-scale thing that we can do to lessen

our dependence – and we ought to look at this as a security problem like the French did – I hate to say that, but the French got it right. They said, we’re not going to be held hostage on our energy supply, and they’re 80 percent nuclear, and they know how to store it, and they don’t store it in a deep repository yet. And maybe they never will have to or what they have to do will be very small because they do something we proposed that I was told was crazy, but now I hear people are using it in speeches.

And we can do safe above-ground nuclear storage at already approved sites, not in these cities, but we can do this above ground for 50 to 100 years. Who knows how we’re going to treat this stuff in 50 to 100 years, and we may not have the waste problems. But if we today – we’d have to build to get rid of all the stuff about seven or eight Yucca Mountains, which is impossible to do. We’re having trouble building one. The Finns and the Swedes will have a deep repository that they can use before we do.

But there is a way to handle this and to get back in the business, and this is clean, it’s safe, and one – and it’ll keep us in an industrial base that we’re going to lose if we continue this overdependence on fossil fuel. We’re going to lose this great advantage we’ve had of having low-cost power, so I’m trying to get people back into that. I’m trying to get the administration to start working on that. We’ve made a proposal about a year ago to the department and we keep kicking at that. And forums like this, I think, can do well to help us with that.

I’d like to turn to the Corps for just a second because everybody – and we do some oversight with the Corps of Engineers and that’s a big part of our bill. Again, with the Corps, the problem I’ve found is that there is no five-year plan and there is no vision – long-term vision of what the waterways should look like in this country. And I don’t think the appropriator should come up with that. But I didn’t – I don’t find this, and I don’t see this, and so what we tend to do is a bunch of little projects here and there, and we never fund them appropriately, and then they cost more than they should. And I’m trying to get a handle on that.

I’ve cut back the number of new starts. Nobody likes me because I – when my bill left the House, there were no new starts. The Senate put in 87. I think we did more than I wanted to. I think we did ten and ten, if I’m not mistaken, but those were new starts. New starts are little acorns that grow into huge oak trees and never get funded appropriately, so I tried to cut back on those. Members don’t like that. I’ve tried to complete segments and fundings of Corps of Engineer projects, which nobody was doing before.

Let me give you an example of why. And, Gary, you’ll have to – if I get the numbers wrong, then – I’ll be relatively close, I think. There’s a project on the Ohio River, not in my state, that was a dam that supposedly was to replace two other dams. What’s the name of it? Is it the – no. But it’s – I forget what the name of it is. It’s on the Ohio River. Initially it was supposed to start – it was supposed to cost \$745 million 20 years ago to build this dam. It’s about 30 percent complete now and we’re still maintaining the other two dams, and we’re maintaining the 30 percent we’ve built, but to

complete that dam today is about a billion four, just the part – and the whole project originally was going to start at \$745 million because we don't fund it correctly. And we've got projects like that all over the country.

And so what I've been trying to do is fund those and get away from doing all these little projects and say, as we did in MILCON, this is a five-year plan, you're in a five-year plan here and until we get there, you're not going to get yours right now. Now, that's a cultural change, and I'm getting a lot of push-back on that, but I'm still doing it.

New Orleans presents us with a particular problem, and I need to explain this a little bit, too, because you're – the media tends – and the local people and others all get this jumbled up. The federal government is not the one historically that would build back New Orleans. It's the people in New Orleans and the state that would build it back. It's the same way that happened in the disaster. It was New Orleans's responsibility to act, and they didn't act as fast as many people thought they would or should have, and it was the state's responsibility to bring that forward to the federal government. That didn't happen either in a timely fashion or as it timely should.

If you look at Texas – and I've been to both places – Texas has a plan on paper. When a storm hits 35 miles an hour out there, they start to do stuff. That's not true in New Orleans. It may be true today in New Orleans, but it wasn't true then.

Now, the question is, we can't as a federal government go in and impose a plan on the people of New Orleans or the people of the state of Louisiana. What we can do is make certain funds available to do certain things, and that's what I think we'll do. But the problem is that how you do that looks to some people like we're doing nothing, but that's not true. The Corps is going to build back to where it was. It'll be better because it'll be back to the level, even though it sunk before. And I got a thing yesterday. I keep hearing – some people are beating me up the other day about the fact that the Corps screwed up, they didn't do this, they didn't do that. I said, "Well, I don't know enough yet about that to say that," and they had all these soundings and stuff. Then I get a thing back from the Corps yesterday saying that those pilings on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street at least were at the depth they were supposed to be.

So instead of placing blame on everybody for all this stuff, we ought to go back and look and see what happened and take lessons learned. Those things were designed 40 years ago or more. We design things differently. We didn't have all these CAD things that looked at everything the way they do today. And we didn't understand all the engineering the way we do today, so we need to look at it, but it worked pretty good – well for a while.

The other thing is, as I understand it, most of those levees were not maintained by the Corps; they were maintained by local people. And there is a problem – there's a structural problem that the federal government can't fix of these – I forget what you call them. They're like – I would call them counties or townships working together, but they're like little fiefdoms of these people who run them, and they don't all work

together. And you can't do that if you're building this total massive flood control plan that's there.

And some of this stuff you should build back, and there's some places you shouldn't build back. But those I don't think should be decisions made here in Washington. I think those are decisions that they need to make there, and then we decide what we're going to fund it at, and the Corps doesn't do that. That's not the Corps of Engineers' job, but everybody thinks it is. And it's not the federal government's job.

We had a hearing one day of my committee and it was on C-SPAN, and I got a lot of notes back from people writing in and saying, gee, it's neat to see a committee that's – we can't tell who the Democrats are, who the Republicans are. And all the – and everybody is asking the same questions about how the money is going to be spent down there and where we're going to spend it, and it was both Democrats and Republicans asking, because everybody's got the same questions. And that's going to create a problem. It's not going to happen overnight.

Now, there're some things in cleanup that we've got to get done. This is a massive cleanup. It's, I think, worse than anybody's ever had to deal with, and we've still got stuff in Florida that we're cleaning up from the storms there. The thing that we need to prepare for is, we're going to have other things, hopefully not of this magnitude, but we're going to have other storms like this. We're in this period. And we need to be prepared to do that. So that's a little bit about the Corps.

I think that we need to get away from so many projects within the Corps. I've had some problems with the structure of the Corps. When I took over – this is the last thing I'm going to talk about. When I took over the Corps I said, how many reprograms are you doing? And they were doing 20,000 reprogrammings and they had – how many projects did you have, 3,000? About 8,000 projects, and they were doing 20,000 reprogrammings. And I said, "You guys got a funding problem and how much is it?" and they didn't know, and so we've gone back and we've looked at that and we're trying to work together to solve that problem. But when you have 20 – and I hate reprogrammings and so I set some standards and started reading some of it and that's driving them nuts, too. But I – and it's given me some problem with the other body, but – and our bill was held up for about a month over some language that we tried to put in to get a little better management of these types of things within the Corps. But I'm going to continue to do that. I think it's good for the taxpayer dollars. I think it's good for the Corps. And I think in the end results it's going to do will do a better job of completing these projects.

So I'm going to stop there. I think my job is to go around and also say when they've done a good job, and I try to go and tell people when they've done a good job. I'm trying to get this young woman a medal. She did a great job down in Orange, Texas, of a place that was a real disaster area. We tried to say with DOE when – I think they've done a good job and some things. We've tried to say they've done a good job. But when they haven't, we're going to be out there saying this has got to be fixed.

But I'm confident that this guy that we've got down there, Sam Bodman, is the right guy at the right time at the right place to make this agency more functional. And the largest, single-works project screw-up in this country is in DOE. It's at Hanford, but I don't see anybody writing about it. But if this were a Corps project and it was screwed up by \$3 or \$4 billion, Gary's head would be on the block, but everybody says, "Well, that's DOE. We expect that." Well, I don't expect that and I can tell you the secretary doesn't either, and he's going to take some actions and we're working with him on those.

So that's kind of my philosophy on oversight that may – if I have to switch after six years of doing this, that's probably scaring the hell out of some other departments, but that's okay. So I'd be happy to take any questions that you've got. I've probably talked too long, but –

MR. LILLY: Let me – just a second, if I could. This is Antoine here. He did most of the work in putting this together. He's going come around when we recognize somebody and bring you the microphone, so I'd ask you to wait until he gets there, stand up, and state your name. And I'd like to ask that if there are members of the press who are here, that you be recognized first. Put your hands up first, so we can make sure we get your questions in. Any press questions?

Q: Thank you very much, Mister Congressman. It's very interesting presentation. My name is Masakatsu Ota with Kyodo News –

REP. HOBSON: (Inaudible.)

Q: Thank you very much. I have a question. I just want a more clearance – I mean clarification of what you said about RNEP. You say that you thought it was dead, but there's still \$4 million on the defense budget. So you can't get any commitment from DOD side this money won't be able to be spent for a kind of a nuclear earth penetrator?

REP. HOBSON: Well, that's an authorizing – that \$4 million is in the authorizing bill. There's zippo in the appropriations bill for – it's conventional. The word conventional is used in the approps bill. There is no N-word in either bill, but the House – the authorizers are silent. Theoretically, it could go either way there. The defense bill, where the money is, says conventional only, so if somebody does that they violate the law. I mean, and they're going to – that's why you have oversight.

MR. LILLY: You can't spend money on an authorization bill.

REP. HOBSON: Some people have to learn that.

Q: I'm Rich Cohen with *National Journal*. Mr. Hobson, I mean to ask you a general – very general question, a political question. Democrats say – they've been more and more strongly over the last few years that you Republicans, you were really tough in doing oversight when there a Democratic president and now you Republicans as a group

have backed off, not doing much oversight with a Republican president. You want to respond to that either on the specifics or – and –

REP. HOBSON: Well, you've got to read –

Q: – the point about oversight?

REP. HOBSON: Read the last comment that's in that article in the Wall Street Journal. I'm doing my oversight. I can't say what other people are doing. I've been out in – I've been out doing some oversight in DOD, and I try to call it the way I see it. And I think everybody has to do their job in their own way and their oversight in their own way. Some of you may not see, but I think more is being done than – there's – and I don't want to get into it here, but there's some departments I don't deal with that I wish I did because I would be looking at some things that they do in more depth than they are right now. But I can only speak for what I do. And what my chairman has directed, and I think Jerry Lewis – you go ask Jerry Lewis because he said, we need more oversight, and he told all the cardinals that. And I think when we get done with – we started ours and then they asked us to stop for a while till we got our bills done, and we're going to go back at it. And I think you'll see all these committees out doing more oversight because he's told us that's what he wants us to do. And I think the cardinals will respond to that.

MR. LILLY: Any other press questions? Yes?

Q: Zachary Roth with the *Washington Monthly*. You've laid out in a bunch of speeches kind of an all-encompassing vision for our nuclear future. Can you talk a little bit about kind of what's standing in the way of making that a reality?

REP. HOBSON: Well, they've just really been digesting this oversight – this committee's report, and I think they're going to decide what they think they want to go forward with from the department. One of the problems that's inherent in government no matter what the administration is, you have the department, you have OMB, and you have people within the White House, and all this stuff has to be vetted before they get to their plan. It's a little bit easier for me because I don't have to report to anybody. Nobody has come to me and told me I had to lay this out.

Conversely, nobody has come to me and said don't do it either. And that's hard for a lot of people to understand, but nobody has come to me and said back off on any of this stuff. The speaker has never done that. The leadership has never done that. Frankly, the president has never done it – on any of this stuff. And I've been on an airplane with him where he could say, "Hey, what are you doing?" and he's never done that on any of these issues.

And I've poked at him – he knows more about nuclear energy than most of you people think. They've briefed him pretty well on it, and he knows it. He knew more detail about it than I thought he did when we talked about it on the airplane. We didn't talk about the weapons, but he could have told me, "Hey, what are you doing?" and I'd

have told him. I told the defense secretary what I'm doing, and I didn't back off. But it takes a while. There're people around that don't agree with you. And I've been – I'm trying to figure out who all these people are that keep revising the bunker buster here and there and everywhere where it turns around. And I keep – I found a little book the other day that lists people's names, and I started reading to see where they were throughout the administration and what organization they were because this thing keeps jumping up all the time, and I keep going like this with it, and sooner or later hopefully somebody gets the message that this isn't a – we ought to get off this kick and go onto other things.

I think money is going to drive – the lack of funding is going to drive the Department of Energy to look at itself and reorganize itself. I'm trying to provide some leadership in that. They can agree or disagree with me; just do something and then we'll argue about whether it's appropriate or not. But I just want them to get out of the Cold War mode, but that's going to be hard.

I'm going to share something with you. There's a plant that may be directly vetted in this, and one of the members of Congress brought it to me, and right at the top of the page is their "Challenges for the Future." And in the middle of it at the top it says, "Hobson." (Laughter.) And I haven't done anything to them, but I've said we need to look at all these things, and they're worried that in the future where they fit. I'm okay with that, but it's kind of interesting to me. And he thought – they were all worried if I saw it I'd be all upset and I'd be mad, and I said, "No, I think it's neat. I'm going to put it up on my wall. I think it's pretty cool." (Laughter.)

And we've got to look beyond the security of the jobs for the security of the country. And is this the right place and the right focus for us to put our energies and our monies? And what do we want to have ten years from now? What do we want to have 20 years from now in this weapons complex? And there are other things that we could do better. And what is the stability of the things that we have today? These things are old. The technology's old. We need to get better technology.

But I'm challenging them, and I think they're responding. And I think Secretary Bodman is going to provide some leadership in this. He's got the best background of anybody I've seen to run this agency, Democrat or Republican. I mean, he's just got a great pedigree in this. And the only part I don't like: he was a professor. But that's pretty good in this area because there's a lot of intellectual stuff that goes on here that you need somebody that was a – I think he was a chemical engineer and he taught at MIT. He's been in business, he's been in government, and he's been successful. He's made a lot of money. He doesn't need to build his reputation on this job; he just wants to do a good job, and I think that's important.

MR. LILLY: Other press questions?

Q: Here. George Cahlink, *Defense Daily*. I wanted to ask you, you talked about zeroing the funding for the Energy Department's portion of RNEP, but the Pentagon plans to go ahead with at least researching the penetrator, and isn't there a concern that

they could come back and add the nuclear warhead –

REP. HOBSON: They can't.

Q: – at some point?

REP. HOBSON: Well, they'd have to come in and get it appropriated, and I don't think they're going to get that. Domenici said it's dead in the DOE bill. I mean, I know it's hard for people to get the message sometime, but if you keep beating them in the head with it sooner or later they're going to get the message. It's dead, forget about it. Go conventional. There's no the will – if we want to go to a vote – and I've told them, I said, "You guys want to vote on this? We'll vote on this," but we don't need to have a vote. We'll win the vote. You want to do that, fine. And so far we've been able to work it other ways, but I think if we took a vote in the House today there would – you would not get support for the nuclear penetrator. The Senate, I don't know. They have different rules. They have different ways. If this came up for a straight-up vote, they're not going to get it. And even if it's stuck in another bill, we've told them – enough of us have told them we're not going to vote for it. And if you'll notice, it isn't in the authorizing bill either.

MR. LILLY: Other questions? Right here.

Q: I have a two-parter. What sort of funding is there for the conventional program in the defense bill, and have you gotten any sense – I mean the administration is going to release its funding proposal for next year within, what, two months. Do you get any sense that they're going to try to push this again next year?

REP. HOBSON: There's \$4 million in the appropriations bill. There's more in the authorizing bill, but we're only going to spend \$4 (million), and as for conventional, I don't know what they're going to do. I mean, I didn't think they were going to do it this year because DOE had signaled us that it wasn't in their pass-back, and it was – they had zeroed it out, so I don't think there's any – well, there may be some people over there who would like to do it, I know one guy that would like to do it, but he isn't going to do it. And the secretary – one of the first meetings I had with the secretary is he said to me in front of people, we don't need the N-word. We don't need to do the N-word. I've had generals – retired, when they can talk to me or on their way out the door – say, "I told those guys we don't need this." But there's a cadre of people that were in this study, and that's where they are – what was the study called?

MR. : Nuclear Posture Review.

REP. HOBSON: Nuclear Posture Review. Go pick those people. And I've got a list who they are. I can't recall them all. That seems to be where this – and they're placed around all different places now. That seems to be – I can't prove it, but that seems to be where it raises its head. And I know who they are now, so I'm watching. I didn't know who they were in the beginning. But there's no will – I don't see a will in the

Congress to build this thing. And it's just – I don't know why we keep fighting about it. We ought to go on to bigger and better things where we can spend our energies more and get rid of this thing. Just take it out of our – and we'd look better – I think we'd look a lot better in our presentations about other things in the world if we'd stop this thing, so I'm hoping it's not anything and there's any little notes written year that wind up in the *Washington Post*. That's where I first it I think. Somebody ought to – I don't know who leaked it, but somebody leaked a little, handwritten note and that's the first I knew it was back on the table, although I keep hearing things. But I haven't heard anything that they're going to try to do it again.

Although, I must tell you, Rumsfeld said, "Well, you may win this year, but we'll be back." I said, "Well, okay. I'll still be here." (Laughter.) And so – I don't know why it's such a big deal to build something that you're never going to use and sends all the wrong messages, but, you know –

MR. LILLY: Other questions?

REP. HOBSON: – people disagree.

MR. LILLY: Right here.

REP. HOBSON: Daryl.

Q: Daryl Kimball with the Arms Control Association. I have a question about the reliable replacement warhead program. You've made some compelling points about it. It could be cheaper to maintain the arsenal. It's not safer – safer – no new missions. But you raised another point when you were talking about the dams on the Ohio River: cost effectiveness. My question is that given that the Energy Department has said that they want to do a small build of these by the 2012, 2015 time frame, doesn't that mean that some of the existing warhead maintenance programs are going to have to continue? So at what point, based on what they've told you about this, based on what you know, are there going to be cost savings accrued? I mean, so is this really going to be in the near term cost effective or are we going to have to wait a decade or 15 years before the cost savings are accrued?

REP. HOBSON: I can't give you a definitive answer on that because a lot of it depends on how they put the plan together. I can tell you, I think we'll be safer and more secure if we do it this way, based upon what I know, and I don't have complete knowledge. I also think part of this has to be taking down some of the systems that we have today, and I guarantee you we take down some of the systems, there will be savings. Now, some of those things will be offset by the startup costs on this side over here, but we will get savings. And we will get savings, in my opinion, by not just moving things from one bin to another, but by tearing them up.

And frankly, I don't – I started to say this before – I don't understand why the administration – I couldn't get them during the election mode and I could get them now

to take credit for what they've done in their agreement to bring the stockpile down. It's still classified, so I can't really tell you, but everybody knows. But I can't tell you and they won't take credit for it, and they've done a marvelous job. And they would send, I think, much better signals to the world if they said, hey, we're down to this level of warheads today. That's not where a lot of people would like to be, but it's a lot better and it's a success story and they've lived up to what they said they would do. Now, they didn't tear them all up till we got into it. They were moving them around, but they're tearing them up. I mean, it's a good story, but they won't take credit for it for some reason and I don't understand that.

I think there will be savings, and I don't think you'll wait that long, but it depends on how we configure it, when they get – as they go through it. Yeah, if they just kept everything the way it is and kept maintaining everything the way it is, and then start this new program, yeah, that'll be expensive. But they've – also at the same time they do this, they've got to go through and look to the department and get it out of this total Cold War model that was there, and that will force some savings, but it's going to force some frustrations by some people because it's going to – this has been a jobs program.

MR. LILLY: Other questions? Right here.

Q: John Isaacs, Council for a Livable World. First, I want to thank you for the terrific work you've done in the last few years and your candor today. But following up on reliable replacement warhead, some people see the program as the greatest thing since sliced bread; some people think it's the worst thing since avian flu. You as chairman, how are you going to ensure that this does go in the sliced bread category?

REP. HOBSON: Well, that's where oversight comes in. Frankly, that's where oversight comes in. And the chairman of this committee and the chairman of the senate have to be sure that they don't use this as an excuse to go on a shopping spree for a whole new set of new weapons and capabilities and things of this sort. That's where we come in. That's what we've got to watch. And we've got to have a commitment from the department and the administration that that's what we're going to – that we're going to control this to merely do what we can already do, but with modern technologies and build only with modern technologies, and not go out – and I understand this concern that we don't go on a whole new arms race with people on this.

And I understand that, but I think there's enough situation that we need to go this route because I don't want to build – when I came to this job, what did they tell me we were going to be on pits a year, 450 or – they told me were going to build 450 or 800 – some crazy number of pits. And I looked at the guy and I said, "That's nuts." He said, "You're right." (Laughter.)

I said, "Well, why do you say that?" He said, "Well, that's what everybody says." And we're not going to do that. We can't afford to do that and you were going to build them the old way. I said, "That's crazy." And he looked at me and said, "Oh, yeah, but that's what everybody says." Well, they don't say that anymore, but that's what – when I

took over this job, the guy came into my office and he said – who runs this stuff – and I said, “I hear you’re going to build all these pits a year.” And he said, “Oh, yeah.” And I said, “Where are you going to get the money?” He said, “Well, that’s a problem.” (Laughter.) And I said, “Well, you can’t do that.” And he said, “That’s right.” So I said, “Well, let’s start working on another program.” So that’s what we’ve been working on.

I mean, honest to God, that’s what happened at the first – one of the first meetings we had. Scott will tell you. And they jumped off of that just like that, but that was the public persona. Christ, we can’t afford that. But we do need to build some and we need to build them in the right way, and you just can’t reconfigure these things forever.

MR. LILLY: Okay, over here.

Q: I’m John Medalia with Congressional Research Service. I wanted to ask about the modern pit facility. One of the things in your bill for the first time was to zero the funds for MTF, not just for the site selection but for the whole thing – the modern pit facility. And you also said that the DOE should look at upgrading the facility at Los Alamos, the TA-55 pit facility. Do you think that TA – how much capacity do you think TA-55 can have, and do you think that that would be enough to support the stockpile that the administration plans? Thanks.

REP. HOBSON: We’ll probably build a modern pit facility, but we need to know what size we’re going to build first and how many we’re going to build. And I’m not going to put money into something – well, I have limited funds. I’m not going to put money into something till we know what we’re going to do and just let it sit there. We’ve already got too much of that. And that’s one of the reasons – I’m not opposed to building a new modern pit facility, but this numbers thing drove me nuts and until we get there, we’re just not going to do it. But I’m not opposed to it, I’m just not going to put money in something that I don’t think they’re going to spend. But I think we still left money for planning and stuff in it. I don’t think –

Q: They’re doing R&D.

REP. HOBSON: Yeah, they’re doing R&D but –

Q: (Off mike.)

REP. HOBSON: It’s in the – yeah, it’s in the task force stuff.

MR. LILLY: You want to do one more?

REP. HOBSON: Yeah, I mean –

MR. LILLY: You want to do more?

REP. HOBSON: I’ll do a couple more and then we’ll go.

MR. LILLY: Two more questions? Okay.

REP. HOBSON: And I'll – back in the back if somebody's got something they can –

Q: I'm Damon Moglen with the Union of Concerned Scientists. And I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank you for the terrific work on RNEP. It's been tremendously important. I wanted to pick up a little bit actually on the comments you made on nuclear power because another thing that you've been opening a debate, and interesting debate, on has been the possibility of bringing back reprocessing as a –

REP. HOBSON: Recycling.

Q: Recycling. Well – reprocessing as a way of addressing our nuclear waste problem. And I guess I'm interested because one of the things you've said is the necessity of having a kind of rational series of criteria for making sure that something is budgetarily reasonable, doesn't send the wrong message abroad. And many people would suggest that instead of reprocessing – recycling as you've called it – that the direct storage of nuclear waste in a secure storage medium would be far less expensive and would have none of the kind of proliferation, transport, and plutonium separation problems. And I'm interested in how you think this debate is going to play out over the next year, and what are the criteria that we should be applying to this really important national debate?

REP. HOBSON: Well, I think we need to have a national debate on this because I don't think taking a rod that is 95 – 97 – you use a rod one time, it's 97 percent of its energy still in it that you can use. Why would you take something that's 97 percent reuseable and costs you \$500 million increased liability every year to the cities where you let it sit in cold storage, and then the additional \$500 million a year approximately that's increasing in Yucca Mountain when we don't finish it, and let that stuff sit somewhere, when you can reuse it and make it into MOx fuel, you can do a number of different things with it. We're already doing that.

And when you tell me it can't move around and all this crazy stuff – I mean, let me tell you: they're moving it around a lot of places in the world today. We can move it around. It's far less a difficult problem to do than some of the stuff you see running up and down the highway today or on trains today. And we can make casks that work. They already do. I've looked at them. There's a lot of people who want to scare people emotionally about this, which I think is irresponsible. These rods can be stored. We can make a MOx fuel out of them. We're already doing it. Nobody has died. Nobody has spilled anything. We took this stuff to Europe, to France, and they reprocess it and were burning it in a Duke power plant, and there hasn't been mass exoduses from the communities and all this kind of stuff that everybody throws

But we have to look at this responsibly and say, “What is in the best interest of this country?” and “How do we do this environmentally sound?” One of the things that drives me crazy about the Cold War is that nobody looked at the environmental concerns on this stuff. And we’ve got places like Hanford, and you’ve got Idaho, and you’ve got all – you’ve got the thing over near Dayton. We’re going to have to spend \$30 million to clean up some – and I don’t know how many we spent before that trying to clean it up, but the last piece was \$30 million. Ought to be a better use of that, but nobody cared.

We need to look at this and say, “How do we do this responsibly, environmentally sound? How do we maintain the cost?” Probably today, at this moment, if you discount all the other costs, it is cheaper to buy a new rod; that’s probably true. But I’m not sure that’s the most environmentally thing to do, and I’m not sure we add in all the other costs, that’s the way to do it. But there needs to be a dialogue and there needs to be studies saying, “How do we responsibly take this country from an energy dependence upon fossil fuel and get to something that will protect our way of life and our way to have jobs with relatively low cost energy?”

It isn’t going to be hybrid cars alone. It isn’t going to be wind power, and it isn’t – and I happen to love geothermal. I had a house that was geothermal; I think it’s great. But most people aren’t going to – most builders won’t build a geothermal house because it costs more and so when you go and buy your house you don’t get that choice. And you can’t take a house that’s already been built and try to go back and make it geothermal. So we aren’t going to do that, and you can’t do it everywhere. So what are we going to do? Are we going sit around and say – I just see us sitting around doing nothing, and I’m not going to let that happen to my grandchildren. I’m going to force the issue just so that people look at this and we come up with science.

I don’t like the current recycling process because it does wind up with a bad result in certain areas. The French are still doing it. The Japanese are going to do it. Probably other people in the world or the Brits still do it, but I think it’s the – we need to find a better process, and we’re looking at it. And we need to look at the way we build these plants. There maybe ways to build these plants that we don’t wind up with the same results and the same gunk that we have today that we have to get rid of in the waste product.

So I think we need to look at the models that are in the world. We need to look at a model that might fit for us, and we need to get away from the screaming and yelling about whether we’re going to be in an era or not of nuclear power. It’s proven in the world – the Chinese are buying the heck out of it; they’re getting into it, and they’re going to have them. I’ve been there. I know. I wanted them to buy our technology so we can keep our guys up to snuff on what we’re doing so by the time we make up our mind that it’s in our national security to get back into this business that we know what the heck we’re doing. And we shouldn’t build a 103 different types of plants and – but we can’t allow the naysayers – we’ve got to listen, we’ve got to work, but we need to push forward or this country is going to wind – it’s already late. We’re in the twilight of fossil fuel.

There is – you show me any massive use that we can do. Do you know it costs \$400 million to just to license a plant? And then we've finally got rid of the gotcha clause: if you do all this stuff and you build it – if you build it to the design that's been approved, then they can shut you down. Well, nobody wants to invest in something like that. So we need to let people build and expand, we need to plan, we need to look at the waste, and we need to do it in a sound, scientific way. I think recycling sounds a lot better than reprocessing because all of our kids have been raised – we've all been raised that recycling is good. I think you can do this in a better way than we do it today and that we need science for that. We need to burn in a better way than we do today, and we're working on it and we're funding all that.

By the way, we're funding science in the DOE bill much better than it's ever been funded before. For all those who used to scream in our caucus always about when we were messing up science – they're much happier, and we're going to be back in HPCs – high performance computing – we're there; we're back. We were out of the world leadership in that, but we're darn near close to back in the leadership.

MR. LILLY: One last question.

Q: Yes, Wade Boese with the Arms Control Association. You've spoken at length about being stuck in a Cold War posture. I was wondering if you had a perspective on the United States retaining nuclear forces in Europe as part of NATO's forces?

REP. HOBSON: Well, they always complain about us until we're going to come home and then they want us to stay. I was activated in 1961 and sent to France as an enlisted guy in the Air Guard, so I think we need to stay a part of NATO. I think if you look at General Jones' plan, which I saw it before he did it and since, there will be a change in the force structure. It's already down to 100,000. It's coming down below that. I think for the security of the world we're going to have to maintain some force there.

When you talk to people, even though they complain about us, we're the only people who really can bring all those groups together even though they complain. And we're the only one that generally doesn't have a territorial thing in – or a bad history back over a long period of time with one group or the other and so they don't want us to totally walk away. You will hear that they do but, you know, even the Belgian's were complaining when we wanted to move some warehouses and stuff out of Belgium down to Italy. They didn't like that. So I think we'll continue – it's going to shift a little further east. They're going to move some of those bases, or a base or two. Everybody wants a NATO facility. Everybody wants us to have a facility because we're the best ones. I think we're going to have a limited number – a lesser number. There'll be a change in the force structure.

Did I answer what you –

Q: Congressman, my specific question was whether or not the United States would continue to maintain nuclear forces?

REP. HOBSON: Oh, nuclear forces.

Q: (In theater, in Europe.)

REP. HOBSON: I can't answer that. Probably. You see, I don't see the threat there, so somebody could make a decision better than I could on that because the threat is different today. But I don't know the answer to that. You said nuclear forces, I'm sorry. I think we're going to have some forces in Europe, whether nuclear or not. There are only two services that have any nuclear capability today and one of them is – one of them, I guess, is stationed in – is the Navy and the Air Force. And the Air Force is pretty limited, so the tactical stuff is gone. The Army doesn't have the stuff that they had years ago. It's gone – totally gone. We have no capability in the Army.

So the threat is a different threat. I think you need to talk to the Europeans and see what they all want and what we think is mutual for us. We may be able – somebody – I mean, I'm not enough of an expert to tell you that the Navy alone could do it and you could take everything elsewhere. I don't really know the answer. I guess that's the short answer: that I don't know the answer. (Laughs.)

MR. LILLY: We have one person who's had his hand up a long time.

REP. HOBSON: Yeah, that's you.

Q: (Off mike.)

REP. HOBSON: Well, you don't want to hear all my thoughts on that. Maybe you do, but I'm not going to. (Laughter). I think they need to fill some slots. They've just got to throw them at the right people. I think this is a difficult agency to take over and run. You know, this agency was never put together right to begin with; it was just things cobbled together. And so to try to come in and run this thing and get control of it is very difficult. You have people pushing back wherever you go whenever you try to do something.

I do think that he's got – I think he's put together a pretty good staff and given a period of time – the problem is he's only got three years to get this thing under control and set – and do what I'm trying to do, is set some things – the stage for the future and not just the status quo. And that's going to be hard and I can't tell you what's – we don't see – this is one of the problems – we don't see the OMB stuff, although I will tell you this – I think you'll see more emphasis on science by Bodman because he made a statement one day that – and this may scare the clean-up people, but he said, "Clean up can wait a little bit, but science can't." So I think he's got a great – and that's great for the future of this country because this country needs science in the future. And DOE is

one of the last places in our universities where there is really true science being done. So we need to continue to fund that and he shares that vision.

I don't know how much effect that he's going to be able to have this fast on '07 on some of these reports that are coming out, because they're just coming out and they've got to vet all that stuff before they can move forward. It's easier for me, in some respects, than it is for them because I don't have to vet it with a whole bunch of people. But I have to be careful about that, too; that I don't become arbitrary on what we're doing. And so we try to work with them as best we can.

And I would tell you that Josh Bolten is – has got a tough job, but he's a good person to work with. I don't always agree with the numbers they come up with, especially with Corps and some people – it's a big structural problem with the Corps not of the Corps' making. But he will listen and he will understand and work within the constraints that he's got. How much has he got in his level yet? I can't tell you that because I haven't had a meeting with – we did have a meeting. We called it – what did we call it? The Killer B's – I forget how it came out, but it was Bodman, Bolten, Barton, and Hobson – oh, it was Hobson and the Killer B's. (Laughter.) That's what it was. And we tried to sit down and go through some broad picture stuff. And we probably need to get back and do – you raised a good point, we probably need to get back and look at this stuff again and see where we're going with some of this stuff, because I'd like to get some of this stuff locked in under my watch and his watch together.

Same thing I'm trying to do with the Corps: trying to lock some things in with the corps that hopefully improve the Corps down the road. Problem with the Corps – let me just go on that for a minute. There is nobody when there's a cabinet meeting that's an advocate for the Corps, Civil Works Corps of Engineers project or how they run. There's nobody in the room. Secretary of Defense – technically, they report up through the Secretary of Defense. He's more interested in what they do in the war fighting than what they do in the civil works programs, so there's really – it's really a structure problem within the government and I don't know how to fix it. But it leaves them to the whims and wishes of three groups: OMB, which I have a problem with on some of that, and – because they're not the government; they think they are – and the House and the Senate. It's not a good way to go. It's not a good way to run a railroad and I haven't figured out how to fix this. If some of you guys want to write something about how to fix it, tell me.

But, anyway, thanks for listening to me and I hope I've been responsive. I don't know the answer to your question, but thank you.

(Applause.)

(END)