United States Department of Defense
NEWS TRANSCRIPT
On the web: http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2002/t01092002_t0109npr.html
Media contact: media@defenselink.mil or +1 (703) 697-5131
Public contact: public@defenselink.mil or +1 (703) 697-5737

Presenter: J.D. Crouch, ASD ISP Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2002 - 3:05 p.m. EST

Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review

(Special briefing on the results of the Nuclear Posture Review [NPR]. Also participating were Rear Adm. Barry M. Costello, deputy director for Strategy and Policy, Joint Staff; John Harvey, director, Office of Policy, Planning, Assessment and Analysis, Department of Energy; and Richard McGraw, principal deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Slides shown in this briefing are on the Web at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2002/g020109-D-6570C.html. The cover letter forwarding the NPR to Congress was made available during the briefing and is on the Web at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2002/d20020109npr.pdf.)

McGraw: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's time for a very titillating subject, I'm sure, for all of you: the second Nuclear Posture Review, the first one done in 1994, I think. To give you a briefing and answer your questions is Mr. J. D. Crouch, the assistant secretary of Defense for International Security Policy.

J.D.?

Crouch: Great. Thank you.

So, thank you very much. I see some faces that I've traveled with recently. It's my pleasure today to brief you on the findings of the Nuclear Posture Review. Before I get started on that, I'd like to put this report a little bit in context.

A great deal of what we did in this report is really an outgrowth of two things: one, the president's tasking to us to transform the U.S. military and to transform it into a set of capabilities that is more suitable, more effective for the security challenges that we will face in the 21st century; and second, and perhaps particularly in the context of this NPR, it's -- this report was conducted against the backdrop of a completely new relationship with Russia, a relationship that the president has been working on very hard since the beginning of this administration and which has borne a great deal of fruit in terms of cooperative activities and the like.

There's a great deal in this report. It's currently been delivered to Capitol Hill. It's a congressionally mandated report, and -- in classified form. And what I'm obviously going to be presenting today is sort of some of the unclassified findings in summary.

Where are our slides here? Good. First slide, please? Next slide, please.

I'm going to go over the congressional requirements. You understand that that was really the genesis of the report. This is the first congressionally mandated Nuclear Posture Review. But the report is much more

fulsome and goes into a number of topics well beyond what was required by the congressional legislation. And again, that was, I think, mandated both by the president's tasking to us to transform the military and the major changes in the international security environment that have occurred over the last couple of years. I'll also talk about that security environment and the context in which we think the changes in our forces that we're recommending will be unfolding over the next decade or so, conclusions about the need for a capabilities-based force, and applying the approach of a capabilities-based force to our strategic forces and talk a little bit about our long-term goals, commitments, initiatives and the like.

Next slide, please.

The congressional requirement was simply to do a Nuclear Posture Review and to provide a written report from the secretary of Defense to the Congress. This was conducted by the department in full consultation with the Department of Energy. There was a broad team that was put together to do this study. We also had additional requirements levied on us in the FY '02 budget, which we completed in this report, as well as providing a report on sustainment and modernization of our strategic forces.

Next slide, please.

Before I get into this, what I'd like to do is make a couple of comments about some of the people who were involved in this. The Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD] -- I chaired a senior steering group on this issue, along with the director for Strategic Plans in the Joint Staff, that sort of guided the process. Additionally, we had a co-chair from the NNSA, National Nuclear Security Administration, Dr. John Gordon, who was a co-chair for nuclear issues. All OSD organizations that anything to do with these issues were involved, as well as all the individual services, Strategic Command, and other commands, as appropriate. It was a very broad-based participation.

And another thing I would point out is that while the review has a number of decisions in it, which we're -- I will brief to you, there's actually quite a bit of implementation that will have to be done -- follow-on implementation and decisions that will come out of this report. So it's an ongoing process.

The slide that you see is really a contextual slide to show how we see the difference between the world in which our current strategic triad was built for, the Cold War world, and the context of that -- basically, a known, single ideological peer opponent; the idea that there would be prolonged conflict, a limited number of potential contingencies in which the United States and its strategic forces would have to be involved.

And the implications of that for us was that we relied not exclusively but very heavily on our offensive nuclear forces, and we had a threat-based approach to nuclear planning, both because we had to, we had a -- the focus was on the Soviet Union, which of course is no longer with us, and because everything else was sort of a lesser included case -- any other potential contingencies were lesser included cases.

Today we have a very different situation. We have situation where the United States may face multiple potential opponents, but we're not sure who they might be. There are multiple sources or potential sources of conflict.

We also have a new relationship with Russia, which is heading down a more positive course, a much more positive course.

And the implications of this are that, on the one hand, while it's very hard to know the who and when of when we might have to use our military forces broadly and even our strategic forces more narrowly, we do or ought to plan the how -- that is to say, what are the kinds of capabilities that we need to counter the

potential adversaries or the capabilities of potential adversaries that are either extant today or that will emerge in the years to come?

And so our conclusion here is basically that we -- the NPR underscored the need for the continued main defense goals of the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review], to assure, dissuade, deter and defeat.

And in the nuclear planning context, we adopted the concept of a capabilities-based force. We underscored the need for greater flexibility for a range of contingencies that will be harder to know, and we also will be making changes in how we plan, not just our nuclear forces, but the other components of the strategic capability that I'll talk about in a second.

Next slide, please.

Among the extant and emerging threats to the United States, our friends and allies -- I've put this slide up, you've seen these kinds of things before at briefings. But one of the things we want to focus on is the problem of weapons of mass destruction. I think one of the things that came out of the NPR is that there is not a single solution to the problem of weapons of mass destruction. It is not entirely a military problem, it also is a diplomatic problem. It is also a problem that will involve other aspects of national power. But from the military standpoint, we are concerned about the growing capabilities of various states in the biological, chemical, nuclear and ballistic-missile delivery area. And obviously, we are also concerned explicitly about certain states that are developing those capabilities.

Next slide, please.

The new security environment. This sort of focuses a little bit on the security environment in which -- and the direction that the president gave us to conduct our NPR. Obviously, first and foremost we are trying to encourage a positive relationship with Russia. And we believe that we can do that by establishing a new framework of relations that sets aside the sort of Cold War hostilities, in particular the idea of ending the relationship with Russia that is based on mutual assured destruction. This seems to be a very inappropriate relationship given the kinds of cooperation, for example, that have been evinced in the last few months in the campaign against global terrorism.

We also underscored the fact that the Cold War approach to deterrence, which was highly dependent upon offensive nuclear weapons, is no longer appropriate, which is not to say that we think that nuclear weapons don't continue to play a role in that. We think they play an important role, a fundamental role. But we also believe that other kinds of capabilities will be needed in the future.

The other thing the president gave us, obviously, was to try to develop a framework in which we were able to reduce to the lowest possible number of operationally deployed nuclear weapons. And the number, of course, as you know, that we came up with, or the number that he released was, in fact, informed by this review, and that is 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed nuclear weapons. And additionally, we are trying to achieve these reductions without having to wait for Cold War arms-control treaties, and placing greater emphasis both on missile defense capabilities and also on the development of advanced conventional capabilities.

Next slide, please.

This slide, you will be familiar with the titles in each block. This is, in fact, the QDR defense goals. And what we attempted to do here -- and I'm not going to go through the slide in detail -- but what we attempted to do here was provide a overview of the kinds of capabilities that were needed in each one of these

particular defense goals.

I would note, under "Assuring Allies and Friends," we believe that developing credible non-nuclear and nuclear response options were necessary to supporting U.S. commitments. Under "Dissuading Competitors," maintaining a more diverse -- or developing a more diverse portfolio of capabilities would help to deny a payoff from competing with the United States directly in this area. And under "Deterring Aggressors," we -- we note not only the need for nuclear and non-nuclear options, but also defenses to discourage attack by frustrating enemy attack plans and the like.

So these are sort of the broad goals around -- and capabilities around which we conducted the analysis.

Next slide, please.

This slide talks a little bit about our approach in terms of the distinction between a traditional threat-based approach and a capabilities-based approach. As you can see, under the threat-based approach, the size of our force was primarily reflected -- was a reflection of a specific threat. There was an emphasis on nuclear offensive forces. There was clearly some flexibility in our planning, but the requirement for flexibility and adaptability, particularly under sort of real-time conditions, was not really there during the Cold War, and missile defenses were considered by some in this time frame as impractical or destabilizing.

The capabilities-based approach argues that there may be multiple contingencies and new threats that we have to deal with. We're focusing on how we will fight, how we will have to fight, not who or when, and we don't really know. We expect to be surprised, and so we have to have capabilities that would deal with a broad range of the potential capabilities that adversaries may array against us.

These capabilities are not required to be country-specific. Indeed, in some cases, it's -- it would be difficult for them to be country-specific. You know, one example out of -- out of today's situation, obviously, is Afghanistan, where we would not have expected to be in Afghanistan maybe six months earlier.

We also believed it was very important to include new components or new kinds of capabilities in this approach, including active and passive defenses and non-nuclear capabilities. The non-nuclear strike forces, we believe, have the potential, if fully exploited, fully developed, to reduce our dependency on nuclear forces for the offensive-strike leg of the -- of the component. And even defenses give us more options and will allow us to do the same.

The last bullet is extremely important, because it talks about effectiveness of command control, intelligence and adaptive planning.

We believe that by improving -- investing in these areas and improving in these particular areas we're going to create a more efficient capability, one that, in fact, will allow us to reduce our forces overall but to maintain the overall capability that will be necessary as we move forward in the 21st century.

Next slide, please.

I'll let you stare at this for a second. This is a pictogram that is designed to kind of tell you where we are and where we want to be. And there's a transition that's going to go on here; it's not something that's going to happen overnight. Our strategic forces today continue to be arrayed around a triad that looks very much like it did during the Cold War: ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles], bombers and SLBMs [submarine-launched ballistic missiles]. We would like to transition to what we call a new triad, a triad of forces that includes non-nuclear and nuclear strike capabilities, and notice that the smaller triad is, in fact,

embedded in this. We will continue to maintain a balanced nuclear force triad, but at a much smaller or reduced level.

In addition to that, we think it's important to augment those capabilities with a -- defensive systems that in some cases may offer a president more options, may also reduce our reliance on offensive systems, both active and passive defensive systems, and a responsive infrastructure. When I use that term, I'm not strictly talking about the nuclear infrastructure, I'm talking about a responsive defensive infrastructure that can respond to -- in time frames that are not in the sort of 15-20 year time frame that we are used to thinking about the development of new systems, in much shorter time frames to critical problems as well as repairing our nuclear infrastructure and supporting the forces that we currently have deployed. So -- and that responsive infrastructure is very critical to -- repairing it is critical to being able to reduce risk as we bring the operational force down to lower and lower levels of nuclear forces.

So basically, what we have here is a concept of reductions of our nuclear forces, but the introduction of some new elements that help to mitigate risks as we introduce new elements to the force.

Next slide, please.

Now, in a capabilities-based approach we had to determine a way to size the nuclear component of the force. And we did that by essentially adopting a completely new approach to this problem.

And what we posited is that there are sort of immediate and potential contingencies that we will have to deal with. In fact, there's a broad range of contingencies. Immediate things in that category may be rogue states that we would have to deal with, WMD, states with WMD, and the like.

And we will maintain an operationally deployed force for immediate and unexpected contingencies. Obviously, anything that is unexpected, you're going to have to deal with, with your operationally deployed systems. In addition to that, any sort of immediate threats that you would identify would also be dealt with with these systems. And these essentially can be thought of as, at the nuclear level, bombers and missiles that would be available right now, in minutes, to days to a few weeks.

We also are going to maintain a responsive capability. Now, this is not a separate force, it's the ability to augment the operationally deployed force in a way where, over weeks, months and even years, that we could respond to changes. What kinds of changes? Potentially changes in the security environment that were more adverse than we thought. Technological surprise. Changes in our assumptions about how well we can introduce or field new elements of the triad.

Planning in all this continues to be a very important -- important idea. We will continue to do pre-planning for our immediate and potential contingencies, but one of the important things that came out of the QDR is it's necessary to develop new tools for adaptively -- in a timely way adaptively creating plans for situations that may arise very quickly in an unexpected way. And again, that was not something we had to think about in the Cold War. We didn't think about adaptive planning in the kinds of short time-frames that we have to think about it now, because we knew who the opponent was going to be, we knew that it was going to be sort of a -- not very much time to make decisions and we would in fact have to execute very much preplanned kind of options.

Our goal is to reach the level of 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed warheads within a decade to meet these requirements for the new defense policy goals. And I think another key point that comes out of this is the idea that the force size that we have here was not driven by an immediate contingency involving Russia, because of assumptions we've made about where we think our relationship with Russia is headed

and the path that Russia is on, both politically and also in terms of its own nuclear reductions.

But we will maintain the force structure and the warheads that we take off these systems as part of that responsive force; and how we look at immediate and potential contingencies over the future will change.

We will reassess our situation continually and in an ongoing way and probably more formally periodically.

Next slide, please.

We -- this slide basically talks a little bit about the sustainment of our current nuclear forces. To give you some idea of what's in the budget, we are currently projecting to keep the nuclear forces that we have to 2020 and beyond -- and longer, and beyond. If you look at the average ages of some of these systems, you can see that they're as old or maybe older than some of the people in this room -- certainly as old as I am, in some cases. We have life-extension programs that we are funding for those now that are necessary, and we are planning on life-extension programs for those that will need them in the out years.

We are also looking at study alternatives for follow-on systems at this point, but at this point, we are planning on going with the existing force of ICBMs -- submarine-launched ballistic missiles on SSBNs [ballistic missile submarines] and bombers. We will be fully funding the Trident D-5 SLBM life-extension program in this five-year defense plan, and we'll also be, I know, accelerating -- DOE is planning on accelerating its test- readiness program. I point out one item on there: No change in the administration's policy at this point on nuclear testing. We continue to oppose CTBT [comprehensive test ban treaty] ratification. We also continue to adhere to a testing moratorium, and I know that I have a colleague here from the Department of Energy who will be happy to talk about their program in a little bit more detail, if you have any questions about that.

Next slide, please.

This slide gives you some additional background on additional -- the new components of the new Triad and some of the -- some of the initiatives that we have in the report. Again, I don't want to go over all of it. I would point, under "Non-nuclear Strike," you're probably aware of our initiative to convert four Trident submarines for cruise-missile carriage. Under "Missile Defense," we have an ongoing, robust RDT&E program. And under the "Command Control and Planning," we have a number of initiatives that we think will help to create better intelligence, more efficient command and control and faster and adaptive planning.

Next slide, please.

This slide is designed to kind of give you a picture of how all these two things come together -- the reductions on the one hand but the implementation of the new Triad on the other. As we bring the force down from START I levels, which is essentially where we are now at around 6,000 warheads, down to the president's goal of 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons, we will be making decisions. And you notice that we see periodic assessment points. We'll be making decisions along the way about what our force structure will look like, how -- what the composition of it will be, and the like.

And we have made initial decisions right now, including the Peacekeeper elimination, which you see there; the taking down -- taking four Trident submarines out of strategic service; and taking away the requirement for the B-1 to maintain a nuclear capability. We've also made additional decisions, which will result in additional reduction in warheads to FY '07.

At the same time, we are going to be introducing new kinds of capabilities. And again, this is not something that's going to happen overnight. There's no particular order for the things you see at the bottom, but I think one of the most important elements -- and you'll see this reflected in -- when the president submits his budget, I think you will see this reflected, is to try to repair our infrastructure so that we have a more responsive infrastructure. We will be putting dollars against the command, control and planning. And as time goes on, we hope to be able to field limited missile defense capabilities and improve our conventional strike capabilities.

The assessment points are very important. We have a responsive force. We may decide at -- somewhere along the line that we have to flatten out our reductions because changes have been made in the strategic environment that require us to do that. We may decide that we would have to increase our forces. We may also decide that we could decrease our forces further, or bring our forces down much faster, depending upon the security environment, depending upon technological surprise, and depending upon our ability and our confidence in developing new elements or fielding new elements of the triad. So we are going to be assessing along the way, along this journey, as we reach the president's goal of 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed warheads in a decade.

Next slide, please.

This just summarizes for you the decisions that have been made. We have been over most of those. I would also say that we're planning on downloading warheads from both the operationally deployed ICBMs and SLBMs. And these planned reductions are going to be completed in phases. In addition to the 1,300 START accountable warheads that will come off the force as a result of the retirement of Peacekeeper, the Tridents and the like, we will be taking additional operationally deployed warheads off existing ICBMs and SLBMs down to a level of about 3,800 by FY '07. And beyond FY '07, we'll be making the force structure decisions on how we will be bringing down the force to 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed warheads.

Next slide, please.

Just in concluding, I want to hit a couple of high points that I think were reflected in the review. First, this new triad concept, we think, can both reduce in the long run our dependence on nuclear weapons and improve our ability to deter attack in the face of a proliferating WMD capability. We think the combination of these new capabilities along with a smaller nuclear capability is more appropriate to the kind of security environment that the United States will enter -- has entered and will see over the next 10 to 20 years. And so in that context, I also think it's important to point out that this new triad concept really was also a way for us to draw down the force by lowering -- and lowering risk as we did -- as we draw down the force, reducing that dependence on nuclear weapons, but making the force -- the nuclear force that we retained as safe, reliable, and effective as it can be.

And with that I will open the floor to questions. I would also like to ask Admiral Costello from the Joint Staff and John Harvey from the Department of Energy to join me up here. They may have some additional insights and be able to answer some technical questions that I'm -- that are beyond me.

How do we do this, in terms of the calling? Am I the guy?

Q: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

Crouch: And this guy goes first always, right? (laughter) Okay, good.

Q: How are we to know who's talking?

Crouch: Well, you usually don't.

Q: My question is, there are many critics who say that while you are announcing sharp reductions in nuclear weapons here, that since you aren't going to destroy the weapons -- the warheads that you're pulling off these weapons or removing from aircraft, that you aren't really reducing nuclear weapons. Correct me if I'm wrong, you already have thousands of warheads on the shelf, in addition to the 6,000 that are deployed. What would you say to people who say that since you're not destroying these weapons, you really aren't reducing the nuclear force, if these weapons are ready to put back on planes quickly?

Crouch: Right. We are in fact -- right now, as you say, there are weapons in the stockpile -- and we refer to this as an active and an inactive stockpile. There are a number of weapons in that stockpile. Many of them are in the queue for dismantlement and destruction.

Q: Could you -- I'm sorry. I don't mean to break in. Could you give us a ballpark figure on how many there are in addition to --

Crouch: That's one thing we can't do. (laughs) But what I can say is that, you know, as -- there have been no final decisions made at this point on what the size of our responsive capability would be, and also there have been no final decisions made on the overall size of the active stockpile and the inactive stockpile. Those things will shift over time.

And they are a function of a number of factors. One of them is restoring the health of our infrastructure. In fact, one of the interesting facts is that it's necessary to restore that infrastructure not only to be able to maintain our own -- the nuclear forces that we have, but it's the same infrastructure that in fact dismantles and retires weapons. And so one of the things we'll -- our ability to put weapons through that process, that dismantlement process, is in some way shaped by the health of that infrastructure.

We have been taking -- we have taken weapons all throughout the history of arms control off of systems. I don't think there's a single arms control treaty that required you to actually destroy the weapons. The unilateral reductions that were announced by President -- the first President Bush back in '90, '91, we -- they did mandate destroying weapons. And there will be weapons that will be destroyed as a result of our reductions. Which -- what we will end up with is a situation where some weapons will move off and stay in the responsive capability of the United States, others will be earmarked for destruction and will be put in the queue for destruction, and others will remain in the inactive stockpile.

So this is going to shift over time. It's also going to shift as a result of factors that we cannot foresee at this time frame.

But I think the fact that -- the important fact -- and that's why I left it for last -- is that we are actually taking weapons off of the operationally deployed force. This is the force that, you know, would be -- could be or would be used in an extreme situation, and consequently I think that is a very positive benefit, and I believe in fact the Russians will be doing a very similar thing.

Q: So just briefly, you are denying that the 1,700 to 2,200 figure would be -- then be misleading, since you're going to have more than 1,700 to --

Crouch: That -- I don't think it's misleading.

In fact, I think I've done a -- we have all done a very good job of explaining to you and everybody else exactly what it is. We're certainly not trying to mislead anybody. We think it's very important, and that one of the advantages -- and we've had a situation, really since the signing of START I, where both sides have kept very high force levels on both sides and that are on operationally deployed systems. We think it is a major step in the right direction that we're able to move those forces down to significantly lower levels, and we also think it is a prudent thing on the other side to have, in a very uncertain period, some responsive capability that we could respond to unforeseen contingencies.

Q: Sir?

Crouch: Yes?

Q: Could you give us a rough percentage, perhaps, of the 3,800 missiles that you -- warheads that you'd be taking off, what amount of those you would keep in the responsive force? And could you also sketch out for me what you mean, our -- philosophically our dependence on nuclear weapons, because I didn't really get it. I mean, you've used them only one time, in World War II, so how are we dependent on them? What do you mean by that?

Crouch: Okay. Let me take the second question first.

When I talk about dependence on nuclear weapons, I'm talking about the fact that during the Cold War, where we were dealing with a country -- single country, essentially, a nuclear-armed country, although it had allies that were not nuclear armed -- a single armed country that had many thousands of nuclear weapons, conflict, I mean the avoidance of conflict with that country was really dependent upon offensive retaliation. And so the fact that we -- the happy fact that we did not -- we have only used nuclear weapons once, at the end of the Second World War, does not reduce or mitigate the fact that we were, I think, very dependent upon our strategic nuclear force capabilities to deter that kind of an attack on ourselves and our allies. So when I talk about dependence, I'm certainly not indicating that there were not roles and needs for other kinds of military capabilities. There certainly were during the Cold War period. But I think that today those circumstances have changed and --

Q: We can no longer depend on nuclear weapons to deter our future aggressors, like September 11th --

Crouch: I think I would put it slightly differently; that I think we need a broader array of capabilities, including nuclear forces, to deter and, if deterrence were to fail, to defend against potential adversaries. And I also think it's important to underscore that we continue to need nuclear forces as well as other elements of the new triad, both to assure our friends and allies of U.S. security commitments and to dissuade potential competitors from competing with the United States in ways that are harmful to U.S. security and allied security.

Q: And the percentage of the warheads in a responsive force?

Crouch: Oh. At this point no decisions have been made exactly on the character of that responsive force. And as I said, there will be ongoing assessments on that. And that number itself will probably change over time.

Yeah.

Q: Following on your previous answer to Pam, in the -- one statement, "a diverse portfolio of capabilities denies payoff from competition," can you give us an example of what you mean by that?

Crouch: Well, I think that what we want from the standpoint of dissuasion is to be in a position where other -- countries that might try to challenge the United States or might try to find sort of asymmetrical ways of attacking the United States are going to find it very difficult for two reasons. One is we will maintain sufficient nuclear forces to put us, in effect, beyond their reach in terms of being able to develop themselves as a peer competitor to the United States. But secondly, and I think this is more important for -- is that there are going to be a lot of cases where offensive retaliatory deterrence may not be appropriate or we may need other capabilities in the event deterrence fails, and that's where non-nuclear strike capabilities and our defensive capabilities would come into play and hopefully being able to shape -- so, for example, limited but effective defenses could well help us along with other tools to dissuade countries from investing in large numbers of ballistic missiles that might threaten the United States or our allies and friends.

I don't know, do I go row by row here, or what's the -- sure, you'd like that, right? We'll do this one, and then we'll go back.

Q: Could you explain what the difference is, if there is a difference, between inactive and the responsive force? When you refer to -- whatever, some of the -- the current operational force going into the responsive force, is that different from being in an inactive status?

Crouch: Unfortunately, these are not terms that are necessarily separate baskets. When I talk about the immediate -- the operationally deployed force to deal with immediate and unexpected contingencies, those are, in fact, the forces that are deployed on a day-to-day basis that can respond in anywhere from minutes to days and a few weeks. The responsive capability would be able to augment that force. And it essentially will be additional warheads that could be uploaded back onto that force if necessary and, obviously, if the president were to make a decision to do that. And that would take weeks, months, even years to do that, depending upon the system and the character of the threat.

Q: Presumably we have weapons in that status now, correct? Warheads that are -- that have been removed from delivery systems that are available to be uploaded --

Crouch: Well, we have weapons that are in the inactive stockpile. That is correct.

Inactive stockpile -- and I don't know, John, do you want to maybe talk a little bit about the distinction between the active and inactive stockpile?

Harvey: Sure.

Crouch: I think that might help this -- that's sort of a DOE question, but I think that will maybe give you a flavor for the distinction here.

Harvey: It's a very straightforward distinction. The active stockpile is a unit, a weapon which is available, fully ready to be deployed and used.

The inactive stockpile, typically the limited-life components that go into a nuclear warhead, such as tritium, neutron generators, things that live for a relatively short period of time in comparison with the weapon, are typically removed, and when the weapon is transitioned to the active stockpile from the inactive, those components are reinstalled in the weapon. So the inactive weapon consists of those

weapons that are not fielded with limited-life components.

Crouch: And there are a number of things in that inactive stockpile, including weapons that are in that dismantlement, you know, earmark or --

Q: So -- I'm sorry. Can I ask just one more? Would -- in a responsive stockpile, would the tritium be removed, or would these simply be warheads that are removed from the delivery vehicle?

Crouch: The responsive capability would reside in the active stockpile. Right? So, in other words, those forces would be maintained at -- with the critical components that John was talking about available. Otherwise, it wouldn't be responsive, if you follow me.

Yeah?

Q: I sense that there's a -- that you want to accelerate DOE's testing readiness, but at the same time, you want to maintain a moratorium on testing. Does that indicate that you're moving in the direction of testing, if you want to accelerate readiness?

Crouch: The two were actually very distinct things. We are continuing the current administration policy, as I said, which is we continue to oppose ratification of the CTBT; we continue to adhere to a test moratorium. And the testing readiness issue really came out of -- in fact, a number of studies that had been done prior to the NPR, including, I think, what was it, the Foster Panel, which was a congressionally mandated study, which said that two to three years from a decision to test is too long; that if you were to have a problem with a weapon system that you needed to rectify using a test, you would want to be able to do that faster.

And so one of the recommendations that came out was that -- has nothing to do with the issue of whether we would conduct a nuclear test, but that if there was in fact a determination that we needed to conduct a nuclear test, what would be the time period -- what would be an appropriate time period? And we're continuing to study what that time period would be. And -- but one thing that the NPR does state is that we need to improve our readiness posture to test from its current two to three year period to something substantially better.

Do you have anything you want to add to that?

Harvey: That got it.

Crouch: Okay.

Yes?

Q: Preserving the existing triad, are you going to be abandoning the counting rules that you use right now under START, or -- and does that mean that you're going to be counting strictly the number of warheads and not counting a bomber as a certain number of warheads and a submarine as a certain number of warheads?

Crouch: START I will continue to be in force, and all of its applicable rules, including the verification provisions as well as the counting rules, are still in force. However, when we talk about 1,700 to 2,300 operationally deployed systems, we are talking -- this is what we might call truth in advertising. There are no phantom warheads here. This is the actual number of weapons that we will deploy on the force.

Now, those two things are not inconsistent, because obviously START force levels are at about 6,000 weapons, and we're going to be -- we are in fact drawing down to force levels that are not only below START I, but are below what would have been deployed under START II.

Q: When you say the number of weapons that will be deployed, weapons and warheads then are interchangeable there; you mean the number of warheads that will be deployed?

Crouch: Warheads.

Somebody in the back. This lady, here?

Q: Yeah. Mr. Harvey, what is the status of the stockpile stewardship program, and is that going to change after the NPR is approved?

Harvey: We have two main responsibilities for the -- to the Department of Defense. One is we have to assure that the stockpile is safe and reliable. And two, we have to make sure that we respond to any requirements that the Department of Defense has with regard to modifications, refurbishments, et cetera, of nuclear warhead systems.

We have a very aggressive stockpile stewardship program designed to surveil the nuclear weapons stockpile, to be able to assess and fix problems on a time scale relevant to DOD needs. We -- as part of that stockpile stewardship program, we intend to do this -- we feel confident we can do this without nuclear testing, but there are no guarantees. We need to retain, as part of stockpile stewardship, an ability to, if the president so decides in response to a possible problem in the stockpile that can't be fixed without testing, that we have to be able to be prepared to carry out a test, and we maintain the readiness to do so. Currently, that readiness is 24 to 36 months.

That's a key element of stockpile stewardship.

In addition, with regard to the program itself, we have a long ways to go to restore some of the capabilities we need later this decade to be able to refurbish elements of the stockpile in connection with our sustaining the force levels that J.D. talked about earlier, including elements of our SLBM force, the W-76 warhead for Trident, elements of our air-delivered systems, our cruise missile systems, the W-80 warhead for the air-launched cruise missile and the advanced cruise missile, and also some of our air-dropped bombs, the B-61 in particular. We will need to establish and recover production capabilities in order to be able to refurbish that element of the stockpile later on this decade, and that's one of our key challenges in the future.

Q: Mr. Crouch? Mr. Crouch? Mr. Crouch?

Crouch: Yes?

Q: May I ask a question? I know you probably think you might have answered it, but just for the average American, average public, without getting into technical terms, provided you can even avoid the word "triad", would you just explain the -- exactly what it is that you are doing and why it is important, if you can? Just summarize what it is and why is it important.

Crouch: Right. The Cold War is over. We have a nuclear capability that was built then. And what we are doing is we are transforming our forces in a way that I think will make -- that is much more appropriate to

the security environment and the threats that we believe we will face in the future. And as a result of that, I think we will have a U.S. military uniformly, because of that military transformation, and in this particular piece of that transformation in this new strategic triad, we will have a capability that will make the United States safer, will give the president more effective options for dealing with crises and managing crises. And I think that that benefits every American.

Q: And why is this being done? Is it strictly because of Russia, or is this also the best plan?

Crouch: (laughs) I think it's definitely the best way to arrange or to array our forces for the future. And -- but I want to underscore that one of the -- I mean, one of the things that enabled us to -- gave us the opportunity to do this was our improved relationship with Russia. So I think the two sort of go hand in hand.

How about this gentleman?

Q: Thank you. I think this is a question for Mr. Harvey. What do you see our tritium supply looking like over the next 10 years, taking into account that we're going to be -- a lot of these weapons are going to be deactivated?

Harvey: We're currently reestablishing a capability to produce tritium. For the time being, given the dramatic reductions over the past 10 years of weapons moving from the active to the inactive stockpile -- that is, weapons that don't require tritium -- we've been able to free up quite a bit of tritium to be able to sustain ourselves until we can resume production. We're currently scheduled to resume production sometime later on this decade, and I believe we're in good shape with regard to being able to support the DOD requirements.

Q: Does that mean that you won't be needing TVA to produce any tritium? And does it also mean we won't have to import any?

Harvey: Our approach to producing tritium is to use a commercial light-water reactor, the TVA reactor approach. And no, we -- that is our approach to producing it, and that's the capability that we'll require in the future.

Q: One more question. With -- and Mr. Crouch said that not all of them would be destroyed. I'm still not sure exactly what he means by "destroyed." But does this reinforce or boost the need to get the MOX process up and -- MOX or immobilization going?

Harvey: Basically, when we talk about destroying, we talk about dismantling the warheads, taking the components that are not needed and disposing of them, but making sure that we still can take good care of the safety and security of nuclear weapon materials from the warhead. So we will need to continue, obviously, to store those components that have special nuclear materials in them -- we call them enriched uranium or plutonium --

McGraw: We can take two more questions.

Harvey: -- until such times as they can be disposed of.

McGraw: Excuse me. Didn't mean -- two more questions, folks.

Q: Sir, is there a doctrine of retaliation that is now replacing assured destruction, or is it just a doctrine of,

you know, more options for the president?

And specifically, when you talk about missile defense, it seems as though you're heading for a potentially very odd scenario. Right now, if somebody were to attack the United States with a ballistic missile and weapon of mass destruction, it's assumed, I think generally, that there would be a severe retaliation, probably nuclear. You seem to be implying that if a future country were to do that, and the missile were intercepted, that country would be, quote, unquote, "rewarded" with a lesser level of retaliation, because there hasn't been actual destruction caused to the United States. That seems to be what you're implying when you're talking about this new menu of options for the president.

Crouch: If that's what you think I was implying, that's certainly not what I was implying. What I was stating is that by providing, in this particular example, an additional capability to the president, a missile defense capability, the president would be in a position to defeat the attack of a weapon of mass destruction on the United States.

The lady earlier mentioned, you know, what's in this for the United States and what's in this for the American people? And it seems to me while deterring an attack of a weapon of mass destruction against the United States is something that we have to continue to have forces and capabilities to do, and we will certainly maintain forces and capabilities to do that, being able to defeat that attack, whether it were to come out of the Middle East or some other place, would be a far more preferable option and does not, in fact, foreclose any other options that the president might have.

So I don't think I'm implying that we would be rewarding a country for shooting a ballistic missile. What we would be doing, hopefully, is -- in the long run, is dissuading them from developing those missiles because to have them would be fruitless because we would have the ability to defeat them -- defeat an attack on the United States. And I think that's a very positive outcome.

McGraw: One more --

Q: It just seems to me -- if I can follow this -- this clear implication that the macabre business of massive retaliation is being gotten rid of. And yet, your answer just now seems to indicate that it's not, that it's still there; that you would still, in addition to intercepting the missile, retaliate massively against -- is there a doctrine that tells a president, a future president, what do to in circumstances like this?

Crouch: No, the president will have a -- one of the things that will come out of this is the president, hopefully, will have a much wider range of options that he can deal with. And that's why one of the initiatives here was not only to maintain a smaller nuclear force, but also to develop additional non-nuclear strike capabilities that would also be part of a -- sort of this diverse portfolio of options that the president could draw from.

We're certainly not -- there's nothing in the review that talks about what the president's options are or are not are. Those are really up to the president. The main idea was that we feel we need to give the president and future presidents a broader portfolio of responses and options to deal with the kinds of uncertainties. You know, we thought we knew fairly confidently how to deter the Soviet Union during the Cold War. I think one of the reflections here is that we're not as confident that we will be able or we will know how to deter the kinds of attacks that might be presented in the United States in the future. And if September 11th doesn't underscore that, since I don't -- most of us did not expect that, I think nothing else would.

(cross talk)

Crouch: How about somebody way in the back?

Q: When you talk about taking warheads off of the operationally deployed force, but keeping them available for return, are you effectively saying that they're going to be de-alerted? And also, will warheads that are on missiles or ships that are in overhaul be considered part of the operationally deployed force?

Crouch: De-alerting usually refers to taking off alert the weapons platforms that you have decided to retire. All right? So in this context, no, because the -- basically we're actually -- and those, of course, could be brought back up to alert in a few minutes to, you know, maybe a few hours. What we're talking about is a responsive capability that would take, at the very least weeks but likely months and even years to be able to regenerate -- would not be something that you would respond, let's say, under a tactical threat. It would be a major change in the security environment, for example.

And to answer your second question, we are planning on maintaining a trident SSBN fleet of 14 submarines. Two of those submarines will be in overhaul at all times, and those submarines will not have missiles available to fire, and they will not be part of the operationally deployed nuclear weapons.

Thank you very much.

Q: Can I just clear up one thing you said about the 2020? You said you'd planned to maintain the current force until 2020 -- the current force. Does that mean you're not going to try to develop smaller nuclear weapons, earth-penetrators, and other things that -- but that you will go with conventional forces to do that kind of thing for the short term?

Crouch: (to McGraw) And I'm violating your rule. I shouldn't do this, right?

(to press) At this point, there are no recommendations in the report about developing new nuclear weapons. The -- so I don't know whether that answers the question, but I think that's where we stand. Now, we are trying to look at a number of initiatives. One would be to modify an existing weapon, to give it greater capability against deep and hardly -- or hard targets and deeply-buried targets. And we're also looking at non-nuclear ways that we might be able to deal with those problems.

Q: Thank you.

http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2002/t01092002_t0109npr.html