



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein on the Elimination of Federal Funding for Nuclear Bunker Buster

October 26, 2005

“I was heartened to hear that Senator Pete Domenici announced that the FY 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill will not include \$4 million for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) or nuclear bunker buster. This effectively kills the nuclear bunker buster program for this year.

The move to research and develop new nuclear weapons is misbegotten and wrong-headed. I believe as more people learn about what the Administration plans that the opposition to the development of these weapons will grow stronger.

This is a significant victory for those of us who believe that pursuing a nuclear bunker buster will only reopen the nuclear door and encourage the very proliferation we are trying to prevent. As we have long argued it is simply not possible to develop a nuclear bunker buster that can survive a thrust into the earth without spewing massive amounts of radiation into the atmosphere. As the National Academies of Sciences has found, a nuclear buster can kill between several thousand and a million people.

Nevertheless we must remain vigilant. The policies underlying the request for a nuclear bunker buster remain in place:

- The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, which places nuclear weapons as part of the strategic triad thus blurring the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons;
- National Security Directive 17, which indicates the United States would engage in a first use of nuclear weapons to respond to a chemical or biological attack.
- The draft nuclear weapons doctrine, which envisions using nuclear weapons preemptively, if necessary, to take out hard and deeply buried targets.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to promote a sensible, bipartisan nuclear weapons policy. This includes working with Senator Kennedy to offer an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill to remove the Congressional authorization for the program.

This is the second year in a row that Congress has eliminated all funds for this program. My great thanks to all the members of Congress who have worked to remove this funding, but most especially to Representative David Hobson who has been steadfast in his leadership against the development of a new nuclear bunker buster.”

###