



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

News Media Contact(s):

Megan Barnett, (202) 586-4940

Julianne Smith, (202) 586-7371

For Immediate Release

September 17, 2007

U.S. Removes Nine Metric Tons of Plutonium From Nuclear Weapons Stockpile

Declaration Reinforces U.S. Commitment to Nonproliferation

VIENNA, AUSTRIA - Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman today announced that the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) will remove nine metric tons of plutonium from further use as fissile material in U.S. nuclear weapons, signifying the Bush Administration's ongoing commitment to nonproliferation. Nine metric tons of plutonium is enough material to make over 1,000 nuclear weapons. The Secretary made today's announcement while speaking before the International Atomic Energy Agency's annual general conference.

"The United States is leading by example and furthering our commitment to nonproliferation and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by safely reducing the amount of weapons-usable nuclear material in the world," Secretary Bodman said. "As the United States continues to reduce the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile, we will be able to dispose of even more nuclear material while increasing energy and national security."

The excess plutonium will be removed in the coming decades from retired, dismantled nuclear weapons. It will be eliminated by fabrication into mixed-oxide fuel that can be burned in commercial nuclear reactors to produce electricity.

In 2004, President Bush directed that the size of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile be reduced by almost half from its size in 2001 when he entered office. This direction is consistent with the President's commitment to maintaining the lowest number of nuclear weapons while providing for national security. By 2012, the U.S. nuclear arsenal will be at its lowest level since the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s.

Today's plutonium announcement follows Secretary Bodman's 2005 announcement to remove from further use as fissile material in U.S. nuclear weapons up to 200 metric tons of highly enriched uranium from retired nuclear warheads.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a separately organized agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the United States and abroad. Read more information about the [National Nuclear Security Administration \(NNSA\)](#).

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.