

Peace Farm

Nuclear Watch New Mexico

June 30, 2015

The Honorable Max Thornberry
2329 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Via USPS and email to <http://thornberry.house.gov/contact/>

Dear Rep. Max Thornberry:

We were startled to hear a remark you made in a June 23, 2015 speech in Washington, DC, entitled "A Strategy for America." You stated

We have lost people, engineers in the nuclear complex, who go work in the energy industry, partly because they had to, well, shoot rats off of their lunch in some of the facilities that they were working in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLDcPbe8IZ0>, beginning minute 45:49

On the same day the trade newspaper *Defense Daily* reported you saying

Nuclear engineers no longer consider national laboratories "desirable" places to work, "partly because they had to shoot rats off their lunch in some of the facilities that they were working in." (Quotation marks indicate direct quotes of you)

<http://www.defensedaily.com/hasc-chair-increase-u-s-defense-spending-to-counter-russian-nuke-modernization/>

Recognizing the breath of your experience and the depth of your knowledge as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, your remarks raise a number of serious safety and security questions that we are keen to know about.

Please be advised that we have filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) seeking documentation of:

- 1) Incidents in which NNSA personnel or its contractors "had to shoot rats off their lunch in some of the facilities that they were working in."
- 2) What facilities at which NNSA sites were involved in these incidents.
- 3) Were these shootings authorized? Were appropriate security personnel involved? What weapons were used? How many shots were fired?
- 4) If other than appropriate security personnel were shooting rats, does this mean that unauthorized personnel have firearms and weapons in secure, sensitive nuclear weapons facilities?
- 5) Did these reported rat shootings take place within bullet range of any explosives or nuclear materials?
- 6) What are the safety and security consequences of these rat shooting(s)?

For your reference, our joint FOIA request is available at
<http://nukewatch.org/importantdocs/resources/NWNM-FOIA-Request-RatShootings-at-Nuclear-Facilities-6-25-15.pdf>

As you know, the FOIA process can be long and slow. We would be deeply grateful if you could shed any light on these safety and security concerns.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Cletus (Jerry) Stein,
Board President
Peace Farm

Jay Coghlan,
Executive Director
Nuclear Watch New Mexico

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