

# Wayne Allard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2004

CONTACT: Angela de Rocha at (202) 224-5944

## **SENATOR ALLARD QUESTIONS ARMY SECRETARY NOMINEE ON STATUS OF PUEBLO DEPOT PROJECT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) continued his fight to keep the cleanup project at the U.S. Army’s Pueblo Chemical Weapons Depot on schedule at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Wednesday, questioning Francis J. Harvey, nominee to be the new Secretary of the Army, regarding cost overruns and other issues related to cleanup.

“Chemical weapons demilitarization is one of the most important tasks the new Army Secretary will have to oversee,” Senator Allard said. “I want to make sure that Secretary-designee Harvey understands that the Pueblo Depot is a high-priority project in need of his close scrutiny.”

Senator Allard, who earlier this year successfully restored \$50 million in funding to the Pueblo Depot project after it was not included in the Army’s proposed budget for next year, asked Secretary-designee Harvey, “...to get the project back on track so (the United States) can comply with the (Chemical Weapons) treaty.”

The following is a transcript of the exchange between Senator Allard and Secretary-designee Harvey.

SENATOR ALLARD: “The United States Army has been put in charge of implementing the demilitarization of chemical weapons facilities so that the United States can meet the requirements of the Chemical Weapons Treaty.

“That treaty requires that the demilitarization occur by 2012. I have a chart here that’s prepared by the Department of Defense showing we have five sites that aren’t going to meet the schedule, as originally laid out, for the 2012 deadline. The project that is most out of line is the one at Bluegrass, Kentucky; a site in Alabama and a site in Oregon are not far behind. Then, closer to the 2012 deadline is Pueblo, and the project at Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

“I’m told this program is way behind schedule and that there are some serious cost-overrun issues. I am concerned about this program and I’d like to hear how you, as Secretary of the Army,

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would respond to some of these concerns and what you feel you can do to get the projects back on track so we can comply with the treaty.”

ARMY SECRETARY-DESIGNEE FRANCIS J. HARVEY:“This is a very important initiative. I am generally familiar with the project, but not with the details. I know progress has been made at certain sites, that there have been delays and cost overruns. My background is such that I pride myself on my program management abilities. I learned to manage by being a program manager in the Air Force and in the Navy.”

SENATOR ALLARD: “How high a priority is the demilitarization of these facilities, from your understanding from your predecessor? Do you think it’s high enough?”

NOMINEE HARVEY: “At this point I don’t know that details. I know the sites, and the sequence...I know there has been a change in the technology in the middle of this program. So I commit to you that I will get involved in the details. I will find out why we’re behind schedule and why we have cost overruns, and ensure we have the right program managers on the job.

“One of the performance measures I will institute as secretary is on key acquisition programs and programs like this. So I plan on regularly and frequently knowing what the progress is, by site, in terms of cost, schedule, and environmental programs. By the way I will manage, I will know in real time what the performance is and will take action accordingly. If we get off schedule or over cost, the program manager will be in my office explaining why and what corrective actions he’s going to take and when it’s going to be back on schedule and when it’s going to be done...”

SENATOR ALLARD: I appreciate what you have explained to me. I do hope that you keep me and this committee informed, because (the project) is under the jurisdiction of this committee and is something we’re very concerned about.

“Whenever we have a possibility of cost overruns, the contractors have to be held accountable and the people in the Department of the Army have to be held to accountable. I think we’re headed for some problems, and I wanted to call them to your attention....There is some new technology, I will acknowledge, but we also have put money into the new technology areas, and then that funding has been moved to sites where they are using the old technology because of cost overruns. I do think some really tough questions have to be asked.”

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