

TESTIMONY OF
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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy

Field Hearing on
How the Domestic Nuclear Industry Boosts Local
Economies, Curbs Emissions, and Strengthens
National Security

May 3, 2019
Shippingport, Pennsylvania

Committee Chairwoman Johnson, Subcommittee Chairman Lamb, Ranking Member Weber. Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here in Pennsylvania to testify about this important topic of commercial nuclear energy and the relationship to national security.

It is fitting that the hearing is taking place here in Shippingport, the site of the first commercial reactor in the world dedicated to peaceful use, generating electricity for citizens in this vicinity.

It was my honor to serve on active duty in the United States Navy for more than 40 years. There has been, and continues to be, a very close and interesting historical relationship between the U.S. Navy and the commercial nuclear power industry in this country.

The first nuclear powered vessel in the Navy, the submarine USS Nautilus was commissioned in 1955. President Dwight Eisenhower opened the Shippingport power plant in 1958. The reactors of both of these power plants were essentially the same and construction of both was overseen by the same person, then Captain, later Admiral, Hyman G. Rickover, U.S. Navy.

Since those early days of nuclear power, the Navy and the U.S. commercial industry have operated with many close connections and dependencies. Today, of the approximately U.S. 200 nuclear power plants in operation, half are in the Navy, most powering submarines and aircraft carriers. The Navy and the civil power sector share the same industrial base, supply chain and talent pool.

Nuclear power has been intrinsically tied with U.S. government interests and national security since it was first brought on line in the 1950s. But in recent years, a steady decline in the commercial nuclear energy sector threatens to undermine national security by diminishing our ability to exert geopolitical influence.

