DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 21, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending May 21, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh and T. Dwyer were on site all week. Board members, J. T. Conway, A. J. Eggenberger, H. J. C. Kouts, and J. E. Mansfield were on site Thursday. Staff members J. K. Fortenberry, J. McConnell, and W. Andrews accompanied the Board, and were on site Wednesday-Thursday.

Board Site Visit: Board members Conway, Eggenberger, Kouts, and Mansfield met with representatives from DP-20, DOE-MD, DOE-AL, AAO, and M&H on Thursday. The chief subjects of discussion were the *Integrated Pit Storage Program Plan*, Recommendation 98-2 (in particular, Seamless Safety for the 21st Century (SS-21), Readiness Reviews, NESS, and Conduct of Operations), and the Pantex Chronic Beryllium Disease Prevention Program.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI): An AL-R8 SI Engineering Evaluation (EE) was held May 10th-13th, for which a preliminary report of the findings was released early this week. Although the EE was touted as a final design review surrogate for the AL-R8 SI, it was actually focused on the repackaging process. 37 pre-start findings were identified, many associated with procedural or drawing inadequacies, and missing or non-existent [minor] tools/gauge standards. [Of note, 1 pre-start finding recommends introducing alcohol to the process as a cleaning agent.] Among the 29 post-start findings is a requirement to shift from carbon steel to stainless steel bolts -- specifically called out as a post-start item because it is considered a political rather than a safety issue. Many of these individual findings will probably be consolidated in the final report. 8 process enhancements were also identified. All EE corrective actions are projected to be completed by next Wednesday.

W56 Dismantlement Program: Another unit was dismantled this week, up to the point in the process just before torque would be applied to the troublesome primary-to-secondary joint. Design Agency and M&H personnel continue to evaluate safety basis considerations and mechanical/metallurgical aspects of the problem.

Building 12-116 Thermal Characterization Test: The Building 12-116 Thermal Characterization Test got underway at 8:00 a.m. Monday, May 17th, when the air handler supplying rooms 120, 121, and 122 was turned off. Chiller/air handler service will be restarted tomorrow (Saturday). Surface temperatures have been recorded continuously on 6 different pits and the maximum temperature rise realized to date is 5.1°F. The highest pit surface temperature recorded was 111.7°F. Air temperature extremes were 65.65°F to 70.10°F. Note that outside air temperatures only ranged from 51°F on May 17th to 83°F on May 20th. It is planned to repeat this test when the facility is more fully loaded (Phase 1 capacity) and/or in late August when expected outside air temperatures will be higher.