

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 13, 1998

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending November 13, 1998

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** H. Waugh was on site all week. T. Dwyer was at DNFSB-HQ Monday-Tuesday, and on site Thursday-Friday. W. Andrews, J. Deplitch, M. Forsbacka, C. Martin, and OE L. McGrew were on site Thursday and Friday, reviewing the W56 Program.

**W56 Dismantlement Program:** The Board staff reviewed the W56 Dismantlement Program, including authorization basis documentation, M&H understanding of the authorization basis, and bay and cell operations (via facility walkdowns, as well as demonstrations of tooling safety features). The hazard analysis appears to have been adequate, and tooling and procedures have been dramatically improved by the SS-21 design process. However, the Activity Based Controls Document (ABCD) does not define a hierarchy of the controls for the operation-specific portion of the authorization basis. Without such differentiation, it is not clear that adequate measures will be in place to ensure effective design and preservation of critical controls. Further, the staff was informed that the W56 HAR and the W56 Weapons Safety Specification (WSS) are not part of the authorization basis. Of note, DOE-AL WPD (through the Standing Management Team) has directed a rewrite of the ABCD to prioritize the controls and identify necessary Limiting Conditions of Operation (LCOs). Board staff members will observe the W56 NESS, which convenes next week at Pantex, and the Readiness Assessment, scheduled for December.

**Congressional Staff Visit:** Mr. G. Wayne Glass, the Senior Defense Policy Advisor on Senator Bingaman's staff, visited Pantex on Friday. He evidenced particular interest in stockpile stewardship issues, including stockpile reliability certifications. This was apparently related to the requirements of the *Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for FY99*, § 3159, which requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, to contract with a federally funded R&D center to establish a Panel to Assess the Reliability, Safety, and Security of the U.S. Nuclear Stockpile. Discussions also involved potential issues associated with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the various potential START Treaties.

**B83 Pipecutting Efforts:** Over the past few years, a total of 3 B83 JTAs that had 'out-of-round' cases and could not be disassembled have accumulated on site. These JTAs, with mock special nuclear material, but live IHE, had been air-dropped at the Tonapah Test Range and subsequently received additional shock loading at SNL. In order to retrieve the mock nuclear package, the external case on these units must be cut. The first case-cutting efforts took place this week. The tooling proposed by M&H and approved by LLNL is essentially an over-sized pipecutter. It was used to make 3 progressive cuts on the first JTA, with 1 more cut required. In making this final cut early next week, the PTs will be required to wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) in case they inadvertently cut into the next layer of JTA material.