

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 12, 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 March 12, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was leave all week. T. Dwyer was on site Monday and Wednesday-Friday; Tuesday, he attended the Board/DOE-AL Recommendation 98-2 discussions. D. Owen and OE R. West were on site Wednesday-Friday observing W87 reviews.

W56 Dismantlement Program: The 2nd unit of the W56 Dismantlement run has been set aside, as was the 1st unit, pending resolution of mechanical problems with the [potentially galled] threaded joint that connects the W56 primary to the secondary. A 3rd unit is being brought in to attempt to complete a mechanical disassembly. In the meantime, M&H is working to procure and gain approval to use new tooling that will allow application of higher torque to the joint.

W87 Life Extension Program (LEP): The contractor readiness review [sic] of the W87 LEP, scheduled to precede work on units #3 and #4, was suspended after 1½ days. This review was intended to evaluate the implementation of controls from the recently approved W87 HAR and ABCD. A prerequisite in the *W87 Program Readiness Review Plan of Action* required the identified controls to be incorporated into the process prior to the start of the review. During the 1st day of the review it was found that controls incorporated into several NEOPs had not been properly identified as authorization basis-related. The incorporation of some other controls could not be validated. Additionally, the team was informed that the method for identifying and requiring documentation of control steps was being revised, but the W87 Authorization Basis Management Plan had not been updated to the new requirements. Further, the review team found that the internal M&H standard governing declarations of readiness was not followed. M&H management suspended the review until these conditions could be corrected. The review could potentially resume on Monday.

The Plan of Action for the DOE-AL readiness review [sic], which will follow the contractor readiness review, has also been issued. The stated objective of this Plan of Action is to assess the implementation of the controls in the approved ABCD. The scope of the review is defined by the following 4 core requirements: 1] adequate and correct procedures; 2] training and qualification programs regarding implementation of the ABCD; 3] a documented description of the safety envelope; and 4] a program to confirm/periodically reconfirm operability of safety systems. The POA appears to limit the scope of the upcoming DOE-AL review based on several previously completed assessments (e.g., NESS revalidation (1997), Safety Evaluations for D&I (1995) and rebuild (1997), Weapons Program Readiness Review (1997), and a Single Integrated Readiness Review (1998)). It should be noted that the NESS and Safety Evaluation processes did not have the breadth of a Readiness Assessment, DOE-AL did not participate in the WPRR and SIRR, and all of these reviews preceded development of the LEP NEOP set. In a further complication, DOE-AL is currently considering authorizing M&H to proceed with additional LEP operations before enforcing implementation of the controls in the approved ABCD.