

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 14, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 14, 1997.

1. DNFSB Activity Summary: Both Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh were on site all week. Staff members Chip Martin, Cindy Miller, and William White were on site this week.

2. Issue Follow-Up:

a. Radiography Restart: On Monday, DP-20 approved a revision to the Pantex Basis for Interim Operations intended to resolve the Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) that resulted in the suspension of radiography operations last December. On Thursday, a "Senior Managers' Team" met at Pantex to discuss issues related to an improved integrated safety process for nuclear explosive operations at Pantex (see below). As part of that meeting, the team, which included representatives from DOE-HQ, DOE-AL, DOE-AAO, Mason and Hanger, and the three Design Agencies, also discussed the status of preparations to resume radiography operations on nuclear explosives. The group was unable to reach a conclusion on whether or not the USQ has been resolved. The group decided to evaluate a few minor changes to the existing control scheme and present the information to DP-20 (who did not attend the meeting) next week. Based on this open issue and the pre-start findings of the evaluation team that performed a combined Readiness Assessment, Safety Evaluation, and Nuclear Explosive Safety Review this week, it does not appear that DOE will be in a position to consider authorizing radiography operations to resume in the near future.

b. Improved Integrated Safety Process: The Pantex Integrated Safety Process Task Team presented its concept of an improved safety process for nuclear explosive operations at Pantex to the Senior Managers' Team this week. The task team is chartered to evaluate the various processes that develop, review, and approve the safety basis for nuclear explosive operations, develop an improved approach to safety with no gaps or overlaps and develop a transition plan to implement that approach. The task team's proposed approach, which was accepted by the senior managers, is based largely on the SS-21 process. The team concluded that the expanded process should be applied to any significant project from designing and constructing a new facility to modifying an existing process, and should include the following attributes:

- The project team for any project performed under this approach should include representatives from all appropriate organizations.
- The project should have well defined scope, objectives, and criteria developed early in the tasking phase.
- The project should use the majority of available expertise in the line/development functions -- only a small portion of the personnel should be "held in reserve" to preserve their independence for final reviews.
- The project should be broken into phases and undergo incremental DOE reviews and approvals to ensure the project stays on track and to avoid significant problems at the end of the project.
- although the independent reviewers should not influence the project while it is being developed, they should attend the milestone reviews to remain cognizant of the technical issues and should provide feedback on problems (but not solutions) during the development phases when changes can be made more effectively and efficiently.

- Developing and approving the safety basis for an activity is a line function -- the analysis and controls (including the HAR and the NESRs) should be approved as a prerequisite of the independent review.
- There should be one integrated readiness review by line management followed by one integrated independent review. This concept would combine the ORR, SE, and NESS into one "confirmatory" review.

c. B61 Mod 2 Dismantlement: The last B61 Mod 2 was dismantled this week. B61 Mod 5 dismantlement, which begins this week, will complete the removal of all of the older B61 Mods from the stockpile. Mod 5 dismantlement is expected to be completed in June or July 1997.

3. Additional Information:

a. Pantex Security Guard Strike: The Current labor contract expires at 12:01 a.m. March 17, 1997. Following a union rejection of a proposed contract presented by the Company on Sunday, March 9, 1997, the Strike Contingency Plan was activated. As of today, it appears that a strike is likely.

4. Future Activities:

- a. February 4-March ? - W69 Dismantlement NESS
- b. March 18-20 - W78 Archiving Meeting @ SNL/NM
- c. March 25 - W79 MC3395 Removal begins
- d. March 25-27 - W56 Milestone 2 Meeting
- e. April 4 - W79 DMSO Check Out RA starts
- f. April 9 - Quarterly Production Meeting
- g. May 15 - M&H AT-400A Corporate ORR begins (estimate)
- h. June ? - DOE AT-400A ORR (following conclusion of M&H ORR)

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