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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

SAFETY CULTURE PUBLIC MEETING AND HEARING

OCTOBER 7, 2014

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 INDIANA AVENUE, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

Safety Culture Public Meeting and Hearing  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

10/7/2014

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1 PUBLIC MEETING AND HEARING

2 - - - - -

3 (8:31 a.m.)

4 DR. WINOKUR: Good morning. My name is Peter  
5 Winokur, and I am the Chairman of the Defense Nuclear  
6 Facilities Safety Board. I will preside over this public  
7 meeting and hearing. I'd like to introduce my colleagues  
8 on the Board. To my immediate right is Ms. Jessie  
9 Roberson, the Board's Vice Chairman. To my immediate  
10 left is Mr. Sean Sullivan. We three constitute the  
11 Board.

12 This public meeting and hearing is the third in  
13 the series of hearings to address safety culture at the  
14 Department of Energy's defense nuclear facilities, and  
15 the Board recommendation 2011-1, Safety Culture at the  
16 Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant.

17 At this time, I will introduce members of the  
18 Board staff who are participating today. Mr. Richard  
19 Reback, the Board's Acting General Counsel, is seated to  
20 my far left. Mr. Richard Tontodonato, the Board's Deputy  
21 Technical Director, is seated to my far right. Several  
22 members of the Board staff closely involved with safety  
23 culture oversight at the Department of Energy's defense  
24 nuclear facilities are also here.

25 Today's meeting and hearing were publicly

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1 noticed in the Federal Register on September 25th, 2014.  
2 The meeting and hearing are held open to the public per  
3 the provisions of the Government in the Sunshine Act. In  
4 order to provide timely and accurate information  
5 concerning the Board's public and worker health and  
6 safety mission at the Department of Energy's defense  
7 nuclear facilities, the Board is recording this  
8 proceeding through a verbatim transcript, video  
9 recording, and live video streaming.

10 The transcript, associated documents, public  
11 notice, and video recording will be available for viewing  
12 in the public reading room at our headquarters in  
13 Washington, DC. In addition, an archive copy of the  
14 video recording will be available through our website for  
15 at least 60 days. Per the Board's practice and as stated  
16 in the Federal Register notice, we will welcome comments  
17 from members of the public at the conclusion of this  
18 morning's testimony, which will be at approximately 11:30  
19 a.m.

20 The list of speakers who have contacted the  
21 Board is posted at the entrance to this room. We have  
22 generally listed the speakers in the order in which they  
23 have contacted us or, if possible, when they wish to  
24 speak. I will call the speakers in this order and ask  
25 that speakers state their name and affiliation at the

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1 beginning of their comments.

2           There is also a table at the entrance to this  
3 room with a sign-up sheet for members of the public who  
4 wish to make comments but did not have an opportunity to  
5 notify us ahead of time. This will follow those who have  
6 already registered with us in the order in which they  
7 have signed up. To give everyone wishing to make  
8 comments an equal opportunity, we ask speakers to limit  
9 their initial comments to five minutes. I will then give  
10 consideration for additional comments should time permit.

11           Comments should be limited to statements,  
12 technical information, or data concerning the subject of  
13 this public meeting and hearing. The Board members may  
14 question anyone making comments to the extent deemed  
15 appropriate.

16           The record of this proceeding will remain open  
17 until November 7th, 2014. I would like to reiterate that  
18 the Board reserves its right to further schedule and  
19 regulate the course of this meeting and hearing, to  
20 recess, reconvene, postpone, or adjourn this meeting and  
21 hearing and to otherwise exercise its authority under the  
22 Atomic Energy Act of 1954 as amended.

23           Today, we are pleased to welcome Secretary of  
24 Energy Ernest J. Moniz. We hope to hear from Secretary  
25 Moniz regarding how the Department of Energy is

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1 addressing concerns identified in the Board's  
2 recommendation 2011-1 and his perspective and  
3 expectations regarding safety culture at Department of  
4 Energy defense nuclear facilities.

5 At this time, I welcome testimony by Secretary  
6 Moniz, to be followed by questions from the Board  
7 members. Welcome, Mr. Secretary.

8 SECRETARY MONIZ: Great. Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman and members of the Board. Good to see you  
10 again.

11 What I'm going to do, Mr. Chairman, is make, I  
12 think, relatively few comments. I think it's better if  
13 we then can get into a discussion, but certainly to  
14 reiterate, our continuing commitment to safety culture  
15 improvements, this Board, and, frankly, our internal  
16 organizations have -- have, you know, pointed out, I  
17 think, areas of progress, but also areas -- considerable  
18 areas of continued -- continued work. So, I'll just  
19 emphasize some of the areas, some of the specifics, and  
20 starting out from the point of view that I think -- I  
21 hope that there is no question about our sharing the same  
22 values and goals and then comes the question is how do we  
23 kind of keep making progress towards -- towards that end.

24 And I'm going to start by saying one, I think  
25 for us, I think, very important thing, namely that as is

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1 well known, we have been in a transition in terms of the  
2 Department of Energy's top leadership, specifically at  
3 the Deputy Secretary level. Dan Poneman, of course, was  
4 very central to our activities and discussions in this  
5 area, but as of yesterday, we have a new Deputy  
6 Secretary, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall.

7 And I can assure you, we have already discussed  
8 safety culture. We have already discussed some of the  
9 emergency response issues that were raised by the Board.  
10 And I guess this is something that qualifies as something  
11 of a public announcement that next week we will have our  
12 first town hall meeting, introducing the new Deputy  
13 Secretary to the Department and looking and discussing  
14 major issues. I can assure you these will be a focal  
15 point in our introduction of the Deputy Secretary.

16 So, that's something that, again, we will focus  
17 on, she will focus on, and we will raise that right off  
18 the top as an element in the town hall meeting, because I  
19 think that's, again, where things like commitment to this  
20 need to be reinforced constantly. It doesn't substitute  
21 for specific actions, but I think it's a necessary  
22 setting of tone that we will -- we will try to accomplish  
23 next week.

24 I think, again, something else that we can -- I  
25 think we all agree on is that the mission or missions of

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1 the Department of Energy remain very central to, you  
2 know, delivering to our people on very important  
3 commitments, not only for this administration, but I  
4 would say enduring commitments. Certainly some are in  
5 areas not of direct responsibility of this Board, like  
6 the whole clean energy and climate agenda, but there are,  
7 of course, the nuclear security mission, the broad  
8 nuclear security mission is one where obviously you do  
9 have very important responsibilities. And I want to  
10 thank you, Mr. Chairman, and other members for ongoing  
11 discussions that we've been able to have over the last --  
12 over the last year and a half.

13 And, again, don't need to keep repeating, but  
14 we all agree that safety culture, fostering safety  
15 considerations into every decision that we make, every  
16 day that decisions that are made in the line, allocation  
17 to resources, are all very, very critical.

18 Before I get back into some of the broader  
19 issues, I want to just kind of highlight a few specifics  
20 that I think maybe in the end say more about how one  
21 approaches these things on a day-by-day basis. So, for  
22 example, the Board has pointed to safety culture and  
23 emergency response shortcomings, the WIPP incidents this  
24 year were examples, I think, in both. Some of the  
25 responses that we have -- not only responses, but things



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1 we were doing somewhat earlier before -- before the  
2 incidents and continuing and -- but others in -- kind of  
3 in response.

4 For example, in terms of a response to the --  
5 to the radiological incident, the -- in a first meeting,  
6 a videoteleconference with the team out in Carlsbad, the  
7 suggestion was immediately to kind of talk about a date  
8 for restarting operations. And we said, no, that's not  
9 where we start. We don't set a date before we understand  
10 better, A, what happened and, B, what the recovery plan  
11 is because these dates can then acquire lives of their  
12 own, and that could lead to a compromise of safety. So,  
13 that's just kind of an anecdotal example, but I think  
14 that's exactly how one needs to be thinking all the time.

15 And, frankly, I think the message was well  
16 received that that's how we were thinking about it as  
17 well at headquarters. And I think now, you know, six  
18 months later, with a draft recovery plan out, now we can  
19 begin to talk about what looks to be appropriate times  
20 for restarting in a safe -- in a safe condition.  
21 Similarly, on the emergency response side, the -- first  
22 of all, we have a -- well, frankly, we have recruited a  
23 terrific individual, came from the National Security  
24 Council, to look at our emergency response capabilities,  
25 again, broadly, because it goes back again to our

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1 multiple missions, only some of which overlap with your  
2 direct responsibility. So she is looking both in terms  
3 of how we manage emergency response for things like  
4 energy -- energy emergencies, you know, severe weather,  
5 infrastructure down, what -- how -- how we organize --  
6 organize a response, but also at the issues in terms of  
7 our own complex -- in terms of how -- how are we going to  
8 upgrade. We completely -- I think we concurred with your  
9 findings, for example, in that -- in -- in that  
10 particular case.

11 Another example, I would say, is that we  
12 reorganized our health, safety, and security functions.  
13 We separated an office into two different components.  
14 One is dedicated -- is the Environmental -- Environmental  
15 Health, Safety and Security Office. That is -- that will  
16 be managed by the Undersecretary for Management  
17 Performance, itself a new organizational entity to -- to  
18 elevate very -- very clearly to the undersecretary level  
19 that upgrading, upping our game in management performance  
20 is -- is absolutely critical.

21 This is one element of that, and I think you'll  
22 be hearing later today from the director of that office,  
23 Matt Moury. But then having a separate -- separate  
24 organization on independent enterprise assessments headed  
25 by Glenn Podonsky that reports to me directly.

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1           One of the findings earlier this year in that  
2 independent assessment were safety culture shortcomings  
3 in the WTP arena at -- at Hanford. And, again, in terms  
4 of how we're trying to, you know, internalize appropriate  
5 responses to these, when we got the report in the spring,  
6 the immediate charge back to that independent assessment  
7 activity was to notify the line organization at Hanford  
8 and through them the contractors that there would be a  
9 one-year revisit to look again at safety culture and  
10 specifically look at what has been done in the year.

11           So, that -- that review, it's -- it's docketed  
12 with the Independent Assessments Office. That will occur  
13 in the late winter, which is the one-year anniversary of  
14 the original -- original finding. And I think that's the  
15 case where, you know, frankly, when -- when the site and  
16 the contractors had good performance, they will have a  
17 little more time; when there are shortcomings, well,  
18 we're going to just go back and tell them and -- you  
19 know, tell them, one year from now you're going to --  
20 you're going to come back and be -- we're going to come  
21 back and you're going to be -- you're going to be graded  
22 on this.

23           So, again, those are anecdotal, but I think in  
24 many ways they kind of tell a story about how we're  
25 trying to react to this. We -- we certainly are not -- I

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1 feel very strongly that when these findings are made by  
2 the Board or by our internal organization, we don't --  
3 certainly we don't bury our heads in the sand. We have  
4 to take them quite seriously. I view them as  
5 constructive findings that gives us a chance to -- to  
6 continue to up our -- up our game.

7 So, I just wanted to emphasize that that's what  
8 we're trying to do. And this does come directly to the  
9 Secretary's office, Secretary/Deputy Secretary, and we  
10 will try to take -- take strong action.

11 The -- you know, in a broader sense, I mean, we  
12 know that the -- the Integrated Safety Management Policy  
13 is the -- kind of is the foundation of the approach.  
14 That's not new; that's been in place, obviously, for a  
15 long time. It's an enduring framework, but we need to --  
16 we need to -- to continually implement it.

17 The Department, as the Board knows, and we've  
18 said now already twice, does have a set of diverse  
19 missions and, frankly, I think that the -- the specific  
20 implementation plans of many of our policies will look  
21 slightly different compared -- you know, based upon the  
22 mission. What we're trying to do is establish -- you  
23 know, make sure that what are the core principles that  
24 must be part of the implementation plan, whether it's in  
25 safety, security, or -- or other areas, things like, for

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1 example, project management, another area where we  
2 will -- we've been at this for a -- you know, over a year  
3 in terms of redoing our fundamental project management  
4 structures.

5 We hope we'll be able to put those forward.  
6 It's been a lot of iterations with the -- with the line  
7 organizations. Again, by the way, the same philosophy.  
8 Here are the core principles that must be observed,  
9 whether it's the Office of Science or Defense Programs or  
10 EM. You will -- there will be some variations,  
11 specifically in how that is implemented, but the core  
12 principles must be respected and we will strengthen the  
13 way in which the -- essentially the Office of the  
14 Secretary gauges with that.

15 That's something that I hope within weeks we'll  
16 be able to -- to put out. And even though that may not  
17 sound like direct -- directly safety culture, I think the  
18 issue of being able to execute projects more effectively  
19 certainly spills over into -- into those -- into those  
20 issues. So, that's another example of something we will  
21 be doing -- we will be doing soon.

22 I might say also that -- and I don't want to --  
23 despite these different missions, et cetera, and you  
24 know the -- the statistics, and also the limits of them,  
25 but -- but I do want to emphasize that, you know, things

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1 like -- like injuries with respect to industrial --  
2 industrial practice generally is actually pretty good,  
3 despite the fact that we have -- we have pretty  
4 extraordinary risky operations in our -- in our nuclear  
5 facilities.

6 And I think, you know, on the one hand, one  
7 should not underestimate that kind of output measure. We  
8 also know that's far from the whole story, okay, and  
9 there are -- you know, and interpretations. But I do  
10 want to emphasize that we are -- you know, we do have  
11 that. It's not like we are in some major outlier space,  
12 but I don't want to underestimate, nor do I want to  
13 overestimate that as a -- as a important -- an important  
14 issue.

15 The -- we are taking some additional steps, for  
16 example, very much in line, I think, with your 2011  
17 recommendation, we are forming a safety culture  
18 improvement panel. That charter should be --  
19 unfortunately, he couldn't quite get it done by this  
20 meeting, but we're, again, I would say within weeks,  
21 certainly, of doing that. And, again, this will be a  
22 panel specifically to manage a consistent implementation  
23 of safety culture improvements and -- and sustainment  
24 initiatives.

25 I might say that we are also working with

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1 our unions. You all know, of course, the Hammer -- the  
2 Hammer facility, but there are other issues in terms of  
3 how contracts are structured and incentives put in.  
4 Again, a place where we have recruited as of June a  
5 really, in my view, outstanding individual from the labor  
6 world and, in fact, it's actually two individuals in  
7 dealing with labor.

8 And, in fact, this last week, I actually forget  
9 which week this is. Last week, in fact, we made it very  
10 clear that something that really hasn't happened is that  
11 they will be involved with our procurement people up  
12 front in terms of how requests for proposals for our  
13 sites are structured. Now, that will be -- they'll have  
14 broad interest in terms of how those contracts are  
15 structured, but I think that's another thing that will --  
16 that will influence safety culture issues strongly.

17 The -- I mentioned the -- the reorg already --  
18 or the various reorgs of relevance here. One area that  
19 we identified for improvement was a better understanding  
20 of the leadership behaviors needed for a safety-conscious  
21 work environment. And, so, a training course was  
22 developed with a team of federal and contractor subject  
23 matter experts from across DOE and NNSA, National Lab  
24 site contractors, aligned with the ISM system, focused on  
25 our ISM guide. And this course has now been delivered to

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1 -- approximately to 2,000 leaders and managers across the  
2 -- across the complex.

3 And, interestingly, the -- those who have kind  
4 of come to this course and wanted to be part of the  
5 course, are not restricted to the kinds of nuclear sites  
6 that you are responsible for examining a broader  
7 interest, which I think, again, is a very positive kind  
8 of department or enterprise-wide activity.

9 I mentioned the contract language issues in  
10 terms of particularly with labor. Those are probably the  
11 kinds of things that I wanted to say. The -- we also do  
12 have -- this is not, again -- this is more the energy  
13 space, but although maybe it's the kind of thing that we  
14 should think about more broadly, but an energy -- an  
15 energy incident management council is being strengthened.

16 Its charter is being rewritten. The Deputy  
17 Secretary will chair this. Again, this is right now  
18 focused much more on the energy infrastructure response  
19 side, but again, I think it's -- I think of this as  
20 something of a continuum across all of these -- all of  
21 these -- all of these areas.

22 So, you know, I think rather than kind of go  
23 through the repetition of kind of our shared values, I  
24 think that just gives a way of thinking and doing as --  
25 as recommendations come forward, as incidents occur, and



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1 always trying to really strongly reinforce our shared  
2 values. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I think I'll turn  
3 it back to you.

4 DR. WINOKUR: Well, thank you for your  
5 testimony. And so that we can gauge the amount of time  
6 we have for questions, it's my understanding you'll be  
7 able to stay with us perhaps until about 9:20 this  
8 morning. Is that accurate?

9 SECRETARY MONIZ: I heard a yes.

10 DR. WINOKUR: Yes, thank you very much. All  
11 right we know -- we know who's in charge now.

12 Let me start out with a question for you about  
13 safety culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization  
14 Plant. And, actually, in your comments, you did mention  
15 the 2014 DOE independent oversight assessment of the  
16 project. And I think it was somewhat sobering. They did  
17 talk about the fact that there were improvements but that  
18 no significant improvement in safety culture of the  
19 organization had occurred. And they said that there were  
20 very few changes in the perceptions of workers, I guess  
21 in terms of their ability to raise concerns and have them  
22 addressed.

23 Is that consistent with your thinking? Have  
24 you -- have you fully accepted the findings of that  
25 report and are you comfortable with what the report's

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1 suggesting?

2 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, yes. I mean, again, I  
3 -- well, I don't want to underestimate this -- the  
4 progress noted by the group, but they clearly identified  
5 major persistent problems. The -- first, there's no  
6 question I certainly am committed to wanting openness.  
7 Those on the front lines, I think, have a lot to offer in  
8 terms of how the work should -- should go forward.

9 They have to feel completely open to having the  
10 opportunity to express that, to have -- to have technical  
11 differences of opinion resolved in a -- in a professional  
12 -- professional way. But, again, I think the -- if you  
13 then ask, okay, what can you do to really, shall we say,  
14 strongly encourage those problems being -- being  
15 addressed, I mentioned a couple of them, I think.

16 One is this immediate message going back,  
17 schedule a one-year revisit that will specifically look  
18 at progress on these issues. And I think, frankly, both  
19 the contractor and the line organization are presumably  
20 sent a strong message by that. If there is not  
21 improvement at this one-year review, there will be a more  
22 stern message, to be perfectly honest.

23 And, secondly, longer term impact is this idea  
24 of having a relook at how requests for proposals are  
25 structured. I think there's a lot of incentives that

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1 need to be put in at the right time, and that's up front  
2 when you're even asking for the -- for the proposals.

3 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you. When the Board wrote  
4 its recommendation, one of the things we focused on was  
5 that the safety culture was making it difficult for the  
6 project to address technical issues. It was deterring  
7 the timely reporting, acknowledgment, and ultimate  
8 resolution of these technical issues. We actually had a  
9 hearing in the subsequent year at the site where we went  
10 through some of these technical issues, which had not  
11 been resolved for a very long period of time, some of  
12 them erosion and corrosion for over a decade.

13 And I think you know and you're aware that the  
14 project is still having a lot of difficulty resolving  
15 technical issues. Do you think the inability to resolve  
16 these technical issues can somewhat stem from this  
17 weakness in safety culture? Do you think that's still  
18 impacting the project's inability to solve the issues?

19 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, of course, with regard  
20 to WTP, as you know, we are in a process with the -- with  
21 the state in terms of a pretty fundamental restructuring  
22 of how the project is approached. While we --  
23 unfortunately, we were not able to reach agreement on  
24 specifics in terms of, you know, various milestones, et  
25 cetera, I think it is important to realize that both

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1 department's and the state's proposals -- this is  
2 relevant to your question, Peter --

3 DR. WINOKUR: All right.

4 SECRETARY MONIZ: -- both the -- both proposals  
5 adopted fundamentally the same restructuring of a phased  
6 -- phased approach. The -- and the driver of that was  
7 precisely the unresolved technical issues that you  
8 referred to. And, frankly, so, when I, you know, took  
9 over the secretarial role a year and a half ago, my view  
10 was, again, well, we got -- we got to put this on the  
11 table. We can't just put in another plan based upon the  
12 plan of record when there are unresolved technical  
13 issues. It would be very -- in my judgment, my technical  
14 judgment, let alone my kind of managerial judgment -- was  
15 that it would be very unsafe to execute the plan of  
16 record without resolving those technical issues. And you  
17 know very well what those -- what those are.

18 So, I'll be honest. I do think that -- that a  
19 little more attention to input some years ago might have  
20 helped those technical issues to be resolved earlier.  
21 So, our -- our plan is to make sure we have an executable  
22 plan. Executable means safe, among -- among other  
23 things. And I would say that I think that in the last  
24 nine months, since we kind of took head-on this issue of  
25 acknowledging and addressing the technical challenges, I

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1 think we've actually made a lot of progress.

2 I'm not saying they're solved. If they were  
3 solved, we could be putting all those milestones out  
4 there right now. But that's kind of, again, the  
5 philosophy that we are -- we are trying to follow. It  
6 involves many lines of our management reforms, how  
7 project management is done. It certainly involves safety  
8 as a core consideration of that. And as I said, I think  
9 there were opportunities that maybe were not taken full  
10 advantage of in terms of addressing this earlier.

11 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you. My final question for  
12 now is the issue of whistleblowers. The Board began its  
13 investigation at Hanford based upon some allegations of  
14 Dr. Tamosaitis. The Board wasn't concerning itself with  
15 any issues -- legal issues of ongoing litigation, but we  
16 were looking at the fact that a whistleblower could be  
17 viewed by the workers that -- as creating a chilling  
18 effect, let's say, on the workforce and making it more  
19 difficult for the workforce to raise safety concerns.

20 And these whistleblower issues, incidences,  
21 continue in the project. There's a lot of congressional  
22 interest, and then there's media interest, and then do  
23 you think that -- that these issues are still impacting  
24 the project and making it difficult for workers to feel  
25 that they can raise safety concerns?

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1           SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, certainly, I'm strongly  
2 committed to doing all that we can in terms of making  
3 sure that kind of a chilling environment is not present.  
4 Now, it's well known that there are some issues that are  
5 still ongoing, specifically with regard to WTP. It's  
6 also public that certainly in one case, and we can't  
7 discuss the specifics, it's an ongoing issue, but it is  
8 public that a IG report was -- IG investigation was  
9 requested to -- to look into that.

10           I would also say that in some other -- at least  
11 in one other very high-profile case in a different part  
12 of the Department, and, again, not in the nuclear sphere,  
13 that when it was very clear that there was a problem of  
14 the type that you have mentioned, we took immediate --  
15 immediate action and removed -- removed some rather  
16 senior -- senior individuals.

17           So, all I can say is that we will keep working  
18 at this, making it very clear that this is not the way we  
19 want to do business. Frankly, this is, again, and I want  
20 to go back that it's a recurring theme, a lot of how  
21 contracts are structured up front can be very material on  
22 these -- on managing downstream problems. And we have to  
23 look at that kind of procurement reform.

24           DR. WINOKUR: Thank you.

25           Mr. Sullivan?

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1 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you, and good morning, Mr.  
2 Secretary.

3 SECRETARY MONIZ: Good morning.

4 MR. SULLIVAN: Really great to have you here  
5 and on this very important topic. I actually want to  
6 shift gears a little bit and ask you a question about the  
7 Pantex Plant, the people who work there and their  
8 culture. And if you bear with me for just a minute,  
9 because this is a public meeting, I want to go through a  
10 little bit of the background for the benefit of the  
11 public.

12 SECRETARY MONIZ: Mm-hmm.

13 MR. SULLIVAN: But the Board wrote this  
14 Recommendation in 2011 focused on the Waste Treatment  
15 Plant, and among the recommendations was a recommendation  
16 to -- specific recommendation to an extent of condition  
17 review, which is to look everywhere throughout the nuclear  
18 weapons complex at safety culture. And that was done in  
19 2012, and the results came back that said specifically at  
20 Pantex the safety culture was not very good, which was  
21 concerning to us because this is where the actual weapons  
22 and warheads are assembled and disassembled and many other  
23 maintenance procedures happen.

24 And just recently, the Board received a brief  
25 from the Nuclear Explosive Safety Senior Technical

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1 Advisors, and again, by way of background, for the benefit  
2 of the public, a nuclear explosive safety evaluation --  
3 I'm reading from your own instructions to make sure I get  
4 it correct -- is they are -- they qualitatively assess the  
5 adequacy of controls in meeting the Department of Energy's  
6 nuclear explosive safety standards and the criteria. And  
7 the senior technical advisors are persons who are acting  
8 from outside the actual community in order to reinforce  
9 the independence and diversity. They are recognized  
10 senior-level science, engineering, and management experts.

11 And, so, these folks came in and told us that  
12 just -- just in August, that they thought that the  
13 relationship with the folks at Pantex was sub-optimal  
14 between themselves and -- and the folks there. They said  
15 some Pantex personnel seemed to view the nuclear explosive  
16 safety studies as a barrier to overcome rather than a  
17 rigorous process to help them think through any potential  
18 issues and ensure the plant operates safely. They went on  
19 to say that many of their actual suggestions meet with  
20 resistance rather than an openness to actually make  
21 change.

22 Can you address, sir, for us just what -- what  
23 you feel about the safety culture at Pantex and what  
24 actions might be necessary in order to make improvements,  
25 if improvements are, in fact, warranted?



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1           SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, first of all, I think  
2 improvements are, again, warranted, first of all,  
3 throughout our complex, and that would include at -- at  
4 Pantex. I think -- I think later on Madelyn Creedon, the  
5 Deputy Administrator -- Principal Deputy Administrator,  
6 will be -- will be testifying and can go into that a bit  
7 more. And, again, in general terms, as I said, we'll  
8 establish this safety culture improvement panel, which is  
9 not, of course, facility-specific but more -- more broadly  
10 engaged.

11           The -- we are -- you know, working to try to  
12 revise and improve kind of the safety-conscious work  
13 environment self-assessment process. We clearly need to  
14 make sure we have best -- best industry standards,  
15 consistency, methodology, solicit and really listen to --  
16 to feedback, lessons learned. I believe NNSA is going to  
17 be specifically looking at a reevaluation of DOE, you  
18 know, orders, guides, and standards. And, again,  
19 Principal Deputy Creedon can -- can get into that more.

20           I will add that, again, I think a lot of the  
21 issues we deal with are linked, and we all know we have a  
22 very significant modernization challenge for our  
23 production complex. We did have some good news with  
24 Kansas City there in August where, you know, half the  
25 footprint, a much better environment, saving operating

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1 funds, but, of course, that's the non-nuclear  
2 establishment and there are different challenges at Pantex  
3 and at Y-12, et cetera, Los Alamos.

4 So -- so, I think we have to -- we have to look  
5 at this in a -- in a coherent way. We have to move  
6 forward on the modernization program. You all -- well,  
7 you well know that there are challenges in each of those  
8 three sites that I mentioned, but I think -- so, we  
9 have -- I think we need to make sure we are enforcing  
10 these culture -- safety culture improvements continuously.

11 It's very important every day that we are doing  
12 work in these -- in these facilities, but we also need to  
13 think about how that safety environment can be improved  
14 dramatically as we go through the modernization over the  
15 next -- unfortunately I can't say two or three years, but  
16 two or three decades. So, I think we have to keep those  
17 different time scales in mind.

18 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. Well, thank you, Mr.  
19 Secretary. So, you know, one of the things that they told  
20 us -- again, these are the nuclear explosive safety -- the  
21 senior technical advisors, is that, again, that they had  
22 many issues that they had raised repeatedly over the  
23 years, and they didn't seem to be getting addressed. And  
24 they were simply looking for having a technical  
25 conversation with management to understand why these

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1 issues weren't being addressed. So, my question --

2 SECRETARY MONIZ: Okay.

3 MR. SULLIVAN: -- to you, sir, is really whether  
4 you'd be willing to have that conversation with them.

5 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, so -- so, certainly, I  
6 probably have to be informed more to this, and I know that  
7 there are some -- some areas which are not -- specific  
8 issues which are not discussable in the current format  
9 today. So, what I would say is I think I'll go back  
10 certainly with General Klotz and see about how to best  
11 bring those specific issues up -- up to my attention and  
12 what we do about it.

13 I mean, I'm certainly aware of the general  
14 issues and some of the -- as I said, some of these  
15 classified specific challenges, but perhaps I need a  
16 broader -- broader briefing.

17 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you very much, Mr.  
18 Secretary.

19 SECRETARY MONIZ: Thank you.

20 DR. WINOKUR: Ms. Roberson?

21 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and  
22 thank you for your comments, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate  
23 those.

24 Mr. Secretary, in the last three years, DOE's  
25 response to Board Recommendation 2011-1 has involved

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1 changing procedures, conducting assessments, some  
2 independent assessments, mostly self-assessments, and  
3 conducting a lot of training. And we -- this is a third  
4 in a series of hearings. And, so, in our recent hearings  
5 with safety culture experts, the Board has learned that it  
6 is extremely difficult to make change to an existing  
7 culture of safety. And DOE's culture has been evolving  
8 and getting stronger for almost 70 years. And, so, the  
9 culture is what the culture is.

10 In September of 2013, you issued a memorandum to  
11 all departmental elements entitled "Personal Commitment to  
12 Health and Safety through Leadership, Employee Engagement  
13 and Organizational Learning." What are the challenges you  
14 see in driving the existing culture of safety or  
15 subcultures toward the expectations you laid out in that  
16 memo?

17 SECRETARY MONIZ: By the way, first of all, I  
18 just would repeat that this will be repeated next week  
19 with our first town hall meeting, as I mentioned with the  
20 new -- the new Deputy Secretary. I can assure you, this  
21 will be a prominent issue -- issue of discussion.

22 Well, you know, I am going to emphasize the  
23 half-full part of the glass, and I do think that there --  
24 I think there is progress being made. But, again, and  
25 I've said -- I said already earlier, we know that we have

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1 a ways to go. You -- what's the problem? Well, you  
2 identified one of the problems already. You know, there -  
3 - these things take -- often take some time to -- to  
4 change, but I believe that the training, the -- I hope,  
5 you know, kind of more consistent level of attention at  
6 the senior levels of the Department, and as I mentioned,  
7 and I -- maybe I'm putting too much stock into this, but I  
8 think the idea of looking up front when procurements start  
9 is the time to start doing this, and not -- because you're  
10 always behind if you are then responding to an incident  
11 and the levers are not what one perhaps should have had in  
12 place.

13 MS. ROBERSON: Okay. Well, we use your letter a  
14 lot when we go to the field.

15 SECRETARY MONIZ: Oh.

16 MS. ROBERSON: We say this is the Secretary's  
17 commitment.

18 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, thank you for helping  
19 support it. Right.

20 MS. ROBERSON: And what I -- what I wonder is,  
21 is do you see oftentimes resigning to black-and-white in  
22 actually making that public commitment has an impact. And  
23 I just wanted to know if you think you see the kind of  
24 impact you expected when you signed that memo.

25 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, as always, I mean, I

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1 think it tends to go slower than you maybe would have --  
2 would have liked, but I would -- I would say that I think  
3 putting it in black and white really is important. Of  
4 course that's why we did it very early in my tenure, but  
5 on the other hand, black and white has the advantages of  
6 black and white and the disadvantages of black and white,  
7 because in the end, there's a lot of interpretation  
8 required. And -- and if the -- and if the organization  
9 does not have a sense that this is really -- really in the  
10 thought process and in the commitments, you know, there  
11 are ways of -- of dragging things out.

12 Now, I think we are making progress, as I said.  
13 I like it to be -- to be more -- faster and more  
14 consistent, but we will keep pressing kind of in both  
15 directions. But I might add, the reason I started out  
16 with anecdotes is because I do think that -- it's that --  
17 I think those kinds of responses to findings and  
18 recommendations that have operational consequences going  
19 down, like for example, okay, you didn't get an A, so you  
20 get reviewed again.

21 I think that's what kind of says, look, you  
22 know, we're serious about this. And -- and until you  
23 perform at a higher level, we're just going to keep coming  
24 back and -- and there are other levers like in a contract  
25 that we can -- we can exercise.

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1 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you, sir.

2 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Secretary, DOE is a very  
3 diverse organization, and you have many subcultures. Even  
4 when we deal with defense nuclear facilities, you have got  
5 NNSA; you've got EM; you've got research activities in  
6 defense nuclear facilities; you've got a lot of production  
7 facilities. And you've got to craft this overarching  
8 framework to build a strong culture of safety.

9 Are there elements in DOE that you see today  
10 that you think are leaders in this area that have stronger  
11 safety culture that you could use to inform other elements  
12 of DOE and strengthen their culture?

13 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, it certainly is correct  
14 that -- that there are different approaches to issues  
15 across -- across the Department, and -- and maybe just  
16 again in the same way that Mr. Sullivan said as a public  
17 hearing maybe just a little bit of background is that  
18 the -- the reorganization that we put in place at the  
19 undersecretary level, one for energy and science, one for  
20 management and performance, and one for nuclear security,  
21 which, of course, the NNSA is a legislatively required  
22 position, the -- those -- that was done, first of all, to  
23 very much emphasize these are the three big areas that we  
24 have got to advance for the administration and, you know,  
25 for the American people: nuclear security, the energy

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1 science mission, and better management performance.

2 Each of those three areas has one -- typically  
3 one, in NNSA you might say two -- large programs that do  
4 big, complicated things. The Office of Science, EM, which  
5 is in the management and performance line, and then  
6 principally defense programs, although nonproliferation  
7 does have at least some well-known major projects.

8 There's no doubt that each of those entities has  
9 a different culture and a different set of challenges. If  
10 we take an example like project management, I think, you  
11 know, there's no -- I'm not revealing a big secret to say  
12 that in general the Office of Science is viewed as having  
13 had a much more successful program overall over the years.

14 So, what we are doing and what I mentioned  
15 earlier in terms of what will be probably in a few weeks  
16 our announcement of our kind of revised project management  
17 approach is precisely to not fix what's not broken but to  
18 use the essential principles being employed there in the  
19 other two lines.

20 It's not to say that, again, execution is  
21 identical, because it can't be. An EM project and a --  
22 and a UPF and a coherent x-ray laser project are  
23 different. But what we're trying to do, and this is --  
24 this is in response to you -- is the general approach to  
25 these kinds of issues is we're trying to get a lot more



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1 enterprise-wide experience, learn from best practices,  
2 understand what are the core principles that make that  
3 approach effective, have those principles become  
4 enterprise-wide, and then have the implementation at each  
5 of the undersecretary levels follow their needs and  
6 their -- the kind of work that they -- that they do.

7 So, that's our general approach and it applies  
8 in all of these -- all of these areas. How successful  
9 we'll be, well, we'll -- we will -- we will judge going  
10 forward.

11 DR. WINOKUR: I'm hopeful you can take one  
12 additional question.

13 Ms. Roberson?

14 MS. ROBERSON: And I'm going to be brief, just  
15 in case my peers have another question. You -- you hit it  
16 a little bit in your opening comments, the major reorg you  
17 did when you first took on the position as Secretary. And  
18 I really just have one question I wanted to ask you. It  
19 may be a lot of pieces to the question.

20 You did talk about some of your drivers, but the  
21 question I wanted to focus on was how you viewed the  
22 reorganization contributing to strengthening safety or  
23 your safety message. And then as a part of that, when you  
24 were sworn in as Secretary, there were several independent  
25 assessments that you actually had available to consider as

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1 you reorganized: EM, federal assessment, and HSS. And  
2 I'm just wondering if any input from those assessments had  
3 any impact on your decisions in how you restructured the  
4 Department from a safety perspective.

5 SECRETARY MONIZ: Absolutely. And -- and, in  
6 fact, I'll say this quite -- you know, say it publicly,  
7 that a -- an individual who really played a complete role,  
8 frankly was a driver of this, was, in fact, Glenn  
9 Podonsky, who headed the merged organization before and he  
10 made a strong case that -- that -- and especially in the  
11 context of our undersecretary reorganization that it was  
12 better to split the functions so that I had a true  
13 independent assessment function that was separated from  
14 the more line function, if you like, of now -- what is now  
15 EHS&S. So, that was very much in there.

16 But, also, I'll say honestly that, you know, we  
17 did not adhere, you know, slavishly to some management  
18 ideology about it, so, for example, at least in the  
19 interim in the transition, what we did is while some of  
20 the interactions with the labor unions perhaps logically  
21 would have been in a different place, we decided to keep  
22 them at least for a transitional period to be determined  
23 in the independent assessments office simply because,  
24 frankly, there was such a very good personal relationship  
25 and the unions really wanted that -- wanted that there.

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1 That included running the Hanford facility, et cetera.

2 So, you know, we -- we're trying to get the  
3 organization institutionalized to align with our principal  
4 objectives, but, again, we don't want to fix what's not  
5 broken at the moment. So -- so, and safety was clearly a  
6 major part of that -- of that interaction, specifically  
7 with unions, for example.

8 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you, sir.

9 DR. WINOKUR: Well, we certainly want to thank  
10 you for your time this morning. I think we have a couple  
11 of additional questions which we'll submit for the record.

12 SECRETARY MONIZ: Okay.

13 DR. WINOKUR: And we understand your  
14 responsibilities. We're very pleased you were able to  
15 spend some time with us this morning. So, once again,  
16 thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

17 SECRETARY MONIZ: Well, Peter or Mr. Chairman.

18 DR. WINOKUR: Peter to you is fine.

19 SECRETARY MONIZ: Peter, Sean, and Jessie, you  
20 know, look, I really appreciate what -- what you do. Your  
21 recommendations have been fair and I think point -- point  
22 for -- point to directions for us to -- to respond to.  
23 Again, you know, we -- you know, there's no -- there's no  
24 magic wand that all these things get cured overnight, but  
25 -- but we appreciate your work and we'll keep working with

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1 you.

2 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you again, Mr. Secretary.

3 SECRETARY MONIZ: And I do, also, and I would  
4 just put an advertisement in for you to as soon as  
5 possible get together with our new Deputy Secretary, who  
6 will play clearly a very important role in these -- in  
7 these issues. Thank you.

8 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you, sir.

9 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you.

10 DR. WINOKUR: Please join us.

11 As I mentioned earlier, this public meeting and  
12 hearing is the third of a series of hearings to address  
13 safety culture at the Department of Energy's defense  
14 nuclear facilities and the Board's Recommendation 2011-1,  
15 Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization  
16 Plant. Subsequent public meetings and hearings will be  
17 announced by separate notices.

18 In the first hearing, the Board received remarks  
19 from a recognized industry expert in the field of safety  
20 culture on the tools used for assessing safety culture;  
21 the approaches for interpreting the assessment results;  
22 and how the results can be used for measuring the safety  
23 culture of an organization.

24 The Board also heard remarks from safety culture  
25 experts from the Federal Government, including senior

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1 staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the  
2 National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The  
3 nuclear nexus between NRC and DOE is obvious, while NNSA  
4 and DOE have a similar federal contractor construct and  
5 both engage in complex high-hazard operations.

6 In the second hearing, the Board received  
7 remarks from current and former Naval officers on  
8 techniques the Navy uses to measure, improve, and sustain  
9 a robust culture of safety in operations and in the design  
10 and construction of nuclear submarines. The Board also  
11 heard remarks from a member of the United States Chemical  
12 Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, who is with us here  
13 today, and two academic experts on the role of leaders in  
14 establishing and sustaining a robust -- robust culture of  
15 safety within organizations that conduct hazardous  
16 operations.

17 The goal of the first two hearings was to learn  
18 more about safety culture, how it can be measured, how it  
19 can be improved, and how leaders influence it. Our goal  
20 for this meeting is to discuss with the Department of  
21 Energy senior officials their views on the current status  
22 of the safety culture of their organizations and their  
23 thoughts on improving that culture.

24 We will also discuss with them their  
25 organization's progress in addressing the commitments

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1 associated with Board Recommendation 2011-1. In this  
2 meeting, the Board will hold three panels. The first  
3 panel was testimony from the Secretary of Energy. In the  
4 second panel, the Board will receive testimony from the  
5 Honorable Madelyn Creedon, the Principal Deputy  
6 Administrator of the National Nuclear Security  
7 Administration.

8           The Board is interested in the views of NNSA  
9 leadership on the concerns identified in the Board's  
10 Recommendation 2011-1, safety culture assessments that  
11 were conducted of NNSA and its contractors, and NNSA's  
12 approach to address identified areas of concern.

13           In the third panel, the Board will hear  
14 testimony from Mr. Mark Whitney, the Acting Assistant  
15 Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department  
16 of Energy. The Board is interested in the views of EM  
17 leadership on the concerns identified in the Board's  
18 recommendation, safety culture assessments of EM -- that's  
19 Environmental Management -- and its contractors, and  
20 Environmental Management's approach to address areas of  
21 concern.

22           This concludes my opening remarks. I will now  
23 turn to the Board members for their opening remarks.

24           Ms. Roberson?

25           MS. ROBERSON: None at this time, Mr. Chairman.

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1 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Sullivan?

2 MR. SULLIVAN: No remarks.

3 DR. WINOKUR: This concludes the Board's opening  
4 remarks. At this time, I would like to invite our second  
5 panel member, the Honorable Madelyn Creedon, to the  
6 witness table.

7 Ms. Creedon will be provided 10 minutes for her  
8 opening remarks. The Board will accept her full written  
9 testimony into the record. Ms. Creedon has been provided  
10 some initial lines of inquiry in advance of this hearing.  
11 Ms. Madelyn Creedon was confirmed by the Senate on  
12 Wednesday, July 23rd, 2014, as the Department of Energy's  
13 Principal Deputy Administrator for the National Nuclear  
14 Security Administration. At this time, we welcome remarks  
15 by the Honorable Madelyn Creedon, to be followed by  
16 questions from the Board members.

17 MS. CREEDON: Thank you. Again, good morning,  
18 Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. It is, indeed, a  
19 pleasure for me to be here today to discuss NNSA's efforts  
20 and progress with respect to Recommendation 2011-1 and to  
21 improve the NNSA's safety culture.

22 I've been the Principal Deputy Administrator for  
23 about two months now, and in that short time, I have had  
24 the opportunity to begin to explore the NNSA's safety  
25 culture, including the assessment of its organization and

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1 safety culture activities. I look forward to discussing  
2 this important topic with you all this morning.

3 NNSA actively supports the Department of  
4 Energy's commitment to safety culture, not simply because  
5 it's a commitment to the DNFSB, but because it's the right  
6 thing to do. NNSA has proactively supported responses to  
7 Recommendation 2011-1 since DOE formed its response team  
8 in the summer of 2011. NNSA employees participated in  
9 developing the implementation strategy and writing the  
10 implementation plan and have implemented those actions on  
11 behalf of NNSA.

12 Three of our NNSA employees helped develop the  
13 safety-conscious work environment training for federal and  
14 contractor senior leaders described in Section 5 of the  
15 implementation plan, and they also serve on the team of  
16 instructors who have taught the class to over 2,000 senior  
17 federal, contractor, and plant and laboratory leaders, as  
18 well as managers from across the DOE. We are also  
19 supporting the design of the safety-conscious work  
20 environment training for first-line leaders.

21 Jim McConnell, the NNSA Acting Associate  
22 Administrator for Infrastructure and Operations and a  
23 former DNFSB staff member, teaches safety culture modules  
24 in nuclear enterprise leadership training for DOE and  
25 contractor senior managers. And, of course, DOE and NNSA



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1 federal and contractor managers and employees at our sites  
2 are very involved in addressing the opportunities for  
3 improvement identified in the NNSA safety culture self-  
4 assessment report, which was conducted in response to the  
5 2011-1 Recommendation. Our M&O partners are also running  
6 a series of workshops on safety issues, with the second  
7 one to be held later this month.

8           You are aware of -- of this safety culture  
9 review that NNSA had conducted, and it looked at both the  
10 federal staff at headquarters and as well as the field  
11 offices. And, of course, this survey was conducted last  
12 year. The primary objective of the evaluation was to  
13 gather information regarding the status of the  
14 organizational safety culture at NNSA.

15           This report recognized that the NNSA  
16 organization is comprised of dedicated and talented  
17 professionals who are committed to ensuring that the NNSA  
18 mission is carried out safely, securely, and effectively.  
19 The report also stated that NNSA succeeds in its mission  
20 and succeeds in carrying out its mission safely, but in  
21 many times the work that is carried out and is -- is  
22 carried out in spite of the bureaucracy and some of the  
23 organizational issues. So, it's really the result of the  
24 dedication and the effort of these NNSA employees that  
25 really are instrumental to getting the job done.

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1           The report's findings highlighted the need to  
2 improve trust and respect between NNSA senior leadership  
3 and employees across the organization. The report also  
4 describes the behavior of senior leadership as a culture  
5 of entitlement and a culture of non-inclusion. From this  
6 report, it's evident that NNSA must improve its  
7 environment and its communications so that our employees  
8 can trust the NNSA leadership.

9           Part of this improvement must be the  
10 establishment of an environment in which our people not  
11 only can but are encouraged to raise issues, including  
12 those associated with safety at all levels and that they  
13 not be concerned about retaliation for their actions.

14           The NNSA safety culture report identified  
15 several recommendations for NNSA's consideration. These  
16 include establishing a communication process to  
17 effectively engage the workforce at all levels of the  
18 organization, implementing a change management process,  
19 but most importantly, establishing trust and respect  
20 amongst NNSA employees, including its leadership.

21           There are no quick fixes. Even the best plans  
22 require some time to be effective. But the work has  
23 started. Frank Klotz, the NNSA Administrator, and I are  
24 actively engaged in addressing these issues and committed  
25 to success. Shortly after taking office, Frank started

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1 planning a leadership team retreat, which we will have  
2 next week, to focus on key issues that significantly  
3 affect our culture. During this time, we will work as a  
4 team on four common themes: communicating effectively;  
5 developing a strategic plan and vision; achieving  
6 effective leadership; driving a performance-based culture.

7 The goal of this meeting is really to bring  
8 together the NNSA senior leadership team and make sure  
9 NNSA is a stronger and more effective organization. One  
10 of the outcomes will be to establish a process to engage  
11 our workforce to get their ideas, feedback, and solutions  
12 for moving forward.

13 We're also establishing a working group to  
14 develop and implement actions to improve our safety  
15 culture. The working group will be made up of headquarter  
16 and field office employees and will be a key part of the  
17 effort to find the best ways to improve the safety  
18 culture.

19 The working group's first deliverable will be a  
20 strategy, building on the work that is already being done  
21 in our field offices and sites, to ensure that safety is a  
22 part of every aspect of NNSA's culture and drives how our  
23 agency performs its mission.

24 NNSA's key to success really does lie in our  
25 talented workforce, both the -- both our federal employees

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1 and our M&O partners who really do support NNSA's mission  
2 every day. Because of their commitment, we know we can  
3 rely on all of our employees to help us improve the work  
4 environment and NNSA's culture.

5 You have asked about organizations that have a  
6 strong safety culture. A healthy organizational safety  
7 culture is most often found within an aligned organization  
8 that has effective processes and motivated people. Based  
9 on the results of the field offices' self-assessments and  
10 the data from the NNSA federal safety culture assessment,  
11 our field office managers and our M&O partners have  
12 already taken measures to improve workplace culture, and  
13 we applaud their efforts.

14 NNSA field office, headquarters, and contractor  
15 senior leaders recently met in Nevada to share with each  
16 other what they are doing to sustain the focus on the --  
17 on developing and maintaining a healthy safety culture at  
18 their sites and within their organizations and to share  
19 their lessons learned. The field offices have also  
20 drafted their sustainment plans, and we have submitted  
21 those to you, consistent with the DNFSB Recommendation  
22 2011-1.

23 The NNSA leaders dedicated a day and a half to  
24 discuss safety and performance culture and exchange ideas  
25 on what and how to improve. You just heard the Secretary

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1 talk about his commitment to safety. All of NNSA, but in  
2 particular our middle and senior managers, have important  
3 roles to play to establish a strong safety culture. Now  
4 that Frank Klotz and I are finally in place, we also have  
5 a lot of work to do to fix strategic communications and to  
6 make progress on a variety of issues confronting NNSA,  
7 including the safety culture.

8 We're trying to set the tone for the enterprise,  
9 and we will communicate NNSA's support for the Secretary's  
10 vision and our plans for achieving that vision to improve  
11 the safety culture in our federal and contractor  
12 organizations. In NNSA, our field managers play a key  
13 role in communicating the safety culture vision to federal  
14 employees in the field and NNSA M&O partners.

15 Field office managers and contractor senior  
16 leaders at NNSA's defense nuclear sites routinely discuss  
17 safety culture in meetings with subordinate managers and  
18 at all-hands meeting. I actually did the same in a small  
19 version of an all-hands last week when I was out at Los  
20 Alamos, and also in meeting with the Albuquerque and  
21 Sandia federal employees.

22 Frank and I will continue to visit NNSA field  
23 sites to discuss our safety culture vision and our  
24 expectations with field and with our contractor partners.  
25 Our NNSA mid-level managers have a particularly important

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1 role to play in developing and communicating the safety  
2 culture vision, especially to our first-line managers and  
3 supervisors. These managers have greater visibility among  
4 the employees, and they work most closely with them. They  
5 are an important link in spreading the safety culture  
6 message throughout our federal and contractor  
7 organization.

8 Research suggests up to 80 percent of  
9 communications get lost or are distorted in the flow  
10 downward from the top of the organization to the workers.  
11 We need to use multiple methods, ensure consistency of  
12 messages, and regularly ensure safety culture messages to  
13 ensure our employees' confidence that we mean what we say.

14 As we all know, the NNSA enterprise is full of  
15 lots of rumors, some unfounded, some really unfounded.  
16 The Board observed that many of NNSA's safety culture  
17 assessments found that workers have different perceptions  
18 of the existing safety culture than their managers.  
19 Experts in safety culture assessment and organizational  
20 psychology tell us its very common for workers and  
21 managers to have different perceptions of the safety  
22 culture.

23 Managers almost always believe that the work  
24 environment is better than what the workers believe.  
25 Managers and workers are in different work environments,

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1 and so it's expected that they would have different  
2 perceptions. Managers -- managers may not get out to work  
3 sites frequently enough or hear enough or really listen to  
4 what the workers are concerned about, and I think this is  
5 a problem at NNSA, as well.

6 So, we have to fix that. And we also have to  
7 improve the culture throughout the leadership engagement.  
8 We have to improve our commitment, and we have to create a  
9 consistent, conservative, overarching framework for safety  
10 culture.

11 In his remarks, the Secretary told you that the  
12 best approach is to use the behavioral aspects of the  
13 integrated safety management framework. NSA -- NNSA  
14 agrees. Like DOE, the NNSA and its contractors have  
15 embraced the integrated safety management program for many  
16 years. For the most part, we have mature safety  
17 management processes, but we need to continue to improve  
18 them.

19 As the Secretary stated, integrated safety  
20 management has become an enduring framework for safety.  
21 NNSA is not looking at organizations we can model  
22 directly. Safety culture experts caution organizations  
23 against transplanting cultures. We are, however,  
24 benchmarking the other organizations, such as NRC, INPO,  
25 commercial power plants, and NASA to identify best

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1 practices that we can apply in NNSA.

2 We're also proactively working with the rest of  
3 the Department to identify and adopt best practices. As I  
4 mentioned earlier, the NNSA production office at Y-12 is  
5 hosting the Safety Cultural Sustainment and Best Practices  
6 Workshop for DOE, NNSA, and their contractor partners  
7 later this month.

8 The Board rightly identified naval reactors as  
9 an organization recognized for its strong safety culture.  
10 At NNSA, six of our direct reports have Naval reactors  
11 experience, of course in addition to Admiral Richardson.  
12 Many additional NNSA and contractor employees have Naval  
13 reactors experience and hold leadership positions at our  
14 defense nuclear sites.

15 The rigor and discipline of their background  
16 directly contributes to safety. Our employees, within  
17 Naval reactors experience, clearly influence our culture  
18 for the better, to the application of best practices and  
19 improvement ideas. And I would note overall that the Navy  
20 nuclear culture is also very good in instilling the idea  
21 of raising issues and raising issues up the chain and  
22 having successful layers -- successive layers of the chain  
23 again push these issues up.

24 In fact, one of the most interesting things  
25 about that Naval reactors culture is that in the Naval



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1 reactors, you actually get in trouble if you don't raise  
2 it, as opposed to getting in trouble when you do raise it.  
3 And that's something that NNSA should also strive to  
4 achieve, that same culture, where one has -- where all of  
5 our employees have the freedom to raise issues, and as I  
6 mentioned earlier, are encouraged to do so.

7 In summary, NNSA and its contractors recognize  
8 the need to continuously improve safety -- to improve our  
9 safety culture and are taking actions to address  
10 weaknesses and implement best practices. Frank Klotz and  
11 I also understand that NNSA Headquarters has to be more  
12 proactive in improving the safety culture and set the tone  
13 to ensure an open atmosphere exists where issues can be  
14 raised and resolved.

15 My experience at DOD recently taught me that  
16 it's the resolution of the issues is as important as the  
17 raising of the issues, because if issues are raised and  
18 not resolved, over time, people stop raising issues, so  
19 both parts are equally important.

20 We are also fully aware and understand that  
21 safety culture is a continuing journey, and it will take  
22 time to see changes in values, expectations, attitudes,  
23 and behaviors. With that said, I think Frank and I are a  
24 little bit impatient. And, so, my commitment to you and  
25 to the employees of NNSA is that we will make immediate

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1 progress, but most importantly, we will put in place a  
2 culture that looks to the long-term view of continuous  
3 improvement.

4           At every turn, Frank and I will emphasize our  
5 personal values that are captured in the phrase that you  
6 have heard Frank use many times: mission first, people  
7 always. To that end, we will value and respect our  
8 employees; communicate frequently and openly; encourage  
9 employees to raise problems and issues and get them  
10 resolved, without fear of retaliation; ensure that issues  
11 raised are addressed in a timely and transparent manner;  
12 and encourage differing opinions and a questioning  
13 attitude.

14           We'll also expect every leader at NNSA to do the  
15 same, and we will hold ourselves and them accountable. We  
16 owe it to our employees to improve our culture -- all of  
17 it -- which will improve the trust our employees have with  
18 NNSA leadership. We owe it to our stakeholders to improve  
19 our culture so that they can trust that we will meet  
20 mission -- that we will meet our mission safely and  
21 securely, with quality and timeliness.

22           Thank you very much, and I look forward to your  
23 questions.

24           DR. WINOKUR: Thank you for your testimony. The  
25 Board member questions will begin with Mr. Sullivan.

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1 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you, and good morning Madam  
2 Deputy Administrator? Is that -- I've got your title  
3 correctly? It's a mouthful?

4 MS. CREEDON: Yeah, I know.

5 MR. SULLIVAN: Well, it's good to see you this  
6 morning.

7 MS. CREEDON: Thank you.

8 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you for coming. So, I want  
9 to go straight back to Pantex, because you heard my  
10 question to the Secretary, and I think he promised that  
11 you could give us more detail. So, by way of review, the  
12 -- when the -- an extent of condition review was done in  
13 2012 on safety culture, Pantex did not score well.

14 And recently we've heard from your nuclear  
15 explosive safety senior technical advisors that they were  
16 concerned that in Pantex their suggestions tend to meet  
17 with resistance rather than a willingness to make changes  
18 that would improve safety.

19 So, can you speak to any more? You just gave us  
20 an awful lot in your introduction about generally things  
21 that you're doing, but can you speak to any more about  
22 specifically what is happening at Pantex?

23 MS. CREEDON: So, I am aware that Pantex did not  
24 score particularly well in the safety assessment study  
25 that was done. And as I have started to venture out on

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1 the road, the first stop was Los Alamos, and Sandia, as  
2 well as meeting with our federal folks, both at Sandia,  
3 Los Alamos and also the Albuquerque folks. I have to get  
4 out to the rest of the sites. Pantex and Y-12 are high on  
5 that list.

6 I have not had an opportunity to get into all of  
7 the details of that, but one of the things in some of our  
8 discussions internally -- and, again, I'm not sure if this  
9 is the case, but I know that there are some ideas about  
10 this, is that maybe because these senior technical  
11 advisors are independent contractors and they're -- that  
12 maybe there is a communications issue where they don't  
13 always see or may not be fully aware how and where their  
14 advice really has been implemented. That may be part of  
15 the problem, but given the results, it surely isn't all of  
16 the problem.

17 So, this is something that I will definitely  
18 look into, and as soon as I can get down to Pantex, we'll  
19 spend some time down there, and also we'll talk to the --  
20 we'll talk to these senior technical advisors, as well, to  
21 try and figure out what's going on.

22 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. You know, I  
23 had the opportunity just last week to go out to Pantex to  
24 spend a whole day to watch operations. But when I -- when  
25 I looked at the site office, the -- all the top managers

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1 for the site office, they weren't there.  
2 They -- the site office is a combined site office with  
3 Tennessee. One of the principal managers was -- I was  
4 told was on vacation, but the others were -- were up in  
5 Tennessee.

6 Do you have the right structure for people to be  
7 looking for you, your eyes on the ground, there in Pantex?

8 MS. CREEDON: This is something we're going to  
9 have to look at, I think, pretty closely. We just had  
10 this combined contractor mechanism get put in place  
11 earlier this summer. The federal manager, Steve Erhardt,  
12 is extraordinarily capable, but, frankly, I'm worrying a  
13 little bit that we may burn him out because he spends a  
14 lot of time moving back and forth.

15 So, one of the things that, you know, I need to  
16 do and Frank and I need to do is really sit down with  
17 Steve and understand, as he gets more into how this is  
18 going to work, exactly some of the logistical issues with  
19 respect to getting back and forth between the two sites  
20 and also making sure that he has the federal -- the  
21 federal help that he needs so that he can fully implement  
22 this. He's a very talented guy, but it's really important  
23 that we, as I say, utilize him fully and we don't burn him  
24 out in the process. So, this is something we're going to  
25 have to look at as this goes -- as this implementation

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1 goes forward.

2 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you. And, so, lastly, I  
3 just want to encourage you that when the senior technical  
4 advisors came to brief us, they had a lot of important  
5 things to say, but one of the things that they basically  
6 had to say was that they didn't -- they weren't sure they  
7 were being heard because a lot of their recommendations  
8 they had made over and over, and it didn't appear that any  
9 action was being taken.

10 So, I would simply encourage you as you go to  
11 look for all the people that you need to talk to, and I  
12 know that's a very large group, but to reach out to this  
13 group and -- and to hear from them directly. And I would  
14 -- I would ask you to consider doing that.

15 MS. CREEDON: Thank you. I will.

16 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you.

17 MS. CREEDON: Thanks.

18 DR. WINOKUR: Let me say first of all I enjoyed  
19 your testimony very much. I know you've only been on the  
20 job for two months, but I think it was very insightful and  
21 demonstrated an understanding at least of the challenges  
22 you're facing.

23 And the question I want to ask is one that you  
24 have covered to a reasonable degree, but maybe I'll just  
25 hit on a few fine points. What I was concerned about is

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1 how do we take the message -- the vision from the  
2 Secretary and the senior leadership, yourself and  
3 Administrator Klotz, and how do we get it down to the  
4 workers, what you call this committed workforce. And I  
5 want you to know that I understand that your workforce is  
6 committed.

7 And I think in your testimony you talked a lot  
8 about leaders, middle managers, site office managers. I  
9 mean, who from your perspective are the key leaders that  
10 you think need to get on board to be absolutely certain  
11 that you can transition from what the administrator and  
12 yourself and the Secretary are saying and the workers are  
13 hearing and understand.

14 MS. CREEDON: So, at a minimum, it's the senior  
15 leaders and headquarters and our senior leaders in the  
16 field. They have to start it. But they can only go so  
17 far. It's going to take a while, and it has to -- it has  
18 to trickle down to everybody. It has to be the mid-level  
19 managers. It has to be those first-line supervisors. It  
20 has to be everybody that's doing the work.

21 And as you also know, I think, the annual  
22 federal workplace survey, NNSA didn't do very well on that  
23 either, and that was from a headquarters perspective. So,  
24 we have a lot of work. And it isn't just the safety  
25 piece. We have a lot of work on NNSA at large to make it

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1 a better place to be. Part of that is the safety culture,  
2 and part of that is as all of our -- as all or our senior  
3 folks talk to people, very often we tend to emphasize --  
4 they tend to emphasize a certain aspect. Is it a  
5 production -- a production schedule? Is it project  
6 management? Is it keeping the costs in line?

7 And, so, I think our managers tend to focus on  
8 what they do best -- their job jars, so to speak -- and  
9 making sure that as they focus on what they do best that  
10 they also focus on some of these broader issues, the  
11 safety and the security and these other issues. I think  
12 that will help convey that everybody is committed to this.

13 So, it's -- as I say, it's going to be a while,  
14 as we work through this. You know, Frank and I have two  
15 years to get this right, so we're going to try really hard  
16 to achieve it.

17 DR. WINOKUR: And I'll bring up Joe Bader who we  
18 recently lost. He passed away to a long illness, and I  
19 know was a very close friend of yours and mine. And one  
20 of the things he always said to me, it's those mid-level  
21 managers, they are the key, because the message can get  
22 lost going down the chain.

23 Are there any particular attributes or things  
24 you're looking for in these mid-level managers to be  
25 certain that they can provide the kind of leadership you



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1 need to establish the safety culture?

2 MS. CREEDON: Well, at a minimum, I think  
3 they're the ones who have to encourage the workforce to  
4 raise issues, and then they have to raise the issues to  
5 their senior workforce. So, they are the ones who, as I  
6 said, have the most frequent contact with most every --  
7 with most everybody that actually does the work. And, so,  
8 they're the ones that are going to have to really in some  
9 instances get that message across, that issues need to be  
10 raised, and get people to be empowered, if you will, to  
11 raise issues.

12 And it's not just safety; it's across the board.  
13 And so that we can make sure that these bubble up and that  
14 they -- we can figure out how to get them resolved. Or if  
15 we can't get them resolved, understand why we can't get  
16 them resolved, and then try and tackle that -- that issue.  
17 But they are key. We've got to get our message down; and  
18 they've got our -- they've got to get the workers' message  
19 up.

20 DR. WINOKUR: And I guess the last part of this  
21 is how will you ensure yourself that the message is  
22 getting down to the workers? I think you clearly  
23 demonstrated that your understanding of, you know, the  
24 potential miscommunications going down the chain of  
25 command. How -- how would you as the Deputy convince

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1 yourself that it's what it needs to be?

2 MS. CREEDON: Well, I mean, at a personal level,  
3 Frank and I are just going to have to go talk to people.  
4 We're just going to have to get on the road and talk to  
5 people. But we have almost 40,000 employees by the time  
6 we look at the federal employees and the M&O contractors.  
7 So, we're clearly not going to talk to all of them. It  
8 just isn't possible, as much as I would like to.

9 But it really is also going to be important that  
10 we talk to all of our -- our managers and make sure that  
11 they're also talking to their employees and really build  
12 this environment where issues can -- can bubble up,  
13 because they're going to have to bubble up, because we  
14 can't do it on our own. We're going to have to rely on  
15 our folks to do a lot of the work for us and to be our  
16 eyes and ears on the ground, and then really to be able  
17 to come forward and tell us what's going on. And our  
18 field office managers are going to be key to that.

19 DR. WINOKUR: All right, thank you.

20 Ms. Roberson?

21 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and  
22 thank you for your comments, as well, today.

23 You laid out in your opening statement a series  
24 of actions that NNSA has undertaken: a communications  
25 plan, the strategy, the effective leader training, and

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1 several other actions. And I guess I wanted to just ask  
2 you, are you -- we often ask have you had the opportunity  
3 to give some thought to what kind of metrics. And when  
4 people hear metrics, they kind of think about the  
5 operation and how many of this gets out. When you're  
6 making this kind of change, change management plan was a  
7 weakness in the previous assessment, and you mentioned  
8 improving that.

9 Have you had an opportunity to give thought to  
10 what kind of metrics would tell you and the Administrator  
11 whether these changes or these efforts that you're driving  
12 are having the intended result, early enough that you can  
13 course correct?

14 MS. CREEDON: I have to say probably not to the  
15 degree that they need to be done yet. I'm not quite there  
16 yet. I think in terms of demonstrable effects, it would  
17 be things that would show up on future surveys, even to  
18 the -- you know, to the annual employee survey. One  
19 of the things that Frank and I have talked about doing is  
20 doing more frequent surveys within NNSA, and a little more  
21 tailored to NNSA, and just try to understand where there  
22 are options for improvement and opportunities for  
23 improvement. And part of that would be putting in those  
24 surveys an opportunity for people to actually write  
25 comments, as opposed to just saying yes, no, maybe on some

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1 of the response forms.

2 So, that's something small, but it might help  
3 measure at least where our folks are thinking and where  
4 they think the progress is being made or not. But really  
5 looking at how you establish metrics for change in the  
6 safety culture, it strikes me as hard, and I'm sure Don  
7 Nichols and his folks have thought about this a lot more  
8 than I have, but it is something I'm going to have to do,  
9 because I don't have a good answer to that question.

10 MS. ROBERSON: And then in the last question, it  
11 may seem a little unfair, but I have to ask this. The  
12 Board made this Recommendation in 2011, and the  
13 Department's undertaken quite a few actions, a lot of  
14 assessments, training, changed and strengthened some  
15 procedures. And I guess in the vast enterprise of NNSA,  
16 I'd ask you is there a particular sub-organization or  
17 operation that you think really has got it? It doesn't  
18 mean they're perfect, but I'm not asking you who's the  
19 worst; I'm asking you kind of who you think exhibits the  
20 best practices that you'd like to drive across the  
21 enterprise.

22 MS. CREEDON: I don't know yet.

23 MS. ROBERSON: Okay.

24 MS. CREEDON: I don't know yet. I'm -- I mean,  
25 I think part of being a little bit new is I think what's

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1 bubbled up more has really been the problems and not the  
2 good stuff.

3 MS. ROBERSON: Okay.

4 MS. CREEDON: And, so, one of the things that we  
5 have to do is make sure the good stuff comes forward, too,  
6 and that people get acknowledged for when they do things  
7 right, and I know -- and not just the -- the  
8 acknowledgment for when they do something that's not  
9 right.

10 MS. ROBERSON: And then the last question I'd  
11 ask you is you -- I mean, clearly word of mouth is -- is  
12 the most effective way, but are there other tools that you  
13 and the Administrator will be using to communicate and  
14 recommunicate your expectations in this area to your  
15 enterprise?

16 MS. CREEDON: I think there are a variety of  
17 tools. We -- we do mass emails in some levels of  
18 communication. We have weekly staff meetings where all of  
19 the headquarters senior leaders and all of our field  
20 office senior managers participate. They obviously  
21 participate by VTC, but they're all there. It's an  
22 opportunity for us to raise some issues, for them to raise  
23 some issues, so then hopefully they can then turn around  
24 and carry it back.

25 What we probably need to get a little better at

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1 is communicating better with -- so, us also communicating  
2 better with our M&O partners. The field office managers  
3 have a lot of interaction with them across the board, as  
4 do each of the individual headquarters components, have  
5 interaction across the board. But I think as a body, we  
6 probably are going to have to look at more interaction  
7 amongst us.

8 So, you know, we're looking at doing this in  
9 November, but I think this is probably something that  
10 we're going to have to -- to do a little better to make  
11 sure it's not just sort of internally focused on the NNSA  
12 employees, but it also has a -- a broader message.

13 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you.

14 DR. WINOKUR: You -- I had asked the Secretary a  
15 question about the fact that the DOE was a very diverse  
16 organization with many subcultures, and NNSA is no  
17 exception to that. You've got Naval reactors, you've got  
18 Los Alamos, you've got Livermore, you've got Pantex,  
19 you've got production, you've got research.

20 You talked interestingly in your testimony about  
21 transplanting cultures and the challenges associated with  
22 that. Can you say a few more words about it or perhaps  
23 just explain to me do you think it would be possible to  
24 transfer some of the Naval reactors culture to Los Alamos,  
25 because they're two very different organizations, and they

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1 both have very established cultures, and they grew up very  
2 differently in the last 70 years? So, any thoughts on  
3 that?

4 MS. CREEDON: So, I think I also mentioned that  
5 you can't pick up one culture and lay it over top of  
6 another organization. It just -- it won't work, but one  
7 of the things that Don and his team have started to do is  
8 -- is -- and also, frankly, some of the lessons learned  
9 that are going on in these meetings that are the field and  
10 are the contractors -- is really look at where -- where  
11 are the things that you can pull out. Where are those  
12 specific things that are examples of best practices? How  
13 do you identify them? And then how do you figure out  
14 where you can apply them?

15 So, some things might apply well at Pantex or Y-  
16 12 and not so much at Sandia. And that's -- that's really  
17 the challenge, is finding -- finding those best practices  
18 and then getting -- getting them instilled appropriately  
19 but in the right organizations, so that the practices are  
20 suited for the organization, and then getting the people  
21 in those organizations to really adopt those so that it's  
22 not a not-invented-here but that is, okay, this is pretty  
23 good and we'll give it a shot, so that it becomes theirs  
24 and that they can modify and push it.

25 But I know that's -- you know, that's a somewhat

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1 theoretical explanation, but it is hard. Having -- having  
2 watched it at DOD in the various cultures at DOD, it's  
3 very hard to get those best practices shared across the  
4 board.

5 DR. WINOKUR: And me, I'm interested to know,  
6 and give me an example in DOD of two different  
7 organizations whose -- which that it would be difficult to  
8 transfer cultures. Is this between the Army and the Navy  
9 or between the different services, or who? Who would it  
10 be?

11 MS. CREEDON: So, as I mentioned, the Navy has a  
12 -- the Navy has a pretty good -- at least the nuclear  
13 pieces of the Navy have a pretty good self-assessment.  
14 The Air Force's self-assessment is not as strong.

15 DR. WINOKUR: Okay.

16 MS. CREEDON: And, so, one of the things that  
17 the Secretary of the Air Force has committed to do is  
18 improving the Air Force's self-assessment program, and so  
19 they're looking at how the Navy does self-assessment  
20 programs. So, interestingly enough, the Navy's -- at  
21 least in the nuclear side, the Navy self-assessment  
22 program grew out of the various reviews that occurred  
23 following the 2007 Minot incident that the Air Force had.  
24 So, it's -- it would seem to be something that the two of  
25 them can work on together to improve the self-assessments.



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1 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you.

2 Mr. Sullivan?

3 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you. So, in my -- in my  
4 first question, I zeroed in on Pantex, so now I'd like to  
5 zero in on Los Alamos. And as -- as you are aware, the  
6 public may not be, but last summer the -- the laboratory  
7 director out at Los Alamos paused operations in the  
8 nation's plutonium facility, PF4, and many of those  
9 operations have -- have yet to restart.

10 Just recently, the Secretary sent out a memo to  
11 Administrator Klotz and to Mr. Whitney, who's sitting  
12 behind you, transferring legacy waste management from NNSA  
13 to -- to EM. And in that he -- the Secretary pointed to  
14 the fact that -- that Los Alamos under NNSA was -- was  
15 dealing with some significant management challenges,  
16 including restarting operations in PF4.

17 And they've been -- they've been doing these  
18 operations in PF4 for -- for several years, so in my view,  
19 and this is my -- my personal view, is that their  
20 challenges are not technical. They know technically how  
21 to do the work, but the challenges are more management and  
22 perhaps culture. So, I'm wondering if you could address  
23 to what extent there are cultural issues, safety culture  
24 issues out in Los Alamos and what NNSA is doing about  
25 that.

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1 MS. CREEDON: Certainly associated with PF4, and  
2 this is a topic that I had some discussions with the Los  
3 Alamos folks, as well as the NNSA folks last week, I think  
4 what they have adopted right now is actually a very good  
5 approach. And in many respects, it's very similar to what  
6 the Secretary described about the approach to restarting  
7 WIPP.

8 And it's not not picking a date certain and  
9 working backwards from it. It's understanding what  
10 needs to be done across the board, whether it's  
11 procedural, whether it's operational, whether it's  
12 technical, whether it's safety, and identify all those  
13 things, bin them in -- bin them into work baskets, if you  
14 will, and start -- and start working them down.

15 And at some point, you'll have a sense of  
16 when -- when that date happens, but I know there's  
17 certainly frustration because PF4 has been down as long as  
18 it has, but I think that the plan that they've laid out,  
19 where they've clearly identified a whole series of actions  
20 that have to be taken and that they're going to work  
21 through these actions.

22 And if something happens in that action to  
23 complete, you know, so the effort to complete that action  
24 bogs down, they're going to go back and figure out what  
25 happens, you know, and they're not going to cut corners

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1 and they're not going to jump forward to an artificial  
2 date, because I think that's -- that's a problem, you  
3 know, and it does drive to some strange behaviors.

4 So, it's not just a safety issue; it's an  
5 across-the-board management issue. And I think they  
6 understand that. There are some other examples of that  
7 that you're probably aware of at the moment, but  
8 particularly with respect to things Los Alamos has on its  
9 plate, it does have a lot on its plate. And I think they  
10 are recognizing that they have -- they have to take a  
11 different approach to some of these things. And, of  
12 course, we also have the plutonium operations, other than  
13 just the plutonium operations in PF4 that we have to work  
14 on, as well.

15 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you. So, again, by way of  
16 background, so after the pause, the contractor did their  
17 own self-assessment. They gathered some team and they  
18 gathered some -- some experts, including people who  
19 weren't actually -- who didn't actually live and work  
20 there in -- in Los Alamos.

21 And they wrote a report which identified that,  
22 in fact, many of the things that had led to the pause had  
23 been identified in earlier reports and yet hadn't been  
24 addressed. So, much like -- or similar to the comment  
25 about the nuclear explosive safety senior technical

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1 advisors, that wasn't the first time people had said, hey,  
2 you know, there are things here that fundamentally need to  
3 be addressed and they haven't been addressed.

4 So, are you confident now that this approach  
5 will address those underlying issues in moving forward  
6 there in Los Alamos?

7 MS. CREEDON: I am confident they have a good  
8 plan. How well they succeed in actually addressing and  
9 resolving all these is something that we're going to have  
10 to follow and track and work with them closely.

11 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

12 DR. WINOKUR: Ms. Roberson?

13 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 At the Board's hearing in Pantex about a year  
15 and a half ago, the Acting Administrator at the time  
16 committed to conducting an assessment of safety culture of  
17 the federal NNSA organization, and that assessment was  
18 accomplished a few months later. And you talked about  
19 some of the upcoming actions as a result of that.

20 The -- the assessment was completed following an  
21 organizational -- a set of organizational changes that  
22 included reorganizing the safety elements within NNSA  
23 Headquarters. And one of the things of particular  
24 interest to us from the assessment, noted from the  
25 assessment, was -- and I'm going to quote -- "The NNSA

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1 organization does not effectively manage change." And I  
2 know going forward you've talked about that being an  
3 element of your actions.

4 But in reorganizing the safety function, and we  
5 had a lot of questions about that as well, too. And, so,  
6 I'm just wondering are you planning -- are you looking at  
7 that to make sure that that is structured the most  
8 effective way for what you and the Administrator want to  
9 accomplish in this arena?

10 MS. CREEDON: So, the -- so, the answer to the  
11 last part of that question is yeah, we are; yes, we are.  
12 And obviously I wasn't around when all of that was  
13 happening, but I've heard a few descriptions of that.  
14 And, so, it's clear that as we look forward at what  
15 organizational structures we make, so any changes that we  
16 make, we have to -- we have to do a much better job  
17 communicating with our employees, not only the what, but  
18 the why and how -- how it impacts them, because that also  
19 was one of the issues that came out of that is people  
20 didn't understand how this change was going to affect  
21 them, what did it mean to them, did they have to move, did  
22 they lose their job, that sort of thing. So, I think that  
23 was something that we're really going to have to be very  
24 conscious of.

25 MS. ROBERSON: Okay. And then the -- I don't

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1 want to use the word "metric" again -- I'll say tools.  
2 How do you conclude with confidence that you've -- you're  
3 applying the right amount of resources to safety, and I'll  
4 say balance what mission but to give you confidence that  
5 you've got the right kind of resources applied to your  
6 safety functions to ensure that you can accomplish your  
7 expectations in that arena.

8 MS. CREEDON: That's a really hard question,  
9 recognizing that we've got pretty significant budget  
10 issues coming down the road, particularly if as of -- as a  
11 department we end up going back to the life of  
12 sequestration. So, you know, we had two years of the  
13 Budget Control Act, so a lot of that depends on where we  
14 head from a budgetary perspective. But overall, we have  
15 to -- if we have to do a mission and we have to do the  
16 mission safely and securely and effectively, and it's part  
17 of a whole package.

18 So, I have a bit of a reaction to the balance,  
19 because I think it's an entire mission package and you  
20 have to do it -- you have to do it all. And at some  
21 point, frankly, we have an obligation that if we can't do  
22 that mission and we can't do it safely and we can't do it  
23 securely, we have to kind of raise a red flag and say we  
24 just can't do this if the money isn't there to do it.

25 Now, on the other hand, we have to make sure

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1 that we're doing it efficiently and that we're using the  
2 money that we have in the most effective and efficient  
3 way. And that's a task we have to do. So, we have to --  
4 you know, we really have to make sure we are getting blood  
5 out of that stone or turnip or which -- you know, whatever  
6 the analogy is.

7 But we have to make sure we can -- you know,  
8 that we do it. But if we can't, we -- you know, we have  
9 an obligation that says we can't do this.

10 MS. ROBERSON: Thank you.

11 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Sullivan?

12 MR. SULLIVAN: You mentioned before that you've  
13 only been there two months that the good stuff hasn't  
14 bubbled up yet. So, I just want to start by noting that  
15 you do have an awful lot of good stuff out there. You've  
16 got a lot of very smart people, a lot of very dedicated  
17 people. They're a lot like offensive linemen in football.  
18 You know, we notice them when we throw the penalty flag,  
19 but we don't notice the -- all the plays that they make  
20 that are -- that are really good.

21 Do you have any thoughts about you will try to  
22 get that part of information to be brought up to a point  
23 where you will -- it will come to your attention or -- or  
24 how you will reach down and find it yourself and how you  
25 might share those best practices?

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1 MS. CREEDON: Yeah. We've -- we've actually had  
2 a couple conversations on that, and so one of the things  
3 that we've started to do is really have our field office  
4 managers highlight when people do something, you know,  
5 special. There are opportunities for -- on the federal  
6 side, there are some opportunities for -- for on-the-spot  
7 rewards. I mean, they're small rewards. They're about  
8 \$500, but I just approved a small package of those last  
9 week or week before last. So, it's those kinds of things  
10 that we really can say, you know, that was really well  
11 done. And we're looking at other ways to try and do even  
12 non-monetary things to say this is really good.

13 Don Cook has been -- on the DP side has been  
14 presenting a series of awards for -- for some really good  
15 work that's happened. So, I mean, there are -- there are  
16 ways to do this. We're also trying to look at ways to  
17 make this even a little bit higher visibility. So, we've  
18 been talking to our PA folks so that they can take some of  
19 these good examples and -- and some of this really fine  
20 work and put it out to a broader community, so not just  
21 the office where the person works knows how -- how good  
22 some of this was, but, you know, also to put it out into  
23 these broader NNSA casts so that everybody's aware that,  
24 yeah, we really have good people out there who really are  
25 doing good things.



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1 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. And I just want to take a  
2 moment to -- to give you a piece of advice, which I'm sure  
3 you've -- you've probably already learned in the Pentagon,  
4 but if you find yourself spending all your time in  
5 Washington, DC, with all the noise that goes on here and  
6 all the people who want your attention here, you're  
7 probably in the wrong place, because the action is out  
8 there. So, I encourage you to get around as much as you  
9 can. There are good people. And I -- I try to do that,  
10 and I -- I enjoy every time I do get to meet them. Thank  
11 you.

12 MS. CREEDON: Thanks.

13 DR. WINOKUR: I want to ask you a couple of  
14 questions about balancing mission and safety. I think you  
15 brought it up. I think it's an incredibly important area  
16 about how the Department does that. And let me express  
17 some personal opinions now. I'm not speaking for the  
18 Board.

19 When Tom D'Agostino was the Administrator, he  
20 had a statement when you came into the Pantex plant you  
21 saw it: Getting the job done. I didn't think it was a  
22 great safety message, even though I understand underlying  
23 that was a full commitment on the part of NNSA to make  
24 sure that safety and mission were integrated. It went  
25 without saying, we heard. And now we have a new

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1 statement: Mission first. Do you think that those  
2 statements can confuse workers that if they see that in  
3 bold print when they go to work every day acknowledging  
4 the fact that they are incredibly committed and they want  
5 to get their job done every day? Do you think that's an  
6 issue?

7 MS. CREEDON: But that's not all of the -- of  
8 our statement. Our statement is: Mission first, people  
9 always. And -- and it takes that whole phrase, because  
10 it's the "people always" part that is as important as the  
11 "mission first." And, so, hopefully they read the whole  
12 thing: Mission first, people always, because it is the  
13 people. You know, how they do the work, how they're  
14 trained, how they do safety, how they do security. I  
15 mean, they're the ones that do the mission. So, it's a  
16 phrase in its entirety: Mission first, people always.

17 DR. WINOKUR: And you feel that provides the  
18 necessary balance between mission and safety?

19 MS. CREEDON: I -- I think so. I hope so.

20 DR. WINOKUR: Okay.

21 MS. CREEDON: It seems to be well received. And  
22 we'll see how it goes, but I think it is, because I do  
23 think it conveys that idea that, you know, people are  
24 always important.

25 DR. WINOKUR: One of the things about the

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1 balancing mission and safety that I think is incredibly  
2 important is that if you don't get the safety right, and  
3 I'm not asking the Department to say safety is an  
4 overriding priority, which NRC does, but if you don't get  
5 the safety right and you have an accident like we had at  
6 WIPP, you can see not only the impact on the dollars but  
7 the impact on the mission is just sobering.

8 And, so I -- I just -- you know, I also  
9 encourage you to -- and you know this and understand it,  
10 that it's not really choosing between the two, because if  
11 the safety goes wrong and the accident occurs, especially  
12 one of these low-probability, high-consequence accidents,  
13 that obviously it can really hurt your mission.

14 MS. CREEDON: No, I agree. And it's -- and it's  
15 true -- it's true of security and the incident at Y-12 is  
16 an example of that as well. So, I mean, it really is,  
17 it's the whole package.

18 DR. WINOKUR: I'm going to kind of change gears  
19 a little bit. Can you share some of your thoughts on  
20 changing established cultures, based maybe a little bit  
21 upon your experience at the Department of Defense? I  
22 mean, we raised this point a few times today. It's one of  
23 the things we have learned in our prior hearings. People  
24 can come and create cultures, whether they're Steve Jobs  
25 or Admiral Rickover or people, they create them from

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1 scratch, they -- but -- but when you have an established  
2 culture, something that's been ingrained for 50, 60, 70  
3 years, obviously changing it and improving it and moving  
4 in the direction you want to go is a very, very  
5 challenging task, a very daunting task.

6           You've seen some of this also on the DOD side.  
7 Are there any insights you have about what it takes to  
8 change that culture, that very well established culture?

9           MS. CREEDON: Probably the most significant  
10 thing is recognizing that the culture needs a change, so  
11 that's the first thing. The second thing is sometimes  
12 even when there is a recognition of that, it -- the words  
13 are only spoken at the senior leaders. And there's not a  
14 lot of follow-through to go with those words. So, the  
15 second thing is making sure that not only the senior  
16 leaders say the right words, but they -- but they follow  
17 up on those words with real actions that all the way down  
18 to, you know, the lowest -- the lowest person really  
19 begins to see some change, some real change in them, and  
20 then all the way down to the middle management.

21           So, I mean, that's why it takes time. And it's  
22 going to take time and, you know, just having watched a  
23 little bit of some things in DOD, it's -- it takes a lot  
24 more than just senior -- senior leaders saying this is the  
25 way I want it to be.

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1 DR. WINOKUR: Okay, thank you.

2 Do the Board members have any other questions  
3 for Ms. Creedon?

4 MS. ROBERSON: I don't, Mr. Chairman.

5 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Sullivan?

6 MR. SULLIVAN: No.

7 DR. WINOKUR: Well, with that, we want to thank  
8 you very much for your testimony today and spending time  
9 with us to answer questions.

10 MS. CREEDON: Thanks.

11 DR. WINOKUR: I think it was a very nice  
12 dialogue. We appreciate it. We wish you well in your new  
13 job. Next time we see you, two months, we'll see. All  
14 right, I'll leave it at that. And -- and we thank you  
15 again, and we'll move on to our third panel.

16 MS. CREEDON: Thanks very much.

17 DR. WINOKUR: At this time, I would like to  
18 invite our final and third panel member, Mr. Mark Whitney,  
19 to the witness table. Mr. Whitney will be provided 10  
20 minutes for his opening remarks. The Board will accept  
21 his full written testimony into the record. Mr. Whitney  
22 has been provided some initial lines of inquiry in advance  
23 of this hearing.

24 Mr. Mark Whitney was named Principal Deputy  
25 Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Energy

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1 Office of Environmental Management in May 2014 and  
2 currently serves as the Acting Assistant Secretary for  
3 Environmental Management. At this time, we welcome  
4 remarks by Mr. Whitney, to be followed by questions from  
5 the Board. Welcome.

6 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you and good morning,  
7 Chairman Winokur, Vice Chairman Roberson, and Mr.  
8 Sullivan. I do very much appreciate the opportunity.  
9 This is my first hearing and -- well, my first hearing,  
10 not just in this capacity, but my first hearing in front  
11 of the Board. So, I do appreciate the opportunity. I've  
12 enjoyed, you know, listening to the previous two panels of  
13 my boss and my colleague, Madelyn Creedon.

14 You know, today, I would really like to and plan  
15 to address DOE's Office of Environmental Management's  
16 ongoing improvements regarding safety culture and safety -  
17 - a safety-conscious work environment. We are continuing  
18 to strengthen the organizational safety culture across EM,  
19 and we've made that a primary focus for not only myself  
20 but all of EM's leadership.

21 DOE's Office of Enterprise Assessments, as  
22 you're aware, most recent independent oversight assessment  
23 of the safety culture at our largest cleanup project, the  
24 Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant at Hanford, found  
25 that while many improvements have been made, there's still

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1 a lot of work to do. And, so, we recognize that and --  
2 and we'll talk about that a little bit later, as well.

3 EM and the Office of River Protection recognized  
4 that however changing culture takes time and it requires a  
5 commitment -- a sustained commitment to actually change  
6 culture. You all have talked about that in the 50, 60, 70  
7 years that have given us the culture we have in the  
8 Department. While EM is only 25 years old, that's -- 25  
9 years is enough time to develop your own culture. And  
10 it's hard to turn and you can't turn it on a dime. So,  
11 that's where we are right now, but we recognize the  
12 commitment it does take, and we are dedicated to making  
13 that commitment.

14 It is a journey. And I do want to highlight the  
15 fact that the most recent assessments does say that there  
16 are improvements that have been made. And that does  
17 provide us with some indicators that -- that we hope we're  
18 on the right path. Like I said, we are focused on  
19 continuing to make improvements. And while that's a good  
20 thing, you know, that -- that there were improvements  
21 noted, our focus has to be on the other issues in the  
22 report that were identified as not having been improved  
23 over the period of time.

24 Bechtel National, Incorporated, and ORP, the  
25 Office of River Protection, are continuing to aggressively

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1 work on improving their safety culture. The results of  
2 the 2014 independent assessment -- or independent  
3 oversight assessment of safety culture -- are being used  
4 to guide additional corrective actions. And those actions  
5 are captured in the Office of River Protection's  
6 Comprehensive Safety Culture Improvement and Oversight  
7 Plan, which EM Headquarters is monitoring on a -- a  
8 regular basis.

9 In addition to assist ORP in proactively  
10 responding to emerging technical and culture issue --  
11 issues raised at ORP, we are providing subject matter  
12 expertise resources on a regular basis. As you heard,  
13 Secretary Moniz, of course, has established a vision for a  
14 strong safety culture and a strong safety-conscious work  
15 environment. And he's clearly articulated his  
16 expectation, as well as his personal commitment in this  
17 regard, and I do believe that EM, while we still have work  
18 to do, has been a leader in this area within the  
19 Department and across our complex to further improve our  
20 safety culture.

21 As the leader of the organization, I, of course,  
22 support the Secretary's vision for establishing the strong  
23 safety culture and commit to continuing to work towards  
24 ensuring that the Environmental Management Program does  
25 exemplify the organizational behaviors necessary for a



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1 safety-conscious work environment.

2 I also understand that a healthy -- a healthy  
3 safety culture is essential to our success, both the  
4 Department's and Environmental Management's programmatic  
5 success. But leading the change in our safety culture  
6 does require us to change behavior throughout the  
7 organization, and this is required to foster an  
8 environment of trust, of mutual respect, and of course a  
9 questioning attitude.

10 Like the Secretary, I am observing signs that  
11 we're headed in the right directions in terms of building  
12 a more positive safety culture, not only at the waste  
13 treatment plant but also throughout the EM complex, across  
14 our complex. At the same time, I recognize we do have a  
15 lot of work to do, as I said, and our focus has to remain  
16 on continuous improvement throughout the process.

17 So, we have -- we have implemented some actions  
18 over the past few years, and so I'll address a few -- a  
19 few of these right now. We -- in 2013, we, of course,  
20 completed safety-conscious work environment self-  
21 assessments across the complex, our sites did, as well as  
22 NNSA and Office of Science sites. While, you know, we  
23 performed these self-assessments to help us evaluate the  
24 status of our safety-conscious work environment at our  
25 specific sites, you know, and they were focused primarily

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1 on the focus areas that are in Attachment 10 to the ISMS  
2 Guide and the focus areas and attributes contained in  
3 those.

4 But I think more importantly, or just as  
5 important, it really helped us understand better and  
6 helped us gain increased awareness and knowledge  
7 throughout the complex of what safety culture is and what  
8 a safety-conscious work environment is. So, while I do  
9 believe that we had tangible results and findings that we  
10 were able to take action on and continue to take action  
11 on, I think the process of doing this was extremely  
12 valuable across the complex.

13 EM also supported the -- the consolidated  
14 report, of course, the extent of condition report through  
15 extensive dedication of time and resources to ensure a  
16 timely review and to make sure that it was consistent with  
17 deliverables identified in the 2011-1 milestone. This, of  
18 course, consolidated report included elements of the  
19 safety-conscious work environment self-assessments, as  
20 well as the -- the independent assessment of the Office of  
21 Health, Safety and Security.

22 In that review, as the Secretary mentioned, DOE  
23 identified the high-level departmental improvement  
24 actions, which have been embraced by EM and heavily  
25 supported by EM resources to date.

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1           Also, consistent with the 2011 safety-conscious  
2 work environment, consolidated extent of condition report,  
3 and in conjunction with NNSA and the Office of Science, of  
4 course, EM did request that each of its site offices  
5 develop a site-specific safety culture sustainment plan.  
6 And those plans were to contain a description of the  
7 sustainment tools to be used, how the tools are suitable  
8 for the site conditions and plans and schedules for use of  
9 the tools, and how the tools would align with recommended  
10 departmental actions.

11           Many of the sites have recently submitted these  
12 tools -- or these sustainment plans or are in the process  
13 of doing so. We recently, last month, had a field  
14 managers meeting in Idaho, a senior leadership meeting  
15 where a portion of the agenda was dedicated to discussions  
16 of sustainment plans, getting the field officers'  
17 perspective on the sustainment plans, what they found in -  
18 - in pulling those together and -- and our initial read on  
19 some of those.

20           And so we're still getting those; we're still  
21 going through those. We understand we have a commitment  
22 to deliver those to you and we will do so. I'm currently  
23 going through them myself right now, and so once we --  
24 we're able to do that, we will -- we will provide those to  
25 you. I believe we just recently received the last one.

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1           Training has been a big focus for us, of course.  
2   And out of the -- the consolidated report, one of the key  
3   areas that we, of course, found was the need to increase  
4   awareness and understanding and -- and specifically  
5   through training. So, we've worked a lot on developing  
6   and executing training programs across the complex. One  
7   of these, for example, is the safety-conscious work  
8   environment for DOE and DOE contractor senior leaders.  
9   And this course has been conducted in 85 sessions across  
10   the complex for over 2,000 participants.

11           I had the benefit of participating in one of  
12   those when I was in Oak Ridge, and it's been implemented  
13   at nearly every DOE site across the complex, not just the  
14   defense nuclear facilities, which I think, as the  
15   Secretary mentioned, is -- is important.

16           In addition to the safety-conscious work  
17   environment training for senior leaders, it's also  
18   important to really build and understand awareness of a  
19   safety-conscious work environment throughout the  
20   organization, of course. And, so, we are currently  
21   developing a training program focused on first-line  
22   supervisors in the area of safety culture. It will build  
23   somewhat on the success we've had with the -- the senior  
24   leaders training program, as well, working with the Office  
25   of Science, of course, and the National Nuclear Security

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1 Administration to develop that course.

2 The independent oversight assessment report of  
3 the EM program that was dated November of 2012, identified  
4 a lot of problems, frankly, including that some senior  
5 managers indicated that they do not perceive that they  
6 have any direct responsibilities for safety, that the site  
7 leads are responsible for safety, and it's their interest  
8 in following the safety issues.

9 Additionally, it found that there's a pervasive  
10 belief that EM-40, my colleague, Jim Hutton, and his team,  
11 own safety -- own safety -- and that the mission units --  
12 mission support units did not have as significant a role  
13 as we know that they do. They didn't fully understand the  
14 roles and responsibilities in this area, as well as how  
15 they interact and integrate with the field.

16 To ensure that EM senior leadership understood  
17 expectations associated with safety responsibilities, in  
18 September of last year, EM-1, my predecessor issued a memo  
19 to all direct reports, both at headquarters and in the  
20 field, to outline his expectations and to clearly  
21 articulate that safety is essential to our mission, our  
22 future success, and is a core value of the Office of  
23 Environmental Management.

24 It further states that we must integrate safety  
25 into management at work practices at all levels. Senior

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1 leaders do have the distinct role of demonstrating a  
2 commitment to safety through their actions and behavior,  
3 as well as establishing clear expectations and  
4 accountabilities for their staff.

5           The memo did provide additional clarification on  
6 the responsibility to emulate the attributes of a strong  
7 safety culture that promote trust, questioning attitude,  
8 and receptiveness to raising issues. So, through our  
9 longstanding commitment to the integrated safety  
10 management, we will continue to build the kind of robust  
11 safety culture vital for safe and efficient operations in  
12 EM and introduce safety culture and sustainment methods  
13 into our day-to-day operations.

14           To further advance the EM safety culture, we are  
15 incorporating, which I think is a key activity, attributes  
16 of a strong safety culture in our evaluations of senior  
17 executives' performance. You know, in fact, many of the  
18 behavioral elements and attributes from Attachment 10 to  
19 the ISMS Guide do have strong -- very strong -- a direct  
20 link to the executive core qualifications of the ESES  
21 cadre. And, so, we are focusing heavily on that, ensuring  
22 an understanding of roles and responsibilities and  
23 expectations and accountabilities.

24           I'll speak briefly on WIPP, lessons learned and  
25 then close and then of course take any questions that you

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1 may have. The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant fire accident  
2 investigation board report identified critical issues  
3 really associated with -- with how -- fundamentally how  
4 DOE performs contractor oversight, as well as a lack of  
5 clarity around federal roles and responsibilities. And  
6 these helped contribute to the incident.

7 In response, we've done a few things, you know,  
8 focused on improving the capabilities and the expertise,  
9 particularly in the technical areas of the Carlsbad field  
10 office, and that includes reorganization of the field  
11 office, to separate oversight from actual -- from program  
12 execution, which is important. We've also provided CBFO  
13 authority to hire 22 additional folks, again primarily in  
14 the technical disciplines: nuclear safety,  
15 technical/operational areas.

16 We -- CBFO is in the process of -- of, you know,  
17 filling this position. They've -- they've been able to  
18 hire three of those 22. And they are in the hiring  
19 process, various stages of the hiring process for the  
20 remainder -- remainder of those folks.

21 Lastly, EM has arranged for a safety culture  
22 assist visit to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in January  
23 of 2015. And that team will include safety culture  
24 experts from various organizations, including the Nuclear  
25 Regulatory Commission, to include NASA, commercial nuclear

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1 industry, and other experts from the DOE complex.

2 So, as the organization that's responsible and  
3 accountable for the cleanup of the environmental legacy  
4 brought about from decades of nuclear weapons development  
5 and Government-sponsored nuclear energy research and  
6 development, we do recognize that the safe and successful  
7 execution of our mission affects the nation's safety and  
8 security.

9 We do remain focused on embedding a commitment  
10 to safety deeply in the culture of EM, and I will continue  
11 to depend and build upon the processes for bringing safety  
12 issues to the forefront, including line management, to  
13 include the Office of the Ombudsman, to include the  
14 Differing Professional Opinions program, to include the  
15 Employee Concerns Program, and every other tool at our --  
16 that we have available to us to bring these concerns to  
17 the forefront. We're here to complete a mission, and we  
18 must do it safely.

19 You know, just a message is -- for me on this  
20 issue, I want to emphasize that to kind of, you know,  
21 reiterate what the Secretary said, costs and schedule for  
22 us, for our projects, although we have significant cost  
23 and schedule, we have several projects, as you're aware,  
24 across the complex that have experienced technical issues,  
25 and that's driven up costs and -- and extended our



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1 schedule, but we still cannot let the costs and schedule  
2 concerns drive our judgment on -- on opinions or concerns  
3 related to worker or public safety. Those will be judged  
4 on their technical merits.

5 One, I think recent example, as the Secretary  
6 mentioned, is his personal involvement in the WIPP  
7 recovery process. And from the very beginning, after the  
8 February events and his, you know, continuous stressing of  
9 the -- the schedule piece, and let's not have us, you  
10 know, a schedule drive us to do something that's not  
11 prudent.

12 So, I was -- had the opportunity to be out with  
13 him in Carlsbad in August when he visited and heard him  
14 deliver that message directly. We've -- we've done a lot,  
15 we've learned a lot since February. We had to the two AIB  
16 reports, first on the fire incident and then second on the  
17 response to the radiological release. We're awaiting the  
18 third report. We've also, you know been completing  
19 entries into the mine. We're learning from that. We're  
20 doing radiological rollback and characterizing as we go  
21 in, so we're learning more about the conditions of the  
22 mine.

23 So, the WIPP recovery plan that was released, as  
24 the Secretary mentioned last week, on the 30th of the  
25 month, did outline a goal for resuming operations in the

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1 first quarter of 2016, but if you'll notice in that  
2 recovery plan, it's very, very explicit that we will not  
3 do -- we will not do that, we will not resume operations  
4 or entry into the mine for placement of waste in the first  
5 quarter of '16 if it compromises safety. Safety will  
6 drive our -- our schedule for resuming operations. So,  
7 the Secretary's message was taken to heart when we  
8 developed the plan, of course.

9 On a more personal note, I did recently come  
10 from the field. I was in Oak Ridge as the EM field office  
11 manager and have now been at headquarters for a few months  
12 in this role. I've seen firsthand how important safety is  
13 in all facets of what we do in the field, and I'm going to  
14 bring that mindset and I have brought that mindset with me  
15 to headquarters and will continue to emphasize that in all  
16 that we do.

17 So, I want to thank you again for the  
18 opportunity to discuss the Department's safety culture  
19 improvement efforts, and I'll be happy to answer any  
20 questions that you may have.

21 DR. WINOKUR: Well, thank you for your  
22 testimony. I'm going to begin the questioning. Let me ask  
23 you to start out by just generally giving -- giving me  
24 your sense of what -- how safety culture is on the WIPP  
25 project -- on the WTP project, excuse me, on the WTP

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1 project.

2 MR. WHITNEY: I believe that we have a committed  
3 and focused leadership team there now. I really believe  
4 that. We have regular updates directly from the site  
5 office manager. Our last month's meeting, I thought, was  
6 -- was actually very productive and informative for me  
7 being, you know, the new guy, to see the focus that Kevin  
8 and his team is -- is placing on this. Kevin giving a  
9 major portion of the briefing on -- on what they're doing  
10 with respect to their improvement plan.

11 And, in fact, you know, there were a couple of  
12 items that I pulled from that and -- and suggested to Jim  
13 that we need to take some of those as lessons learned and  
14 see if we can find at some of the other sites, and one  
15 specific that I thought that we could use at headquarters,  
16 and so we've requested some additional information from  
17 them.

18 So, you know, but I'm not naive. I understand  
19 that's a large project. The concerns that were identified  
20 were so great a couple years ago that, you know, just to,  
21 you know, reiterate what I said during my comments, it's  
22 going to take time, but we are committed and we'll provide  
23 the -- the focus and the dedication to -- to seeing it  
24 through. And I do think we have the right team there in  
25 place right now to do it.

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1 DR. WINOKUR: Well, I did take the opportunity  
2 this weekend to read the 2014 DOE Independent Oversight  
3 Assessment Report, and it's really sobering. I mean,  
4 using some of the words in the report, it said there have  
5 been many improvement efforts -- efforts, but there is  
6 still no significant improvement in the safety culture of  
7 the organizations involved in the project.

8 And, so, the Board wrote a recommendation three  
9 years ago. There was an HSS assessment three years ago.  
10 Here we are three years later, and this assessment is  
11 basically saying, no improvement. I'm just trying to  
12 figure out why you think things are going to improve on  
13 that project?

14 MR. WHITNEY: Well, I think improvements  
15 were -- were noted, but like I said, you highlighted the  
16 key concerns, and that is our focus going forward. So,  
17 what the team has -- has done, so in addition to the  
18 actions coming out of the previous HSS independent  
19 assessment, they -- the Office of River Protection  
20 completed those actions and then recently completed  
21 assessments of those actions and those -- the things that  
22 they had put in place under their improvement plan.

23 Those assessments, in combination with this most  
24 recent HSS 2014 assessment, really have formed the basis  
25 for their -- their current improvement plan, which really

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1 consists of four major items. But they found -- I mean,  
2 they found themselves that many of the -- the things that  
3 they put into place, the nine actions, many of them did  
4 not have the effect that they intended or had hoped would.  
5 Several of them did and they want to continue those and  
6 pull those into -- into their process going forward.

7 So -- so, I am -- I do have some confidence, and  
8 I do think it's an indicator that -- that, you know, that  
9 the report highlights things that are working, and we need  
10 to take those and build off those and not be defeated by  
11 the assessment but actually use that to continue to get  
12 better.

13 DR. WINOKUR: But, in fact -- and I appreciate  
14 that. In fact, when you do read the report, it says some  
15 of the trends are negative, going in the opposite  
16 direction. You're not gaining ground; you're going  
17 backwards on that project. Is that your -- did you read  
18 the same thing I did about it?

19 MR. WHITNEY: Yes. No, I -- yes, I read it, as  
20 well, and had very similar concerns that you did. All I  
21 can say is we are committed, you know, to -- to improving  
22 the safety culture, to addressing the issues that haven't  
23 improved, and to looking closely at those things that --  
24 that may be going in the wrong direction.

25 I -- I will say that it's -- it's not because of

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1 lack of effort by the team and not for focus. I do think  
2 it goes back to what Ms. Roberson and you have alluded to  
3 before. You know, we have a culture that's decades old,  
4 right? And it takes time to change. And, you know, in  
5 Oak Ridge, a lot of that is, you know, when I was there,  
6 you have relationships that are 20, 30 years old. And  
7 that forms a large portion of your culture.

8 And, so, you know, and that's just one piece of  
9 the culture that's been formed. And, so, really getting  
10 at some of these issues is not -- it's not a two-year  
11 process. It's not. I mean, and we have to face that, but  
12 it doesn't mean that we should stop trying. And we're not  
13 going to.

14 DR. WINOKUR: One of the questions, Mr. Whitney,  
15 I asked the Secretary and I ask you again, the Board's  
16 purview is safety oversight, so we are very concerned  
17 about the resolution of the technical issues, which have a  
18 serious impact on the safety of the design and  
19 construction project itself. Do you think safety culture  
20 -- I asked the Secretary this and I'll ask you -- do you  
21 think safety culture -- weaknesses in safety culture may  
22 still be an impediment to the resolution of technical  
23 issues on the project?

24 MR. WHITNEY: I think that the Secretary  
25 answered it very well, that the way we have -- we want to

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1 ensure that our focus from a project perspective and a  
2 scheduling and sequence in work does not put ourselves  
3 into a position where we face undue technical issues that  
4 are going to cause problems, and therefore he talked about  
5 the -- you know, the discussions with the state and where  
6 we are with the consent decree and our focus from the  
7 beginning, not putting ourselves in that situation again  
8 and focusing on those -- those elements of the project  
9 right now that we can implement, that don't have the same  
10 degree of technical challenges and not setting ourselves  
11 up with schedules that aren't reasonable.

12 And, so that is -- that is our focus. But, you  
13 know, admittedly, our safety culture is not where it needs  
14 to be. And, so, we need to continue to focus on that, and  
15 we should always consider it a -- a risk and always be  
16 focused on it.

17 DR. WINOKUR: All right, thank you very much.

18 MR. WHITNEY: Yes, sir.

19 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Sullivan?

20 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you, and good morning, Mr.  
21 Whitney.

22 MR. WHITNEY: Good morning.

23 MR. SULLIVAN: Nice to see you again.

24 MR. WHITNEY: You, too.

25 MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you for being here. I do

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1 want to go to WIPP, which you addressed in your opening  
2 remarks. And, again, by way of background, so the Board  
3 had this 2011 recommendation which was focused on the  
4 Waste Treatment Plant. There was an extent of condition  
5 review that was undertaken by the Department. And  
6 specifically at the WIPP site in January of 2013, the  
7 field office and your contractor issued a -- issued a  
8 report, and I want to quote from it. They said that "The  
9 integrated safety management system status is a stage III,  
10 indicating a fully mature culture has been achieved."

11 And then only 13 months later, they had a fire,  
12 followed by a radiological release incident. And the  
13 accident investigation board for the radiological release  
14 incident said, and I'm going to -- again, I'm going to  
15 quote, says that "NWP and CBFO have allowed the safety  
16 culture at the WIPP project to deteriorate, as evidenced  
17 by the workers' feedback that they do not feel comfortable  
18 identifying issues that may adversely affect management  
19 direction, delay mission-related objectives, or otherwise  
20 affect costs and schedule. Questioning attitudes are not  
21 welcomed by management, and many issues and hazards do not  
22 appear to be readily recognized by said personnel."

23 So, they did an assessment in January of '13 and  
24 said that they had a fully mature culture, and then 13  
25 months later we have incidents which lead to an



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1 investigation report that said the culture was not good at  
2 all. So, how did this happen?

3 MR. WHITNEY: Well, the January '13 self-  
4 assessment findings was clearly not the case, and so a  
5 couple of, you know, not excuses for that, but a couple of  
6 things that I'd like to mention is, one, we are focusing  
7 on the -- the guidance for conducting self-assessments and  
8 increasing the rigor and the structure and the consistency  
9 of those. And that's something that we are undertaking  
10 currently.

11 You know, the accident investigation board  
12 reports have been very clear on the problems that face  
13 WIPP from a culture standpoint, a safety culture,  
14 particularly comparing the mine culture to the nuclear  
15 safety culture and the -- the issues that -- that were  
16 found there. And, so, you know, we are focused. There's  
17 a lot of work going on right now as part of the recovery  
18 effort, a vast majority on basic safety management  
19 programs and getting those to where they need to be.

20 And that's, you know, back to my point before  
21 and the Secretary's, our focus is on safety and doing this  
22 safely -- safely going forward. And I'll be going out to  
23 WIPP next week, to Carlsbad, and you're welcome to join me  
24 if you'd like.

25 MR. SULLIVAN: Well, I will --

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1 MR. WHITNEY: Responding to your interest in  
2 going to -- to Carlsbad.

3 MR. SULLIVAN: I'll always look at the weather  
4 before I decide whether or not I'm going to go.

5 So, in the eight months that's -- that's  
6 transpired since -- since they had the incidents at WIPP,  
7 what has the Department done to look at the other places  
8 in your -- in your complex to see if you have the same --  
9 the same issues might be present there?

10 MR. WHITNEY: That's a good question. Now, we  
11 have not undertaken at this point a systematic review,  
12 extent of condition, based on what happened at WIPP. We  
13 do plan to look at that when the final report is complete.  
14 But what we have done is really focused our efforts  
15 working with the individual sites, you know, starting with  
16 -- with basic things like briefings from Joe Franco, the  
17 CBFO manager, to all the -- the other field office  
18 managers on -- on what happened, what were some of the  
19 issues they uncovered from, you know, Jim Hutton's group  
20 discussing some of the -- the deficiencies that were noted  
21 in the AIB reports.

22 And, so, we've -- we've tried to have a constant  
23 communication of the issues and the lessons we were  
24 learning as we -- as we go through this process, building,  
25 you know, to a great extent off the two AIB reports. And

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1 our plan is going forward when the final report is done to  
2 take those and look at them comprehensively and -- and see  
3 how we might be able to do something more systematic with  
4 respect to the condition across -- across the complex.

5 We have, of course, you know, as a result really  
6 of the fire incident tasked the entire EM complex with  
7 looking at deferred maintenance, doing a review of all  
8 deferred maintenance across the complex, specifically  
9 those that are -- have safety-related components. And,  
10 so, we have now received all of those inputs.

11 And that was -- that was in interactive and  
12 iterative process with Jim Hutton and his team, working --  
13 and headquarters folks working directly with the sites as  
14 those were being developed to understand that the guidance  
15 was understood by the sites and what they should be  
16 focusing on. And, so, we're pulling that information  
17 together to identify trends, lessons learned for the  
18 rest of the complex, and also to factor those things into  
19 our -- our planning and budgeting process.

20 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. But to be clear, we --  
21 this was a clear -- this was a case where -- where out in  
22 Carlsbad they said they had a good culture, and then 13  
23 months later only -- only by virtue of an accident and  
24 then an accident investigation board did we learn that  
25 that wasn't the case. Have we -- we haven't gone yet to

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1 the other sites to see if -- if we accurately have a good  
2 gauge on what their cultures are?

3 MR. WHITNEY: Well, that is part of our ongoing  
4 process with the -- you know, quite honestly, largely in  
5 response to the Board's 2011-1 Recommendation of things  
6 that we've done across the complex with safety-conscious  
7 work environment and the HSS independent assessments, as  
8 well. Those -- those are ongoing on safety culture and  
9 specifically nuclear safety culture.

10 Now, as far as taking specific lessons learned  
11 from the WIPP incident, I believe we're doing that on a  
12 daily basis and communicating what's come out of the AIB  
13 reports and what we found even since the -- the last  
14 report, the second report was complete by going into  
15 the -- into the mine and just, you know, looking at where  
16 we are and understanding exactly what's the situation  
17 that's in the mine.

18 We were able to take those things and  
19 communicate those out to the -- out to the sites, and not  
20 just, you know, send an email and say look at this, but  
21 actually engage and talk about it, answer questions,  
22 and -- and the sites amongst themselves, as well, I  
23 believe, have -- have done that on a regular basis, at  
24 least when I was, you know, in Oak Ridge, we did do that.

25 We had regular calls, monthly calls, just with

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1 the site managers, and we talked about issues, lessons  
2 learned. Of course, WIPP, you know, was the topic of the  
3 day on several of those conversations, and those -- those  
4 issues were communicated and -- and, so, I think we're  
5 doing it. I think, you know, my point was a systematic  
6 extent of condition focused explicitly on the findings  
7 from the WIPP might be premature until we get the accident  
8 investigation report three.

9 MR. SULLIVAN: So, you mentioned earlier that at  
10 WIPP the -- in the field office they're separating  
11 oversight from operations. Is that a model that you will  
12 be implementing everywhere in the -- within the EM  
13 complex?

14 MR. WHITNEY: Well, I think, you know, just from  
15 a principle standpoint, the oversight should not report up  
16 through the project in -- at any site. And, so, that's  
17 not something I've experienced at -- at other sites, but  
18 it is -- I believe is the right model. Oversight needs to  
19 be external to the actual project being executed. Yes.

20 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you.

21 MR. WHITNEY: Yes, sir.

22 DR. WINOKUR: One of the -- you know, one of the  
23 things Mr. Sullivan was talking about was the fact that  
24 you go out to a site, they tell you they have a great ISMS  
25 safety culture system, and then you have an accident that

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1 follows, so you really wonder whether or not, you know,  
2 the assessment or headquarters' perception of what's going  
3 on at the sites is what it needs to be.

4 And I -- I want to say that because you made a  
5 statement during your comments that you felt EM was a  
6 leader in safety culture.

7 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

8 DR. WINOKUR: Did you say that? I think you  
9 said that.

10 MR. WHITNEY: A leader in this -- this process  
11 that we've undertaken since 2012. And I -- and I think as  
12 a result now, I do think we're a leader in safety culture.  
13 And -- and at least I feel like this leadership team is  
14 focused on that, focused on communicating that message and  
15 fixing the problems that we have.

16 I mean, I'm not -- I'm not going to argue with  
17 you that -- that we have issues and that, you know, a  
18 report that comes out in January 2013 that essentially  
19 runs completely counter to what happened in February 2014  
20 is the situation that we want across our sites. And --  
21 and we're focused on, you know, trying to ensure that  
22 doesn't happen and really doubling down efforts.

23 I will tell you it's not for a lack of effort  
24 that these -- you know, that some of these things have  
25 happened. And we're going to continue focus and -- and

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1 we're working with experts from industry, from other  
2 organizations, trying to not keep this stovepiped, because  
3 obviously we have issues, and if the issues are in our  
4 organization, then we need to look out elsewhere for  
5 support and expertise and independent parties. And, so,  
6 we're doing that as well.

7 DR. WINOKUR: So, are you a leader in safety  
8 culture because you're working hard at it, or do you feel  
9 your sites really do have strong safety culture?

10 MR. WHITNEY: I feel that, you know, across our  
11 sites, there -- there is a strong safety culture, I do.  
12 And -- and I believe that we do have specific sites where  
13 we've had incidents, and we've had things happen that  
14 would -- would, you know, indicate otherwise. But I think  
15 generally across the board we do have a strong safety  
16 culture at our sites. But, you know, it's not perfect.  
17 It's imperfect.

18 And, you know, to be quite honest with you, I  
19 think no matter what line of work you're in, what industry  
20 you're in, your safety culture will never be perfect, but  
21 we should continue to strive for that, and that's what  
22 we're going to do.

23 DR. WINOKUR: Do you think you have a strong  
24 safety culture at Hanford?

25 MR. WHITNEY: I think we are continuing to make

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1 improvements towards getting to a strong safety culture at  
2 Hanford.

3 DR. WINOKUR: Okay, I have a question I had  
4 asked before of Administrator Creedon. I'd like to ask it  
5 of you, and that's the challenge that it -- that you face  
6 in terms of taking the message that the Secretary and  
7 yourself, the senior leadership of EM, you know, the  
8 vision, the commitment to safety culture, and translating  
9 it down to the workforce.

10 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

11 DR. WINOKUR: And there's a lot of levels of  
12 management in between that. And can you say anything  
13 about that mid-level management structure and what you  
14 think they need to do and how they need to be trained to  
15 make sure that you, in the end, do get the message without  
16 the rumors and without the really big rumors that Ms.  
17 Creedon talked about down and get -- get things moving in  
18 the direction you want?

19 MR. WHITNEY: Yes. Well, you know, first of  
20 all, I think that we recognize that, you know, no matter  
21 how good your safety culture policy is or your -- your  
22 programs are, if it's not implemented where the work gets  
23 done, you know, they're not of significant value. So, we  
24 recognize that and that's been one of the -- the focuses  
25 that we've had.



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1           I think it goes back to a question that you've  
2   asked about leadership, and it starts with hiring people,  
3   hiring the right people, and hiring folks that have the  
4   technical capability, but have -- that are also leaders  
5   and have the ability to lead. And that's at not just the  
6   headquarters leadership level but at the site, at the site  
7   level, and the mid-level managers at the sites.

8           So -- so, that is a very important issue for me  
9   and something that I've looked at very closely since I've  
10  been in this position. And, you know, and I think that  
11  it's something that from a human resources perspective  
12  that we need to focus on as a program. But we will, you  
13  know, continue to emphasize this.

14           And I think, you know, the message has to be  
15  communicated from headquarters. It can't be the push of a  
16  button on an email saying this is, you know, a letter,  
17  look at it. It has to be followed up with continuous  
18  communication via all-hands meetings, town hall meetings,  
19  and your leadership at the sites have to live it. And,  
20  most importantly, you know, they have to mean it, because  
21  people, you know, they know if you're not sincere, if  
22  you're just, you know, stating a motto or a slogan. They  
23  -- they realize it and they get it, so you really have to  
24  work at it.

25           And I think, to me, safety culture is -- it's

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1 not complex, but it takes a lot of effort and a lot of  
2 time, it really does, and you have to invest and you have  
3 to make a concerted effort to put in the time. And it's  
4 the same as general organization -- organizational  
5 culture, which in my mind you can't really separate the  
6 two. They're intertwined, and so it's -- but it is, from  
7 my perspective, the most important thing that you do as a  
8 leader is not solve the technical issues, it's to lead  
9 people and -- and develop a culture that is the right  
10 culture for their organization, that promotes getting  
11 things done and empowers folks to get things done, both on  
12 a safety basis, a project basis, and all that we do.

13           You have technical staff to help you resolve the  
14 technical decisions, and you can make -- our technical  
15 issues, you can make decisions on that, but that's our  
16 most important quality that I think that we need in  
17 leaders. And, so, I think it all starts there. And, so,  
18 I think your questions were very appropriate for the topic  
19 this morning, and I agree completely with those.

20           DR. WINOKUR: Thank you.

21           Ms. Roberson?

22           MS. ROBERSON: Thank you. Thank you for your  
23 comments, Mr. Whitney.

24           MR. WHITNEY: Thank you.

25           MS. ROBERSON: Let me ask you, do you -- are you

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1 confident that your site offices and your contractors  
2 understand your expectations in this area?

3 MR. WHITNEY: I'm confident they understand  
4 expectations.

5 MS. ROBERSON: Are you confident they understand  
6 your expectations? You're the leader --

7 MR. WHITNEY: Yes. I'm confident they  
8 understand my expectations. I meet with the site office  
9 managers who are direct reports to me as EM-2 and, you  
10 know, we -- every -- on a -- we have a biweekly call with  
11 each of those. It's a regular scheduled call. And then I  
12 end up talking to each one probably a few times a week on  
13 different issues, but safety is, on our biweekly calls,  
14 always part of our agenda on our call to talk about that.

15 And the performance plans, although I didn't  
16 develop the previous ones, I thought they were pretty good  
17 for the senior executives and the direct reports when it  
18 comes to safety. And then I am taking a performance  
19 evaluation process right now, and then we'll move into the  
20 planning process for the next fiscal year.

21 And I've already taken an interest in that,  
22 making sure that those expectations are captured in those  
23 plans, because it helps in addition to communicate  
24 obviously to someone to see exactly what they're going to  
25 be held accountable for. So, I do -- I do think my

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1 expectations are understood in this area.

2 MS. ROBERSON: Okay. And, so -- and maybe it's  
3 just me. I mean, I kind of know EM has definitely been  
4 aggressive on the front end to getting their assessments  
5 done, looking at certain procedures. And I know you guys  
6 are working on sustainment plans. What isn't quite so  
7 visible is where there are specific concerns or  
8 weaknesses. Are corrective actions being taken? Are you  
9 holding your sites accountable for corrective actions for  
10 real problems in the middle?

11 MR. WHITNEY: Yeah. And -- and, yeah, I mean, I  
12 think that's the daily basis types of things that  
13 you're -- you're talking about, the real problems that are  
14 encountered, but also the problems that have come up in  
15 the assessments. And, so, yes, I mean, that's -- and  
16 those problems span, you know, project, safety, security,  
17 all -- all issues. We are holding them --

18 MS. ROBERSON: So, how are you doing that?

19 MR. WHITNEY: Excuse me?

20 MS. ROBERSON: So, how are you holding them  
21 accountable?

22 MR. WHITNEY: I'm doing it through, you know,  
23 one to the performance process and the regular --

24 MS. ROBERSON: The contract performance process?

25 MR. WHITNEY: For the -- for my senior

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1 leader -- for the feds, through the regular, you know, SES  
2 performance review process. With respect to I think, you  
3 know, WTP's a good example of, you know, contractor  
4 assurance and some of the issues that were identified in  
5 the 2011-1 Recommendation. And what we've done since that  
6 time, recognizing that that was -- that was an issue is  
7 really kind of refocused our performance evaluation  
8 management process for the contractor to pull in and focus  
9 more on the things like technical issue resolution, self-  
10 identification of problems and really working through  
11 these issues that are directly associated with -- with the  
12 Board's recommendation and our implementation plan.

13 And, so, we think that's a good example of what  
14 we are doing. And I think we're making -- I think we are  
15 making progress in that area. I don't want to sound  
16 naive, but -- and I realize the 2014 report, you know,  
17 indicated that we still have a lot of work to do, and we  
18 agree with that. But I do think we are making progress as  
19 -- through a combination of these efforts.

20 MS. ROBERSON: So -- so, let me ask you, because  
21 I think experience is instructive. So, I think you  
22 probably gave us the short answer, I'm hoping. But we  
23 talked about when Mr. Sullivan was asking about WIPP and  
24 what's been done in the complex. So, I understand the  
25 final investigative report is not done yet.

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1 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. ROBERSON: But you already know that you  
3 thought you had a site that had a pretty good culture of  
4 safety, but they had weaknesses in fundamental safety  
5 management programs.

6 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. ROBERSON: So, are you looking at your other  
8 sites, as well, to see -- you talked about deferred  
9 payments. I would say fire protection, emergency  
10 management. What are you doing to make sure the  
11 correlation between what -- where they think they are -- I  
12 think -- I don't know who, maybe it's the Secretary that  
13 uses this term "perceived performance is actual  
14 performance." So, there are things you already know,  
15 lessons learned you already know. So, I'm going to ask  
16 you again, are you taking any of those lessons learned to  
17 the other sites?

18 MR. WHITNEY: Yes.

19 MS. ROBERSON: Okay.

20 MR. WHITNEY: Definitely on that -- on a really  
21 -- I would say a continuous basis, the lessons learned  
22 from WIPP, we are taking to other sites. I do think we  
23 need to do -- my point was I do think we need to do --  
24 take a more systematic approach once we have the final and  
25 really, you know do a comprehensive review and see if, you

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1 know, and do something a little more formal. But, yes,  
2 ma'am, in response to your question, we are.

3 MS. ROBERSON: So -- so, same question I asked  
4 the Deputy Administrator: How are you assuring yourself  
5 that what is being done are the right things? You have  
6 tools, metrics? I know that there are going to be metrics  
7 kind of at -- maybe at the site level, operational level,  
8 but as an executive running a program, what are you --  
9 what kind -- what are you going to view to help you  
10 understand whether actions that are being taken are  
11 leading things in the right path?

12 MR. WHITNEY: Yeah, that's a good question. And  
13 I think that it's important to have that headquarter  
14 federal oversight of what's going on in the field. And,  
15 so, one of the things that the Secretary mentioned was the  
16 safety culture improvement panel that came out as an  
17 action from the consolidated report.

18 That panel, one of the first orders of business,  
19 and the Secretary indicated the charter is being  
20 developed, and I think within the next few weeks that  
21 charter will be finalized and the panel will be  
22 established. But one of the first orders of business, I  
23 understand, is the development of metrics that can be used  
24 in this area, that we can have as a -- a DOE-wide system  
25 of metrics.

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1           It's not -- I think this is going to be a hard  
2 one. It's really going to be a hard one to quantify some  
3 of these things, right, because so many of them are  
4 qualitative in nature. But -- but we have taken -- my  
5 understanding is that is going to be on the, you know,  
6 current agenda as one of the first things that we take up  
7 with this panel.

8           MS. ROBERSON: So -- so, one other -- one other  
9 example, and I don't want to whip it to death, cleanup  
10 project at Idaho, you also had a self-assessment done on  
11 that project as a part of -- part of 2011-1. And then  
12 there was an incident, and the -- one of the root causes  
13 of the cause of that incident was a lack of a questioning  
14 attitude. The attributes of a healthy safety culture  
15 weren't necessarily evident.

16           So, what's -- what are you -- what is happening  
17 on that project to try to address -- because it -- I mean,  
18 we -- we do talk about this takes a long time, but you  
19 don't really have a long time on that project, right?

20           MR. WHITNEY: Yeah, yeah. That's a good point.

21           MS. ROBERSON: You hope not.

22           MR. WHITNEY: We want the treatment unit to --  
23 to function and not be obsolete by the time we start  
24 operating, right? So, yes. But to the point, I think one  
25 of the things that is indicative to me that we have, you



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1 know, addressed, not resolved the issue, but addressed  
2 that issue with respect to IWTU is the fact that we are  
3 being deliberate through the commissioning process.

4           You know, it's going on two years now, two  
5 years, and we're not going to get ourselves into a  
6 situation where we start operating a facility that's not  
7 ready for prime time. And, so, I think that's actually a  
8 really good sign, although some may take it as a bad sign,  
9 but our focus is on getting through the startup and  
10 commissioning process in a manner where we have confidence  
11 it's going to work.

12           And of course the site -- I think we have  
13 good -- very strong management at the site now. You know,  
14 we have hired Jack Zimmerman, you may know, as a -- the  
15 federal manager for the EM program there. And he brings a  
16 wealth of experience and expertise with him. And  
17 particularly in safety culture, as well, and has been  
18 involved in some of these things from a complex DOE EM  
19 complex-wide perspective. And he gets it.

20           And so we -- and we have also most recently -- I  
21 think as a -- an example or an indicator that this group  
22 has become more of a learning organization and they  
23 clearly weren't before. We have -- they have brought in  
24 folks that were the THOR Corporation that developed the  
25 technology to get help in this area. We've also brought

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1 in NETL to provide additional expertise in a fluidized bed  
2 processing. And, so, we're -- we're working together to  
3 try to resolve the issue, but I think -- I think they've  
4 come -- I think they've come a long way, and I think they  
5 understand what the expectations are. I think we have the  
6 right -- I do think we have the right folks in place right  
7 now to do it.

8 MS. ROBERSON: Well, let me just say one last  
9 thing on this question. It doesn't mean I'm done talking  
10 forever, just now. The -- when we had our other hearings,  
11 one of the things we asked a lot of questions about  
12 because we actually formally raised it in our response to  
13 the Department's IP, and that was a  
14 concern -- we had reservations about the effect of relying  
15 on self-assessments.

16 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

17 MS. ROBERSON: And we asked a lot of questions  
18 in our previous hearings, and we understand that's a --  
19 that's an essential tool, but clearly one of the things I  
20 walked away with is that is not sufficient. And when I  
21 kind of look at EM, it's, to me, maybe not to you, it's  
22 kind of any activity that had an independent assessment,  
23 they got some pretty tough feedback.

24 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

25 MS. ROBERSON: Self-assessment, not so much.

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1 So, I guess my question is, you know, going back to the  
2 questions about WIPP, why do you have confidence that you  
3 have a good picture of your operations where they did  
4 self-assessments?

5 MR. WHITNEY: And that's a good question. I  
6 think, you know, self-assessments are imperfect by nature  
7 -- human nature, right? And they're never going to be  
8 perfect. I do think part of the value of those is going  
9 through the process. From my experience in the field,  
10 that was tremendous. And, again, it goes back to being  
11 sincere about it and committed to it and so the folks --  
12 you know, the folks that are in the organization actually  
13 believe that you mean -- you know, mean what you say.

14 I think, you know, we have found the -- the same  
15 thing, that we need to refine the rigor and the structure,  
16 the consistency of the guidance that we're providing to do  
17 self-assessments to hopefully tweak those a little bit. I  
18 do think it's important to point out that the independent  
19 assessments and the self-assessments as are captured in  
20 the consolidated report, they did align fairly closely as  
21 far as the attributes that, you know, required most of the  
22 -- you know, a very thoughtful approach, and most of our  
23 attention.

24 But you're right, the tone is -- is clearly  
25 different. And, you know, I do think a healthy self-

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1 assessment focuses on the things that need to be fixed.  
2 You know, you can have a line in there, you know, if you  
3 feel like your organization is doing a good job, that you  
4 got to focus on the things that need to be fixed, and --  
5 because that's, you know, that's what we need to be, you  
6 know, addressing when we go through the self-assessments.

7 But I think by nature they are going to be  
8 imperfect and, you know, just the whole -- the survey  
9 process and the difference in responses between the  
10 management and the employees, you know, there's always --  
11 I think I read somewhere that there's usually a 15 to  
12 20 percent difference in responses, right, because leaders  
13 -- the leaders, you know, kind of think that they're  
14 evaluating themselves.

15 MS. ROBERSON: Right, exactly.

16 MR. WHITNEY: And, so, they want to be a little,  
17 you know, less harsh on themselves.

18 MS. ROBERSON: Right.

19 MR. WHITNEY: Because they are trying to do the  
20 right things and put the right things in place, and I  
21 think that is a true statement, you know, across -- across  
22 the board, so...

23 MS. ROBERSON: All right. Thank you very much.

24 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you.

25 DR. WINOKUR: I think you mentioned something

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1 about the qualitative nature of safety culture just a  
2 moment ago, and I would just point out that the Board's  
3 initial recommendation came from the fact that we were  
4 concerned that safety culture was making it difficult for  
5 the waste treatment plant project to actually address its  
6 technical issues. And I think there's more than a few  
7 examples of that recently, whether it's solving technical  
8 issues at WTP or preventing accidents at the WIPP facility  
9 or addressing criticality concerns at Los Alamos.

10 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

11 DR. WINOKUR: I mean, this is a -- this is a  
12 theme, and we were told during one of our hearings that a  
13 new book, "A Life in Error" by James Reason, talks about  
14 the importance of safety culture as being this overarching  
15 theme as to why issues occur. So, I would just -- I would  
16 just raise that for your attention.

17 MR. WHITNEY: Right, thank you.

18 DR. WINOKUR: I wanted to ask you, we have  
19 discussed a few times today about the diverse nature of  
20 the organization. You have a very large organization.  
21 Are there sites -- I kind of got at this before. Are  
22 there sites in EM that you think really are the better  
23 sites for safety culture that can provide leadership to  
24 the other sites or where you can harvest lessons learned  
25 and apply them?

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1           MR. WHITNEY: I think that the latter part is  
2 more important, actually, because I think everyone's, you  
3 know, hit on it this morning, that you can't necessarily  
4 transplant a whole safety culture. What you try to look  
5 for are key elements, just like we do for the broader  
6 safety culture attributes, try to look at key elements  
7 across organizations that work, that are effective,  
8 whether it's, you know, what NRC does, what INPO does,  
9 what we do, and try to -- try to adopt those and adapt  
10 them, but also take lessons learned from the individual  
11 sites, those folks that are -- do -- are having success  
12 in, you know, specific areas and then try to, you know,  
13 transplant those across sites to, you know, to kind of fit  
14 into their site-specific organizational culture, because  
15 despite how, you know, we may feel that, you know, we can  
16 move around the DOE and the EM program, we have sites all  
17 over the place and people probably perceive that we move  
18 around different sites.

19           You know, in reality, most people stay at a site  
20 for their entire career, and that may not be the best  
21 thing, but that's -- that's generally how it works. And,  
22 so, there's a lot more than organizational culture that  
23 impacts safety culture. It's like the community. It's  
24 what goes on all around you.

25           And, so, it's hard to, you know, take whole

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1 elements from one site to another, but there are, I think,  
2 lessons learned that we can -- can take from some sites  
3 and some things that sites do -- do well. And, you know,  
4 as ironic as it may sound, I think that what WTP and ORP  
5 is going through right now and the processes that they're  
6 focused on, although, you know, I think to date there has  
7 been some marginal improvement, but as their 2014  
8 assessment indicated, it's -- we've got a long ways to go.

9 I think there are things that we can learn from  
10 what they're doing because, you know, activities, you  
11 know, they're going through a lot right now, and they  
12 really are focused on that. And they have some good ideas  
13 and some good things that they're implementing that we  
14 want to support. And we want to -- we want to take them  
15 to other sites, and we want to bring them to headquarters,  
16 too, some of these things that I'm hearing about.

17 DR. WINOKUR: Do you have a site that pops in  
18 mind as a leader in safety culture in EM, one of them that  
19 just you look at, you --

20 MR. WHITNEY: I wouldn't single out a specific  
21 site. I wouldn't.

22 MS. ROBERSON: Well, why not?

23 MR. WHITNEY: Well, based on the previous  
24 leadership at Oak Ridge, I would say that they are far and  
25 above...

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1 DR. WINOKUR: Okay. Mr. Sullivan?

2 MR. SULLIVAN: So, we've talked about WIPP and  
3 Hanford a lot. We've heard Idaho mentioned. You just  
4 mentioned Oak Ridge, so I don't want the folks in Savannah  
5 River to be -- feel left out. Is it -- is it good there?

6 MR. WHITNEY: I -- I think that Savannah River,  
7 like many of our -- like all of our sites, they have areas  
8 where they can improve in safety culture. I did have an  
9 opportunity to visit and, so, you know, I'm basing my  
10 assessment on one visit and a lot of conversations with  
11 different folks in the organization, both at Savannah  
12 River and at Headquarters.

13 I think in general they -- they have a -- a good  
14 safety record. It's hard for me to judge safety culture  
15 right -- I don't want to say that it's a great safety  
16 culture just because I don't know that it is  
17 right now, and I just need to be on the job a little bit  
18 longer to kind of form those assessments, but obviously  
19 it's a -- a very important site to us with, you know, one  
20 of the sites and one of the missions we consider our --  
21 you know, our riskiest and the things that we need to  
22 address. And, so, we are paying a lot of attention to  
23 that.

24 So, I do, you know, talk about this a lot with  
25 Dr. Moody and with folks at Headquarters on the Savannah



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1 River site, not just the mission, but the safety, and try  
2 to focus on those things. So, I'm going to withhold  
3 complete judgment. I don't have anything to indicate that  
4 they have, you know, significant safety culture issues.

5 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. And I'll just add from my  
6 perspective, I'd agree with that. My -- my vision of --  
7 my view of what Dr. Moody does down there is that he runs  
8 a pretty good show.

9 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

10 MR. SULLIVAN: So, like I said before, there  
11 are good things out there. Let's go back to your  
12 experience at Oak Ridge, and just talk to me specifically  
13 about the things either you did or that you saw their  
14 federal leaders doing that you thought particularly  
15 was -- were good things, things that you'll be encouraging  
16 your other field office representatives to do.

17 MR. WHITNEY: Well, you alluded to one, a little  
18 different, you know, take on it from, you know, going from  
19 Headquarters, getting out to the field, but site office  
20 managers and the management in the field, they have to get  
21 out to the facilities. They got to get out, walk around,  
22 talk to people, ask people questions, and not just --  
23 fact-grabs are great, and I rely on them tremendously to  
24 let me know what was going on and, you know, I always had  
25 a line in to them to talk about things. You got to talk

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1 to the folks doing the work, the contractors, other  
2 federal folks there.

3 And, so, a lot of it, I think, is just as basic  
4 as -- as walking around, talking to people, letting them  
5 know -- understand that you actually are -- care about  
6 safety and what they're doing in general.

7 It gets back to what I said earlier, which this  
8 isn't a complex issue, but it is an issue that requires a  
9 lot of time and commitment and, you know, and different  
10 type of approaches given different type of environments.  
11 And, so, that is something -- of course, we went through  
12 the safety-conscious work environment self-assessment  
13 process, as did the other sites.

14 And -- and I found that to be a very -- a very  
15 good process. And that was kind of the source of my  
16 comments at the beginning about, you know, it's kind of  
17 the process itself had a lot of value because, you know,  
18 we use that to -- not just do interviews -- you know, have  
19 our team that was responsible for it doing interviews, and  
20 doing surveys.

21 And, you know, I was hands-off. You know, the  
22 person leading that reported to me at the end with -- with  
23 the results, but also just to have -- once we had the --  
24 the self-assessment complete and developed our own -- I  
25 think we called it an action plan, just to show that we

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1 were actually committed to the things that we outline and  
2 we tried to be, you know, tried to be, you know, very fair  
3 and harsh on ourselves, and then meetings with -- with --  
4 with the federal staff. Of course, the contractors did a  
5 self-assessment as well, or did self-assessments as well  
6 and went through the same process.

7 So, I mean, I think communication and actually,  
8 you know, saying it and then meaning it and then following  
9 through on it with the most important thing being the  
10 follow-through.

11 MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

12 MR. WHITNEY: Thanks.

13 DR. WINOKUR: Ms. Roberson?

14 MS. ROBERSON: Mr. Whitney, you mentioned this  
15 in your opening comments. I have a few questions on the  
16 independent assessment of EM itself, the federal  
17 workforce. Have you guys developed a set of corrective  
18 actions for some of those, you know, fairly significant  
19 weaknesses that surfaced in that assessment? Do you guys  
20 have a corrective action plan -- or an action plan or  
21 whatever you want to call it?

22 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

23 MS. ROBERSON: Something that says you're going  
24 to reverse --

25 MR. WHITNEY: Yeah, we -- we don't have a formal

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1 corrective action plan, and I'm going to turn just to make  
2 sure real quick? Is that correct?

3 We don't have a formal corrective action plan,  
4 but we did take actions associated with -- with the  
5 assessment of the EM program, and -- and we had talked  
6 about it earlier as being not a very positive assessment  
7 of our safety culture. And, so, the answer is we don't  
8 have a corrective -- we do not have a formal corrective  
9 action plan.

10 MS. ROBERSON: So, how do all the people in EM  
11 in the organization know you've taken those actions? How  
12 do you communicate to them when you -- because they  
13 participated in the assessment, so they knew there were  
14 problems.

15 MR. WHITNEY: Mm-hmm.

16 MS. ROBERSON: How do they know what actions  
17 you've taken?

18 MR. WHITNEY: This is also a part of the process  
19 that we're going through with the -- with -- with all the  
20 other assessments that we're doing across the complex, but  
21 specific to Headquarters, it is through the all-hands  
22 meetings, communication directly with folks, and whether  
23 it's emails or EM Fedcasts or, you know, the town hall-  
24 style meetings with employees to talk about these specific  
25 issues.

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1 MS. ROBERSON: Okay. So, one specific thing I  
2 wanted to ask about that report was a quote. In the  
3 report, HSS stated that "Some senior managers indicated  
4 that they do not perceive that they have any direct  
5 responsibility for safety and that the site  
6 representatives have the interest in following safety  
7 issues." Do you believe that EM senior managers now have  
8 a better understanding of their responsibilities for  
9 safety?

10 MR. WHITNEY: Yes. And that -- yeah, that's a  
11 good example of one -- one of the actions that, you know,  
12 has been taken to address that. My predecessor did  
13 outline his expectations and roles and responsibilities  
14 and accountability in this area, and those types of things  
15 are also being pulled into the performance plans of the  
16 senior executives. That's a completely unacceptable  
17 viewpoint to have for a senior leader at Headquarters.

18 We're all responsible for safety, and, you know,  
19 we look to Jim, that was the next part of the, I think,  
20 critical comment that EM-40 is the one that has to deal  
21 with that. We look to him for his technical expertise and  
22 for guidance and for help. But, you know, he's no more  
23 accountable or responsible than the rest of us. So, no, I  
24 don't agree with that, and we have taken concrete actions  
25 to make sure that the expectations are understood.

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1 MS. ROBERSON: Okay.

2 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you, Ms. Roberson. Do the  
3 Board members have any other questions for Mr. Whitney?

4 MS. ROBERSON: No.

5 MR. SULLIVAN: No.

6 DR. WINOKUR: If not, then I want to thank you,  
7 Mr. Whitney. Thank you for your testimony and answering  
8 the Board's questions.

9 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you.

10 DR. WINOKUR: And I want to thank both of our  
11 last two panelists, Ms. Madelyn Creedon and Mr. Mark  
12 Whitney, for their dedication to safety practices designed  
13 to continuously improve and sustain safety in both the  
14 operations and in the design and construction work at  
15 DOE's defense nuclear facilities. Thank you.

16 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you.

17 DR. WINOKUR: And you are excused now. Thank  
18 you.

19 At this time, per the Board's practice, we would  
20 like to end the hearing by providing an opportunity for  
21 comments from interested members of the public. It is my  
22 understanding that we do not have any requests to speak at  
23 this time, but I do want to look to the audience and ask  
24 if anybody would like to make a public comment.

25 Seeing none, with that, I'm going to turn to the

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1 Board members for their closing comments, and then I will  
2 end with my comments. Ms. Roberson?

3 MS. ROBERSON: No closing comments, Mr.  
4 Chairman.

5 DR. WINOKUR: Mr. Sullivan?

6 MR. SULLIVAN: No, I have none.

7 DR. WINOKUR: Thank you. I will now provide my  
8 closing remarks. To begin with, I'd like to thank  
9 Secretary of Energy Moniz, Principal Deputy Administrator  
10 Creedon, and Acting Assistant Secretary Whitney for  
11 supporting this meeting. I want to thank all the members  
12 of the public, as well as congressional staffers, elected  
13 officials, and other representatives of state and local  
14 organizations who were able to find the time to join us  
15 today, either in person or on the internet.

16 An active community with engaged leaders is a  
17 vital part of any successful program of this nature. As  
18 we learned during our previous public meetings,  
19 establishing and maintaining a robust culture of safety is  
20 not easy. It is hard work and requires dedication and  
21 commitment from all members of the organization, in  
22 particular from senior leaders.

23 Today, we had the opportunity to hear from the  
24 Secretary of Energy and senior leaders of the Department  
25 of Energy about their experiences, perspectives, and goals

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1 related to the status of safety culture at the  
2 Department's defense nuclear facilities and planned  
3 actions for future improvement.

4 Our goal for the previous two meetings in this  
5 series was to learn more about the relationship between  
6 organizational culture and safety, how culture can be  
7 monitored and changed, how cultural change can be used to  
8 improve safety, and how leaders are the essential factor  
9 in making those changes.

10 Using the understanding gained through this  
11 series of meetings, the Board will continue to evaluate  
12 the effectiveness of the implementation of its  
13 Recommendation 2011-1 and consider whether future action  
14 is necessary.

15 Once again, I want to thank everyone for their  
16 participation at this meeting. The record of this  
17 proceeding will remain open until November 7th, 2014. I'd  
18 like to reiterate that the Board reserves its right to  
19 further schedule and regulate the course of this public  
20 meeting and hearing, to recess, reconvene, postpone, or  
21 adjourn this public meeting and hearing, and to otherwise  
22 exercise its authority under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954  
23 as amended.

24 This concludes the public meeting and hearing of  
25 the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. We are now



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1 adjourned. Thank you all for attending.

2 (Whereupon, the public meeting and hearing was  
3 adjourned at 11:24 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, LINDA METCALF, CER, the officer before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the proceeding was digitally recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; that said testimony is a true record of the event; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any of the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

LINDA METCALF, CER