

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 26, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 26, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh and T. Dwyer were on site all week. J. Deplitch and OE R. Lewis were on site all week for EMEX 99-1. M. Moury and OE R. West were on site Tuesday through Friday observing W87 LEP readiness activities.

W87 Life Extension Program (LEP): Although the DOE readiness review (RR) for the W87 LEP was supposed to begin this week, the 9 day suspension in the middle of the contractor RR resulted in delaying the DOE review. The M&H RR ended on Thursday, and was limited to assessing the adequacy of implementing the W87 authorization basis (AB). The M&H RR team developed 3 pre-start findings: 1] evidence of proper implementation of several AB controls is lacking; 2] the knowledge level of USQ evaluators is not sufficient to ensure adequate change review; and 3] the M&H AB Management Plan is not being followed in several areas. There were also 3 significant post-start findings: 1] administrative controls from the fire hazard analysis have not been fully implemented; 2] AB training is ineffective, as demonstrated by oral interviews; and 3] several issues were raised concerning the Pantex Activity Controls Manual (control linking document). The pre-start findings are to be closed prior to starting the next unit, while the post-start findings may not be closed until expiration of the current W87 AA. The DOE RR will follow the M&H declaration of readiness, which is projected for April 3rd. Overall, it was apparent from this RR that M&H had prematurely declared readiness again.

Emergency Exercise 99-1: An all-day, site-wide emergency exercise was held on Wednesday, March 24th. This was the first emergency exercise to involve a major response from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The scenario involved a forced takeover of the West Gate by a radical group, the taking of hostages, a weapon of mass destruction (nerve agent, VX), a bomb planted and exploded in a parking lot, and a "suspicious" package found in Zone 12. The exercise evolved to the point where the FBI took control of the tactical situation and was assisted as necessary by M&H and DOE. The exercise was predominantly a security and protective force response. The response was generally adequate with some difficulties in command and control and exchange of information among the response elements. However, there were several issues with safeguarding simulated nuclear weapons in transit at the start of the exercise -- in particular, two man control was compromised. Additionally, the search efforts and techniques M&H personnel used to locate a possible bomb in Zone 12 were poor.

Pantex emergency action level (EAL) procedures were also reviewed. Although the EAL procedures showed significant improvement over the last review, the indicators to aid in determining the appropriate emergency action level were not adequate.

W56 Dismantlement Program: Another unit has been brought into the bay, to commence dismantlement Monday. This will make the 3rd attempt to complete a unit in this program.