

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 18, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending April 18, 1997.

1. DNFSB Activity Summary: Both Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh were on site all week.

2. New Issues:

a. Environmental Restoration Program Funding Problem: Mason and Hanger Corporation and Battelle-Pantex (the subcontractor which manages environment restoration at Pantex) recently identified that the rate of spending on environmental restoration programs in FY 1997 has not been managed well. Had the current rate continued for the remainder of the fiscal year, the program would have overspent its \$9 million dollar budget by about \$2.5 million. While most of the projects planned for FY 1997 have been completed, two major projects have been placed on hold to conserve the remaining cash. Those projects are soil cleanup for high explosive/radiation sites and completing Firing Site 5 interim corrective measures. The former project involves primarily remediation of HE contamination. The latter project involves remediation of a gravel pit with depleted uranium contamination located near Firing Site 5.

3. Issue Follow-Up:

a. Linac Bay Resumption: MHC moved a W62 into a linac bay this afternoon (April 18) and expects to radiograph it tomorrow. A W87 is also scheduled to be radiographed tomorrow.

b. W69 Nuclear Explosive Safety Study: The W69 Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS), which began February 4, 1997 concluded on April 11. The Site Representatives provided a draft copy of the final report, dated April 10, to the technical staff for review. The NESS Group concluded that, "upon resolution of the issues identified in the report, the W69 nuclear explosive operations will have adequate positive measures to ensure nuclear explosive safety and will satisfy the three Nuclear Explosive Safety Standards and other nuclear explosive safety criteria specified in DOE Orders and Directives." However, the report identifies numerous issues (including 16 pre-start requirements) that will not be easy to resolve. Many of the issues raised in the system-specific NESS are actually generic issues (and are identified as such). These issues include several of continuing concern to the staff including lightning protection, fire protection, and on-site transportation. Additionally, the staff has questions concerning the specification of some issues as either pre-start or post-start, for example the report recommends adding two new general Nuclear Explosive Safety Rules (NESRs -- similar to Technical Safety Requirements) but classifies these recommendations as post-starts.

c. W79 Dismantlement: The W79 Project Team met this week to rework the W79 dismantlement schedule. This schedule indicates that the first dismantlement unit (FDU) will begin on April 8, 1998. The detailed schedule will be available for review next week but early indications are that even the April 1998 date may be optimistic. As an example, the schedule only allows eleven weeks from the date of distribution of the NESS Single Integrated Input Document to the completion of the NESS. Previously, the schedule showed 21 weeks.

d. B61-5 Dismantlement: A B61 Mod 5 Nuclear Explosive Safety Rule (NESR) requires that, prior to disassembly, an electrical test will be performed to ensure that one of the weapon safety systems is in place. This is the electrical test that was originally intended to be performed during receipt inspection in Zone 4 but had to be modified to be performed during mechanical dismantlement in the bay. The revision to the NESR was required to accommodate physical changes to the weapon system made during a recent alteration. Prior to beginning a disassembly on April 10, a weapon failed this required test. Following procedures, the Production

Technicians (PTs) discontinued the operation and notified their supervisor. After being notified, the Design Agency (SNL/NM) directed MHC not to repeat the test but rather to go ahead with disassembly using a unique Nuclear Explosive Engineering Procedure that essentially treated the unit like a Mod 2 (which does not even have the safety system in question). The unit was successfully dismantled and the failed component was sent to the Sandia Weapons Evaluation Test Laboratory for evaluation. The Site Representatives noted that five days elapsed between when the unit failed the test (and thus failed to satisfy the NESR) and the day the Occurrence Report was issued.

4. Future Activities:

- a. April 23 - W56 Project Team Meeting
- b. May 2 - W79 DMSO Check Out RA starts
- c. May 15 - M&H AT-400A Corporate ORR begins (estimate)
- d. May 27-June 9 - W87 WPRR
- e. June ? - DOE AT-400A ORR (following conclusion of M&H ORR)

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