

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 9, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending May 9, 1997

1. DNFBSB Activity Summary: Harry Waugh was on site all week with Jay DeLoach. The majority of this week was spent observing dismantlement operations. Chip Martin was also on site to attend the DOE Explosive Safety Engineering Conference.

2. W69 SS21 NESS: M&H is attempting to resolve a number of issues as result of the W69 SS21

NESS which was concluded on April 10. Some of the major NESS issues being addressed are poor fire detection and suppression systems used in the bays and cells where conventional HE is processed; lack of positive measures regarding HE operations in bays to minimize the threat to nuclear explosive safety of transported nuclear explosives; inadequate seismic evaluation of the bays and cells used for nuclear explosive operations; and inadequate engineering analysis of cracked concrete ceilings in Zone 12 bays. It is estimated that W69 dismantlement cannot begin before August 8 and, as a result, the following programs will be impacted: B61 Mod 7 NESS revalidation; W76 SS-21 tooling; and the W76, W78, and W56 HARs.

3. DOE Technical Competence: DOE ALOO does not plan to advertise or open the vacant DOE AAO Manager position to competition. DOE ALOO is currently interviewing selective SES personnel to fill this position.

4. Aerial Radiation Survey: An aerial (helicopter) radiation survey was conducted of 64% of the Pantex Plant and all of the public lands within two miles of the Pantex Plant fence line. Preliminary measurements are at or below background. Zones 12 and 4 and their surrounding areas were not surveyed due to nuclear explosive safety concerns of a low altitude aircraft overflight.

5. SS-21 Facility Layout Issue: The Site Reps observed that B61 Mod 5 dismantlement activities in Bldg 12-64 Bays are contrary to the facility layout described in the SS-21 style NEOPs. EP 401110B, *Integrated Safety Process for Assembly and Disassembly of Nuclear Weapons*, requires a facility layout that "addresses applicable safety criteria." The facility layout is an integral part of the NEOP, however, the current NEOPs categorize the facility layout as "guidelines" which has resulted in various interpretations in the positioning of weapons components and number of weapons being worked on at one time. DOE AAO and M&H are reviewing this issue and its potential impact on other bay and cell operations.