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Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations
Hearing on Emerging Threats: Assessing Nuclear Weapons Complex Facility Security
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INTRODUCTION

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your Subcommittee to discuss physical security at our nuclear weapons facilities. Secretary Abraham and I are committed to assuring that the security at our nuclear weapons facilities remains strong and effective to protect the American people and our national security assets.

A central focus of the NNSA, since its establishment in 2000, has been on security and the improvement of our overall program management. Numerous internal and independent evaluations of the effectiveness of our physical protection systems across the NNSA, including on-site inspection, rigorous force-on-force exercises, in-depth analyses and evaluation have verified that the overall security posture is strong and that we have made changes to address the security challenges in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. While we have made progress, we know that we can make additional improvements.

We are actively engaged in addressing issues identified through formal internal and independent reviews. Overall, I strongly believe that the physical security at each of our sites is, and will continue to meet our security challenges.

The protective forces throughout the nuclear weapons complex are exemplary. These professional men and women protect some of the nation's most critical assets. Since September 11th the demands on these forces have increased, and they have responded in kind. During the nation's elevated security conditions, our protective forces have logged numerous hours of overtime a week, while maintaining utmost diligence. I therefore, continue to be very proud of the men and women who protect the nuclear weapons complex.

I would like to outline the basis for the physical security programs at our sites, the improvements we have made and continue to make since the attacks of September 11, and to address the issues identified in your hearing invitation, including those in the draft GAO report (GAO-03-471).

SECURITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 9/11

Immediately following September 11, then Administrator John Gordon visited each of our most critical facilities to review security measures, both those in place and those planned for implementation. Within days NNSA completed a Vulnerability Assessment of the nuclear weapons complex and an NNSA Counter-terrorism Task Force was established to review current policies and operations. The NNSA also initiated a "Red Team" review of nuclear weapons facilities, known as the Iterative Site Analysis (ISA) Process. It involves in-depth planning and information gathering meant to simulate the activities of real-world adversaries. These were followed by weeks of uninterrupted analysis and table top security exercises using departmental and special operations personnel to test to failure the sites' security by going above the Design Basis Threat.

Specific actions taken at the sites include:

- Hiring additional guard force personnel to man increased numbers of posts
    - on-hand protective forces, from 1,780 in 2000 to our current strength of approximately 2,165
- Enhanced physical protection measures such as vehicle barriers and searches; use of explosive detection devices and dogs
- Increased stand-off distances from buildings and road closures
- Additional security awareness and threat awareness training for employees
- Reconfiguration of storage vaults
- Increased access controls
- Consolidation of nuclear materials, assessments, and plans for additional improvements such as road-closures/reconfigurations
- Revisions to procedures for elevated security conditions (SECON)

In January of this year, the NNSA issued the Security Condition (SECON) Policy Implementation Letter to clarify requirements for NNSA facilities, when changing security protection levels consistent with the Department of Homeland Security threat levels.

Protective Forces

Protective measures at NNSA sites result from an interpretation of the threat by the potential adversary, which is described in the Design Basis Threat (DBT) document. I understand Mr. Mahaley will provide information about the DBT and the process by which the Department arrived at the new DBT. It is important to understand, however, that the DBT is the principal factor which influences how we provide security to our sites

and how much security we provide at each site related to its relative "attractiveness" with respect to potential targeting by terrorists. Following the determination of the DBT a process that my office was fully engaged in as it was developed by Mr. Mahaley, we use a number of tools to understand what its implications may be. Those tools include vulnerability assessments of various types, which can include "force-on-force" exercises to provide as realistic as possible an understanding of what terrorists might be expected to attempt to do. The assessments also frequently use sophisticated computer modeling tools, provide excellent insights into possible attack scenarios that could be employed and how those scenarios may be defeated by our protective forces. The various tools are then factored in to the preparation of a Site Safeguards and Security Plan (SSSP) for each nuclear site, a plan which helps the site manager understand how to employ the most effective protection strategy for his or her site.

During the course of the year various other forms of assessments are conducted at each site. They include self-assessments by the contractor operating the site to determine how the site is performing in each of the major areas of security. They include federal surveys or surveillances by NNSA federal staff to review how the contractor is performing. And they may also include Headquarters reviews by the Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance (OA). The various reviews look at, among other things, protective force performance at each site against the threat scenarios expected for that site. They also include reviews of areas such as personnel security (the clearance process), information security, related to the protection of classified and sensitive information, and materials control and accountability, the management of nuclear

materials at each site. The result of these various reviews and assessments gives us an overall understanding of the situation at each sight.

Although Mr. Podonsky is testifying in more detail, I would like to speak briefly about the results of such reviews at NNSA sites over the last couple of years. Overall, the results of the most recent OA inspections have been positive, with the majority of areas reviewed being rated as "Providing Effective Performance." In some cases, areas were rated as "Needs Improvement." NNSA management is working to ensure that site managers remain focused on providing effective processes and making necessary improvements.

GAO

You have asked for my views on the draft GAO Report regarding the NNSA Safeguards and Security Program. As you know, the draft report provided four summary recommendations on areas where improvements could be made. These include: (1) defining clear roles and responsibilities for the NNSA headquarters and field site operations; (2) consistency in assessment of contractor security activities; (3) overseeing contractor's corrective action plans; and (4) allocating sufficient levels of federal staffing to site offices. I would like to address each of these recommendations.

Defining clear roles and responsibilities for the NNSA headquarters and field site operations

We have long recognized the need to clarify roles and responsibilities at NNSA, and we have done so. My predecessor, Administrator John Gordon, announced NNSA's strategy for improving effectiveness and efficiency in the February 25, 2002, ***Report to Congress on the Organization and Operations of the National Nuclear Security Administration.***

On December 19, 2002, I approved an organizational realignment standing up the new NNSA, creating eight Site Offices and one integrated Service Center, and disestablishing three Operations Offices. NNSA stood up a new organizational structure that: (1) removes a layer of management by disestablishing Operations Offices; (2) locates NNSA support and oversight close to the laboratories and plants by strengthening Site Offices; (3) consolidates support functions in a single Service Center organization; and (4) allows NNSA to adopt challenging staff reduction targets to be achieved by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2004.

NNSA's Site Office Managers have been designated the contracting officers responsible for integrating direction for the contractor. We further clarified safeguards and security roles and responsibilities by formally issuing the Functions, Responsibilities and Authorities Manual for safeguards and security functions in May 2003. GAO's report saw a snapshot from the old system, which we recognized as inadequate for the new, reengineered organization. We have made substantial progress, and we are heading in the right direction.

Consistency in Assessment of Contractor Security Activities

In its report, the GAO notes that reliance on surveillance is not consistent with DOE Orders calling for a comprehensive survey of a contractor's safeguards and security performance. NNSA has proposed language in the current revision to DOE Order 470.1, DOE O 470.1A, to include "Continuous Surveillance" as a recognized form of survey. In our efforts to improve processes, this is an example of getting ahead of the paperwork,

but having good intentions. We are taking a formal look at trends to ensure that the surveillance process we formalize will continue to meet the requirements.

Overseeing Contractor Corrective Action Plans

The GAO report noted that contractors have not consistently prepared corrective action plans to include formal, thorough, root cause analyses as called for in DOE policy and that the NNSA site offices had not identified such instances for correction by the contractor. The report also identified the need to assure that performance measures established for the contractor measure qualitative factors of contractor efforts wherever possible.

In late April, NNSA headquarters issued policy implementation guidance to its site offices to assure the thoroughness and documentation of corrective plan root cause and cost-benefit analyses. In addition, contractor performance of the safeguards and security program is an element of each of NNSA's annual contractor Performance Evaluation Plans (PEPs). The Plans are developed and owned by the Site Office Manager, who also serves as the site Contracting Officers and shares line management accountability for all operations at the site. The Site Office Managers develop the PEPs with input from the HQ program and staff offices. The performance measures addressing safeguards and security in the PEPs are generally qualitative in nature, and impact on the amount of fee that is earned. The Site Office Manager determines the level of contractor performance against the PEP, again with input from the HQ program and staff offices. The final annual performance ratings are approved by the NNSA Administrator who also makes the fee determination decision.

Allocating Sufficient Levels of Federal Staffing to Site Offices

We have looked carefully at the Site Office staffing levels and believe we have correct requirements for Federal staff. The current targets, issued in February 2003, were chosen to achieve the objectives of (1) performing the functions assigned in the Matrix of Functions and Activities by Location and (2) avoiding duplicating functions at Site Offices that could be performed as effectively at the Service Center or should be performed at Headquarters. Between February and August 2002, teams representing the future Site Offices and Service Center worked on developing a detailed matrix containing key functions and activities performed within the NNSA and assigning lead and participating roles to either the Sites, the Service Center and/or Headquarters. In October 2002, NNSA's senior leadership requested that Site Managers prepare staffing plans based upon assigned functions and workload. We held an NNSA staffing "summit" at the end of February 2003 in which each NNSA manager briefed his or her plan to the Leadership Coalition.

Safeguards and security is an important part of this NNSA effort. Where critical vacancies exist, hiring, support from the Service Center, other site offices and/or headquarters are all available options to assure each NNSA site has the appropriate skills mix to effectively execute their safeguards and security program assessment responsibilities. Finally, while the draft report references comments from the Department of Energy's Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance regarding the potential to weaken security oversight if staffing and expertise at site offices are not addressed; they have also stated that NNSA's reorganization steps, to date, have helped to clarify roles and responsibilities for security oversight and that future plans have the potential to further strengthen security oversight.

Improvements/Management Challenges

Following release of the new Design Basis Threat (DBT) document in May, each NNSA site has been tasked to develop an implementation plan by this September. The new DBT will require each site to prepare a revised Site Safeguards and Security Plan, that outlines each site's protection strategies against our expanded threats. As a result, changes in operational procedures, materials and asset location, protective force deployment, application of technology and other efforts will be identified and factored into revised site SSSP's. Resources associated with any necessary changes will be identified from within existing or future budget requests.

The primary cause of NNSA's high Protective Force overtime rate and lack of time for Protective Force training is the increase in periods of elevated Security Condition consistent with raising the national threat level to Orange. The problem has been exacerbated by delays in the access authorization process for granting "Q" clearances to newly hired protective force personnel. A significant cause of the delay is the statutory requirement for all Security Police Officer clearances to be managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Congress is considering an Administration proposal to give the Secretary of Energy more flexibility to refer some investigations to the Office of Personnel Management. The sites have begun to use the Accelerated Access Authorization Process; Headquarters has established a working group to streamline the DOE/NNSA process; the Albuquerque Service Center is now prioritizing clearances for FBI processing, on a site allocation basis. Progress is beginning to be made. As overtime is reduced, opportunities for training will increase.

The NNSA is continuing its efforts toward material consolidation. We have obligated funds to move, consolidate, or increase storage of nuclear materials at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratory, and the Y-12 Plant. In concert with the consolidation effort are our efforts to integrate operational planning with security requirements. Two excellent examples are the Highly Enriched Uranium Manufacturing Facility at Oak Ridge and the proposed new Modern Pit Facility at the Savannah River Site. In both of these cases the Administration's security experts and operations personnel are working hand in hand to ensure that the new facilities can operate efficiently while maintaining required security. Though this approach requires a longer lead-time to address both sets of issues, the Administration believes this to be the correct approach.

Part of our approach in providing the required security discussed above is our pursuit of technology to enhance security while reducing potential jeopardy to our Protective Forces and reducing their associated long-term costs. Toward that end, beginning in FY 04 NNSA will pursue improvements in our ability to address Chemical and Biological threats; physical protection of Protective Forces; recapture and recovery of NNSA assets; improved detection and assessment; and complex wide access authorization data sharing. We will continue to assess and make changes to assure our physical security programs are effective and responsive to the evolving security challenges. This includes continued communication and sharing of issues, lessons learned and best practices and an emphasis on senior management involvement and accountability.

Design Basis Threat

I'd like to say a few words here about NNSA and the Design Basis Threat (DBT). This document identifies and characterizes potential adversary threats to selected Department nuclear weapons, components and facilities. We worked closely with the Office of Security in the development of the DBT that was issued last month. At no time during the NNSA evaluations or deliberations was budget a determining factor. The DBT by its own terms is a goal we are focusing on reaching. We are currently evaluating and will adjust the budget accordingly. It is premature to discuss the specific implementation or resultant costs at this time. We are working closely with the sites to develop cost-effective implementations plans in response to the requirements in the DBT.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to leave you with my assurance that I believe our nuclear complex security posture is strong. On going improvements are necessary both with respect to our facility protection posture, because the threat is always changing, but equally, as GAO has rightfully pointed out, our management of the nuclear safeguards and security program needs further improvement. I want to leave you with the assurance that the Secretary and I are personally committed to ensuring effective safeguards and security across all our operations. I would be pleased to answer any questions.