

National Security Council Meeting
June 24, 1987, 11:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m., Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: Security at DOE Nuclear Weapons-Related Facilities (U)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

State:

Mr. Michael Armacost
Mr. Allen Holmes

White House:

Senator Howard Baker
Mr. Kenneth Duberstein
Mr. Frank C. Carlucci
LG Colin L. Powell
Captain Linton Brooks
Colonel Donald Mahley

Treasury:

Secretary James Baker

OSTP

Dr. William Graham

Defense:

Mr. William Taft
Mr. Robert Barker

Justice:

Mr. Arnold Burns

Transportation:

Mr. James Burnley

Energy:

Secretary John Herrington
Admiral Sylvester Foley
Mr. Michael Seaton

OMB:

Mr. James Miller

CIA:

Mr. James H. Taylor

JCS:

General Robert T. Herres
Vice Admiral Jonathan Howe

Minutes

The meeting opened at 11:05 a.m. in the Cabinet Room. The agenda was as shown at Tab A. The President, after recalling a visit he had made to Hanford (a Department of Energy facility in Richland, Washington) 30 years ago, used his prepared talking points, to make the following opening remarks: (C)

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- I've long believed that the security of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials is immensely important. (U)
- If we ever have an incident that even comes close to having such materials fall into the wrong hands it would have devastating consequences both here and overseas. (U)
- I've followed the reports of John Herrington's efforts to improve security at the Department of Energy, but this is the first time I've had a chance to hear the details face-to-face. (U)
- I know a great deal of work has been done since I was last briefed, and I'm looking forward to hearing about it. (U)

Carlucci: John [Herrington] has the floor and Howard [Baker] can kibitz. (U)

Herrington: Mr. President the two men who will present the briefing to you have done a great deal of the work to improve security. Admiral Bob Foley [Assistant Secretary of Energy for Defense Programs] has briefed you before. With him is Colonel Mike Seaton, U.S. Air Force Retired [Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safeguards and Security]. We'll be talking about aging facilities and about the weapons production complex, not commercial reactors. We've done a lot over the past two years to improve our security here and we're looking forward to telling you about it. (C)

Foley: Mr. President we are going to tell you about how safeguards have improved. You will like the story. We have spent a lot of money on improving our physical security. Based on my 25 years in the Navy I would say the Department of Energy is at least as good as the military, and sometimes superior. We have come a long way. Mike Seaton will now give you some of the details. (C)

Seaton: Good morning Mr. President. It is a personal honor for me to brief you. You chartered in 1983 a special group I chair, an interagency group to focus on the safeguards and security of the Department of Energy nuclear weapons production complex. As Secretary Herrington said we are going to just focus on the weapons production complex this morning and provide you some information as a supplement to the annual reports you alluded to your opening remarks. (C)

Mr. Seaton then presented the briefing at Tab B. The briefing, lasting approximately 20 minutes, was interrupted twice: once for the President to take a phone call concerning an ambassadorial appointment, and once for the following discussion concerning anti-nuclear protesters at the Nevada test site: (C)

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Herrington: It is the policy of the local county not to prosecute the trespassers. They arrest them and then subsequently release them. (C)

The President: Maybe we should wait and arrest them after you have done the tests. (C)

Baker [James]: Why can't they be prosecuted? You mean the U.S. Attorney won't prosecute? (C)

Herrington: The issue is the cost of prosecution. They have told us that they can't prosecute unless we send them money. (C)

Burns [Department of Justice]: I will look into this. That policy doesn't make sense to me. (C)

Herrington: I agree. (U)

The briefing then resumed. After completion of the briefing the following discussion ensued:

Carlucci: We might note that this is a good example of government and private sector cooperation. The Central Training Academy mentioned in the briefing is run by a private corporation. I was on the board of that corporation, and John's [Herrington] people did a superb job of making sure we were being responsive to their needs. (C)

Herrington: John Dingle [Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee] has a full staff supervising us, any time, night or day. We get a lot of Congressional oversight. I think they agree that we are doing it right. (C)

Baker [Howard]: This shows an amazing improvement. I remember when I first looked into this subject as a member of the old Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. There was essentially no security in those days. We have come a long way since then and you should be proud of it. One issue that I didn't hear mentioned was the accountability of special nuclear material. I'm sure you are doing things there as well. (C)

Herrington: When I first took this job that was one of the things that scared me. We have so much material going in and a smaller amount coming out. Most of it is manufacturing loss. (C)

Baker [James]: Is there any reasonable basis to believe that any of it has ever been diverted to a foreign country? (C)

Herrington: No, not in my estimation. Our controls are the strictest in the world. The diversion problem comes primarily from nations like India and Pakistan, and from other countries like France which do have the same strong controls on special nuclear materials that we do. (C)

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Baker [James]: I should know, but what's Pantex, is that the name of a facility or is that the name of a town? (C)

Herrington: It's a facility near Amarillo, the largest employer in the county. (C)

The Vice President: I was impressed by the picture you showed of the enriched uranium. What do you do with that material? (C)

Herrington: It's milled and machined into weapons components. (C)

Baker [James] then asked a question on the operation of nuclear weapons; Mr. Seaton responded by giving a simple explanation of the use of plutonium in implosion primaries and the use of enriched uranium in secondaries. (S/RD)

The Vice President: When you haul these weapons in trucks over the country, are the bombs capable of being used or is some component missing? (C)

Seaton: A component called the fire set is removed so the weapons could not operate. (S/FRD)

Baker [James]: Are any weapons stored overseas? (C)

Taft: We do that. We'll be back to tell you about our safety and security both in this country and overseas later. I think that's set for July 10. We too think we have a good story to tell, although we don't do things exactly the same. For example, we transfer most of our weapons by air. (C)

Baker [Howard]: I suggest that as you get ready for that you do what I used to do when I went to Europe. I would hear these security briefings, and then at the end I would ask the security officer "how would you penetrate the system?" That's the best way to find out the real situation. (C)

Foley: We do that. We run exercises that use the expertise of the security officers. I personally approve each scenario for our exercise, both for realism and for the impact on the surrounding community. I don't want to wake up and find all sorts of things in the papers about problems we have. (C)

Carlucci: The contractors have made a great effort to work with the local communities and pay attention to community relations. (U)

The President: This is quite impressive to me, especially when compared to the pictures of Hanford 20 years ago. (C)

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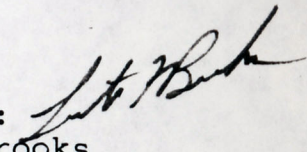
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Carlucci: This concludes the meeting. Thank you for coming.
(U)

Mr. Carlucci closed the meeting at approximately 11:40 a.m. (U)

Attachments

Tab A	Agenda
Tab B	DOE Briefing

Prepared by: 
Linton F. Brooks

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