

Testimony by Michael R. Anastasio
Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Before the
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

April 20, 2007

Good morning Chairman Stupak, Ranking Member Whitfield, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to update you on our progress.

I am Michael Anastasio, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory since June 2006, and president of Los Alamos National Security, LLC.

I am pleased to report that we have continued to make significant progress on many fronts since I last addressed this Subcommittee 11 weeks ago. Today, in keeping with the subject of this hearing, I will focus on security. As I expressed at the last hearing, I personally take the issue of security at Los Alamos very seriously. We are entrusted with some of the nation's most important secrets and I view their safeguarding as one of my most significant responsibilities.

First, we have significantly cut our risks in both cyber and physical security. This includes reducing and consolidating our classified holdings, per the Subcommittee's stated concern. Second, we are taking additional actions to make policy clear and consistent--and to change employee behavior. Third, we are putting in place comprehensive corrective actions with a major focus on long-term sustainability.

My management team, my Board of Governors, and I are taking a number of specific actions to reduce risk.

Cyber security

We now have positive control over both our classified computer ports, using a combination of software, physical locks, and tamper-indicating devices. All of our classified systems have been inspected and found to be compliant. We have reduced the number of stand-alone classified systems by 28 percent.

Physical security

We have made our vault escort requirements clearer and much tougher, requiring the search of all belongings carried by those escorted in and out of vaults. By December, we will have reduced our accountable classified removable electronic media (known as ACREM) by 50 percent. We have destroyed almost 1,500 classified parts and 500 boxes of classified documents that we inherited. We have eliminated 14 vault-type rooms, a reduction of 10 percent--with more to come.

Policy and behaviors

In the area of policy and behaviors, we have uniformly trained our Information Systems Security Officers (ISSOs) and are hiring senior ISSOs in all key organizations to provide consistency throughout the Laboratory.

We are making our cyber security policy clearer and simpler. In addition to mandatory training, we will promote the right behavior through active employee participation. For example, we will directly involve employees through worker-led security teams at multiple levels.

On March 5, we launched an enhanced substance abuse program. Every newly hired employee is tested for illegal drugs, and every badgeholder is now subject to random testing, regardless of his or her clearance level.

New type of vault-type room

For long-term effectiveness and sustainability, we have begun constructing a super vault-type room, the first of its kind. This will allow us to consolidate and control classified information uniformly. At the same time, it will give authorized users efficient access.

I expect to complete construction of the first functional prototype by June. This project will initially allow us to close at least six more vault-type rooms and reduce our ACREM libraries by nearly one-third.

By constructing additional super vault-type rooms, we will reduce the number of classified vaults to an absolute minimum, consistent with our operational requirements.

Validation, verification & oversight

We have been careful to embed validation and verification into our corrective action plans to sustain all these efforts and to prevent backsliding. Moreover, everything we're doing is being closely scrutinized—not only by Congress but by my own Board of Governors and by DOE, NNSA, and other oversight bodies. I welcome that continuing scrutiny. It validates that we're heading in the right direction--and keeps our eye on the ball.

Conclusion

As I testified previously on this issue, there are no “silver bullets” where security is concerned. But, with these security enhancements, and Board of Governors support and oversight, we are aggressively moving Los Alamos in the right direction, as we are on many other fronts vital to the Lab's mission.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.