



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

March 5, 2010

### MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: ~~GLENN S. PODONSKY~~  
~~CHIEF HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY OFFICER~~

SUBJECT: March 3, 2010, Senate Hearing on Protective Force  
Personnel Issues

Recently I testified on behalf of the Department before the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The subject of the hearing was defined by the recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled: *Nuclear Security: DOE Needs to Address Protective Forces' Personnel System Issues*. Also presenting testimony were Mr. Gene Aloise, Director of the GAO's Office of Natural Resources and Environment, and Mr. Mike Stumbo, President of the National Council of Security Police (NCSP). Significantly, this was the first Congressional hearing in the history of the Department to concentrate exclusively on protective force (PF) personnel matters.

The hearing focused on the perceived need to achieve definitive resolution to a range of PF career progression and retirement issues that, to varying degrees, have posed challenges to the Department since its foundation. Mr. Aloise restated the GAO report's conclusion that the Department needed to do a more systematically effective job of managing these issues. Mr. Stumbo called attention to the dilemmas confronting PF members as age or injury impact their ability to continue their careers to a reasonable retirement age. I emphasized the Department's understanding of these issues and the need for all interested parties to work together to arrive at meaningful, broad-based solutions.

Both Messrs. Aloise and Stumbo called attention to the 29 recommendations presented last June by our PF Career Options study group and acknowledged them, in response to a question from Senator Nelson, the Chairman of the Subcommittee, as offering a sufficient basis for achieving the long-sought goal of resolving these issues. I concluded by stressing once again that these were matters in which the Department's line management and policy elements would have to work together, and that final direction would be subject to the desires of the Secretary. The subcommittee members who participated in the hearing demonstrated active involvement with the issues and in possible solutions. Senator Nelson closed by encouraging the Department to move forward along these lines, assured of continuing strong congressional interest in the final outcome.

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act requires that the Secretary and the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration submit both a formal response to the GAO report and, at the same time, a "...comprehensive, DOE-wide plan to identify and implement the recommendations of the study group." These actions are due to Congress on April 30, 2010. This effort is already under way, and many of you have already received requests for support



from your respective program offices. In order to assure that our deliverables meet the expectations of Congress and the needs of the Department's senior leaders, the preparation effort will necessarily broaden and intensify in the next several weeks.

Since 9/11, the Department has taken great strides to ensure that the vital national security interests entrusted to us are effectively protected. In particular, we've accomplished a genuine transformation, through improved tactics, training, weapons, and technology, in the capabilities of our protective forces. Mr. Aloise, in response to a question from Senator Nelson, ratified our accomplishment by characterizing DOE's current security posture as "robust." This reflects immense credit on each and every one of you and on our security community as a whole.

However, our results in placing PF careers on a footing commensurate with the force members' vital role in our national security mission have not kept pace with our achievements in tactical and technical performance. While the Department fully understands the difficulties that must be overcome, we've demonstrated in recent years that the security community knows how to work together to meet such challenges. Given the level of congressional interest and the engagement of our senior leadership, we are presented today with a special opportunity.

Recent events at the Holocaust museum, Fort Hood, and now at the Pentagon should serve as reminders that lethal violence directed at government facilities of high symbolic value—facilities such as our own—can erupt at any time. Those of us who work every day in these facilities—managers, administrators, scientists, scholars, and engineers—spend their work days secure in the knowledge that they are surrounded by a dedicated, well-trained corps of security professionals. Our current PF careers initiative should be viewed in that light.

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