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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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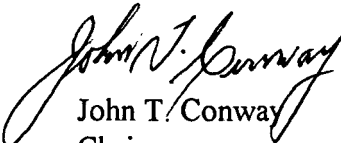
The Honorable Victor H. Reis
Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-0104

Dear Dr. Reis:

The Department of Energy (DOE) recently completed its Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for the W48 pit repackaging in the new AT400A containers at the Pantex Plant. The staff of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) observed the review on July 21-25, 1997. A staff trip report containing some observations from this review is enclosed for your information and use. The Board looks forward to continued progress in this important area.

The Board was pleased to note that the team led by DOE-Albuquerque was supplemented with Core Technical Group members from the Nevada Operations Office, the Rocky Flats Field Office, and DOE Headquarters. The Board encourages this practice as an excellent method for bringing needed expertise to an ORR and expanding the experience base for conduct of ORRS at all sites.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.
Mr. Bruce G. Twining

Enclosure