

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 1996

# DOE RELEASES POST-COLD WAR PLANS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX PLUTONIUM STORAGE AND DISPOSITION--IDAHO FALLS MEETING APRIL 15

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The United States is taking an important step to reduce the global nuclear danger and increase national security in a post-Cold War world. Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary has released a blueprint for a nuclear weapons complex of the future that maintains the safety and reliability of the stockpile without underground testing, and operates more cost-efficiently and safely. Under the preferred alternative, by 2005 the nuclear weapons production complex would be one-fifth of its size at the height of the Cold War. The Secretary also has detailed approaches for the long-term storage and ultimate disposal of surplus weapons-usable plutonium.

The Department of Energy will conduct a public meeting Monday, April 15, Shilo Inn, on the long-term storage and disposition of surplus weapons-usable plutonium. The meeting begins at noon with a display Client and registration. Identical workshops are scheduled from 1-5 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.

Pre-registration can be completed until 3 p.m. (EST) April 12 by calling

1-800-820-5134.

Copies of the Fissile Materials Disposition PEIS are available by calling the pre-registration number. Also, information will be available in the INEL public reading room at University Place in Idaho Falls, and reading rooms in the Pocatello, Shoshone-Bannock, Twin Falls and University of Idaho libraries and the INEL Boise Office.

The draft Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) analyzes long-term storage options and technologies to dispose of surplus weapons-usable plutonium so that it cannot be reused in nuclear weapons. Without specifying preferred alternatives, the draft PEIS identifies three long-term storage alternatives for plutonium and highly enriched uranium: upgrade at multiple sites; consolidation of plutonium at a single site; and co-location of plutonium and highly enriched uranium. The six candidate storage sites are: the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, Hanford Site, Nevada Test Site, Oak Ridge Reservation, Pantex Plant and

## Savannah River Site.

Plutonium disposition alternatives identified as reasonable fall into the following categories:

- Immobilization: Glass and/or ceramic forms
- Reactor Burnup: Mixed oxide (MOX) fuel
- Deep Borehole: Directly or immobilized forms.

For those unable to attend the Idaho Falls meeting but who would like to provide comments:

Oral comments via a recorded phone message may be made by calling 1-800-820-5156,

Written comments may be mailed to the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fissile Materials Disposition, P.O. Box 23786, Washington, D.C. 20026-2786,

Written comments may be faxed to 1-800-820-5156,

Written comments may be sent on Internet to:

*<http://web.fie.com/ntdoc/fed/doe/fsl/pub/menu/any/index.html>*

The Secretary also has released the Department's draft Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, which discusses the future capabilities required for the three weapons laboratories (Los Alamos, Sandia and Lawrence Livermore), the four industrial plants (Kansas City, Pantex, Savannah River and Oak Ridge Y-12) and the Nevada Test Site. The INEL is not a candidate site for any actions under this PEIS.

The comment periods continue to May 7, 1996. Final Environmental Impact Statements and Records of Decision are expected to be issued between August and December 1996.

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Media Contacts: At DOE Headquarters--

Barbara Wetherell, Joanne Johnson, (202) 586-5806

At INEL--

John Walsh, (208) 526-8646