

Defense Quotables

Department of Energy: *Time for Reform*

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Chairman, House Armed
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On June 24, 1999, former U.S. Senator Warren Rudman, chairman of President Clinton's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), testified before the House Armed Services Committee on security and organizational problems at the Department of Energy. The PFIAB's conclusions: DOE's security and counterintelligence operations have been relegated to low priority status for decades; organizational disarray, managerial neglect, and a bureaucratic culture of arrogance at DOE and its labs contributed directly to security problems; and, DOE is a dysfunctional bureaucracy characterized by serious mismanagement and an inability to reform itself. The PFIAB recommended the creation of either an independent agency or a semiautonomous agency within DOE to be responsible for the stewardship of U.S. nuclear weapons.

The Problem

"The Department of Energy is a dysfunctional bureaucracy that has proven it is incapable of reforming itself." PFIAB Report, June 1999, p. 4

"DOE has so many overlapping and competing lines of authority that people are rarely held accountable for failure." PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999

"The Department of Energy sadly in some ways is broken. It's time to fundamentally restructure the management of the nuclear weapons labs and establish a system that holds individuals accountable." PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999

"We found recent cases... of foreign scientists visiting labs without proper background checks or monitoring, classified computer systems and networks with innumerable vulnerabilities... top level bureaucrats who could not tell us to whom they were directly accountable, instances where secure areas were left unsecured for years, thousands of employees being granted security clearances with no good reason. And in the middle of all of this, there were confirmed cases of espionage, the damage from which we may never know." PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999

"Every time a President or a Secretary of Energy or a Congress has run up against the DOE bureaucrats, [the DOE bureaucrats] have won. [The DOE bureaucrats] are willing to wait it out." PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999

"Management dilemmas include overlapping roles and responsibilities, lack of clarity with respect to the chain of command, and confusion over the roles of line [managers] versus staff..." The Organization and Management of the Nuclear Weapons Program, Institute for Defense Analyses, February 27, 1997, p. 1-8

"The disorderly organization within DOE has a pervasive, and negative, impact on the working environment..." Report of the Commission on Maintaining United States Nuclear Weapons Expertise (The Chiles Commission), March 1, 1999

“... the lack of headquarters integration imposes unnecessary burdens and costs on DOE’s field operations. Creating the necessary management framework is a daunting challenge, but one that sorely needs to be taken on.” *The Organization and Management of the Nuclear Weapons Program, Institute for Defense Analyses, February 27, 1997, p. V-15*

“[DOE’s security record is] intolerable. In fact, for this entire government, I happen to think it’s a disgrace to the nation.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“[DOE’s] organizational structure is widely regarded as one of the most confusing...and it has made the creation, implementation, coordination, and enforcement of consistent policies very difficult over the years.” *PFIAB Report, p. 8*

“The root cause of the difficulties at DOE is simply that DOE has too many disparate missions to be managed effectively as a coherent organization. The price of gasoline, refrigerator standards, Quarks, nuclear cleanup and nuclear weapons just don’t come together naturally.” *Assistant Secretary of Energy for Defense Programs Vic Reis, July 14, 1999*

The Solution

“People think it would somehow weaken the ability of the Secretary to hold his subordinates in a semiautonomous agency accountable. That is simply not true. The Secretary will have more direct power to hold people accountable because the locus of responsibility will be more clearly defined and fixed.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“It’s not about security, it’s not about counterintelligence; it’s about whether we are going to have a system of management that holds each and every person at every level of this structure accountable and responsible to security.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“DOE’s problems have to be solved in an all-or-none fashion.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“If you get accountability, you will get security, you will get counterintelligence. You simply can’t move the deck chairs. You’ve got to change the way this operates.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“Because of the overwhelming and damning evidence of security failures and the profound responsibility that comes with the stewardship of nuclear weapons, it’s time to fundamentally restructure the lines of authority to the weapons labs and their security...” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“The Congress and the President, in a bipartisan way, have an opportunity to do what none of their predecessors have done — step up to the plate, making lasting reform, and fundamentally restructure DOE.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“The nuclear weapons labs need to be semiautonomous from DOE... that change needs to be substantial and codified in law.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*

“This Congress has the capability, the talent, the staff to do what has to be done. Question remains is there A) the political will, and B) is there enough sense of urgency to get it done. I think the answer to both should be yes.” *PFIAB Chairman Rudman, June 24, 1999*