

University of California Regents' Meeting  
Update on Department of Energy Laboratories  
September 17, 2008

Bruce B. Darling  
Executive Vice President

Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Energy security, climate change, national security, and the need to contain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are at the top of the national and international agenda.

The nation's presidential candidates, the Executive Branch and the Congress are looking to Los Alamos and Livermore National Laboratories, among other institutions, for solutions to these challenges.

Let me give you three examples of how the Labs are addressing these challenges:

First, in spite of increasing geopolitical tensions, cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation is continuing between the United States and Russia. When the former Soviet Union dissolved, the Labs began to work with their counterparts in Russia to secure nuclear materials and nuclear weapons that were located in the former Soviet Republics. The Labs helped Russia set up secure repositories for these materials to prevent their improper use. And the Labs are installing solar energy sources in hundreds of Russian coastal lighthouses to replace and secure the nuclear energy sources that have previously powered these lighthouses.

Second, Los Alamos is the designated international facility to train all of the International Atomic Energy Agency nuclear inspectors. These inspectors are responsible for physically inspecting nuclear facilities in Iran, North Korea and other proliferant countries to monitor their nuclear activities in an effort to ensure compliance with international treaties and governmental commitments to limit or reduce nuclear weapons.

Last, secure energy sources is a critical issue for this country and the community of nations. Slightly less than 20% of U.S. electricity is produced by nuclear power plants. One-half of the highly enriched uranium that fuels these power plants comes from dismantled Russian

nuclear weapons. So our nuclear power plants are reducing the availability of these materials to terrorists while, at the same time, generating electricity for American businesses and homes. Yet, one of the greatest problems with nuclear power is the waste nuclear materials generated by these power plants. These materials must be stored in secure locations for tens of thousands of years.

Livermore is developing a new technology, based on the National Ignition Facility, that will produce energy in a safe, sustainable manner: a) without carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to global warming, b) that will burn existing inventories of nuclear materials - both from nuclear weapons as well as from the waste products from nuclear power plants, and c) will not generate additional nuclear waste materials.

The two Labs are also advising the bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. It will make recommendations to the Congress and the new Administration on the future of U.S. nuclear weapons, missile systems and non-proliferation programs.

The Commission Chair is former Secretary of Defense William Perry. The Vice Chair is James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense and Energy. Bill Perry is a member of the Boards of Governors of the Limited Liability Companies that manage Los Alamos and Livermore. He is also the Chair of the Mission Committees for both Boards.

The Lab Directors will meet with the Commission at the end of September to provide technical advice on these issues as well as on the scientific capabilities needed to sustain America's strategic security.

Regent Pattiz, that concludes my remarks. I would like to invite Los Alamos Director Mike Anastasio to give you a report on the accomplishments of Los Alamos during the past two years under the new contract.