



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Inspector General
Office of Audit Services

Audit Report

Management of the Department's Protective Forces

DOE/IG-0602

June 2003



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 3, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: *Greg Friedman*
Gregory H. Friedman
Inspector General

SUBJECT: INFORMATION: Audit Report on "Management of the Department's Protective Forces"

BACKGROUND

The Department of Energy and its contractors are responsible for protecting materials and facilities critical to the Nation's nuclear defense program, as well as those used to support scientific, research, and environmental-related missions. While the security of Department sites has been a priority for many years, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Department took action to enhance security at its facilities. One important aspect of this initiative was an increased need for additional protective force personnel. For example, at National Nuclear Security Administration sites, authorized positions increased by 17 percent, to 2,319 officers. Once all positions are filled, annual security force costs for those sites are expected to exceed \$251 million for the current fiscal year, an increase of 67 percent.

In previous reports, the Office of Inspector General identified a number of efficiency concerns relating to the Department's management of its protective forces. In light of these concerns, we initiated this audit to evaluate the Department's management of its protective force program.

RESULTS OF AUDIT

Our review disclosed that in the post-September 11 period, a number of improvements had been made in the management of the protective force program. However, we noted that the Department still faced a number of challenges that could adversely affect the program. Specifically, we observed:

- Long delays associated with granting clearances for newly employed protective force officers;
- Significant increases in unscheduled overtime costs;
- Morale and potential retention problems based on mandatory overtime and declining training opportunities; and,
- Operational vulnerabilities associated with unscheduled work stoppages.



Clearly, the Department, like other Government agencies, faced a number of challenges relative to the unanticipated demand for supplemental security forces immediately after September 11, 2001. Now, however, the Department has the opportunity to improve the operation of its protective force program by taking advantage of accelerated methods of processing security clearances for officers, implementing related contractor performance expectations, and developing an overall protective force contingency strategy. Implementation of these measures should enhance management of the protective force, ultimately reduce costs for mandatory overtime, and help ensure that sensitive national defense and other mission-related facilities are appropriately protected.

We noted that the Department had already taken a number of actions to reduce the impact of heightened security on overtime costs. For example, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) issued guidance granting authority to arm protective force personnel who have "L" – rather than the higher level "Q" – clearances to help alleviate overtime costs and free up officers to attend required training sessions. NNSA also initiated a study to determine how to decrease unscheduled overtime to an acceptable level. Additionally, the Department has begun the process of hiring approximately 400 more officers to reduce unscheduled overtime.

While these are positive steps, additional action is needed to improve the Department's protective workforce. Consequently, we made a number of recommendations to develop and implement workforce management tools that should assist the Department and its contractors in maintaining an effective security force.

MANAGEMENT REACTION

Management generally concurred with our recommendations regarding accelerated clearance processing, workforce monitoring, and overtime. While most Department organizations endorsed the need for an agency-wide contingency plan, one office stated that such a plan was impractical and recommended that only site-level plans be developed. Overall, management has implemented, or intends to implement, actions that should satisfy our recommendations. Management's comments are included verbatim in Appendix 3.

Attachment

cc: Deputy Secretary
Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, NA-1
Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment
Director, Office of Security, SO-1

MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PROTECTIVE FORCES

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MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PROTECTIVE FORCES

Protective Force Concerns

Although the Department of Energy (Department) had taken steps to improve the management of its protective forces, it faced a number of challenges that included delays in processing security clearances, increasing overtime costs, potential retention problems, and operational vulnerabilities associated with unscheduled work stoppages.

Security Clearance Processing

Even though the Department had initiated a number of efforts to increase the population of fully qualified protective force officers, security officials told us that these efforts have not been completely effective because of long delays associated with security clearance processing. According to security officials at Los Alamos, newly hired officers were not available for assignments requiring a "Q" clearance for as long as a year and a half while their clearances were being processed through routine channels. As of December 2002, a National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) management official told us that nationwide, 22 percent of NNSA's security officers (over 400 individuals) were not available to assume some or all of their duties because of problems and delays in processing security clearances.

Overtime Costs

Qualifying officers in a timely manner for assignment is critical because it directly affects the overall cost of security for the Department. The increase in security posture and the corresponding need for fully qualified officers, coupled with long clearance processing times, have caused overtime costs to increase significantly since September 11th. For example, since the terrorist attacks, Pantex has incurred an additional 281,739 overtime hours at a fully burdened cost of \$13,253,180. Also, Sandia has incurred an additional 41,080 overtime hours annually, equating to \$2,083,000 per year, in overtime. Officials at the Nevada Test Site indicated that they have experienced an 11 percent increase in overtime at an unburdened cost of \$425,000. While increases are likely to be similar at other sites, we were unable to develop estimates because the Department did not always track mandatory overtime costs.

Morale and Retention Issues

In addition to cost considerations, increases in unscheduled overtime and a resulting decline in training opportunities may adversely impact

the ability to retain qualified officers. For example, we recently reported¹ that one site that had significant amounts of overtime, had not ensured the conduct of mandatory refresher training, and was experiencing high attrition rates. Since the change in security posture, heavy burdens associated with mandatory overtime have significantly reduced the availability of fully qualified officers for training. Morale suffered because certain officers have been unable to advance and have been denied vacations. In an effort to address these issues, NNSA told us that after September 11, 2001, it initially provided relief by adjusting training requirements.

While the training adjustments initially ameliorated operational impacts, they did not completely resolve morale and effectiveness problems. For example, at certain locations, officers were denied vacations, filed complaints because of what they characterized as "excessive" overtime, and in some cases, were unable to advance because they could not obtain necessary specialized training. Contractor officials at certain sites also indicated that the inability to attend training could become an attrition issue, and without relief, may lead to increased losses. While supervisory security management officials believed that losses may have occurred because of overtime and training issues, they told us that they could not quantify the number of officer losses due to these issues because they did not track reasons for attrition. Site security officials explained that the opportunity to participate in training is important because it provides a break, or "refresher" period that in addition to the direct benefits, permits officers to refocus. NNSA officials told us that the issue could become critical because officers at three of nine NNSA sites were experiencing fatigue that could diminish their effectiveness. The actual or potential loss of fully qualified officers is significant because of the estimated \$37,000 initial cost to train a replacement and the resulting increase in mandatory overtime that must be incurred by the remaining force.

Operational Vulnerabilities

The Department also had not developed a contingency plan and may not be adequately prepared to respond to potential protective force shortages caused by unscheduled work stoppages or the activation of military reserve forces. Even though individual sites had developed plans, they were primarily designed to provide minimum levels of protection for materials. According to site officials, such levels may

¹The cited Office of Inspector General report is classified.

not be sufficient to allow sites to carry out production, testing, or other mission-related activities in the event of a protective force strike. The significance of the problem could be exacerbated by the fact that four major site contracts expire and must be renegotiated within a ten-month period. If shortages of officers occurred at several locations simultaneously, the Department could be forced to shut down critical operations at those sites. Site level plans also do not specifically address supplementing protective forces with officers from other sources in the event of the activation of military reserve forces. The impact of such recalls could be substantial because military reservists at Lawrence Livermore, Sandia, and Los Alamos comprise 13.7, 10.9, and 14.6 percent, respectively, of the workforce.

Opportunities for Improvement

While the Department was initially unable to immediately respond to shortages of protective forces, it now has the opportunity to improve protective force management. Specifically, the Department had not taken advantage of accelerated methods of processing security clearances for officers, implemented related contractor performance expectations, and established responsibility for and developed a cooperative Department-wide protective force contingency plan.

Accelerated Clearance Processing

Several sites had not taken advantage of clearance processing options to mitigate cost and workforce impacts associated with the change in security posture. For instance, Sandia National Laboratories did not fully utilize the Department's Accelerated Access Authorization Program (AAAP) to minimize the period new employees were assigned to "restricted duties." The AAAP expedites the security clearance process by granting a "Q" interim access authorization and allows the officer to begin working with classified material before the standard background investigation is complete. Some sites also did not use prescreening techniques such as credit and local agency checks to help expedite the qualification process. In contrast, Pantex and the Nevada Test Site utilized an accelerated process and were able to fully utilize new officers up to six months sooner. Pantex and the Nevada Test Site also routinely prescreened applicants to decrease the risk of rejection and speed the clearance grant. Headquarters officials in the Office of Security told us that even though the accelerated process had been in

place for a number of years, some sites chose not to take advantage of it. While costs of the program and prescreening were \$500 to \$1,000 higher than routine processing, officials at Pantex indicated that the benefit of having officers available for unrestricted assignment significantly outweighed the cost of the accelerated program.

Contractor Performance Expectations

A lack of contractor performance expectations may also have affected the Department's ability to reduce overtime costs. For example, most sites did not include in their contracts a performance expectation that the contractor would evaluate cost effective alternatives to overtime. In fact, only Pantex included a Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 performance expectation that the contractor would develop alternative methods to reduce protective force overtime. Of the four sites we visited, Pantex had acted the most aggressively in reducing clearance-processing time and had the lowest current percentage of overtime. Incorporating security performance expectations into operating contracts could incentivize contractors to improve performance and would provide the Department with a mechanism to potentially reduce protective force costs.

Contingency Planning

The Department had not assigned responsibility or authority for developing and implementing a complex-wide protective force contingency plan. Currently, responsibility for protective force resources is distributed across organizational lines and no effort has been made to coordinate an overall plan. For example, Office of Security officials believed that it was not feasible for them to develop a plan because they had neither the responsibility to develop nor the authority to implement such a plan. An NNSA official, on the other hand, believed that a plan was needed and that it could involve actions such as developing formal memorandums of understanding with military or Federal law enforcement agencies. Without an inclusive plan, the Department may not be adequately prepared to respond to potential protective force shortages caused by unscheduled work stoppages or the activation of military reserve forces.

Operational Impacts

Unless actions are taken to address overtime and related issues and develop an organization-level contingency plan, the Department risks reducing the effectiveness of its protective forces and its ability to

adequately protect sensitive nuclear or other national defense related facilities. Specifically, continued high levels of stress caused by excessive overtime increases physical fatigue and could evolve into health and safety issues for the Department. Additionally, the Department faces potential increases in protective force attrition caused by overtime-induced stress and fatigue.

Furthermore, if unanticipated events such as strikes or significant military recall were to occur, the Department may not be able to obtain a sufficient number of replacement security officers. For example, at Pantex, officials notified Headquarters of a possible strike and requested approximately 100 replacement officers based on their minimum need. However, Headquarters lacked a Department-level plan or agreements with sites and was only able to secure about 25 replacement officers through ad hoc requests for volunteers from other locations. Because of the lack of centralized support, Pantex officials were forced to bargain, through their site contacts, for the additional officers necessary to sustain minimum nuclear material protection needs. The lack of labor distribution data also limited the ability of site and program officials, such as those from NNSA, to monitor or control mandatory overtime costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration and the Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment work together and take the following actions:

1. Increase the use of prescreening in conjunction with the AAAP to improve the timeliness of the clearance process;
2. Incorporate performance expectations into the Department's management contracts directed at the use of cost effective alternatives to administering protective force overtime costs;
3. Develop a Departmental level protective force contingency plan; and,
4. Track protective force overtime costs and attrition rates as a means to monitor the effectiveness of workforce management initiatives at the contractor and program level.

MANAGEMENT REACTION

We received comments from NNSA and from the Department elements reporting to the Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment.

Management generally agreed with the draft report and the recommendations. Regarding recommendation 2, management's written comments expressed concern that incorporating performance expectations focused on overtime costs would be counterproductive. Subsequently, we clarified that the intent of that recommendation was to encourage the use of available alternatives to overtime. Management concurred with recommendation 2 as now stated in the report.

While most organizations commenting believed it may be appropriate to develop a Department-wide contingency plan, some expressed concern that such a plan might not be practical. The Department's verbatim comments can be found in Appendix 3.

AUDITOR COMMENTS

Management's comments, including discussions held subsequent to receiving the written responses, indicated the Department's intent to take action that will satisfactorily address the recommendations. However, management has not yet prepared a formal corrective action plan.

Appendix 1

OBJECTIVE

To determine whether the Department was adequately managing its protective force program.

SCOPE

We conducted the audit from April 2002 to December 2002, at Department of Energy Headquarters in Washington, DC; Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico; Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas; and Nevada Test Site, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the audit objective, we:

- Reviewed actions taken by the Department since the issuance of the audit report *Management and Cost of the Department of Energy's Protective Forces* (DOE/IG-0354, July 1994);
- Reviewed applicable Federal regulations, Departmental orders, and implementing procedures and practices at Headquarters and at four sites;
- Reviewed current union agreements at the four sites visited, as well as six other sites;
- Reviewed and analyzed protective force costs (labor, overtime, training, exercise program, and supplies and equipment);
- Obtained and analyzed Office of Security quarterly and yearly strength reports;
- Reviewed performance-related information to determine compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993;
- Held discussions with Headquarters and other Federal Government officials regarding the Department's protective forces; and,

-
- Held discussions with officials from Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories, as well as the Pantex Plant and Nevada Test Site regarding protective forces.

The audit was performed in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards for performance audits and included tests of internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. Accordingly, the assessment included reviews of Departmental and regulatory policies, procedures, and performance measures related to the Department's protective forces. Because our review was limited, it would not necessarily have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of our audit. We did not conduct a reliability assessment of computer-processed data because only a very limited amount of computer-processed data was used during the audit.

The exit conference was held with management on May 6, 2003.

Appendix 2

PRIOR AUDIT REPORTS

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL RELATED REPORTS

- *The Restructure of Security Services by the Oak Ridge Operations Office*, (DOE/OIG-0487, October 2000). The purpose of the audit was to determine why security costs increased at the Oak Ridge Reservation after the restructuring of its security services. The audit disclosed that the Oak Ridge Operations Office did not manage the restructuring effort in a way that would have achieved its goals. Specifically, the Operations Office did not perform an analysis of security service staffing levels, determine the scope of work to be transferred, or develop cost-reduction measures or incentives to ensure efficient contractor performance. In addition, the Operations Office did not consider cost as a ranking factor in the selection of security services. Management concurred with the finding and recommendations and agreed to initiate corrective actions.
- *Security Overtime at the Oak Ridge Operations Office*, (ER-B-00-02, June 2000). The purpose of the audit was to determine whether the Oak Ridge Operations Office's new security contract provided incentives for Wackenhut to reduce overtime and minimize costs. The audit found that the new contract did not provide Wackenhut with incentives to reduce overtime or minimize costs. This occurred because the Operations Office did not consider contractual incentives for overtime reductions to be necessary. As a result, the Department could incur a significant amount in avoidable overtime costs during the term of the contract. Management concurred with the finding and recommendations and agreed to initiate corrective actions.
- *Management and Operating Contractor Overtime Costs*, (DOE/OIG-0381, October 1995). The objective was to determine whether the Department had controls in place to monitor and manage contractor overtime use. An analysis of the 50 management and operating contracts that were in effect at the end of FY 1994 and a detailed review at four of these contractors showed that the Department did not adequately monitor and manage contractor efforts to minimize overtime. Management did not specifically concur or nonconcur with the finding and recommendations. Management commented that it had identified a need to implement an overtime policy that was consistent with contract reform initiatives and that balances the need for reduced oversight against the need to demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.
- *Management and Cost of the Department of Energy's Protective Forces*, (DOE/IG-0354, July 1994). The purpose of the audit was to determine if protective forces were efficiently managed and appropriately sized in light of the changing missions and current budget constraints. The audit noted several opportunities for the Department to improve the operational efficiency of the protective forces operations, including eliminating overtime paid to officers prior to completion of the basic 40-hour workweek. Management concurred with the findings and recommendations and agreed to take appropriate actions to improve the efficiency of managing protective forces.

Appendix 3

Department of Energy
Office of Science
Washington, DC 20585

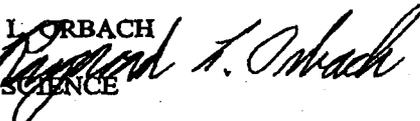
April 3, 2003

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM FOR FREDERICK D. DOGGETT
DEPUTY ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR
AUDIT SERVICES

FROM:

RAYMOND L. ORBACH
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF SCIENCE



SUBJECT:

Comments on IG Draft Report, "Management of the
Department's Protective Forces"

The Departmental Elements for the Under Secretary for Energy, Science and the Environment have reviewed the subject report and offer the following comments, which have been summarized from their original submittals.

We appreciate the insightful comments and recommendations of the IG. Generally, the recommendations in the report contained merit and the respective Departmental Elements are addressing the recommendations as appropriate.

Specific Departmental Element Comments:

The Office of Science (SC) provides the following input to the four recommendations made in the report:

1. Increase the use of prescreening in conjunction with the AAAP to improve timeliness of the clearance process.

SC will emphasize the availability of the timely AAAP process as needed for SC sites that carry weapons (Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL)). Extensive prescreening processes are in place to choose candidates for the AAAP process at ORNL.

2. Incorporate performance expectations into the Department's management contracts directed at administering protective force overtime costs.

Performance Evaluation Plans for the protective services contractor (Wackenhut Services, Inc. - Oak Ridge (WSI-OR)) have routinely included Performance Objectives for the management of overtime. Contract administrators closely monitor overtime usage, and extensive effort is placed on overtime reduction by WSI-OR management. The overtime costs at BNL are within acceptable limits. This is a challenge when the Department SECONs go up and down.



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1. Develop a Department level protective force contingency plan.

SC has read and commented on a draft DOE-wide plan (guidance only) for contingency forces from the Office of Security.

2. Track protective force overtime costs and attrition rates as a means to monitor the effectiveness of workforce management initiatives at the contractor and program level.

These costs and rates are tracked at SC sites that carry weapons. Management and contract administrators will remain alert to any developing trends in this area and, as necessary, apply action to rectify any problems noticed.

The Office of Fossil Energy concurs with the IG findings and recommendations with the caveat that the use of departmental resources should be justified by cost benefit analysis and/or by human safety and health considerations, national security, etc.

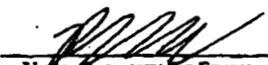
As a general comment, the Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology stated that since only NNSA sites were reviewed, there may be inaccuracies introduced in trying to extrapolate the audit results to the entire DOE complex. Specific comments:

1. Memo, page 1, sixth line of background section: Add "at various facilities" after the phrase "to one of denial."
2. Memo, page 1, second to last sentence: Change "qualifying" to phrase "processing security clearances for"
3. Report, page 3, second sentence, Contingence Planning: Instead of a complex-wide protective force contingency plan, recommend organizational or site plans. A DOE complex-wide plan is not practical because of different funding sources and protective force contractor organizations.

The Office of Environmental Management (EM) concurs with Recommendations 1, 3, and 4, and has the following comment concerning Recommendation 2. EM is reviewing all of its contracts to ensure that we are setting expectations and driving the performance through the contract. Their stated goal is to safely accelerate risk reduction and cleanup; a key element in achieving this goal is to ensure that our supports costs, which include safeguards and security, do not cost any more than they should. That being said, EM endorses the spirit of the Recommendation, however, is concerned that following the letter of the Recommendation may cause them to measure and monitor the wrong set of performance indicators.

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy had no comments.

Please contact Mark Thomock of my office at 301-903-2995 if you have any questions or comments.

Approved: 
Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment

Disapproved: _____
Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment

Date: 4/2/03



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

APR 02 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR Fredrick D. Doggett
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Audit Services

FROM: Anthony R. Lane *Anthony R. Lane*
Associate Administrator
for Management and Administration

SUBJECT: Comments on Protective Force Management IG
Draft Report

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) appreciates having had the opportunity to have reviewed the Inspector General's (IG) draft report, "Management of the Department's Protective Forces." We understand that, from previous reports, the IG had noted a number of efficiency-related concerns with the management of its protective forces. In light of those concerns and the change in threat level, the IG initiated this audit to determine whether the Protective Force Program is adequately being managed.

The draft report noted that there have been improvements in the management of the protective forces but the IG believed that there were still a number of challenges that could adversely affect the program. The IG observed:

- long delays associated with granting clearances for newly employed officers
- increases in unscheduled overtime costs
- morale and potential retention problems based on mandatory overtime and declining training opportunities
- operational vulnerabilities associated with unscheduled work stoppages

While the draft report did give credit for having taken a number of actions to reduce the impact of the change in threats, the report makes several recommendations to:

- increase the use of pre screening in conjunction with the Accelerated Access Authorization Program (AAAP) to improve the timeliness of the clearance process
- incorporate performance expectations into the management contracts directed at administering protective force overtime costs



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- develop a protective force contingency plan
- Track protective force overtime costs and attrition rates as a means to monitor the effectiveness of workforce management initiatives at the contractor and program level.

While NNSA generally agrees with the draft report and the recommendations, we believe that incorporating performance expectation into the management contracts focused on administering protective force overtime costs would be counterproductive. Overtime is inherent to security operations and also occurs with delays in processing security clearances and with increased demands for security officers. Delays in the clearance process, as you are aware, may be caused by FBI or OPM backlog of clearance investigations, or by clearance adjudication, or by candidates not meeting criteria for AAAP - thereby having to go through the normal or expedited process. While it may be cause for additional review, NNSA's Site Managers will have to determine what is an acceptable level of overtime to be charged to their contracts. This then would differ from site to site depending on specific needs, situations, and risks. I would also like to point out that the NNSA has not granted any waivers regarding firearms requalification, as indicated in the draft report.

The development of a protective force contingency plan, as mentioned in the draft report, is laudable. The difficulties arise, short of rule making, from having multiple unions representing the protective force officers, multiple contractors (NNSA does not have the same protective force contractor throughout their complex), and separate contracts for each site.

Should you have any questions, please contact Richard Speidel, Director, Policy and Internal Controls Management, at 586-5009.

cc: Greg Rudy, Associate Administrator for Facilities and Operations, NA-50
John C. Todd, Chief, Defense Nuclear Security, NA-3.3
Robert Braden, Senior Procurement Executive, NA-63
David Marks, Director, Field Financial Management, Service Center, NV

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3. What format, stylistic, or organizational changes might have made this report's overall message more clear to the reader?
4. What additional actions could the Office of Inspector General have taken on the issues discussed in this report which would have been helpful?

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