

September 29, 2005

The Honorable Secretary Samuel Bodman
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW 7A2
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman,

I want to alert you to a very serious security problem at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. On September 26, the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) was invited to visit the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge to discuss security issues of concern to POGO with staff from the Department of Energy (DOE) Headquarters, the DOE site office, BWXT and Wackenhut officials. The day was very productive and the cooperation, within security constraints, was excellent.

On September 27, two POGO investigators, Peter Stockton and Ron Timm, visited the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) to have similar discussions about security. However, the itinerary unexpectedly involved a tour of science sites with a claim that no security officials from the DOE site office, Battelle or Wackenhut were available. This would not have been productive for either POGO or ORNL. One site in particular at ORNL is of concern to POGO because it contains Category I Special Nuclear Materials — weapons quantities of U-233 that can be quickly made into an improvised nuclear device issue, or nuclear detonation. The investigators gave the DOE public affairs officers their cell phone number to call if a relevant meeting could be set up in the afternoon. The investigators then got in their car and decided to drive around the site as long as they were there, to see the security measures around [REDACTED] that contains the U-233. It took about 15-20 minutes to find the building, after an ORNL employee gave them directions. They parked the car in front of the building. Two security officers were standing next to their vehicle talking to each other and said nothing to POGO's investigators. The officers got in their vehicle and drove off. The two investigators then wandered around the building for about 15 minutes observing the security – or lack thereof. The two POGO investigators have significant security backgrounds and were shocked by what they observed.

Finally a security vehicle drove up and asked the investigators if the blue truck in the parking lot down the hill was theirs – it was not. The two then were walking

back to their car when they were told to stop. Two more Wackenhut vehicles arrived. A Battelle security official arrived and stood nearby talking on his cell phone for about 10-15 minutes. More armed guards arrived and stood around. Another vehicle then pulled up with top Wackenhut and Battelle security officials. They attempted to claim that the POGO had been told to leave the site directly – not true. The POGO investigators were then escorted off the site by two security patrol vehicles.

I am shocked that the investigators were able to park within 10 feet of this sensitive building and walk around the perimeter for 15 minutes before being confronted. ORNL has none of the classic defense in depth security around [REDACTED] like other weapons sites. There is no [REDACTED]. This incident demonstrates that once you gain access to the site you have unimpeded access to the exterior of [REDACTED]. This is unique in the weapons complex. There are no [REDACTED]. A number of trucks were observed coming in and out of the lab because of major construction projects. There is [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] The building appears to be only corrugated steel covering some reinforced concrete that could be easily breached by attackers — again with no warning.

Apparently, DOE has attempted to claim that the two POGO investigators broke away from their escort. That is not true. There was no escort. In fact, the public affairs officers had the investigators' cell phone numbers and could have called them to determine where they were. Despite this, it took the officers at least 20 minutes to locate the POGO investigators and inform them that they must leave the site.

If a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] If the bad guys took over the building there is no Special Response Team or SWAT capability on site to get these adversaries out of the building. In POGO's May 2005 report, we pointed out that in a self assessment force-on-force at ORNL, the entire ORNL protective force was "killed" in 90 seconds.

We suggest that you find out who is responsible for this debacle and take appropriate action. Energy, Science and Environment and Independent Oversight (OA) have known about this problem for some time. As we pointed in the May 2005 POGO report, the manager of Y-12 said they could store the U-233 materials at Y-12, if ordered. The material could also be down blended so it would no longer be an attractive terrorist target.

I would be happy to meet with you again and discuss this situation.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Brian". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Danielle Brian
Executive Director

cc:

Honorable Christopher Shays, Chairman, National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations Subcommittee

Glenn Podonsky, Director, Security and Safety Performance Assurance, Department of Energy

Robert J. Walsh, Director, Security for Energy, Science & Environment, Department of Energy