



COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION PROLIFERATION AND TERRORISM

WMD Commissioners Visit New Mexico Nuclear Laboratory

WASHINGTON, July 28, 2008 –Leaders of an independent federal panel on weapons of mass destruction today visited a nuclear laboratory in New Mexico to learn more about what the federal government can do to prevent terrorists from obtaining nuclear and biological weapons.

Members and staff of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Proliferation and Terrorism visited the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M., one of the nation’s top nuclear labs.

“Today, we learned about the impressive array of steps our nation is pursuing to prevent WMD attacks,” said former Senator Bob Graham, the WMD panel’s chairman who attended the Sandia briefings with former Senator Jim Talent, the Commission’s vice-chairman. “We also learned more about where gaps in our capabilities exist and some things our government could do to further close those gaps.

“Gaining insight into nuclear or biological threats is a great and never-ending challenge. Our national laboratories, including Sandia, have led the way at providing that insight through their technical initiatives and expertise and we appreciate the chance to benefit from their knowledge.”

Sandia, run by the National Nuclear Security Administration, has developed anti-weapons technologies such as all-weather overhead imaging and radiation detection sensors that are now in use around the world.

The WMD Commission’s briefings at Sandia examined current and emerging nuclear and biological proliferation threats, the tools and techniques used to safeguard nuclear weapons, the vulnerabilities of U.S. ports to WMDs, and technical issues associated with monitoring terrorist and proliferation trends.

Established by House Resolution 1 to implement a key recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, the WMD Commission is charged with assessing current activities, initiatives, and programs of the United States to prevent weapons of mass destruction proliferation and terrorism. The Commission will make concrete recommendations to improve such activities and plans to issue its final report this fall.

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