



# Los Alamos Study Group

*Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability*

June 4, 2006

Dear friend –

As the months roll by, the failures of U.S. foreign and domestic policies are mounting more rapidly. The federal government seems quite unable to cope with a number of converging crises that are sweeping away the assumptions upon which policy has rested up to now, crises such as:

- Global warming, which threatens many or even most species on earth – not to mention the survival of hundreds of millions of people, human civilization as such, and of course much of what we take for granted in the U.S. today.
- Depletion of oil reserves worldwide, which has led to a broad, never-to-be-exceeded “peak” in the rate of oil production. Peak production of oil worldwide (quite possibly along with a North American peak in natural gas production) is leading to higher prices for these fuels – and to efforts to “stampede” energy policy toward some very poor choices, such as nuclear power.
- The rapid increase in private and public debt to stratospheric, unsustainable levels. U.S. foreign borrowing now exceeds U.S. economic growth in dollar terms.
- Crises of democracy, including the rapid growth of executive power and the growth of the military within it, surveillance and the loss of civil liberties, raw election fraud as well as rampant corruption, growth in theocratic ideals at the highest levels of government, and more.
- An illegal, aggressive war and occupation, including all the typical features of aggressive war such as mass civilian deaths, torture and murder, vast profiteering, the rise of jingoism on the “home front,” and of course the killing, maiming, and psychological brutalization of the soldiers sent to do an illegal job.

Taken together and compounded with other factors, this situation means, just for starters, that the “American Way of Life” is coming to an end. For the less fortunate in our society, that way of life never happened in the first place. For many others it is now disappearing as they lose their pensions, their jobs, or their homes.

What does all this have to do with nuclear weapons, or with New Mexico? Quite a lot.

**The hyper-militarized American foreign policy that is destroying this country is inconceivable without an ever-evolving nuclear strike force to back up U.S. expeditionary forces. That nuclear force is increasingly conceptualized, promoted, designed, tested, and built in New Mexico, where fully half of all U.S. warhead spending occurs.** The New Mexico labs – Los Alamos and Sandia especially but also the Air Force labs at Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range – are absolutely central to the U.S. imperial project.

Starting now and for the foreseeable future, Los Alamos especially is pivotal to the Bush Administration’s plans to replace all the weapons in the U.S. arsenal with new ones. For at least the next 15 years, Los Alamos will be the only place in the U.S. that can make plutonium “pits,” the cores of nuclear weapons, which haven’t been produced since the Rocky Flats Plant near Denver closed 17 years ago. **I am asking for your help in making Los Alamos’ plutonium “pit” mission impossible. We’ve done it before and together we can do it again!** Without new weapons and new production, much of the nuclear weapons complex loses its *raison d’être*. New production is essential to the survival of the nuclear weapons enterprise, which depends upon the replacement of an aging workforce, the transmission of skills, and fresh infusions of political and social approval.

**The choice each of us makes regarding the renewed production of nuclear weapons in New Mexico is part of a larger set of public choices we need to make in our state and in our country. To sum it up in a few words, the severity of converging crises we face makes it clear that we must now choose between war and peace; we cannot have both.** I think that choice is becoming more stark every day.

The path of war, which for us in New Mexico means especially and centrally the path of nuclear weapons, will guarantee failure in addressing any and all of the major problems our country faces. Nuclear weapons are the most destructive of all weapons of mass destruction. Continued support for them is tantamount to support for the U.S. imperial project as a whole and for its absurd military goal of “full spectrum dominance.” This quest is more grandiose than anything ever attempted by Napoleon or Hitler and it cannot but ensure U.S. defeat and decline. We can only hope it does not also lead to nuclear war. As Noam Chomsky said this spring, that is exactly where it is headed.

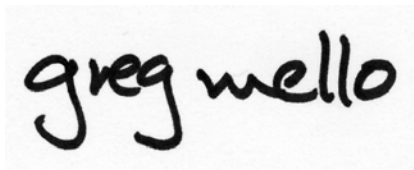
In New Mexico this downward path can be symbolized by the *Jornada del Muerto* or “Dead Man’s Trail” where the first atomic bomb was exploded and where earth-penetrating and other new weapons are still tested today. That path precludes the path of peace, the “royal road” for human beings, the *Camino Real*. We have to choose, and not just choose in our minds and hearts but in our lives and actions too.

**The good news is that “we the people” are a lot more powerful than we usually think, provided we are firm and provided we act.** Good intentions aren’t enough. Knowledge and opinions, however sophisticated, aren’t enough. What, then, can we do? **I invite you to take a close look at the enclosed materials, which include many ways you can take effective action.**

**One important way to help is to assist us financially.** The Los Alamos Study Group depends on individual donors for most of our budget, and we hope you will take a moment and consider the unique opportunity we have in New Mexico to work for nuclear disarmament, and what that opportunity means for the world. **It is a momentous fact, that world nuclear policy is held back by the U.S. more than by any other country, as Hans Blix said at the UN last week, while U.S. policy in turn is utterly dependent upon what happens, or does not happen, in New Mexico.**

**Why the Los Alamos Study Group?** We are the principal public voice opposing nuclear weapons in New Mexico. For more than 13 years, the Study Group has been using detailed knowledge and the “power of proximity” to affect national policy. We led successful efforts that delayed plutonium pit production at LANL by more than a decade so far. On more than one occasion we exposed new weapons plans, contributing to their defeat in one case. We exposed a lab-generated plan to share nuclear weapons secrets with Russia and other countries, leading to legislation that blocked it. We stopped a huge new mixed waste dump in Los Alamos and have prevented expansion of the current dump (“Area G”) so far. We have won several lawsuits over information, civil liberties, and environmental protection. We work behind the scenes, in the bureaucracy and in Congress, in the press, in the courts, and in the halls of the United Nations, assisting diplomats and NGOs understand the realities on the ground in the United States. We are training a new generation of scholars and activists. We have been the source for more than 2,000 newspaper articles in the U.S. alone, and have appeared on thousands of radio broadcasts around the world. We have consistently brought a respected voice of reason to the public debate about nuclear weapons, and we are a key source of information for leading journalists all over the country as well as many other non-governmental organizations.

In solidarity for true human and environmental security,  
Greg Mello, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "greg mello". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.