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Date:-01/03/2003 Edition:-Final Page:-A2

Lab Director's Tenure Was Turbulent

Journal Staff Report

John Browne's tenure as director of Los Alamos National Laboratory was marked by turbulence.

It was Browne who fired Wen Ho Lee in 1999 after fears were raised of nuclear secrets lost to China. Browne was also in charge when a wildfire threatened the lab and burned through part of Los Alamos in 2000.

Soon after the fire, two hard drives containing top-secret information about nuclear weapons were found to be missing from a lab vault. The hard drives were eventually found behind a copying machine a story that made the lab the butt of jokes all the way to the David Letterman show.

Browne's resignation was announced Thursday after weeks of headlines about missing government property, loose controls on the lab's purchasing system and the firing of two lab investigators who were looking into theft and fraud.

Controversies weren't all that happened during Browne's reign atop LANL, of course.

In 1998, then-President Bill Clinton visited Los Alamos, and Browne showed how a hyper-fast supercomputer was taking shape to simulate nuclear weapons tests.

The lab has also recorded many achievements under Browne, including numerous advances in understanding nuclear explosions without test blasts, mapping apparent water-ice on Mars and assisting in the investigation of the post-Sept. 11 anthrax mailings.

On the administrative front, Browne cited strides in increasing the number of minorities and women at the lab. He said Thursday that safety also improved on his watch, with work days lost because of accidents down 70 percent.

Raised in Pennsylvania and trained in nuclear physics at Drexel University in Philadelphia and Duke University in North Carolina, Browne was viewed by some as the ultimate insider when he was chosen to lead LANL in 1997.

Browne had spent half his life rising in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex with stints in weapons testing, the now-defunct Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars) and energy research.

Browne was running Los Alamos Neutron Science Center, a defense-science complex centered on the lab's accelerator, when he was picked by University of California officials to succeed Sig Hecker as lab director.

"I think the laboratory couldn't be in better hands. I feel better about the security of the nation and the world with him at the helm," said Browne's graduate physics professor at Duke, Edward G. Bilpuch.

Some critics viewed Browne's choice as a signal that the university and the Energy Department saw no reason for change at Los Alamos.

"If you want new ideas, you get someone from another institution," said Greg Mello, an anti-nuclear activist in Santa Fe.

Until the recent controversy over purchase and property control problems at the lab, Browne's most high-profile issue as lab chief was the Wen Ho Lee affair.

Lee was never charged with spying, although he spent nine months jailed in solitary confinement awaiting trial. He eventually pleaded guilty to a single felony charge of mishandling classified material after the FBI's case against him fell apart.

Browne stood by his decision to fire Lee. "I would fire him tomorrow for those security violations," Brown said last February in Washington. "They were the most serious violations of security I've seen in 30 years."

At the same appearance, Browne said LANL scientists were devastated by the negative publicity of the Lee case and the missing hard drives. "When you have a feeling you're not trusted, it hits people at the core of their fundamental ethics," Browne said.

But he said the ordeals made the lab stronger.

"People saw this as a challenge to show we really were much better than we were given credit for," he said. "The only way we would overcome this was by ... performing at a higher level, to take our game to the next level, so to speak."

But when documents surfaced in November showing that missing property at the lab was possibly valued at millions of dollars, the lab's performance was again in question and Browne's tenure as LANL director was soon over.

PHOTO BY: JOURNAL FILE

PHOTO: b/w

HAPPIER TIMES: John Browne, center, at a legislative oversight hearing in March 2002, discusses changes in the employment culture of Los Alamos National Laboratory. Browne resigned Thursday after five years as lab director.

PHOTO: b/w

LEE: Fired in 1999 by Browne after security scare

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Paper: THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
Title: Eyes of Texas upon Los Alamos lab - University there hopes to edge out UC as manager of nuclear weapons facility
Author: Keay Davidson
Date: January 20, 2003
Section: NEWS
Page: A1

If the U.S. Energy Department fulfills its threat to fire the University of California as manager of scandal-racked Los Alamos National Laboratory, a strong contender to replace UC would be the University of Texas.

UT officials, aided by powerful allies in politics and science, have for years dreamed of taking over management of the nation's premier nuclear weapons lab. They may finally get their wish, for California's management of the lab is under intense fire.

In their public comments, UT officials are expressing cautious interest in assuming control of the mythic laboratory, where the atom bomb was born in 1945.

Sheldon Landsberger, coordinator of UT-Austin's nuclear and radiation engineering program, said: "I'm pretty sure UT would be interested in doing that, maybe in conjunction with one or two other universities."

The acquisition of the laboratory would be a major boost to the prickly pride of Texas. Since the oil crises of the 1970s, Texas has fought to shed its image as an oil-soaked cattle kingdom run by high-flying, J.R. Ewing-style corporate cowboys.

For decades, in a Texas-sized campaign bankrolled by the Texas Legislature and private corporations, the Lone Star State has enriched its sprawling university system and lured high-tech businesses and Nobel laureates.

As a result, cities such as Austin, the state capital, have come to be rated among the most appealing in the nation. They're noted not only for their scientific and educational excellence but also for their natural beauty, fine climate and cultural diversity.

In the past decade, though, Texans have endured repeated heartbreaks in their effort to win the fattest scientific plums -- those multibillion-dollar federal research projects on the cutting edge of science fiction, projects that are practically ground-based versions of the starship Enterprise.

In 1993, Texans stared in disbelief as the grandest physics experiment in history, the Superconducting Super Collider, was stopped -- while under construction in Waxahachie, Texas -- the victim of congressional budget cutters.

2 FACTORS

And since at least 1996, Texas has fought -- so far without success -- to win an Energy Department contract to manage one of the nation's nuclear weapons labs. But suddenly, in recent weeks, Texas' dream has begun to look attainable for two reasons:

-- UC's management problems at the Los Alamos lab.

After months of allegations of missing property, credit card fraud and mismanagement, the scandal at Los Alamos exploded in November when lab managers fired two ex-police officers whom the lab itself had hired to toughen security.

Suddenly lab critics began talking about a coverup. In the face of intense congressional pressure, the former officers were rehired as consultants on Friday.

The lab might be suffering from "systemic management failure," Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham charged in an unusually harsh Dec. 24 letter to UC President Richard C. Atkinson. Abraham hinted he might even cancel the university's management contract before its formal expiration in January 2006.

The scandal has triggered investigations within DOE and Congress, which recently expanded its review to include the two other national labs that UC runs for the federal government, Lawrence Livermore and Lawrence Berkeley.

A leading critic of UC, Pete Stockton of the Project on Government Oversight in Washington, said UC staffers at Los Alamos "simply have made some terrible errors over time."

Rep. James Greenwood, R-Pa., who chairs the subcommittee running the congressional investigation, said the recent problems have convinced him that it's time to allow others to compete to manage Los Alamos.

"I think it's fundamentally a bad idea to give a $2 billion contract to any entity year after year after year, decade after decade after decade, without providing the opportunity for competition for that contract," Greenwood said.

"When that happens, as I think it has happened here, there is a natural tendency to lose accountability, to get sloppy and to create a culture in which these kinds of things can happen."

-- The presence in the White House of a Texan, George W. Bush.

Bush, the former Texas governor and Abraham's boss, has little political allegiance to Democratic-leaning California, which resoundingly rejected him in the 2000 election.

If Bush chooses to kick UC out of Los Alamos, he might face little effective opposition in the newly Republican-dominated Congress, in which the House Majority Leader, Tom DeLay, is also a Texan.

Bush's top political adviser, Karl Rove, has ties to UT, where he once taught, and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans chaired the UT board of regents for two terms in the late 1990s.

KEEPING IT HIDDEN

If this situation delights Texans, they're shrewd enough not to show it.

UT Chancellor Mark G. Yudof said it would be premature to discuss whether UT will go after the Los Alamos job.

If UT does pursue the atomic brass ring, Texas educational and scientific officials say, it has the technical expertise, managerial skill and legions of talented personnel -- an estimated 20,000 faculty members and an annual $7 billion budget -- to do the job.

However, scientific quality alone probably won't decide who runs Los Alamos.

There's another crucial factor: political clout.

Texans learned that lesson four decades ago from a political lion-tamer of the first rank, then-Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas.

In a legendarily cynical deal, Johnson separated NASA's head from its pitching arm by siting the Mission Control Center in Houston, 884 miles from the launch site in Florida.

On the other hand, former President Bill Clinton, who did not win Texas in the 1992 election, made little effort to save the super collider when budget cutters went after it the next year. All that's left of the project is, literally, a mammoth hole in the Texas soil.

Now, however, Texas might be poised to take over management at Los Alamos. Last week, with what may have been bad timing, UC officials reasserted a long- standing policy: They'll never compete with anyone else for the Los Alamos job.

That is, if DOE allows other institutions to bid for the job, then UC will pick up its marbles and go home.

The policy disturbed UC Regent Richard Blum, who said last week that it makes UC look like a bunch of wimps.

It also incensed lawmakers in Congress investigating the Los Alamos scandal.

OTHER COMPETITORS

Other institutions besides UT are likely to compete for the contract, too. In recent years, the University of Arizona, some New Mexico campuses, and various private corporations and think tanks have been rumored candidates.

The eyes of Texas began to focus on Los Alamos as early as the mid-1990s, when the state was still sore from losing the super collider.

In 1996, U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, complained that UC's contract to run Los Alamos was a sweetheart deal that had lasted too long.

"I believe that UT can do a better job," he said, and called for "a fair and open competition" for the job.

But the Energy Department refused to go along. Because of the highly sensitive nature of work at the national labs, federal law permits the department to hire the same contractor for as long as it likes, without offering the job to other bidders.

The same thing happened when Congress investigated a drug scandal at Los Alamos in the 1980s.

"It was this same B.S. you've always heard in the past," Stockton said: " 'Oh, my God, if we change contractors, all these great scientists will leave.'

"These scientists make a huge amount of money there (at the labs); they lead a charmed life. They would never be able to get that elsewhere."

SANDIA BID TURNED DOWN

In December, the Energy Department turned down UT's bid to run Sandia National Laboratories, which has branches in New Mexico and Livermore. The decision wasn't surprising, lab watchers say, as Sandia's incumbent contractor,

Lockheed Martin, has won high ratings for its management.

While disappointed, Texans aren't disheartened. UT's bid for the Sandia contract was a good experience that convinced Texas officials that they have "the strength and capacity to do an excellent job in management of a national lab," said Sanchez, a UT vice president.

Greg Mello, a veteran lab watcher who runs the Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe, N.M., notes that one strike against UC is that it seems to be losing past political supporters such as New Mexico's powerful Republican Sen. Pete Domenici.

Los Alamos "used to have the protection of Domenici, but now they don't have it, for some inexplicable reason," he said. "The Republicans want UC out. . . . Somebody's giving a green light to this."

Author: Keay Davidson
Section: NEWS
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vestigation

Bush budget plan would benefit New Mexico labs

By JEFF TOLLEFSON
The New Mexican

The Bush administration is roposing across-the-board ıcreases in federal defense ɔending, a trend that is likely) boost record budgets at the ation's nuclear laboratories to ven higher levels next year.

If Congress goes along, the .S. Department of Energy ould spend $3.8 billion — an ıcrease of $190 million — at s main facilities in New lexico next year, according) the budget proposal rolled ıt by the Bush administra-on on Monday.

That figure includes $1.7 llion at Los Alamos ational Laboratory (an crease of $142 million over st year's request), $1.5 bil-ɔn at Sandia National Labo-ıtories (an increase of $106 illion) and $225 million at e Waste Isolation Pilot ant (an increase of $4 mil-ɔn), according to figures ovided by U.S. Sen. Pete ɔmenici, R-N.M.

Despite Monday's unveiling the administration's budget oposals for next year, Con-ess has yet to pass this ar's appropriations bill to nd the labs and other fed-al activities. For the past veral months, the labs have en operating under a contin-ıg resolution that temporar-ily pays the bills until Congress can complete its work.

DOE proposed to spend $6.4 billion on Stockpile Stewardship, a program intended to maintain the nation's nuclear weapons without nuclear testing. The budget proposal would increase spending on the program by about $538 million over the president's request for the current fiscal year and $269 million over the Senate's appropriations bill.

Domenici called the president's budget the "best that we have had, ever, since we started the program that we call science-based Stockpile Stewardship."

The budget proposal for Los Alamos includes $50 million to begin construction of a new National Security Science Building as well as $21 million to begin work on a replacement for the Chemical and Metallurgy Research Facility, according to Domenici.

The budget proposal includes $320 million, up $84 million over last year's request and $33 million over the Senate appropriation, for the current plutonium-pit production program at Los Alamos. The project is billed as a small-scale, experimental effort to produce and certify the first plutonium pit — the heart of a modern thermonuclear bomb — since DOE shut down its Rocky Flats facility in Colorado a decade ago.

By 2007, when the first pit is scheduled for completion, Los Alamos will have spent $1.7 billion on the program. Addressing skepticism, Los Alamos officials have said the program is especially difficult because no one has ever had to certify a nuclear weapon without an explosion.

For nuclear activists such as Greg Mello, who heads the Los Alamos Study Project, the project raises serious questions about DOE's nuclear-weapons program.

"They used to make pits all the time. Why they can't make one now is a little beyond my imagination," Mello said. He believes the lab is either squandering the money or building up a larger pit program that would be capable of producing triggers for entirely new bomb designs.

In general, nuclear activists were quick to question defense increases in the proposed budget. They cite an increased emphasis on nuclear weapons in the nation's defense policies, efforts to design a new nuclear bomb, increasing talk of a return to nuclear testing and the administration's proposal to build a new facility for manufacturing plutonium triggers.

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Date:-02/05/2003 Section:-Opinion Edition:-Journal North Page:-4

LETTERS

What are Mello's Credentials?

WHO IS THIS GREG MELLO FELLOW

That frequently about LANL does bellow?

In Journal North he is frequently quoted

But his credentials are never noted.

Is he a farmer, a dancer, or a Nobel prize winner?

Is he somebody you would invite for dinner?

He speaks about LANL matters as if he knows

About all things technical or management.

But even though he is frequently quoted

His credentials are never noted.

To Journal North I ask

That you take on the task

Of telling us about this Greg Mello fellow

Who frequently about the lab does bellow.

By Journal North he is frequently quoted

But his credentials are never noted.

Ron Christman

Los Alamos

Editor's note: Mello has degrees in engineering and regional planning. Before he became director of the Los Alamos Study Group, his work experience includes stints as a hydrologist, teacher, business owner and Zen Center staffer.

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Date:-02/14/2003 Edition:-Journal North Page:-1

Trap Targets Lab Pollutants

By Adam Rankin Journal Staff Writer

LANL Installs Project in Canyon

Los Alamos National Laboratory hydrologists on Thursday finished installing a pollution trap in Mortandad Canyon they hope will cut the flow of radioactive and chemical pollutants down its intermittent stream.

But critics are doubtful the project is much more than a half-hearted attempt to avoid what really needs to be done in the canyon. They say the project won't clean the deeper ground water, and that the ground water should be pumped to the surface and treated.

The trap is a $900,000, four-walled 27-foot deep permeable reactive barrier made of layers of fine-grained lava rock, calcium phosphate, pecan shells, cotton seed and limestone.

LANL spokesman James Rickman said the barrier is designed to catch a number of radionuclides strontium-90, americium-241, three isotopes of plutonium and several varieties of uranium as well as perchlorate, nitrate and several heavy metals that are carried along in the shallow ground water.

"Our hydrologists and chemists have studied this canyon and I think they are pretty confident that it is going to be a good effective treatment," he said.

Recent measurements of ground water samples from about 500 feet below the surface of the canyon floor show nitrate and perchlorate levels above federal drinking water standards and tritium, a radioactive contaminant, at levels just below the standard.

New Mexico Environment Department officials said the samples were about 300 feet above the regional aquifer from which the town of Los Alamos draws its drinking water.

Rickman has said LANL tests the regional aquifer regularly and results show the town's supply is well within federal standards.

Greg Mello, of the lab watchdog organization Los Alamos Study Group, said any water that enters the barrier which he called a "partial band-aid" can easily migrate to deeper hydrologic layers because the trap lacks a bottom.

"The underside is completely open and the canyon loses water to what's underneath it," he said. "It may capture some (contaminants), but I think it's not a very good thing to do."

Mello speculated LANL chose to use the barrier because it is passive, invisible and cheap.

"It doesn't give the impression that any mistakes were made," because people can't see an active cleanup project at the surface, he said. "It provides a ritual cleanup, so maybe it will satisfy all the actors and maybe that is all that will need to be done... a way to elegantly minimize responsibilities."

He also said the problem in Mortandad Canyon remains deeper, well below the shallow ground water the barrier is targeting, down into the intermediate ground water, 500 feet deep, where water samples show elevated levels of perchlorate, nitrate and tritium.

It might be cheaper to pump and treat the water, Mello said,

"I don't see how this as a solution gets at the contaminated sediments of the canyon, which will continue to bleed into the canyon and in the case of some contaminants that will be forever."

Rickman said the main target of the barrier is mobilized legacy waste that gets caught up in surface water and treated effluent from LANL's Liquid Radioactive Waste Treatment Facility, which discharges about 60,000 gallons of waste water weekly into the canyon.

He underscored that the barrier was built through the lab's own initiative and was not part of any regulatory mandate from NMED or other regulatory agency.

At the end of ten years, the absorbent layers will be dug up after their cleaning power has been depleted, trucked off and properly disposed of as new layers are interred.

NMED spokesman Jon Goldstein said the state's environmental agency is happy to see LANL taking measures to address the state's concerns.

"However, there is still a lot more to do," he said. "This won't do anything to stop the intermediate ground water from migrating deeper."

LANL trapping pollutants in Mortandad Canyon

The Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS — Hydrologists for Los Alamos National Laboratory have finished installing a "pollution trap" the lab says is designed to cut the flow of radioactive and chemical pollutants in the intermittent streams of Mortandad Canyon.

The $900,000 four-walled, 27-foot barrier is made of layers of fine-grained lava, calcium phosphate, pecan shells, cottonseed and limestone.

It is designed to catch a number of radionuclides, including strontium-90, americium-241 and isotopes of plutonium and uranium, as well as toxins such as perchlorate, nitrate and heavy metals carried along in shallow groundwater, said lab spokesman James Rickman.

Greg Mello of Los Alamos Study Group, a watchdog organization, called the barrier a partial Band-Aid that provides "a ritual cleanup" and "a way to elegantly minimize responsibilities."

"Our hydrologists and chemists have studied this canyon, and I think they are pretty confident that it is going to be a good, effective treatment," Rickman said. Work on the barrier was completed Thursday.

A lab-watchdog group, however, says the project won't clean the deeper groundwater.

Greg Mello of Los Alamos Study Group, a watchdog organization, called the barrier a partial Band-Aid that provides "a ritual cleanup" and "a way to elegantly minimize responsibilities."

Mello said water that enters the barrier easily could migrate to deep hydrological layers because there is no bottom on the trap.

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Recent measurements of water below the canyon's surface show nitrate and perchlorate levels above federal drinking-water standards and levels of the radioactive contaminant tritium just below the standard.

Water samples were taken about 300 feet above the regional aquifer from which the town of Los Alamos draws its drinking water, the state Environment Department said.

Jon Goldstein, spokesman for the Environment Department, said the agency is happy the lab is taking measures to address the concerns.

"However, there is still a lot more to do," Goldstein said. "This won't do anything to stop the intermediate groundwater from migrating deeper."

The lab tests the aquifer regularly, and the results show the town's water supply is well within federal standards, Rickman said.

Mello said the problem in Mortandad Canyon remains deeper, below the shallow well water the barrier is targeting, and said it might be cheaper to pump the water up and treat it.

"I don't see how this as a solution gets at the contaminated sediments of the canyon, which will continue to bleed into the canyon, and in the case of some contaminants, that will be forever," he said.

Rickman said the barrier is targeted at legacy waste — left over from historical work at the weapons lab — that gets caught up in surface water and treated effluent from the lab's liquid radioactive-waste-treatment facility. That facility discharges 60,000 gallons of wastewater into the canyon each week.

Press Articles Regarding Leaked Pentagon Planning Meeting Document

As of 3/4/03; not comprehensive

Google News search only

Publication/Radio Show	**Date**	**Placement**	
Newspapers			
Oakland Tribune	2/15/03	Front page (FP)	
San Francisco Chronicle	2/15	A-4	
Tri-Valley Herald	2/15	FP?	
San Mateo County Times	2/15	FP?	
Guardian (UK)	2/19	Top story (TS) web	
Reuters	2/19	TS, web	
BBC World News	2/19	TS, web	
CBS News.com	2/19	TS, web	
Boston Globe (boston.com)	2/19	TS in "nation/ world" section (web)	
Times of India	2/19	TS, web	
New Scientist	2/19	TS, web	
Financial Times (UK)	2/19	TS in "world" section, web	
Daily Telegraph (AU)	2/20	Part of TS digest, web	
Christian Broadcasting Network	2/19	TS, web	
San Jose Mercury News	2/20	A4	
Washington Post	2/20	A9	
Le Monde (did interview at least)	??	??	
Evening Standard (London)	2/19	Page 4	
Associated Press	2/20	Na	
Albuquerque Journal	2/20	FP	
Stephens Washington Bureau (probably just Las Vegas Journal)	2/21	Local section	
Daily Times (Pakistan)	2/22	TS, web	
Environmental News Network	2/20	?	
Hi Pakistan (includes Dawn)	2/21	?	
Irish Examiner	2/20	?	
Mother Jones.com	2/20	TS	
Utne Reader web	2/21	?	
Paknews.com	2/20	?	
The Straits Times (Singapore)	2/21	World, TS	
Sydney Morning Herald	2/21	??	
Oakland Tribune	2/21	?? Follow-up	
Irish Times	2/21	??	
Middle East Online	2/25		
Executive Intelligence Review	3/7		
San Francisco Chronicle	3/1	A4; two review articles	
Guardian (long op-ed, Monbiot)	2/25		

Daily Times (Pakistan) (Monbiot op-ed)	2/25	
Scoop (New Zealand)	2/14	
Albuquerque Tribune	2/25	Long main, editorial
Dawn, Pakistan, Ramana op-ed	2/27	
Radio Interviews		
KSFR, Santa Fe	2/14	
BBC "Radio Five Alive"	2/19	
BBC "Today"	2/19	
BBC "Radio Five"	2/19	
Australian Broadcasting Service	2/19	
Peter Werbe Show (U.S. AM liberal talk radio, syndicated)	2/19	
Canadian Broadcasting Service + 60 NPR stations	2/20	Evening news program
Shanna Perlman BQU National (right-wing, horrible)	2/20	Live, 11:30 am
KUNM, Joe Wessely, radio and web	2/21	Evening news
Democracy Now! (report only)	~ 2/22	
Democracy Now! (live show) Also broadcast live on KSFR	2/28	Long evening program, with Nuclear Watch and CCCNS
Television		
BBC world news	2/19	TV and web
KOB.com (New Mexico NBC)	2/20	Web and ??
Prominent re-posts		
Commondreams.org	2/19	Top
Buzzflash.com	2/19	
Antiwar.com	2/19	
Truthout.org	2/19 & 3/3	
Thoughtcrimes.org	2/20	
Cursor.org	2/20	Top
Carnegie Endowment "Proliferation News" (Pincus article only)	2/20	
Peace Action Education Fund	2/24	

Forthcoming and other		
Mounzer Sleiman, defense analyst for a number of Middle Eastern newspapers and TV stations	2/21	short interview
Springfield, MA radio	3/12	

Oakland Tribune

President mulls plan to build mininukes

Policy shift reflected in Bush's $21 million budget request for design of new weapons in 2004

By Ian Hoffman - STAFF WRITER

Saturday, February 15, 2003 -

Top Bush administration nuclear-weapons executives and weapons scientists are sketching out a strategy for adding a new menu of mininukes, neutron bombs and other nuclear arms to the nation's Cold War-style arsenal.

In talks at the Pentagon last month, federal defense executives and weapons scientists from California and New Mexico set the stage for a debate over "selecting first 'small builds'," or choosing tailor-made weapons for limited production runs.

"What's clear is, in this administration, the brakes are off in nuclear development and the push for nuclear testing," said Greg Mello, head of the Los Alamos Study Group, an arms-control group in New Mexico that obtained minutes to a meeting of top nuclear-weapons advisers.

The revelations are the latest herald of a potential sea change in U.S. nuclear policy:

- On Thursday, House Republicans touted an aggressive new nuclear-weapons policy calling for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos labs to begin studying "advanced concepts" for new weapons for the first time since 1994. GOP lawmakers say they also are thinking of repealing a 1993 ban on research into low-yield nuclear weapons, or those with an explosive yield at or below a third of the Hiroshima bomb.

- President Bush's new budget asks for $21 million for design of new or modified nuclear weapons in 2004.

- White House pronouncements since September lay out a new defense policy giving greater prominence to pre-emptive strikes on foreign weapons of mass destruction. Pentagon war planners already are drawing up contingency plans for a nuclear strike in Iraq, to pre-empt or retaliate for a chemical or biological attack, according to a Los Angeles Times report.

- Nuclear Weapons Council Chairman and Assistant Defense Secretary E.C. "Pete" Aldridge Jr. asked weapons scientists in October "to assess the potential benefits that could be obtained from a return to nuclear testing." Meanwhile, Assistant Defense Secretary for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons Dale Klein has said the nation will have to test within five to 10 years.

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Senior administration officials stress that they have no requirements for new nuclear weapons, meaning the military services and Bush have not yet detailed a new attack mission demanding a new weapons design.

Yet according to minutes of a Jan. 10 meeting, federal defense executives and top lab scientists are laying the preliminary groundwork for those new weapons requirements as they prepare for a Stockpile Stewardship Conference in August, their first in seven years. They plan to debate among other things whether a return to low-yield or high-yield nuclear testing for the first time since 1992 would be needed in proving the new designs.

"What forms of testing will these new designs require?" Defense Department officials asked themselves and scientists on a panel advising the Nuclear Weapons Council, the foremost body for recommending weapons policy to the president.

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The talks offer a rare glimpse into the Bush administration as it mulls building modified or wholly new bombs and warheads as hardware for pre-emptive attacks.

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"It's a far cry from a planning document for administration policy," Franklin said.

Even so, the Bush administration is asking for $21 million for "advanced concepts" studies of modified or new weapons in 2004. That includes $15 million for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos national labs to compete for design of a "bunker-buster" bomb for attacking deeply buried, hardened concrete bunkers. Called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, the bomb would be based either on Livermore's B-83 or Los Alamos B-61, both featuring adjustable explosive yields.

The president also is asking for $6 million for "additional and exploratory studies" of advanced weapons designs.

"These are not vague plans for the future," said the Los Alamos Study Group's Mello. "This is a detailed planning process that bespeaks a great deal of thought and coordination between branches of government."

He finds especially disturbing a portion of the document in which top defense executives and weaponeers ask themselves "what should the policy and practice be for granting authority to adapt and build small quantities?"

Traditionally, only the president may authorize the production of a nuclear weapon. The conversation to Mello suggests lax oversight and control of the nation's key nuclear weapons agencies at the Defense and Energy departments. "That you would even talk about that would suggest the democratic governance of these institutions is already very, very weak. Every member of Congress should sit up and take notice that we are losing congressional oversight of the nuclear weapons program of the United States."

Contact Ian Hoffman at ihoffman@angnewspapers.com .

U.S. may build smaller nukes Memo reveals plan for conference on design and testing

Saturday, February 15, 2003
San Francisco Chronicle
CHRONICLE SECTIONS

James Sterngold, Chronicle Staff Writer

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Policymakers in the Department of Defense, the armed services and the nuclear weapons design labs are moving forward rapidly in planning for the possible production of a new generation of smaller nuclear bombs and a resumption of nuclear testing, a leaked Bush administration document shows.

The internal memo outlines the planning for a conference tentatively scheduled for August, at which panels of experts would address questions relating to how the country would design new types of nuclear weapons and possibly test them.

The conference would also address questions about how the new nuclear policies would be sold to the public and to political leaders.

The eight-page document, titled "Stockpile Stewardship Conference Planning Meeting Minutes," was obtained by the Los Alamos Study Group, an anti-nuclear weapons group based near the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Greg Mello, a leader of the group, said that the unclassified memo came from a government official who was concerned about the aggressive new weapons policy it represented.

The memo was a record of a meeting held on Jan. 10 at the Pentagon. Attendees at the meeting, including Defense Department officials and representatives of the Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos national laboratories.

While the ideas in the memo are not new, experts said, their circulation in government, military and nuclear laboratory circles suggests a quickening pace toward what could be a fundamental change in the country's post-Cold War nuclear doctrine -- away from deterrence and nonproliferation and closer to the notion of "usable" nuclear weapons.

House Republicans issued a policy paper on Thursday which calls for some of the changes discussed in the Pentagon memo. These include the repeal of a decade-old law that prohibits the development of small, low-yield nuclear weapons, and steps that would make it easier to resume nuclear testing, which was halted ten years ago.

The GOP paper also proposed a new doctrine under which the country would be able to launch

nuclear attacks not just in response to a nuclear attack, or the threat of one, but to pre-emptively destroy stockpiles of other weapons, such as chemical or biological weapons, in the hands of hostile countries.

These proposals have stirred concern from some weapons experts and lawmakers who say they could make the use of nuclear weapons more rather than less likely, and would encourage other countries to develop their own stockpiles of more usable nuclear weapons.

The White House has not responded to requests for comment on the Republican policy paper or on the Jan. 10 meeting.

In addition to summarizing the results of previous discussions among dozens of officials, the Pentagon memo outlines suggestions for the planning of construction of small batches of low-yield nuclear weapons and possible testing, and how authorization for commencing the new weapons development would be provided.

At the August conference, where such issues would be taken up, presentations would be made by four panels: a strategy and risk panel; a future arsenal panel; a National Nuclear Security Administration and Department of Defense Infrastructure Panel; and a strategy and policy panel.

The panels would consist of policy planners from the Pentagon, individual military services and officials from Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos and other weapons research facilities.

The document poses specific questions to be addressed, such as to the kind of guidance systems any new missiles might need. "What is the testing strategy for weapons more likely to be used in small strikes," the document asks. "Do we put GPS (global positioning system guidance) on all systems, or just a few?"

Another question asks: "How do we frame the explanation of emerging (sic) policy to show the deterrent value of reduced-collateral damage, precision, agent defeat, and penetrating nuclear capabilities in meeting our national security objectives?"

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said the memo indicates the planning process for what would be a new nuclear doctrine is well advanced, despite the almost total absence of any congressional or public debate on the subject.

"Right now, it's a stealth campaign," Kimball said. "Proponents understand that it's an explosive issue and they risk losing if they don't wait for the right moment."

Paper: San Mateo County Times (CA)
Title: President mulls plan to build mininukes - Policy shift reflected in Bush's $21 million budget request for design of new weapons in 2004
Author: Ian Hoffman - STAFF WRITER [also in other ANG newspapers]
Date: February 15, 2003
Section: Front Page

Top Bush administration nuclear-weapons executives and weapons scientists are sketching out a strategy for adding a new menu of mininukes, neutron bombs and other nuclear arms to the nation's Cold War-style arsenal. In talks at the Pentagon last month, federal defense executives and weapons scientists from California and New Mexico set the stage for a debate over "selecting first 'small builds'," or choosing tailor-made weapons for limited production runs.

"What's clear is, in this administration, the brakes are off in nuclear development and the push for nuclear testing," said Greg Mello, head of the **Los Alamos Study Group**, an arms-control group in New Mexico that obtained minutes to a meeting of top nuclear-weapons advisers.

The revelations are the latest herald of a potential sea change in U.S. nuclear policy:

- On Thursday, House Republicans touted an aggressive new nuclear-weapons policy calling for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos labs to begin studying "advanced concepts" for new weapons for the first time since 1994. GOP lawmakers say they also are thinking of repealing a 1993 ban on research into low-yield nuclear weapons, or those with an explosive yield at or below a third of the Hiroshima bomb.

- President Bush's new budget asks for $21 million for design of new or modified nuclear weapons in 2004.

- White House pronouncements since September lay out a new defense policy giving greater prominence to pre-emptive strikes on foreign weapons of mass destruction. Pentagon war planners already are drawing up contingency plans for a nuclear strike in Iraq, to pre-empt or retaliate for a chemical or biological attack, according to a Los Angeles Times report.

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Administration officials cautioned that the document distilled frank conversations among the executives and scientists responsible for "very long-range issues for the nuclear stockpile."

"So it's appropriate that they consider any range of possibilities and that's exactly what this group is doing," said Anson Franklin, chief of governmental affairs for the National Nuclear Security Administration. "That shouldn't be read to suggest we are actively considering new weapons systems or a return to testing.

"It's a far cry from a planning document for administration policy," Franklin said.

Even so, the Bush administration is asking for $21 million for "advanced concepts" studies of modified or new weapons in 2004. That includes $15 million for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos national labs to compete for design of a "bunker-buster" bomb for attacking deeply buried, hardened concrete bunkers. Called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, the bomb would be based either on Livermore's B-83 or Los Alamos B-61, both featuring adjustable explosive yields.

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Contact Ian Hoffman at ihoffman@angnewspapers.com .

Author: Ian Hoffman - STAFF WRITER
Section: Front Page

The Nation today

By Globe Staff and Wires, 2/19/2003

WASHINGTON, D.C.

US is said to eye small nuclear arms

The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss possibly building a new generation of small nuclear weapons that could be used against hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to documents released by a nuclear disarmament advocacy group. The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its website the minutes from a Jan. 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference of military officials and nuclear scientists, to be held at US Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Neb., possibly the week of Aug. 4, 2003. The New Mexico-based group did not say how it obtained the documents. A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting. (Reuters)

Firefighters union endorses Kerry

The 12,000-member Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts announced yesterday it had decided to endorse Senator John F. Kerry for president, the first statewide union to offer the Massachusetts Democrat its backing. The labor union cited Kerry's support after a warehouse fire that killed six Worcester firefighters, as well as his efforts for pension benefit reform, increased revenue for training, personnel, and equipment, as well as family assistance following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack. Kerry said he was "humbled" by the endorsement. (Globe staff)

CALIFORNIA

INS extending registration date

WALNUT CREEK -- Male visitors to the United States from a group of Muslim countries have been allowed another month to comply with a controversial registration program or face possible deportation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service said yesterday. Men over age 16 from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have until March 21 to register with their local INS office. Men over 16 from Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, and Kuwait have also received a deadline extension, until April 25. An INS press release said the deadline extensions were issued "in response to requests for more time from different individuals and entities." (Knight-Ridder)

Police search home of missing woman

MODESTO -- Police returned to the home of a missing pregnant woman yesterday to search

Paper: Boston Globe, The (MA)
Title: US IS SAID TO EYE - SMALL NUCLEAR ARMS
Author: REUTERS
Date: February 19, 2003
Section: National/Foreign
Page: A2

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Author: REUTERS
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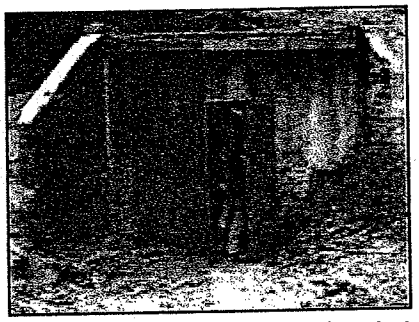
US 'plans new nuclear weapons'

A leaked document suggests that Washington is beginning detailed planning for a new generation of smaller nuclear weapons.



The new weapons could be used against deep bunkers

The document - published by an anti-proliferation watchdog and confirmed as genuine by US officials - indicates the weapons could be used against targets like deep bunkers that contain chemical or biological agents.

The Los Alamos Study Group claims the plans would challenge the foundations of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which limits the development of new designs for nuclear bombs.

The BBC's Justin Webb in Washington says the plans clearly fit in with the wider Bush doctrine of pre-emptive strikes in the future when the US feels itself to be threatened.

'MINI-NUKES'

- Could strike deep-underground bunker
- Existing bombs could be improvised
- Critics doubt it could go deep enough to contain fall out

Click here for Q&A on new generation weapons

The New Mexico-based Los Alamos Study Group posted on its website what it said were the minutes of last month's meeting in the Pentagon of senior US nuclear scientists.

It said the meeting was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public".

The group said that the conference of senior military officials and scientists would be held in August at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command in Nebraska.

The group did not say how it obtained the document, but said it decided to publish it taking into account Washington's "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning".

"It's very rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in the same documents, in the same place," the group's spokesman, Greg Mello, said.

WATCH AND LISTEN
The BBC's Frank Gardner
"Washington may be planning a whole new generation of atomic bombs"
VIDEO

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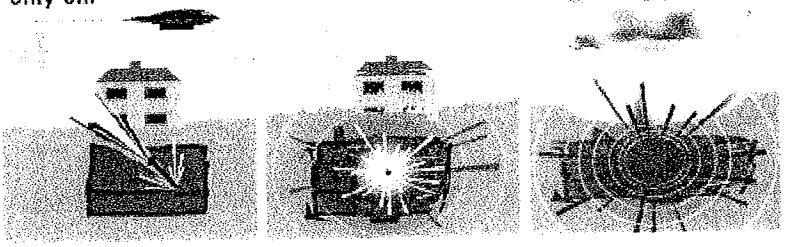
Q&A: America's new nuclear weapons

The proposed 'mini-nukes' would be designed to penetrate deeply buried chemical, biological or nuclear weapons facilities

In tests, a B2 bomber released an unarmed earth-penetrating nuclear weapon from 12,000m. It penetrated only 6m

The aim is that the nuclear explosion is buried and fallout contained

Some scientists argue that even low yield bombs need to penetrate more than 100m to contain explosion and fallout



Minutes of a Pentagon meeting to prepare for a conference on a new generation of nuclear weapons, including so-called 'mini-nukes', have been published by a nuclear watchdog in the US.

BBC News Online world affairs correspondent Paul Reynolds considers some of the questions raised.

What are 'mini-nukes'?

The key to understanding mini-nukes is not just their size. As the name implies, they would be very small, perhaps of 1 kiloton - the equivalent of 1000 metric tonnes of explosive. Indeed, their general name is 'small build'.

Their importance would also come from their accuracy. They would be used as 'bunker-busters' or 'earth penetrating weapons', perhaps to incinerate or destroy an underground stockpile of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, which could not be attacked in any other way.

New guidance systems, based on global positioning satellites, make the use of such weapons possible.

Why has this been raised now?

An independent American nuclear watchdog organisation, the Los Alamos Study Group has got hold of and has published the minutes of a meeting held at the Pentagon on 10 January 2003 at which preparations for a conference on the testing of current nuclear weapons and the design of a new generation of weapons was discussed.

SEE ALSO:
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The conference is planned for this August at Stratcom, the Strategic Command headquarters in Nebraska. The weapons listed are: low (radiation) yield, earth penetrating, enhanced radiation (the "neutron" bomb) and 'agent defeating'. Agent defeating refers not to blowing up enemies' agents but to the destruction of chemical and biological agents.

Why do the Americans want such weapons?

They want more flexible weapons and ones that could be used against emerging threats like chemical and biological weapons.

They want weapons that could be used on a battlefield - not against cities but against defined threats which might not be overcome using conventional weapons.

The end of the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) which kept a balance of terror with the Soviet Union is of no use against a potential enemy which has smaller weapons of mass destruction or disruption.

Would they be useable?

Some critics say mini-nukes would so powerful that they would spread radiation and, therefore, could not be used without the risk of contaminating large areas.

They might defeat their own object and not be viable battlefield weapons. Other non nuclear options, such as air burst bombs, could, perhaps, be used instead.

However, the fact that the Pentagon is exploring their use indicates that it thinks they could be technically possible.

How long has this been going on?

It grows out of a review of American nuclear strategy in December 2001. The Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld introduced a new concept. Instead of the Old Triad in which air-launched and sea-launched missiles and nuclear bombers formed a triangle of nuclear power, a New Triad was put forward. This consists of:

- "Offensive strike systems", that is, the whole of the Old Triad.
- "Defenses", including the National Missile Defence System or anti ballistic missile defence.
- "A revitalized defense infrastructure that will provide new capabilities in a timely fashion to meet emerging threats."

This means mini-nukes and their kind and the ability to design and produce them in a five year time frame.

Wouldn't this encourage nuclear

proliferation?

Anti nuclear groups fear that where the United States treads, others will eventually follow. The Los Alamos Group says the plans call into question the American commitment to article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This says that "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmamentż"

The Treaty is essentially a bargain under which states without the bomb agree not to develop it if states with it move towards nuclear disarmament. This has not worked out in practice.

What happens now?

The Americans are quite well advanced in their planning, according to the leaked documents. There is, therefore, every reason to think that in due course they will develop some, at least, of the weapons they are examining.

Other countries will take a close interest and some might try to build their own. A new concept of warfare is being developed.

What else is being discussed?

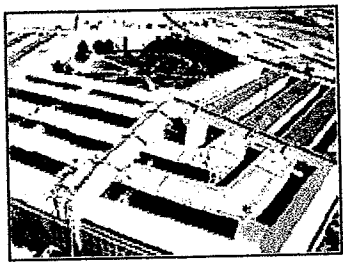
One of the problems the US (and other nuclear countries) faces is keeping its nuclear arsenal "up-to-date". It has had a moratorium on live nuclear testing since 1992 yet testing is the best way of checking that device has not deteriorated.

The leaked minutes show that it is very worried about this problem and the question is raised as to whether there could be 'low yield' testing.

That would raise the issue of nuclear testing again.

U.S. Eyes Mini-Nukes

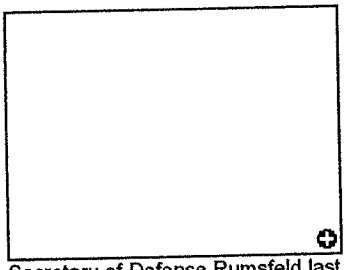
NEW YORK, Feb. 19, 2003



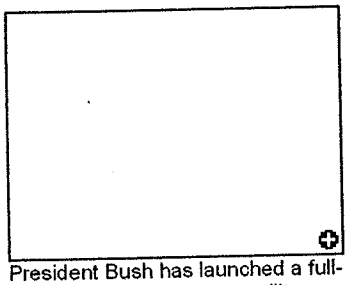
(CBS)

QUOTE

"What would demand a test?"
Pentagon planning document



Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld last week refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons in Iraq, but said conventional weapons would do the job if war occurs. (AP)



President Bush has launched a full-scale review of American military doctrine. (CBS)

(CBS) The U.S. government will convene a conference later this year to discuss the need for small-scale nuclear weapons, and determine whether the ban on nuclear testing poses an obstacle to maintaining America's nuclear force, a leaked Pentagon document says.

The document, obtained and posted on the Internet by the nuclear watchdog Los Alamos Study Group, is the minutes of a meeting last month planning for a conference in August. It was first reported by Britain's Guardian newspaper.

An official at the National Nuclear Security Administration, which maintains the national weapons stockpile, confirmed the authenticity of the document to the Guardian. But the official insisted the conference was concerned only with "long-range" planning.

The document says the results of the conference would be "forwarded, as appropriate, to the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Energy." Pentagon conferences often consider a range of policy options that never become policy.

Since entering office, the Bush administration has employed a multifaceted approach to revising U.S. nuclear policy to meet what the White House considers modern, as opposed to Cold War, threats.

To that end, President Bush and Russian president Vladimir Putin have agreed to large cuts in their countries' nuclear arsenals.

At the same time, the administration's January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review stated the need to consider North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Syria as countries where "contingencies" may develop that required considering the use of nuclear weapons.

The posture review also stated that while the U.S. has not tested nuclear weapons since 1992, and "is making every effort to maintain the stockpile without additional nuclear testing, this may not be possible for the indefinite future."

The review also stressed the need for a range of nuclear options. "Nuclear attack options that vary in scale, scope, and purpose will complement other military capabilities," read a forward to the report.

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The leaked planning document says the conference was spurred by an October 2002 memo that discussed "the risk associated with not testing our nuclear weapons."

The minutes state explicitly that, "it is not the policy of the Administration to return to nuclear testing." However, one of the questions the conference will address is "what would demand a test?"

The conference will consist of four panels addressing different aspects of U.S. nuclear capability and strategy.

One will confront problems posed by the ban on testing. "What existing, and new ... tools coming on-line could provide enhanced capabilities to quantify and minimize performance risk both for the (existing nuclear) stockpile, and potential new or modified weapons?" is a question the panel will address.

That panel will also consider "What is the role of nuclear testing in reducing risk in the stockpile? ...What is the uncertainty in confidence and potential risk threshold for a test recommendation—what would demand a test? "

A second panel will look at the possibility of fielding smaller nuclear weapons, addressing "Requirements for low-yield weapons, (earth-penetrating weapons), enhanced radiation weapons," — the type referenced in the Nuclear Posture Review.

A third working group is set to focus on administrative challenges facing the Nuclear Security Administration, like "design, research and development, production, maintenance." The last panel will deal with policy issues surrounding nuclear weapons — namely how they fit into the U.S. defense goals of "assurance, dissuasion, deterrence, and defeat."

Representatives from U.S. Strategic Command, the NNSA, national nuclear laboratories, the Joint Staff and the military branches will staff the various committees. The conference is tentatively scheduled for August 4 at Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha.

The review of U.S. nuclear policy is part of a broad overhaul of American military doctrine undertaken by the White House.

The president this summer announced that the U.S. doctrine would no longer rule out preemptive strikes against perceived threats.

This fall, the administration reiterated a standing U.S. policy that an attack using weapons of mass destruction on the United States or its troops would be met by a response employing the full range of American resources, which includes nuclear weapons. That was seen as a warning to Iraq.

Last week, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons in a possible war with Iraq, although he indicated that "we can do what needs to be done using conventional capabilities."

By Jarrett Murphy

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The Evening Standard (London)
February 19, 2003

SECTION: Pg. 4

LENGTH: 425 words

HEADLINE: US draws up plans for new wave of nuclear weapons;
War on terror: Bush may be turning up diplomatic heat at critical stage

BYLINE: Ben Leapman

BODY:

AMERICAN defence chiefs are drafting secret plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons, in a move which could set back attempts to win international backing for a war in Iraq.

Leaked Pentagon plans suggest that the new devices could include "mini-nukes" which would be considered more "usable" than giant warheads, making them more effective as a deterrent.

American government officials acknowledged the authenticity of the leaked papers but said their contents were "what-if scenarios and very long range planning". The move will be seized on by opponents of American policy towards Iraq, who will cite the weapons plans as another example of President Bush acting with disregard for world opinion and for internat ional treaties on nuclear nonproliferation.

In Britain, Labour MPs are certain to use the revelations to press their case that Tony Blair should be far more cautious in his dealings with the American administration.

Opinion polls show that many Britons already see President Bush as a bigger threat to world peace than Saddam Hussein.

A paper published by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last year identified potential targets for American nuclear weapons and raised questions over what kind of armaments would be best suited to the purpose.

The leaked papers show that a "future arsenal panel" will meet in August at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command to consider " requirements for low- yield weapons, earth-penetrating weapons, enhanced radiation weapons, agent defeat weapons".

Some of the newgeneration weapons would be "bunker-busters" allowing enemy stock of conventional, chemical or biological weapons to be destroyed in their underground stores.

Building the new nuclear devices would risk breaching a range of treaties.

Greg **Mello** of Los Alamos Study Group, an American nuclear watchdog organisation which obtained the leaked papers, said: "It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the comprehensive testban treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium and US compliance with article six of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty."

The looming row over the nuclear plans echoes the controversy over America's plans for a "star wars" missile defence shield, first floated by President Ronald Reagan and revived by President Bush.

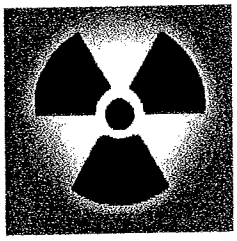
The missile defence programme has already sparked a round of Labour infighting, with the Government overriding objections from many backbench MPs to approve the siting of equipment on British soil.

Wednesday Feb 19 2003. All times are London time.

REUTERS

Pentagon mulling new uses for nukes

WASHINGTON (Reuters) 19 February 2003 04:21



The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss possibly building a new generation of small nuclear weapons that could be used against hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to documents released by a nuclear disarmament advocacy group.

The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Web site the minutes from a January 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public."

According to the leaked documents, the conference of military officials and nuclear scientists would be held at U.S. Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, possibly the week of August 4, 2003.

The Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Los Alamos group did not say how it obtained the documents which it said demonstrated the administration's "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning."

"It's very rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in the same documents, in the same place," spokesman Greg Mello said in an interview on Tuesday explaining why the group had made the material public.

A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting.

The release of the documents come as critics are questioning whether President George W. Bush's administration is contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in wartime.

At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week, Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, noted the administration's request for funds to study nuclear weapons that could be used against deeply buried targets.

"If the United States sends signals that we're considering new uses for nuclear weapons, isn't it more likely that other nations will also want to explore greater use or new uses for nuclear weapons?" Levin asked while questioning Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Rumsfeld said other countries were engaging in underground tunnelling to develop, manufacture and store weapons. He said that "not having the ability to penetrate and reach them creates a very serious obstacle to U.S. national security."

Special report United States of America

US plan for new nuclear arsenal

Secret talks may lead to breaking treaties

Julian Borger in Washington
Wednesday February 19, 2003
The Guardian

The Bush administration is planning a secret meeting in August to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "mini-nukes", "bunker-busters" and neutron bombs designed to destroy chemical or biological agents, according to a leaked Pentagon document.

The meeting of senior military officials and US nuclear scientists at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command would also decide whether to restart nuclear testing and how to convince the American public that the new weapons are necessary.

The leaked preparations for the meeting are the clearest sign yet that the administration is determined to overhaul its nuclear arsenal so that it could be used as part of the new "Bush doctrine" of pre-emption, to strike the stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of rogue states.

Greg Mello, the head of the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog organisation that obtained the Pentagon documents, said the meeting would also prepare the ground for a US breakaway from global arms control treaties, and the moratorium on conducting nuclear tests.

"It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the comprehensive test ban treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with article six of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," Mr Mello said.

The documents leaked to Mr Mello are the minutes of a meeting in the Pentagon on January 10 this year called by Dale Klein, the assistant to the defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, to prepare the secret conference, planned for "the week of August 4 2003".

The National Nuclear Security Administration, which is responsible for designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons, yesterday confirmed the authenticity of the document. But Anson Franklin, the NNSA head of governmental affairs, said: "We have no request from the defence department for any new nuclear weapon, and we have no plans for nuclear testing.

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"The fact is that this paper is talking about what-if scenarios and very long range planning," Mr Franklin told the Guardian.

However, non-proliferation groups say the Omaha meeting will bring a new US nuclear arsenal out of the realm of the theoretical and far closer to reality, in the shape of new bombs and a new readiness to use them.

"To me it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way ... to resume the development, testing and production of new nuclear weapons. It's very serious," said Stephen Schwartz, the publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, who added that it opened the US to charges of hypocrisy when it is demanding the disarmament of Iraq and North Korea.

"How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?" Mr Schwartz said.

The starting point for the January discussion was Mr Rumsfeld's nuclear posture review (NPR), a policy paper published last year that identified Russia, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya as potential targets for US nuclear weapons.

According to the Pentagon minutes, the August meeting in Strategic Command's bunker headquarters would discuss how to make weapons to match the new policy. A "future arsenal panel" would consider: "What are the warhead characteristics and advanced concepts we will need in the post-NPR environment?"

The panel would also contemplate the "requirements for low-yield weapons, EPWs [earth-penetrating weapons], enhanced radiation weapons, agent defeat weapons".

This is the menu of weapons being actively considered by the Pentagon. Low-yield means tactical warheads of less than a kiloton, "mini-nukes", which advocates of the new arsenal say represent a far more effective deterrent than the existing huge weapons, because they are more "usable".

Earth-penetrating weapons are "bunker-busters", which would break through the surface of the earth before detonating. US weapons scientists believe they could be used as "agent defeat weapons" used to destroy chemical or biological weapons stored underground. The designers are also looking at low-yield neutron bombs or "enhanced radiation weapons", which could destroy chemical or biological weapons in surface warehouses.

According to the leaked document, the "future arsenal panel" in Omaha would also ask the pivotal question: "What forms of testing will these new designs require?"

The Bush administration has been working to reduce the amount of warning the test sites in the western US desert would need to be reactivated after 10 years lying dormant.

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US plans for mini-nuke arsenal revealed

13:37 19 February 03

NewScientist.com news service

A leaked Pentagon document has confirmed that the US is considering the introduction of a new breed of smaller nuclear weapons designed for use in conventional warfare. Such a move would mean abandoning global arms treaties.

The document, obtained by the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear weapons watchdog based in the US, describes plans for a gathering of senior military officials and nuclear scientists at the US Strategic Command in Omaha, Nebraska, during the week of 4 August.

The meeting would discuss further development, testing and introduction of a new generation of low-yield nuclear weapons. These weapons, with a destructive power of less than five kilotons, could be designed to penetrate an underground bunker before detonating. The Hiroshima bomb dropped by the US in 1945 had a yield of about 15 kilotons.

The US military believes mini-nukes may provide a stronger deterrent to rogue states. This is because the US would be more willing to use them than standard nuclear weapons, which have yields of hundreds of kilotons.

US government officials have confirmed the authenticity of the document, but say that it covers "very long range planning" and "what-if scenarios".

Enhanced radiation

Also on the agenda for the August meeting would be enhanced radiation weapons, also known as neutron weapons. These produce a large amount of radiation without a devastating blast and can be used to decimate weapons stockpiles and troops without destroying much infrastructure.

Patrick Garrett, an analyst with the military think-tank GlobalSecurity.org, says the document is alarming. "It's like looking at the cold war all over again," he told **New Scientist**.

"The fact that they're actually going to sit down and to talk about reliability issues and what would need to happen for production, testing and guidance, means these people are particularly serious about deploying these things sometime very soon," he says.

Garrett adds that the long-term implications of contaminating a target with radiation may not be well understood. "I don't think these people understand that any use of a nuclear weapon is a bad use." he says.

Treaty threat

The Los Alamos Study Group also condemns the plans for threatening international non-proliferation agreements. Greg Mello, head of LASG, says: "It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with Article VI of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which is binding law in the US."

Recent US interest in the development of smaller, more targeted nuclear weapons is well documented. **New Scientist** reported in October 2000 that the US Defense Appropriations Bill ordered a study of the feasibility of low-yield nuclear weapons. This overturned a ban on research into the development of battlefield nuclear weapons imposed in 1993.

In November 2002, **New Scientist** also reported a further $15m in US government funding for research into a nuclear "bunker buster", called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator.

Will Knight

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Article Last Updated: Saturday, February 15, 2003 - 8:48:59 AM MST

President mulls plan to build mininukes

Policy shift reflected in Bush's $21 million budget request for design of new weapons in 2004

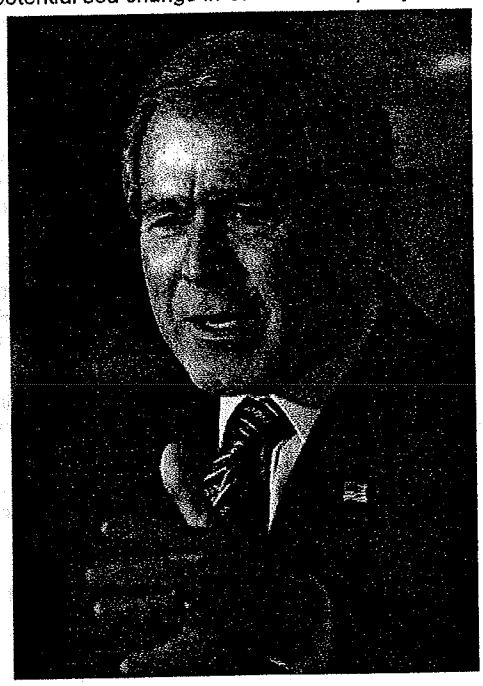
By Ian Hoffman - STAFF WRITER

Top Bush administration nuclear-weapons executives and weapons scientists are sketching out a strategy for adding a new menu of mininukes, neutron bombs and other nuclear arms to the nation's Cold War-style arsenal.

In talks at the Pentagon last month, federal defense executives and weapons scientists from California and New Mexico set the stage for a debate over "selecting first 'small builds'," or choosing tailor-made weapons for limited production runs.

"What's clear is, in this administration, the brakes are off in nuclear development and the push for nuclear testing," said Greg Mello, head of the Los Alamos Study Group, an arms-control group in New Mexico that obtained minutes to a meeting of top nuclear-weapons advisers.

The revelations are the latest herald of a potential sea change in U.S. nuclear policy:



- On Thursday, House Republicans touted an aggressive new nuclear-weapons policy calling for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos labs to begin studying "advanced concepts" for new weapons for the first time since 1994. GOP lawmakers say they also are thinking of repealing a 1993 ban on research into low-yield nuclear weapons, or those with an explosive yield at or below a third of the Hiroshima bomb.

- President Bush's new budget asks for $21 million for design of new or modified nuclear weapons in 2004.

- White House pronouncements since September lay out a new defense policy giving greater prominence to pre-emptive strikes on foreign weapons of mass destruction. Pentagon war planners already are drawing up contingency plans for a nuclear strike in Iraq, to pre-empt or retaliate for a chemical or biological attack, according to a Los Angeles Times report.

- Nuclear Weapons Council Chairman and Assistant Defense Secretary E.C. "Pete" Aldridge Jr. asked weapons scientists in October "to assess the potential benefits that could be obtained from a return to nuclear testing."

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for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons Dale Klein has said the nation will have to test within five to 10 years.

"The drums are beating pretty loudly on all quarters," said Thomas Cochran, a physicist and head of the Natural Resources Defense Council's program on nuclear arms.

"Like kids in a toy shop, they have all these ideas (for weapons) they want to pursue but without any utility," Cochran said. "The U.S. has not designed a new, successful weapon in decades, and that's because all the practical improvements you can make in nuclear weapons were made at least two decades ago."

Senior administration officials stress that they have no requirements for new nuclear weapons, meaning the military services and Bush have not yet detailed a new attack mission demanding a new weapons design.

Yet according to minutes of a Jan. 10 meeting, federal defense executives and top lab scientists are laying the preliminary groundwork for those new weapons requirements as they prepare for a Stockpile Stewardship Conference in August, their first in seven years. They plan to debate among other things whether a return to low-yield or high-yield nuclear testing for the first time since 1992 would be needed in proving the new designs.

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"What forms of testing will these new designs require?" Defense Department officials asked themselves and scientists on a panel advising the Nuclear Weapons Council, the foremost body for recommending weapons policy to the president.

"What is the role of nuclear testing in reducing risk in the stockpile? What parts of those risks are associated with the absence of nuclear testing, in comparison to the risk association with a 150kt (kiloton explosive yield) threshold or a low-yield test program. ...What would demand a test?"

The talks offer a rare glimpse into the Bush administration as it mulls building modified or wholly new bombs and warheads as hardware for pre-emptive attacks.

Administration officials cautioned that the document distilled frank conversations among the executives and scientists responsible for "very long-range issues for the nuclear stockpile."

"So it's appropriate that they consider any range of possibilities and that's exactly what this group is doing," said Anson Franklin, chief of governmental affairs for the National Nuclear Security Administration. "That shouldn't be read to suggest we are actively considering new weapons systems or a return to testing.

"It's a far cry from a planning document for administration policy," Franklin said.

Even so, the Bush administration is asking for $21 million for "advanced concepts" studies of modified or new weapons in 2004. That includes $15 million for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos national labs to compete for design of a "bunker-buster" bomb for attacking deeply buried, hardened concrete bunkers. Called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, the bomb would be based either on Livermore's B-83 or Los Alamos B-61,

The president also is asking for $6 million for "additional and exploratory studies" of advanced weapons designs.

"These are not vague plans for the future," said the Los Alamos Study Group's Mello. "This is a detailed planning process that bespeaks a great deal of thought and coordination between branches of government."

He finds especially disturbing a portion of the document in which top defense executives and weaponeers ask themselves "what should the policy and practice be for granting authority to adapt and build small quantities?"

Traditionally, only the president may authorize the production of a nuclear weapon. The conversation to Mello suggests lax oversight and control of the nation's key nuclear weapons agencies at the Defense and Energy departments. "That you would even talk about that would suggest the democratic governance of these institutions is already very, very weak. Every member of Congress should sit up and take notice that we are losing congressional oversight of the nuclear weapons program of the United States."

Contact Ian Hoffman at ihoffman@angnewspapers.com .

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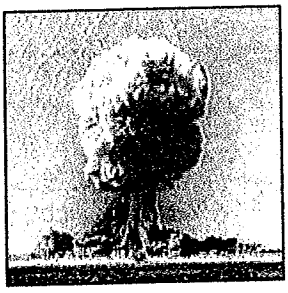

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A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting.

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At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week, Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, noted the administration's request for funds to study nuclear weapons that could be used against deeply buried targets.

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Pentagon said planning talks on new nuclear weapons

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Article Last Updated: Saturday, February 15, 2003 - 3:49:58 AM MST

Carte blanche for new nukes?

Gloves come off as administration sets stage for debate on nuclear weapons

By Ian Hoffman, STAFF WRITER

Top Bush administration nuclear-weapons executives and weapons scientists are sketching out a strategy for adding a new menu of mininukes, neutron bombs and other nuclear arms to the nation's Cold War-style arsenal.

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"So it's appropriate that they consider any range of possibilities and that's exactly what this group is doing," said Anson Franklin, chief of governmental affairs for the National Nuclear Security Administration. "That shouldn't be read to suggest we are actively considering new weapons systems or a return to testing."

"It's a far cry from a planning document for administration policy," Franklin said.

Even so, the Bush administration is seeking $21 million for "advanced concepts" studies of modified or new weapons in 2004.

That includes $15 million for scientists at Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos national labs to compete for design of a "bunker-buster" bomb for attacking deeply buried, hardened concrete bunkers. Called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, the bomb would be based either on Livermore's B-83 or Los Alamos B-61, both featuring adjustable explosive yields.

The president also is asking for $6 million for "additional and exploratory studies" of advanced weapons designs.

"These are not vague plans for the future," said the Los Alamos Study Group's Mello. "This is a detailed planning process that bespeaks a great deal of thought and coordination between branches of government."

He finds especially disturbing a portion of the document in which top defense

for granting authority to adapt and build small quantities?"

Traditionally, only the president may authorize the production of a nuclear weapon. The conversation to Mello suggests lax oversight and control of the nation's key nuclear weapons agencies at the Defense and Energy departments.

"That you would even talk about that would suggest the democratic governance of these institutions is already very, very weak. Every member of Congress should sit up and take notice that we are losing congressional oversight of the nuclear weapons program of the United States."

Contact Ian Hoffman at ihoffman@angnewspapers.com

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Publication: Jnl Legacy 1995 to July 2005; Date: Feb 20, 2003; Section: Final; Page: 70

Date:-02/20/2003 Edition:-Final Page:-A1

Pentagon Considers New Nukes

By John Fleck Journal Staff Writer

Policy May Lead to Next Generation of Weapons

Military and Energy Department leaders have begun thinking about what would be needed to design, test and build a new generation of nuclear weapons, according to a document leaked by members of the arms control community.

The document, consisting of the minutes of a Jan. 10 meeting at the Pentagon, lays out the agenda for a secret conference to be held in August to look at the questions.

Greg Mello, of the anti-nuclear Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe, distributed the document to reporters and posted it on the Internet. An Energy Department official confirmed the document's authenticity.

Among the issues to be considered at the August meeting, according to the document:

* What characteristics should a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons have?

* How should a choice be made about which new weapons to build?

* Would new weapons require underground test blasts?

* Could small-scale "low-yield" testing be substituted for the current U.S. moratorium on such underground nuclear blasts?

Among the attendees at the January meeting, according to the minutes, were senior weapons program officials from Sandia and Los Alamos national labs in New Mexico.

The document shows that "plans for new weapons are moving beyond the policy stage to the detailed ... technical stage," Mello said.

Government officials disagreed, saying the process described in the memo should be viewed as a "what if" exercise rather than active planning for a new nuclear arsenal.

The nuclear weapons complex needs to be ready if national leaders ask it to provide new weapons, said Linton Brooks, acting administrator of the DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration.

"I think that this is sort of responsible long-range planning," Brooks said in an interview. "The idea that it's somehow a first step on the path to new weapons is just not right."

It is prudent for U.S. nuclear weapons scientists to think about future options, said C. Paul

Robinson, president of Sandia National Laboratories.

"Thinking does not mean use of nuclear weapons," he said in an interview.

Mello disputed their contention, saying he believes the memo shows a desire by the weapons community to begin working on new bombs.

"I think that it's quite clear that we're beyond the 'what if' stage," Mello said.

The discussions within the Pentagon and Energy Department come amid growing pressure in Washington, D.C., defense policy circles for changes in U.S. nuclear defense policy.

The current policy is based on maintaining aging U.S. nuclear weapons built during the Cold War to deter the Soviet Union in Europe. As such, the weapons were primarily designed to destroy Soviet missile silos and other primarily nuclear targets.

Critics of that old-style nuclear policy say those weapons are not well-suited to our changing national security needs, where new adversaries might include smaller nations armed with chemical or biological as well as nuclear weapons.

A report last week from a congressional committee led by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., argued for research into new kinds of nuclear weapons geared to those new national security needs.

The purpose of nuclear weapons, Robinson said, is to prevent war by holding at risk the things potential enemies find valuable.

For the Soviet Union, that meant vast fields of nuclear missile silos. But a missile designed for that kind of target is unrealistic overkill against a new opponent's smaller stockpile of chemical or biological weapons, Robinson said.

If an adversary thinks our nuclear weapons are too massive to be used, the adversary will not be deterred from using their own weapons. "If they were unthinkable to use, they wouldn't deter," he said.

The minutes of the January meeting tick off a list of new types of nuclear weapons to be considered, including bombs with smaller yields designed to precisely target underground bunkers holding stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons.

In addition to talking about what kinds of new weapons the future U.S. nuclear arsenal might hold, the document says officials should consider what would be required to build such weapons.

February 20, 2003, Thursday, BC cycle

3:53 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 318 words

HEADLINE: Government considers new nukes

DATELINE: ALBUQUERQUE

BODY:
The Department of Energy and military leaders are discussing the possibility of developing a new generation of **nuclear** weapons, according to a document obtained by an anti-**nuclear** group.

Information on a secret conference scheduled for August to discuss questions about designing, testing and building **nuclear** weapons was contained in the minutes of a Jan. 10 meeting, the Albuquerque Journal reported in Thursday editions. The minutes were confirmed by a DOE official, the newspaper reported.

Greg **Mello,** of the anti-nuclear Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe, distributed the document and posted it on the Internet.

The document lists questions on the characteristics, types and need for underground nuclear blasts for a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratory officials attended the meeting, according to the minutes.

The document shows that "plans for new weapons are moving beyond the policy stage to the detailed ... technical stage," **Mello** said.

Government officials said the process described in the memo should be viewed as a "what if" exercise rather than active planning.

The nuclear weapons complex needs to be ready if national leaders ask it to provide new weapons, said Linton Brooks, acting administrator of the DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration.

"I think that this is sort of responsible long-range planning," Brooks said. "The idea that it's somehow a first step on the path to new weapons is just not right."

It is prudent for U.S. nuclear weapons scientists to think about future options, said C. Paul Robinson, president of Sandia National Laboratories.

"Thinking does not mean use of nuclear weapons," he told the Journal.

A report last week from a congressional committee led by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., argued for research into new kinds of nuclear weapons geared to new national security needs.

Paper: Cincinnati Post, The (OH)
Title: U.S. WEIGHS REVIVING LOW-YIELD NUCLEAR WEAPONS - SMALLER BOMBS TO BUST BUNKERS
Author: Walter Pincus, Washington Post
Date: February 20, 2003
Section: News
Page: A7

The Bush administration is reviving interest in developing low-yield nuclear devices that could be used to destroy such targets as reinforced bunkers holding chemical or biological weapons with less damage to the surrounding area than today's giant warheads, according to administration officials and government scientists.

The program is based on views within the nation's nuclear weapons laboratories that, as the United States reduces its stockpiles of larger nuclear weapons, it should replace them with smaller numbers of low-yield bombs. Low-yield nuclear weapons have much less explosive power than the large nuclear bombs that today's strategic arsenal comprises.Nuclear weapons strategists believe low-yield weapons would be a more credible deterrent against outlaw states and terrorist organizations with weapons of mass destruction. Since the bombs would inflict much less damage to the area outside the target than high-yield devices, the threshold for using them presumably would be lower.

Low-yield nuclear weapons have been controversial since the late 1970s, when the Army tried to introduce neutron artillery shells and warheads to its forces in Europe. The explosion of the neutron weapon created enormous radiation, while its blast and heat -- though still powerful -- were smaller than traditional nuclear bombs. Neutron weapons were deferred by President Jimmy Carter after a public uproar. President Ronald Reagan revived them, but President George H.W. Bush eliminated them as part of an agreement to reduce tactical nuclear weapons overseas.

Discussion of developing low-yield weapons returned in the 1990s when officials studied creating high-altitude low-yield weapons to produce an electromagnetic pulse that could wipe out enemy communications and electronics.

The low-yield weapons being considered now would be designed to penetrate reinforced bunkers housing chemical or biological weapons and detonate underground, concentrating their explosive power and heat on the chemical or biological agents and reducing or eliminating radioactive fallout in the atmosphere, scientists say.

Officials from the Defense and Energy departments met at the Pentagon on Jan. 10 to discuss reviving the low-yield nuclear weapons development program, an Energy Department spokesman said. The meeting was held to plan for a conference on the future of the U.S. nuclear stockpile scheduled for August at the Omaha headquarters of Strategic Command, the Pentagon command responsible for the country's nuclear arsenal.

"Requirements for low-yield weapons" were put on the agenda for a Future Arsenal Panel at that conference, according to notes from the Pentagon planning session. The notes were released this week by the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a Santa Fe-based organization that tracks U.S. nuclear weapons activities.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was asked about the notes at a Pentagon news conference Wednesday. "I don't believe there is anything currently under way by way of developing new nuclear weapons," he said.

Author: Walter Pincus, Washington Post
Section: News
Page: A7

THE Daily Telegraph

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THE IRAQI CRISIS - NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

20feb03

LONDON: Britain is trying to persuade the US to give diplomacy three more weeks before the United Nations is asked to trigger military action against Iraq.

Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw have suggested a crunch UN meeting could take place on March 14, *The Times* said.

Both argue that the delay could provide time to convince France and other doubters that Saddam Hussein has failed to cooperate with UN inspectors and that a new resolution paving the way to war should be approved.

PERSIAN GULF: Three giant cargo ships are being tracked by US and British intelligence on suspicion they're carrying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The 40,000-tonne vessels have been sailing the world's oceans for three months in radio silence – a clear violation of international maritime law.

They left port in late November, just a few days after UN weapons inspectors led by Hans Blix began their search for the alleged Iraqi arsenal.

TEHRAN: Nearly 5000 Iranian-backed Iraqi opposition troops crossed into northern Iraq from Iran with the aim of securing the frontier in the event of war.

BAGHDAD: UN weapons inspectors visited five sites involved in the production of a banned missile as rockets became a new crisis flashpoint. in the Iraq risis.

GAZA CITY: Eleven Palestinians were killed when Israeli tanks invaded Gaza City, Palestinians said early today, including a suicide bomber who attacked a tank.

CASABLANCA, Morocco: Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for three alleged members of the al-Qaida terrorist network from Saudi Arabia who are accused of plotting to attack US pesonnell and interests.

MANAMA, Bahrain: THE US Navy will use Zachary, the 19-year-old sea lion as one of its new secret weapon in any war against Iraq. Brought to the

kingdom, Zachary and the other whiskered sea mammals will guard against attack, providing early warning of enemy saboteurs.

WASHINGTON DC: The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss building a new generation of small nuclear weapons to target underground bunkers, according to leaked documents.

The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Web site the minutes from a January 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested ... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public."

WASHINGTON DC: Hans Blix and Mohamed al-Baradei, the UN weapons inspectors whose reports could decide whether America attacks Iraq, are among 150 nominations for this year's Nobel peace prize. The two join the Irish rock star Bono, a former governor of Illinois and a Cuban dissident in the near-record number of groups and individuals proposed for the award, won last year by the former US president Jimmy Carter

SINGAPORE: Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew said the US-led campaign to wipe out terrorism will ultimately prevail but will most likely take at least a decade before the scourge is defeated. Choking off access to funds which terrorists need to finance their activities will be pivotal if the anti-terror campaign is to emerge victorious, the elder statesman said.

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Pentagon said it's planning talks on new nuclear weapons

Thursday, February 20, 2003
By Reuters

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss possibly building a new generation of small nuclear weapons that could be used against hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to documents released by a nuclear disarmament advocacy group.

The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Web site the minutes from a Jan. 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested ... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public."

According to the leaked documents, the conference of military officials and nuclear scientists would be held at U.S. Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Neb., possibly the week of Aug. 4, 2003.

The Santa Fe, N.M.-based Los Alamos group did not say how it obtained the documents, which it said demonstrated the administration's "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning."

"It's very rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in the same documents, in the same place," spokesman Greg Mello said in an interview explaining why the group had made the material public.

A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting.

The release of the documents come as critics are questioning whether President Bush's administration is contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in wartime.

At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week, Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, noted the administration's request for funds to study nuclear weapons that could be used against deeply buried targets.

"If the United States sends signals that we're considering new uses for nuclear weapons, isn't it more likely that other nations will also want to explore greater use or new uses for nuclear weapons?" Levin asked while questioning Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Rumsfeld said other countries were engaging in underground tunneling to develop, manufacture, and store weapons. He said, "Not having the ability to penetrate and reach them creates a very serious obstacle to U.S. national security."

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The Hamilton Spectator

February 20, 2003 Thursday Final Edition

SECTION: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B03

LENGTH: 348 words

HEADLINE: U.S. eyes small nukes: group

SOURCE: Spectator Wire Services

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:
A leaked document suggests that Washington is beginning detailed planning for a new generation of smaller nuclear weapons.

The document -- published by an anti-proliferation watchdog and confirmed as genuine by U.S. officials -- indicates the weapons could be used against targets like deep bunkers that contain chemical or biological agents.

The Los Alamos Study Group claims the plans would challenge the foundations of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which limits the development of new designs for nuclear bombs. Weapons experts say the plans clearly fit in with the wider Bush doctrine of pre-emptive strikes in the future when the United States feels itself to be threatened.

The New Mexico-based Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Web site what it said were the minutes of last month's meeting in the Pentagon of senior U.S. nuclear scientists.

It said the meeting was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested ... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public."

The group said that the conference of senior military officials and scientists would be held in August at the Omaha headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Command in Nebraska.

The Los Alamos Study Group did not say how it obtained the document, but said it decided to publish it, taking into account Washington's "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning."

"It's very rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in the same documents, in the same place," group spokesman Greg Mello,said.

The minutes, which Bush administration officials confirm as genuine, also talk of lower yield nuclear weapons being developed with reduced collateral damage.

One of the principal tasks being considered for such devices is the destruction of deep bunkers where chemical, biological or nuclear weapons are stored.

President Bush has repeatedly stated that the United States would consider pre-emptive strikes in the future if it considers itself to be threatened.

LOAD-DATE: February 20, 2003

20/02/03

US 'considering making smaller nuclear weapons'

THE US government is considering making new, smaller nuclear weapons that could be used to hit hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to a nuclear disarmament group.

The Los Alamos Study Group has published the minutes from a January 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public".

According to the leaked documents, the summit of military officials and nuclear scientists would be held at US Strategic

Command headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, possibly in early August.

The Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Los Alamos group did not say how it got the documents which it said showed the "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning" going on at the White House. A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting.

Critics of President George Bush have questioned whether his administration is considering lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict.

"If the United States sends signals that we are considering new uses for nuclear weapons, isn't it more likely that other nations will also want to explore greater use or new uses for nuclear weapons?" Democrat Senator Carl Levin asked US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last week.

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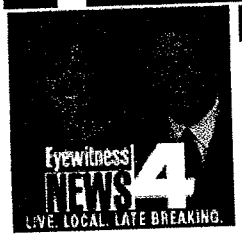

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Government considers new nukes

Last Update: 02/20/2003 07:42:22

(Albuquerque-AP) – The US Department of Energy and military leaders are discussing the possibility of developing a new generation of nuclear weapons.

That's according to a document obtained by an anti-nuclear group.

Information on a secret conference scheduled for August is contained in the minutes of a January 10th meeting.

The conference is slated to discuss questions about designing, testing and building nuclear weapons.

The minutes have been confirmed by a DOE official.

Greg Mello, of the antinuclear Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe, distributed the document and posted it on the Internet.

The document lists questions on the characteristics, types and need for underground nuclear blasts for a new generation of nuclear weapons.

February 20, 2003

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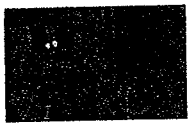

Color-Coded Crises

Bush's Nuclear Dreams

For a half century, nuclear bombs have remained nightmare weapons -- doomsday arms designed to back up Cold War deterrence. For the past two years, however, the Bush administration has been working steadily to ease the atomic bomb out of its Cold War closet. And, with the White House pushing the world toward a war in Iraq, neoconservative hawks are picking up the pace.

The Los Alamos Study Group, an anti-proliferation watchdog group based in New Mexico, has published a classified administration memo which reveals that the White House has scheduled a meeting of Pentagon officials and nuclear scientists in August to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons. As Julian Borger of *The Guardian* reports, the planned meetings is the clearest indication yet that the Bush administration plans to overhaul the nation's nuclear strategy to better fit its doctrine of preemptive warfare.

> "[N]on-proliferation groups say the Omaha meeting will bring a new US nuclear arsenal out of the realm of the theoretical and far closer to reality, in the shape of new bombs and a new readiness to use them.
>
> 'To me it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way ... to resume the development, testing and production of new nuclear weapons. It's very serious,' said Stephen Schwartz, the publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, who added that it opened the US to charges of hypocrisy when it is demanding the disarmament of Iraq and North Korea.

Thinking Outside the Box

IN ARTS

A Suburban War Story

> 'How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?' Mr Schwartz said."

James Sterngold of the *San Francisco Chronicle* notes that the ideas entertained in the memo -- plans for small nuclear weapons designed to destroy underground bunkers and stores of chemical and biological weapons -- are not new. But the fact that Pentagon and administration officials are actively discussing a program to build such weapons, Sterngold reports, suggests "a quickening pace toward what could be a fundamental change in the country's post-Cold War nuclear doctrine." And the White House isn't alone in looking to hurry the matter along, Sterngold writes.

> "House Republicans issued a policy paper on Thursday which calls for some of the changes discussed in the Pentagon memo. These include the repeal of a decade-old law that prohibits the development of small, low-yield nuclear weapons, and steps that would make it easier to resume nuclear testing, which was halted ten years ago.
>
> The GOP paper also proposed a new doctrine under which the country would be able to launch nuclear attacks not just in response to a nuclear attack, or the threat of one, but to pre-emptively destroy stockpiles of other weapons, such as chemical or biological weapons, in the hands of hostile countries."

Iraq is, of course, not mentioned by name in the GOP paper. But earlier this month, Britain's Minister of Defense, Geoff Hoon, told the *BBC* that London would be prepared to use nuclear weapons in Iraq "in conditions of extreme self-defense." Taken together, Hoon's statement and the administration's memo suggest that both London and Washington believe "that the use of nuclear weapons may be appropriate in the coming war with Iraq," Paul Rogers asserts in *Foreign Policy in Focus*.

> "If the weapons are used, then the nuclear threshold that has held since 1945 will disappear and we will move into an even more dangerous world--as other states scramble to develop their own deterrents in the form of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons."

The European Dis-Union

They were all bristling in Brussles this week. First, French President Jacques Chirac snubbed 13 Eastern European candidates for the European Union, labeling the countries' support for Washington war planning "infantile" and "reckless." Then diplomats from several of those countries, particularly Poland and the Czech Republic, fired back, accusing Paris and Berlin of bully tactics in the debate over Iraq.

All of which has provided US right-wingers with another opportunity to jump on the bash France bandwagon. Hating Chirac has become a second calling for many war party pundits, and the French leader's hauter is proving irresistable. The editorial writers at the *Daily News* certainly didn't pass up a chance to throw a rhetorical sucker punch or two, declaring that Chirac's anger "is evidence of the French inferiority complex, which started festering round about the time of Waterloo and grew only worse thanks to France's less-than-glorious military performance in the last century." Tony Blankley, writing in *The Washington Times*, wonders that Chirac could take such a high-handed approach at the EU when France continues in its efforts to slow Washington rush to war in Iraq -- efforts Blankley reasons make France unfit to keep company with the US.

> "This from a country that perversely measures her own glory by her capacity to betray a friend and ally.
>
> ...
>
> If and when the French people throw out their current government and elect one which respects its neighbors and friends, we should certainly attempt to have useful and cordial relations with that government. Until then, we should not only not seek their support on

US Plans Making "min-nukes" : Claims British Paper

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LONDON, Pakistan: Feb 20 (PNS)- United States is planning to make "mini-nukes", bunker busters" and neutron bombs to destroy chemical and biological weapons, a leading British daily claimed on Wednesday while quoting a leaked Pentagon document.

"The Bush administration is planning a secret meeting in August to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "mini-nukes", "bunker-busters" and neutron bombs designed to destroy chemical or biological agents" said leading British paper The Guardian on Wednesday.

It said "The leaked preparations for the meeting are the clearest sign yet that the administration is determined to overhaul its nuclear arsenal so that it could be used as part of the new "Bush doctrine" of pre-emption, to strike the stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of rogue states".

"The meeting of senior military officials and US nuclear scientists at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command would also decide whether to restart nuclear testing and how to convince the American public that the new weapons are necessary," said the daily.

The Guardian said " Greg Mello, the head of the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog organisation that obtained the Pentagon documents, said the meeting would also prepare the ground for a US breakaway from global arms control treaties, and the moratorium on conducting nuclear tests".

"It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the comprehensive test ban treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with article six of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," Mello was quoted as saying by the daily.

"The documents leaked to Mr Mello are the minutes of a meeting in the Pentagon on January 10 this year called by Dale Klein, the assistant to the defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, to prepare the secret conference, planned for "the week of August 4 2003"," said the Guardian.

British paper claimed that "The National Nuclear Security Administration, which is responsible for designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons, yesterday confirmed the authenticity of the document. But Anson Franklin, the NNSA head of governmental affairs, said: "We have no request from the defence department for any new nuclear weapon, and we have no plans for nuclear testing".

"The fact is that this paper is talking about what-if scenarios and very long range planning," Franklin was quoted as saying by the Guardian.

"To me it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way ... to resume the development, testing and production of new nuclear weapons.

It's very serious," Stephen Schwartz, the publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was quoted as saying by the paper. He added that "it opened the US to "How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?"

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Paper: San Jose Mercury News (CA)
Title: 'BUNKER BUSTER' BOMBS, NUCLEAR TESTS DISCUSSED - DOCUMENT RELEASED BY WATCHDOG GROUP
Author: DAN STOBER, Mercury News
Date: February 20, 2003
Section: Front
Page: 4A

An elite group of U.S. nuclear weapons leaders is holding a series of closed-door meetings to lay the groundwork for a significant shift in U.S. nuclear weapon policy.

Under consideration are a return to nuclear testing and the small-scale production of a new generation of battlefield nuclear weapons, according to the minutes of a meeting at the Pentagon last month. Among the weapons under discussion are so-called mini-nukes, earth-penetrating "bunker busters," "enhanced radiation" weapons such as the neutron bomb and specialized explosives to destroy biological and chemical weapons. The minutes, released by the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a nuclear watchdog organization, also show that the participants were interested in how to "frame the explanation" of the new policies.

A series of smaller committee meetings are to culminate in a large conference in August at the U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. The goal is to produce "decision memos" for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham that could put the country back into the production of new weapons.

One U.S. nuclear weapons scientist said the Bush administration has moved beyond the Cold War notion of nuclear weapons as city-destroying retaliatory weapons of mass death.

The new weapons will be smaller, with specific purposes and fewer civilian deaths, he said.

Arms control experts, however, contend that the nation should be moving in the opposite direction, away from "usable" nuclear weapons, toward disarmament.

The minutes of the meeting were released by Greg Mello, who runs the Los Alamos watchdog group near the national weapons laboratory in New Mexico.

He said the document makes clear that Bush administration officials expect to resume explosive nuclear testing in the Nevada desert, which was halted in 1992 by President Bush's father.

"They are trying to decide when, what size, under what rubric, and how to sell it to a reluctant world," Mello said. Arms-control proponents argue that attempts to persuade other countries not to develop nuclear weapons are undercut by the large-scale U.S. nuclear program.

The Jan. 10 meeting was the first of a series of gatherings leading up to the August conference on so-called stockpile stewardship. Stockpile stewardship is described as maintaining the safety and reliability of aging U.S. hydrogen bombs and missile warheads without nuclear testing.

The far-flung enterprise is funded with $6.4 billion annually and employs cutting-edge supercomputers and gigantic scientific devices such as the stadium-sized National Ignition Facility laser at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

But Mello says the meeting minutes show the stewardship program "is completely intertwined with development of new weapons." The document suggests that participants study the question of how NIF and nuclear testing will co-exist.

The January meeting drew 32 participants from the Air Force, Navy, Rumsfeld's office, the National Nuclear Security Agency, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the three nuclear weapons labs, Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore and Sandia, also in New Mexico.

In tone, the minutes resemble the Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review of 2001 and a proposal for a new nuclear strategy released by Congressional Republicans last week.

Author: DAN STOBER, Mercury News
Section: Front
Page: 4A

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Pentagon planning talks on new nuclear weapons

REUTERS [WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2003 10:52:01 AM]

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss possibly building a new generation of small nuclear weapons that could be used against hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to documents released by a nuclear disarmament advocacy group.

The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Website the minutes from a January 10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public."

According to the leaked documents, the conference of military officials and nuclear scientists would be held at US Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, possibly the week of August 4, 2003.

The Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Los Alamos group did not say how it obtained the documents which it said demonstrated the administration's "bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning."

"It's very rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in the same documents, in the same place," spokesman Greg Mello said in an interview on Tuesday explaining why the group had made the material public.

A spokeswoman for the Pentagon could not immediately confirm the meeting.

The release of the documents come as critics are questioning whether President George W. Bush's administration is contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in wartime.

At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week, Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, noted the administration's request for funds to study nuclear weapons that could be used against deeply buried targets.

"If the United States sends signals that we're considering new uses for nuclear weapons, isn't it more likely that other nations will also want to explore greater use or new uses for nuclear weapons?" Levin asked while questioning Defense Secretary

THE UNITED STATES HEADLINES

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Rumsfeld said other countries were engaging in underground tunnelling to develop, manufacture and store weapons. He said that "not having the ability to penetrate and reach them creates a very serious obstacle to US national security."

Utne
A DIFFERENT READ ON LIFE

Pentagon Planning New, More 'Usable' Nuclear Arsenal

February 2003
By Craig Cox,
Utne.com

The Bush administration is planning to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons designed for use against chemical and biological weapons, according to a Pentagon report leaked to *The Guardian*.

The new weapons program, which would employ "mini-nukes," "bunker busters," and "neutron bombs," will be discussed by senior Pentagon officials and government scientists at a secret August meeting at the headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha, reports Julian Borger. The meeting, notes Borger, is the clearest indication yet that the Bush administration intends to employ nuclear weapons as part of its new "pre-emptive force" doctrine.

The move would violate several well-established nuclear weapons treaties, said Greg Mello, head of the Los Alamos Study Group, which obtained the documents. "It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the comprehensive test ban treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and U.S. compliance with article six of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," Mello explained.

Arson Franklin, head of governmental affairs for the National Nuclear Security Administration, confirmed that the documents obtained by Mello—minutes of a January 10 meeting of Pentagon officials—were authentic, but added that the Pentagon has requested no new nuclear weapons and that the agency had no plans to begin testing them. "The fact is that this paper is talking about what-if scenarios and very long-range planning," Franklin said.

But Stephen Schwartz, publisher of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, said the meeting demonstrates the willingness of the Bush administration to use nuclear weapons. "To me, it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way . . . to resum the development, testing, and production of new nuclear wapons," he said. "It's very serious."

And, he added, it points out the hypocrisy of the administration's demands that other nations dismantle their weapons of mass destruction. "How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say, 'How dare you develop these weapons,' when it's exactly what we're doing," he said.

According to the documents, the move toward developing more "usable" nuclear weapons was sparked by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, whose nuclear posture paper identified Russian, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya potential targets for the new U.S. nuclear arsenal. These "low-yield" (less than a kiloton) weapons, according to the Rumsfeld report, would be a more effective deterrent because of their more practical application as tactical weapons.

Related Link: http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,898528,00.html

Paper: Washington Post
Title: U.S. Explores Developing Low-Yield Nuclear Weapons
Author: Walter Pincus
Date: February 20, 2003
Section: A Section
Page: A9

The Bush administration is reviving interest in developing low-yield nuclear devices that could be used to destroy targets, such as reinforced bunkers holding chemical or biological weapons, with less damage to the surrounding area than today's giant warheads, according to administration officials and government scientists. The program is based on views within the nation's nuclear weapons laboratories that as the United States reduces its stockpiles of larger nuclear weapons, it should replace them with smaller numbers of low-yield bombs. Low-yield nuclear weapons have much less explosive power than the large nuclear bombs that comprise today's strategic arsenal. Nuclear weapons strategists believe low-yield weapons would be a more credible deterrent against outlaw states and terrorist organizations with weapons of mass destruction. Since the bombs would inflict much less damage to the area outside the target than high-yield devices, the threshold for using them presumably would be lower.

Low-yield nuclear weapons have been controversial since the late 1970s, when the Army tried to introduce neutron artillery shells and warheads with its forces in Europe. The explosion of the neutron weapon created enormous radiation, while its blast and heat -- though still powerful -- were smaller than traditional nuclear bombs. This made the weapon attractive to military officials planning for a possible war against the Soviet Union in Europe's densely populated areas.

Described as effective at killing people while leaving buildings standing, the neutron weapons were deferred by President Jimmy Carter after a public uproar in Europe and the United States. President Ronald Reagan revived the weapons, but President George H.W. Bush eliminated them as part of an agreement to reduce tactical nuclear weapons overseas.

Discussion of developing low-yield weapons returned in the 1990s when officials studied the possibility of creating high-altitude low-yield weapons to produce an electromagnetic pulse that could wipe out enemy communications and electronics.

The low-yield weapons being considered now would be designed to penetrate reinforced bunkers housing chemical or biological weapons and detonate underground, concentrating their explosive power and heat on the chemical or biological agents and reducing or eliminating radioactive fallout in the atmosphere, scientists say.

Officials from the Defense and Energy departments met at the Pentagon on Jan. 10 to discuss plans for a conference on the future of the U.S. nuclear stockpile, an Energy Department spokesman said. The idea of reviving the low-yield nuclear weapons

development program was among the subjects to be discussed at the conference, scheduled for August at the Omaha headquarters of Strategic Command, the Pentagon command responsible for the country's nuclear arsenal.

"Requirements for low-yield weapons," including neutron or enhanced-radiation weapons that create less heat and minimize explosive effects, along with "agent defeat weapons" designed to neutralize chemical and biological weapons, were put on the agenda for a Future Arsenal Panel at that conference, according to notes from the Pentagon planning session. The notes were released this week by the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a New Mexico-based organization that tracks U.S. nuclear weapons activities.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was asked about the notes at a Pentagon news conference yesterday. "I don't believe there is anything currently underway by way of developing new nuclear weapons," he said.

He added that the notes "referred not to the development of specific weapons, but the analysis that would go into determining whether or not something might or might not make sense."

The Future Arsenal Panel at the August meeting will discuss computer modeling for possible new nuclear devices and what type of testing, if any, would be needed, the notes say. The notes add that consideration of the new weapons is being prompted by the Nuclear Posture Review completed by the Bush administration last year.

The Nuclear Posture Review called for the reduction by two-thirds of the country's 6,000 operational nuclear warheads and bombs over the next 10 years. It provided for keeping several thousand warheads in a strategic reserve and allowed for the development of new weapons based on changed security requirements.

Under an arms control treaty reached by President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin last May, Russia committed itself to wholesale reductions in its strategic nuclear arsenal as well.

One of the most controversial features of the Nuclear Posture Review is that it seemingly left the door open to using nuclear weapons for a preemptive attack on a threatening foreign country. The new study of low-yield nuclear devices would be compatible with that provision.

Another matter before the August conference will be the prospect of resuming nuclear testing, the notes said. The conference also will study the impact of a resumption of testing on public opinion in the United States and abroad.

"They are going to discuss not only weapons and testing policies but the politics to get them approved," said Greg Mello, director of the **Los Alamos Study Group**. "It's rare that so many details about the nuclear weapons agenda of the Bush administration would appear in one document."

The August conference comes on top of the administration's 2004 budget request, which seeks money to continue refurbishing and modernizing thousands of deployed nuclear warheads. It also calls for study of a "robust earth penetrator," a nuclear device that would destroy buried, hardened underground bunkers for command posts or weapons storage.

The Nuclear Security Administration, which runs the nation's nuclear weapons complex at the Energy Department, is requesting $6.4 billion next year, an increase from this year's $5.9 billion and almost $1 billion above the last budget presented by the Clinton administration. The new request calls for $15 million for the earth penetrator and $21 million for two of the nation's national nuclear weapons laboratories, Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore, to assemble design teams to study advanced nuclear concepts. The teams are being created so that the United States has the expertise to build new weapons or change existing ones, senior Energy Department officials said.

Last week, a House Republican policy committee recommended that the Pentagon's Nuclear Weapons Council revitalize advanced nuclear weapons development and that Congress consider repealing a 10-year ban on research on low-yield nuclear weapons, those whose explosions are less than 5 kilotons, the explosive equivalent of 5,000 tons of TNT.

"It allows the United States to have teams of scientists and engineers working on emerging threats and potential problems before they become severe," the GOP policy committee report said.

Author: Walter Pincus
Section: A Section
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Deutsche Presse-Agentur

February 21, 2003, Friday
04:04 Central European Time

SECTION: Politics

LENGTH: 658 words

HEADLINE: NEWS FEATURE: U.S. looking at new generation of "tactical nukes"

DATELINE: Washington

BODY:
As it plans a possible war against Iraq, the United States is also assessing whether to build a new generation of smaller, tactical nuclear weapons in future.

Unlike the Cold War's massive "city killers", supporters argued, smaller "bunker-busters" could be used short of an all-out nuclear war to destroy underground depots of weapons of mass destruction.

Washington has considered using current models of such bombs in an Iraq war although it might be deterred by the enormous diplomatic cost of doing so, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Some U.S. nuclear weapons strategists said they believe low-yield nuclear weapons would be a credible deterrent against outlaw states and terrorist groups, The Washington Post reported Thursday. Critics warned, however, that no nuclear weapon should be considered "usable" and that earth-burrowing weapons could blow out large craters and spread deadly radioactive dust through the air.

Developing any new nuclear devices, non-proliferation groups cautioned, makes their use more likely and breaks down a taboo against nuclear-weapons use by all nuclear-armed nations.

This month, the Los Alamos Study Group, a watchdog body, released a leaked Pentagon document about plans for a secret August conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build".

The document said that one expert panel at such a meeting would look at "the contribution of nuclear forces to each of the four principal defence goals: assurance, dissuasion, deterrence and defeat".

American defence and nuclear energy officials would also "re- examine the policy issues of the various levels of testing" and ask the question, "Should the U.S. adjust its policy on nuclear weapons testing?" the paper said.

Nuclear tests are now limited by the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which the United States has not ratified, and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which it has. It also withdrew in December 2001 from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Greg Mello, spokesman for the New Mexico-based Los Alamos Study Group, expressed anger over the Pentagon's secret nuclear meeting: "These plans deserve outrage - first in the United States and throughout the world."

At the scheduled Nebraska conference, he added, "They are going to discuss not only weapons and testing policies but the politics to get them approved.

"It may or may not be obvious that if allowed to proceed further - especially in the present jingoistic atmosphere now prevailing in Washington - the process outlined here will be quite hard to stop."

U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, when asked about the report this week, said: "I don't believe there is anything currently underway by way of developing new nuclear weapons.

"I think that anything that was in a classified document which leaked, if I'm not mistaken,referred not to the development of specific weapons but the analysisthat would go into determining whether or not something might or mightnot make sense."

U.S. administrations have never ruled out using nuclear weapons under certain circumstances, and President George W. Bush has approved nuclear weapons as an option for responding to attacks using weapons of mass destruction, The Washington Times reported.

Last year's U.S. Nuclear Posture Review also recommended that nuclear weapons should be considered in response to an attack using weapons of mass destruction or against targets able to withstand conventional attack.

"From the start of the Bush administration, we have seen increasing interest in 'usable' nuclear weapons," Christine Kucia of the Arms Control Association told The Los Angeles Times.

Nuclear devices "have been reserved for decades as the absolute weapons of last resort", she said. "To put them in the realm of usable weapons is to take on a whole new definition that has never been explored and, frankly, should not be explored." dpa fz ls

Headline: US plans making "min-nukes": claims British paper -- Detail Story

LONDON: United States is planning to make "mini-nukes", bunker busters" and neutron bombs to destroy chemical and biological weapons, a leading British daily claimed on Wednesday while quoting a leaked Pentagon document.

"The Bush administration is planning a secret meeting in August to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "mini-nukes", "bunker-busters" and neutron bombs designed to destroy chemical or biological agents" said leading British paper The Guardian on Wednesday.

It said "The leaked preparations for the meeting are the clearest sign yet that the administration is determined to overhaul its nuclear arsenal so that it could be used as part of the new "Bush doctrine" of pre-emption, to strike the stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of rogue states".

"The meeting of senior military officials and US nuclear scientists at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command would also decide whether to restart nuclear testing and how to convince the American public that the new weapons are necessary," said the daily.

The Guardian said " Greg Mello, the head of the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog organisation that obtained the Pentagon documents, said the meeting would also prepare the ground for a US breakaway from global arms control treaties, and the moratorium on conducting nuclear tests".

"It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the comprehensive test ban treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with article six of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," Mello was quoted as saying by the daily.

"The documents leaked to Mr Mello are the minutes of a meeting in the Pentagon on January 10 this year called by Dale Klein, the assistant to the defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, to prepare the secret conference, planned for "the week of August 4 2003"," said the Guardian.

British paper claimed that "The National Nuclear Security Administration, which is responsible for designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons, yesterday confirmed the authenticity of the document. But Anson Franklin, the NNSA head of governmental affairs, said: "We have no request from the defence department for any new nuclear weapon, and we have no plans for nuclear testing".

"The fact is that this paper is talking about what-if scenarios and very long range planning," Franklin was quoted as saying by the Guardian. "To me it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way ... to resume the development, testing and production of new nuclear weapons.

It's very serious," Stephen Schwartz, the publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was quoted as saying by the paper. He added that "it opened the US to charges of hypocrisy when it is demanding the disarmament of Iraq and North Korea".

"How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?" Schwartz was quoted as saying.

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The Irish Times

February 21, 2003

SECTION: CITY EDITION; IRAQ CRISIS; Pg. 12

LENGTH: 680 words

HEADLINE: Pentagon may use new E-Bomb during war on Iraq

BYLINE: By CONOR O'CLERY, North America Editor

BODY:
Pentagon officials are debating whether to use a highly-classified weapon known as the E-Bomb in any war against Iraq, with the aim of producing what military planners call "shock and awe", according to reports in the US.

The reports coincide with evidence this week that the US is secretly moving towards the construction of a new generation of mini-nuclear weapons.

Delivered by a cruise missile, the E-Bomb can unleash a high velocity electro-magnetic pulse as it nears its target. This can short-circuit electrical connections, knock out lights and telephones and crash computers. The use of the revolutionary weapon, designed to incapacitate equipment rather than humans, would give the US a decisive initial advantage in the first day of an attack by disabling Baghdad's command and control systems.

The man-made lightning bolts could, however, kill anyone with heart pacemakers, cripple hospital equipment and put emergency services out of action. It has also proved temperamental in tests and commanders reportedly fear US military systems might be affected.

The E-Bomb is an advance on the use of carbon filaments showered onto electric generators in Serbia to cause massive short-circuits.

The Pentagon is also said to be considering the use of a new microwave device mounted on a Humvee that could scatter civilians by inflicting intense heat on to their skins.

The leaking of details of potent new weapons is likely aimed at demoralising Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his forces in advance of an attack. More alarming for the Iraqi generals, however, are reports, initially in the Los Angeles Times, that the US is keeping open the option of using nuclear weapons if Iraq uses chemical or biological agents against US troops.

In January 1991 the then-US secretary of state, Mr James Baker, warned Iraq that any use of weapons of mass destruction by Baghdad could provoke a nuclear reaction.

Separately, evidence came to light this week that the Pentagon was exploring the possibility of constructing, deploying and promoting a new generation of mini-nuclear weapons, called "bunker-busters" and neutron bombs that would destroy chemical or biological stocks.

On January 10th, 32 senior officials dealing with US nuclear weapons met in the Pentagon to plan a secret conference at US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) headquarters in Nebraska in August.

The minutes were obtained by the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog organisation and the Defence Department said they were genuine.

The agenda for the August meeting revealed that "the brakes are off" in planning for new nuclear weapons, the director of the Los Alamos Study Group, Greg Mallo, told The Irish Times.

"What is really breath-taking is the very explicit connection with nuclear testing requirements," he said. "We are supposed to be negotiating the end of the arms race. This is a restart of the arms race, and it is nuclear armament rather than nuclear disarmament."

The January meeting arose from an internal Pentagon memo last October by Mr Pete Aldridge, Under-secretary of Defence, requesting that nuclear weapons laboratories examine the benefits of low-yield nuclear testing. It was chaired by Dr Dale Klein, former vice chancellor of the University of Texas and a friend of President George Bush, and who is now an assistant to Mr Rumsfeld.

"Many of the people at this meeting have held ideas like this for a number of years and they have been waiting for their opportunity to advance those ideas," Mr Mello said.

It was impossible to overstate the challenge to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, he said. The last nuclear test in the US was in September, 1992.

"These plans deserve outrage - first in the United States, and throughout the world. It may or may not be obvious that if allowed to proceed further - especially in the present jingoistic atmosphere now prevailing in Washington - the process outlined here will be quite hard to stop."

Paper: Las Vegas Review-Journal (NV)
Title: Resumption of nuclear testing on Bush agenda
Author: STEVE TETREAULT
Date: February 21, 2003
Section: City
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By STEVE TETREAULTSTEPHENS WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON -- Government planners are taking a fresh look at resuming nuclear testing in Nevada to gauge the reliability of the nation's weapons stockpile as well as develop new nuclear devices.

The Bush administration is organizing a conference for later this year, possibly in August, to develop recommendations on new generations of "low-yield" nuclear weapons, earth-penetrating weapons and enhanced radiation devices, according to documents made public this week.

The conference also would re-examine policy on underground nuclear testing, which was halted in 1992. "Should the U.S. adjust its policy on nuclear weapons testing?" asks a planning document for the gathering that would be held at U.S. Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Neb.

Thirty-two managers from the national weapons laboratories, the military, the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Office of the Secretary of Defense met at the Pentagon on Jan. 10 to discuss an agenda, according to meeting minutes leaked to a watchdog group in New Mexico.

"These meetings show, in a degree that is rare in publicly available documents, the bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning in the Bush administration," said Greg Mello, director of the **Los Alamos Study Group**, which monitors weapons activities and posted the documents on its Web site.

According to minutes of the Jan. 10 session, the conference had its beginnings with a memo written last October by Pete Aldridge, defense undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics.

Aldridge asked weapons lab directors to assess "technical limitations" in their annual certification that nuclear weapons in the U.S. stockpile are safe and reliable.

"We will need to refurbish several aging weapons systems but the limitations of the nuclear weapons complex will not permit us to perfectly replicate the original designs," Aldridge wrote. "We must also be prepared to respond to new nuclear weapon requirements in the future.

"It also would be desirable to assess the potential benefits that could be obtained from a return to nuclear testing with regard to weapon safety, security and reliability," Aldridge wrote.

Nuclear anti-proliferation groups said conference plans came as little surprise since factions within the Bush administration have been pushing for new nuclear weapons development and testing, as well as the resumption of stockpile testing.

"What's surprising to me is that things are proceeding rather rapidly and without any obvious requirement from the military or president that such weapons are needed," said Stephen Schwartz, publisher of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. "We've got the process a little backwards."

Asked about the notes this week, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "I don't believe there is anything currently under way by way of developing new nuclear weapons."

Rumsfeld went on to say the document "referred not to the development of specific weapons but the analysis that would go into determining whether or not something might or might not make sense."

Author: STEVE TETREAULT
Section: City
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Secret Pentagon plan for new nuclear arsenal

By Julian Borger in Washington
February 21 2003

The Bush Administration is planning a secret meeting to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "mini-nukes", "bunker-busters" and neutron bombs designed to destroy chemical or biological agents, a leaked Pentagon document reveals.

A meeting of military officials and nuclear scientists at the Omaha headquarters of the United States Strategic Command in August would also decide whether to restart nuclear testing and how to convince the public new weapons are necessary.

The leaked preparations for the meeting are the clearest sign yet that the Administration is determined to overhaul its nuclear arsenal so that it could be used as part of the new "Bush doctrine" of pre-emptive strikes.

Greg Mello, head of the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog, said the meeting would also prepare the ground for the US to break away from global arms control treaties, and the moratorium on conducting nuclear tests.

The documents, which were leaked to Mr Mello, are the minutes of a meeting in the Pentagon on January 10 called by Dale Klein, the assistant to the Secretary for Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, to prepare the secret conference.

The National Nuclear Security Administration, which is responsible for designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons, has confirmed the document's authenticity.

When Mr Rumsfeld was asked about the notes at a Pentagon news conference on Wednesday, he said: "I don't believe there is anything currently under way by way of developing new nuclear weapons."

He added that the notes "referred not to the development of specific weapons, but the analysis that would go into determining whether or not something might or might not make sense".

However, non-proliferation groups say the Omaha meeting will bring a new US nuclear arsenal out of the realm of the theoretical and closer to reality, in the shape of new bombs and a new readiness to use them.

"To me it indicates there are plans proceeding and well under way ... to resume the development, testing and production of new nuclear weapons. It's very serious," said Stephen Schwartz, publisher of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. It exposed the US to charges of hypocrisy at a time when it is demanding the disarmament of Iraq and

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"How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?" Mr Schwartz said.

The starting point for last month's discussion was Mr Rumsfeld's nuclear posture review (NPR), a policy paper published last year, that identified Russia, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya as potential targets for US nuclear weapons.

According to the Pentagon minutes, the August meeting in Strategic Command's headquarters would discuss how to make weapons to match the new policy. A "future arsenal panel" would consider: "What are the warhead characteristics and advanced concepts we will need in the post-NPR environment?"

The panel would also contemplate the "requirements for low-yield weapons, EPWs [earth-penetrating weapons], enhanced radiation weapons, agent defeat weapons".

Nuclear weapons strategists believe low-yield weapons would be a more credible deterrent against outlaw states and terrorist organisations with weapons of mass destruction. Since the bombs would inflict much less damage to the area outside the target than high-yield devices, the threshold for using them presumably would be lower.

The leaked document says the "future arsenal panel" would also ask the pivotal question: "What forms of testing will these new designs require?"

The conference will also study the impact of a resumption of testing on public opinion in the US and abroad.

A beginner's guide to the new weapons

Low-yield nuclear weapons have much less explosive power than the large nuclear bombs that comprise today's strategic arsenal.

"Bunker-busters" are earth-penetrating weapons that break through the surface of the earth before detonating. US scientists believe they could be used as "agent defeat weapons" to destroy chemical or biological weapons stored underground.

The designers are also looking at low-yield neutron bombs or "enhanced radiation weapons", which could destroy chemical or biological weapons in surface warehouses. Neutron weapons are described as effective at killing people while leaving buildings standing.

The low-yield weapons being considered now would be designed to penetrate reinforced bunkers housing chemical or biological weapons and detonate underground, concentrating their explosive power and heat on the chemical or biological agents and reducing or eliminating radioactive fallout in the atmosphere, scientists say.

(Low-yield means tactical warheads of less than a kiloton - "mini-nukes" - which advocates of the new arsenal say represent a far more effective deterrent than the existing huge weapons, because they are more "usable".)

The Guardian; The Washington Post

US plans mini nuclear weapons

Military officials and scientists will meet secretly on developing a new generation of weapons, leaked paper reveals

LONDON - The United States is planning a secret meeting in August to discuss developing a new generation of nuclear weapons, including highly usable 'mini-nukes', that would be used to destroy chemical or biological agents in rogue states.

According to a leaked document, the meeting of military officials and nuclear scientists at the Omaha headquarters of the US Strategic Command will also decide whether to restart nuclear testing and how to convince Americans that the new weapons are necessary.

The leaked preparations are the clearest sign yet that US President George Bush is making good on his new 'Bush doctrine' announced last year, the Guardian newspaper reported.

The doctrine envisages 'pre-emptive' strikes at the stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of rogue states.

The high-level panel would discuss an entire menu of weapons to achieve this, including 'low-yield' mini-nukes that would be a lot more 'usable' compared to existing bigger weapons, and earth-penetrating 'bunker busters'.

In addition, 'enhanced radiation weapons' would be able to take out chemical or biological weapons in surface warehouses.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), responsible for designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons, has confirmed the authenticity of the document.

But Mr Anson Franklin, the NNSA head of governmental affairs, told the Guardian: 'We have no request from the Defence Department for any new nuclear weapon, and we have no plans for nuclear testing.

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'The fact is that this paper is talking about what-if scenarios and very long-range planning.'

According to a recent Los Angeles Times article, the Pentagon is already developing powerful computers that could appraise underground targets and then determine whether a nuclear 'bunker buster' would be required to destroy them.

Advocates of such new - and potentially destabilising - weapons say their small size could help the US deter rogue states and terrorist groups.

The US could never use massive Cold War-era nuclear weapons on rogue states in, say, the volatile Middle East, they added.

But critics say that pursuing new weapons makes their use more likely, breaks down a half-century-old taboo against using nuclear weapons and encourages other nations to proliferate. At risk is the prospect of an American breakaway from global arms control treaties and the moratorium on conducting nuclear tests.

'It is impossible to overstate the challenge these plans pose to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the existing nuclear test moratorium, and US compliance with Article Six of the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty,' said Mr Greg Mello, head of a nuclear watchdog body that obtained the Pentagon documents.

Mr Mello, of the Los Alamos Study Group, said the secret meeting was planned for 'the week of Aug 4, 2003'.

Some analysts say the new plans smack of a double standard, since the United States has been asking rogue states such as Iraq and North Korea to disarm.

'How can we possibly go to the international community or to these countries and say 'How dare you develop these weapons', when it's exactly what we're doing?' said publisher Stephen Schwartz of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, an arms control magazine.

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'US planning new nukes'

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration plans a meeting this year to discuss possibly building a new generation of small nuclear weapons that could be used against hard-to-reach targets like underground bunkers, according to documents released by a nuclear disarmament advocacy group.

The Los Alamos Study Group posted on its Web site the minutes from a January10 Pentagon meeting it said was called to plan a secret conference "to discuss what new nuclear weapons to build, how they might be tested... and how to sell the ideas to Congress and the American public." The conference owould be held at US Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, possibly the week of August 4, 2003. —Reuterss

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Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: NEW BOMBS AMID NEW THREATS
Author: JEFF TOLLEFSON
Date: February 23, 2003
Section: Main
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Nuclear planners working on ability to conduct small-scale atomic warfare

Nuclear-weapons planners want to revive a dying art — the design and development of thermonuclear bombs — to counter new threats in a post-Cold War world.

Nuclear experts plan to meet this summer to discuss the potential new weapons, which could be built in small quantities, as well as the costs and benefits from a resumption of nuclear testing. New weapons might include so-called "bunker busters," other small-yield bombs and high-radiation bombs, according to the documents.

The proposed meeting appears to build on the Bush administration's nuclear strategy, which calls for enhancing the nuclear complex and shifts U.S. policy to allow for targeted nuclear strikes in countering enemy efforts to produce chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

The **Los Alamos Study Group** obtained the documents about possible nuclear options and released them last week. Greg Mello, who heads the disarmament group, sees the discussion of new weapons and full-scale nuclear tests as evidence that nuclear planners, once tempered by Congress and previous administrations, have taken hold of the reins under President Bush.

"This administration doesn't believe in treaties or the rule of law. In this meeting, they are undercutting the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and they are also undercutting the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," Mello said. "These are the primary tools with which nuclear proliferation in the world is prevented."

National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) officials say such a meeting of nuclear scientists is part of the standard defense-planning procedures. In part, they say, the conference is designed to "take stock of Stockpile Stewardship," the core program for maintaining the current arsenal without nuclear tests.

"We have no requirements for new nuclear warheads, and we are not developing nuclear warheads," said John Harvey, director of the policy planning staff for NNSA, an arm of the U.S. Department of Energy that is responsible for the nuclear weapons complex. "That said, part of our responsibility is to understand what the options are."

The administration's nuclear policies received a boost this month from the House Policy Committee, which released a report titled "Differentiation and Defense: An Agenda for the Nuclear Weapons Program."

The report calls for establishing ballistic missile defenses and ramping up nuclear capabilities. The House panel also called for the repeal of a 1993 law prohibiting research on low-yield weapons and endorses the creation of "an active advanced development program" to explore ideas for new or modified nuclear weapons.

As chairwoman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, New Mexico Republican Heather Wilson led the review. In a foreword to the report, she credited the assistance of Gary Laughlin, a Sandia National Laboratories engineer who is serving on her staff as a congressional fellow from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

The report asserts that the notion of "mutually assured destruction," which held both the United States and the former Soviet Union in check during the Cold War, is no longer valid. While the United States is now the single superpower, threats to the nation are "numerically smaller but more diverse and less inherently stable." Wilson was unavailable for comment.

Harvey explained it this way: It would be difficult to justify the use of the current arsenal of larger nuclear weapons against non-nuclear powers, which hampers our deterrence against nations like Iraq. An effective nuclear deterrent would necessitate smaller, "useable" nuclear weapons, capable of hitting underground bunkers and hurting rogue nations where it will hurt them most — without wiping out the general population.

It's a significant shift in policy. The old deterrence relied on restraint for fear of an all-out nuclear holocaust. This new U.S. policy relies on an apparent willingness to use nuclear warheads, even as a first strike, to counter the development of similarly destructive weapons.

"We are talking about nuclear weapons in a fundamentally different way," said Steve Schwartz, publisher of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, a watchdog publication dedicated to nuclear and security issues. "Anything that makes it easier to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons is an enormous step in the wrong direction and will come back to haunt us in a very real way, because other countries will emulate us."

As part of this year's appropriations, Congress allotted $21 million for research into "advanced concepts" for nuclear weapons. This includes $15.5 million for the research and design of the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator," which is likely to occur at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore national laboratories.

The bunker-buster design might encase the insides of an existing thermonuclear bomb in a harder shell designed to smash deep into the ground before exploding. In theory, this would destroy underground bunkers while confining most of the blast and radioactivity below ground.

This would not be the nation's first bunker buster, but the proposal has sparked a sizeable debate in the last year. Many scientists have opposed the idea on technical grounds: It's tough to make a bomb penetrate deep into the earth without destroying itself in the process. Critics argue such a feat is outright impossible unless you carry the bomb down by hand, in which case a conventional weapon would work just as well. Schwartz sums it up as a "total fantasy."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, a New Mexico Democrat, opposed funding the bunker buster this year. Bingaman believes the United States should push for nonproliferation and rely on its absolute superiority in conventional weapons rather than breathe any life into nuclear warfare.

"We don't need to be threatening rogue nations with nuclear attack in order to deter them from pretty much anything they might try," he said.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., has supported exploring new bunker-buster designs and more generally the administration's nuclear policies. He could not be reached for comment.

An underlying fear of developing new weapons resides in the certification. It's easier to ensure an existing bomb remains functional than to prove the reliability of an entirely new design. As such, the advent of new designs might necessitate nuclear testing, which could in turn open the doors for testing in countries like China, Pakistan and India, critics say.

While it hasn't called for a resumption of nuclear testing, NNSA is moving to decrease the amount of time it would take to conduct a test from two or three years to 18 months, just in case an unforeseen problem arises, according to Harvey. "There are no guarantees in this business."

The last nuclear test took place in 1992 at the Nevada test site. Although the Senate has not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the nation maintains a voluntary ban on nuclear testing.

Harvey said the president opposes the treaty, arguing that it does not allow for sufficient verification or flexibility in case the United States needs to conduct a test at some point. Nonetheless, the president supports the voluntary ban, Harvey said.

But that kind of assurance leaves many uneasy. Schwartz believes that the push for testing among nuclear strategists is real and that it will eventually come to pass if the executive branch places as much focus on nuclear weapons as it has under President Bush.

Earlier this month, 89 lawmakers, including U.S. Democratic Rep. Tom Udall of Santa Fe, signed a letter to the president calling for assurances that the nation will not resume

nuclear tests. The letter cites a statement by Pete Aldridge, a top Defense official, calling on the national laboratories to "readdress the value of a low-yield testing program."

Given that the United States is preparing for war with Iraq over weapons of mass destruction while trying to defuse nuclear agendas in North Korea, India and Pakistan, the letter said, it is especially important that the United States walk a straight line and support international efforts at nonproliferation.

"Instead of considering a resumption of nuclear explosive testing, your administration should be pushing for ratification of the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) to provide for the safety and security of all Americans," the lawmakers wrote.

A National Academy of Sciences report last summer indicated that the United States would be able to maintain its current stockpile without nuclear tests, as required by the international treaty. Given the nation's technology and resources, the Academy report said the treaty could benefit the United States, in that it would be easier for us to maintain an arsenal without testing than it would be for other nations to build an arsenal without testing.

Nonetheless, Wilson's report cites "uncertainty" about whether the Stockpile Stewardship program can achieve its primary goal: a simulation-based method for certifying nuclear weapons without actually blowing them up. Moreover, it could be 10 years before we know one way or the other, according to the report, which endorses the administration's proposal to boost preparations for possible nuclear tests in the future.

The report also raises concerns about declining expertise in nuclear testing, indicating that more than half of the nuclear scientists with such experience have retired or left DOE. This is also cited as a reason for re-establishing a weapons-design program.

"If augmented with advanced development programs, the combination of challenging work should be sufficiently enticing and genuine to train a new generation of weapons scientists and engineers," the report states. While sympathetic with such a plight, the disarmament activists feel it's a poor standard for making decisions about global security.

"The weapons program has more than doubled in size during Stockpile Stewardship, and now it's hungry," said Mello of the **Los Alamos Study Group**.

Schwartz says the nuclear labs — as opposed to military planners — have always driven the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The labs would develop new weapons and then sell them to the military, which would then integrate them into war plans, he said, citing the Pentagon documents as evidence that this framework remains in place today.

"There ought to be some kind of public debate. This is all taking place underneath the surface," Schwartz said. "If these weapons are necessary and these policies are appropriate, they ought to be able to withstand congressional, media and public scrutiny."

Author: JEFF TOLLEFSON
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Pentagon Plans August Conf. On "New Smaller Nukes"

Monday, 24 February 2003, 4:09 pm
Press Release: Los Alamos Study Group

For immediate release 2/14/03

Pentagon plans conference on how to develop, build new kinds of nuclear weapons for "small strikes" – and how to sell these ideas to Congress, American people

> The Study Group deserves no credit for unearthing this document. We didn't dig it up, and it was not given to us with the idea that we would publish it. Quite the contrary. We have come to believe, however, that it is our responsibility to make it availability in its entirety, to do so rapidly (e.g. before any war in Iraq) -- and to do so from a position outside Washington, DC in order to enhance the vitality and diversity of debate about U.S. nuclear weapons.

Contact: Greg Mello, 505-982-7747

On January 10, 2003, thirty-two senior nuclear weapons managers from U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories, the uniformed military, the National Nuclear Stewardship Administration (NNSA), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense met in the Pentagon to discuss the future of the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

Minutes from this meeting have now become available. These meetings

Albuquerque Tribune 2/25/03

EDITORIAL

New, secret nuke plan turns back treaty clock

The only nation ever to have used a nuclear weapon in war now says it needs new ones, of the "thinkable" and "usable" variety, to wage a new kind of war. What's the world to think?

This is the same nation, still armed with thousands of nuclear warheads, that aims to wage war on a country that has had the audacity to try to develop a nuclear weapon itself.

The world, undoubtedly, will frown. Americans should take note. They should ask their government, point blank, "Who do you think *we* are?"

The Bush administration last week exposed its hypocrisy by claiming, urgently, that it must attack Iraq for secretly pursuing weapons of mass destruction — while the Bush administration is doing no less itself, in secret.

As the Bush administration has been pushing the nation and the world toward war against Iraq for not coming clean on its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programs, the administration's top nuclear weapons experts secretly have been exploring how to develop new, small, precision nuclear warheads, to resume nuclear weapons testing and to abandon the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

That is the core of the agenda of a secret meeting tentatively planned for the week of Aug. 4, at the Omaha headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Command. Critics, aghast, note that is the week which commemorates the anniversary of the first atomic bombing of Hiroshima, one of two Japanese cities destroyed by the United States to end World War II.

The meeting's agenda was revealed last week in a leaked Pentagon document, detailing a meeting that took place Jan. 10. The agenda would explore paths for developing new nuclear weapons, in direct conflict with the global movement to contain and eliminate nuclear weapons and including a U.S. promise of "good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament."

That's wording from Article 6 of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, in which the United States also agreed to pursue "a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

Clearly, this administration is heading in the opposite direction, by moving to develop miniature nuclear weapons that are acceptable for use and suitable for President Bush's new doctrine of using a "preemptive strike against emerging threats before they are fully formed."

House Republicans last week announced their intention, in a document posted on the Web site of Albuquerque Republican Rep. Heather Wilson, to support "advanced concepts" in nuclear weaponry and repeal a U.S. ban on the development of low-yield nuclear weapons. Obviously, as a result, the nuclear test moratorium would have to go.

Is all this supposed to persuade other nations not to proliferate, not to want nuclear weapons to defend themselves, not to see a need to deter the most powerful nation in the world from thinking it can use a nuclear warhead — perhaps even while waging a preemptive nuclear war in the name of American national security?

The great challenge during the Cold War was to convince the Soviet Union and the United States that both would lose a nuclear shootout and risk destroying life on Earth in the process. Will other nations now think deterrence is needed to counter the U.S. drive to produce "thinkable" nuclear warheads?

Indeed, if other nations had adopted the president's recent pre-emptive strike doctrine as their own policy, would these revelations be grounds for an attack on the United States — specifically, its nuclear weapons labs — before it has a chance to develop miniature nukes?

For months, critics have claimed that Bush is the most dangerous man in the world. Do they now have a smoking gun?

Is there evidence in the leaked Pentagon document that ought to be presented to the U.N. Security Council? Here we have Department of Defense and nuclear weapons experts from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California essentially exploring how to reboot the nuclear arms race that fizzled at the end of the Cold War.

Among their objectives: mini-nukes, bunker-busters and neutron bombs that they argue could be used with less "collateral damage," but still be capable of destroying chemical and biological agents. Bottom line: more weapons of mass destruction to counter existing weapons of mass destruction.

We've been there, done that. It's called an arms race.

The United States has thousands of nuclear warheads in its arsenal. What does this nation need with more nuclear bombs?

The United States is a prime signer of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Its leadership, through nine presidents over five decades, has sought the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban. Now we learn that it's plotting to wiggle out of both, so it can develop, test and produce a whole new class of nuclear bombs.

Could it be any more blunt than asking, as the Pentagon document does, "What are the warhead characteristics and advanced (weapons) concepts we will need in the post-NPT environment?"

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty has the lofty goal of stopping the global spread of nuclear weapons to nonnuclear states — essentially, in exchange for the nuclear states promising to reduce and eliminate their arsenals. The treaty is a fundamental part of the case against a noncompliant Iraq. The treaty has been endorsed by 188 nations, more than any other disarmament treaty in history. Yet the United States, under Bush, is above all that.

Some nuclear lab experts, including executives at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, argued to The Tribune last week that the story has been "blown out of proportion" and that all the Pentagon and the labs are saying now is that they "should be free" to explore these possibilities.

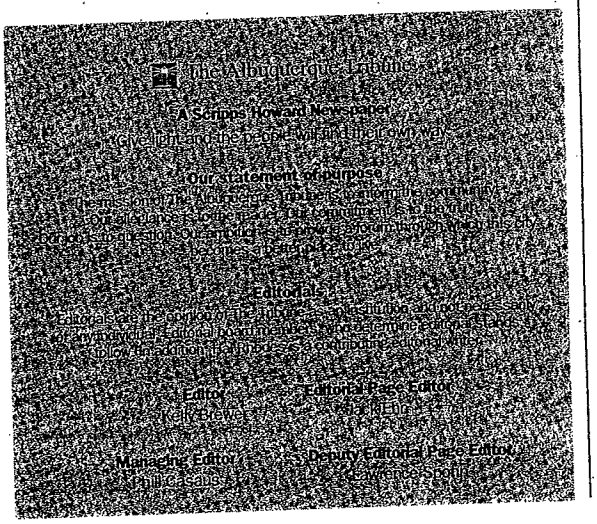
But so far, the nuclear arsenal planning has been done behind closed doors.

These plans have included figuring out how to sell or spin these ideas to the American people. The Pentagon document asks, "How do we frame the explanation of emerging policy to show the deterrent value of reduced-collateral damage, agent defeat and penetrating nuclear capabilities in meeting our national security objectives?"

How, indeed? How about starting with town meetings, from coast to coast, heartland to downtown, church to community center and then asking the American people what kind of nuclear weapons policy and arsenal *they* want?

How about first exploring with them what their hopes and expectations are for the security of their own nation — and for the security of a shrinking world?

Will Americans prefer to enforce arms control agreements or to abandon them to develop new, thinkable, usable nuclear weapons?



Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan
2/25/2003

NEWS

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World Views: Out of the wreckage

By tearing up the global rulebook, the US is in fact undermining its own imperial rule

By George Monbiot

The men who run the world are democrats at home and dictators abroad. They came to power by means of national elections that possess, at least, the potential to represent the will of their people. Their citizens can dismiss them without bloodshed, and challenge their policies in the expectation that, if enough people join in, they will be obliged to listen.

Internationally, they rule by brute force. They and the global institutions they run exercise greater economic and political control over the people of the poor world than its own governments do. But those people can no sooner challenge or replace them than the citizens of the Soviet Union could vote Stalin out of office. Their global governance is, by all the classic political definitions, tyrannical.

But while citizens' means of overthrowing this tyranny are limited, it seems to be creating some of the conditions for its own destruction. Over the past week, the US government has threatened to dismantle two of the institutions that have, until recently, best served its global interests.

On Saturday, President Bush warned the UN security council that accepting a new resolution authorising a war with Iraq was its "last chance" to prove "its relevance". Four days before, a leaked document from the Pentagon showed that this final opportunity might already have passed. The US is planning to build a new generation of nuclear weapons in order to enhance its ability to launch a pre-emptive attack. This policy threatens both the comprehensive test ban treaty and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty - two of the principal instruments of global security - while endangering the international compact that the UN exists to sustain. The Security Council, which, despite constant disruption, survived the cold war, is beginning to look brittle in its aftermath.

On Wednesday, the US took a decisive step towards the destruction of the World Trade Organisation. The WTO's current trade round collapsed in Seattle in 1999 because the poor nations perceived that it offered them nothing, while granting new rights to the rich world's corporations. It was re-launched in Qatar in 2001 only because those nations were promised two concessions: they could override the patents on expensive drugs and import cheaper copies when public health was threatened, and they could

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expect a major reduction in the rich world's agricultural subsidies. At the WTO meeting in Geneva last week, the US flatly reneged on both promises.

The Republicans' victory in the mid-term elections last November was secured with the help of $60m from America's big drug firms. This appears to have been a straightforward deal: we will buy the elections for you if you abandon the concession you made in Qatar. The Agri-business lobbies in both the US and Europe appear to have been almost as successful: the poor nations have been forced to discuss a draft document which effectively permits the rich world to continue dumping its subsidised products in their markets.

If the US does not back down, the world trade talks will collapse at the next ministerial meeting in Mexico in September, just as they did in Seattle. If so, then the WTO, as its former director-general has warned, will fall apart. Nations will instead resolve their trade disputes individually or through regional agreements. Already, by means of the free trade agreement of the Americas and the harsh concessions it is extracting from other nations as a condition of receiving aid, the US appears to be preparing for this possibility.

The US, in other words, seems to be ripping up the global rulebook. As it does so, those of us who have campaigned against the grotesque injustices of the existing world order will quickly discover that a world with no institutions is even nastier than a world run by the wrong ones. Multilateralism, however inequitable it may be, requires certain concessions to other nations. Unilateralism means piracy: the armed robbery of the poor by the rich. The difference between today's world order and the one for which the US may be preparing is the difference between mediated and unmediated force.

But the possible collapse of the current world order, dangerous as it will be, also provides us with the best opportunities we have ever encountered for replacing the world's unjust and coercive institutions with a fairer and more democratic means of global governance.

By wrecking the multilateral system for the sake of a few short-term, corporate interests, the US is, paradoxically, threatening its own tyrannical control of other nations. The existing international agencies, fashioned by means of brutal power politics at the end of the Second World War, have permitted the US to develop its international commercial and political interests more effectively than it could have done alone.

The institutions through which it has worked - the security council, the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank - have provided a semblance of legitimacy for what has become, in all but name, the construction of empire. The end of multilateralism would force the US, as it is already beginning to do, to drop this pretence and frankly admit to its imperial designs on the rest of the world. This admission, in turn, forces other nations to seek to resist it. Effective resistance would create the political space in which their citizens could begin to press for a new, more equitable multilateralism.

There are several means of contesting the unilateral power of the US, but perhaps the most immediate and effective one is to accelerate its economic crisis. Already, strategists in China are suggesting that the yuan should replace the dollar as East Asia's reserve currency. Over the past year, as the Observer revealed on Sunday, the euro has started to challenge the dollar's position as the international means of payment for oil. The dollar's dominance of world trade, particularly the oil market, is all that permits the US Treasury to sustain the nation's massive deficit, as

it can print inflation-free money for global circulation. If the global demand for dollars falls, the value of the currency will fall with it, and speculators will shift their assets into euros or yen or even yuan, with the result that the US economy will begin to totter.

Of course an economically weakened nation in possession of overwhelming military force remains a very dangerous one. Already, as I suggested last week, the US appears to be using its military machine to extend its economic life. But it is not clear that the American people would permit their government to threaten or attack other nations without even a semblance of an international political process, which is, of course, what the Bush administration is currently destroying.

America's assertions of independence from the rest of the world force the rest of the world to assert its independence from America. They permit the people of the weaker nations to contemplate the global democratic revolution that is long overdue. —Monbiot.com

Home | **Foreign**

ميدل ايست اونلاين
MIDDLE EAST ONLINE

First Published 2003-02-25, Last Updated 2003-02-25 12:40:10

US pre-emptive nuclear strike plan

No longer will the United States refrain from the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear nations, unless the madness is stopped, says Jeffrey Steinberg.

During the third week of February, a number of newspapers in the United States and Great Britain published segments of a Pentagon document, suggesting that the Bush Administration is moving ahead with plans to develop a new generation of "mini" nuclear weapons, to be used against "Third World despots" who collude with terrorists and possess weapons of mass destruction - i.e. Saddam Hussein.

The January 10, 2003 memo from Dr. Dale Klein, outlined plans for an August 2003 conference at the Omaha, Nebraska headquarters of the US Strategic Command, where scientists and military planners will gather to make decisions on the production and deployment of a new generation of "mini" nuclear bombs, "bunker busters" and other nuclear devices that will become part of the US military's arsenal of offensive weapons. No longer is the first use of nuclear weapons a taboo. No longer will the United States refrain from the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear nations, unless the madness is stopped.

Already, a number of prominent Democrats, including 2004 Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, and Senators Edward Kennedy and Diane Feinstein, are making a big stink over this insane utopian shift in policy.

LaRouche has identified the push for the use of nuclear weapons against Iraq as a scandal that must be exploited, to stop the war drive now. Senators Kennedy and Feinstein are reportedly circulating a draft resolution among Senate colleagues, to also take up the issue. And senior Democratic Party figures, in the circles of former President Bill Clinton, have confirmed that there is intense debate and worry behind the scenes, over the Bush Administration's war party being just insane enough to actually use such nuclear weapons in an attack on Iraq.

The prospect of the US using nuclear weapons against Iraq adds a new, even more horrifying dimension to the threat of war in the Persian Gulf. LaRouche has already called on President Bush to renounce this madness.

The leak of the January 10, 2003 document did not come in a vacuum. For the past year, the Bush Administration has been moving, step by step, to overturn a fifty year policy of keeping nuclear weapons on the shelf, as part of America's strategic

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nuclear weapons on the shelf, as part of America's strategic deterrent. Here is a short chronology:

In January 2002, the Bush Administration issued its Nuclear Posture Review, a Congressionally mandated report on the US nuclear weapons program. For the first time, the 2002 report openly discussed the possible use of nuclear weapons, naming seven countries that could be targets of the American nuclear arsenal: Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya and Syria.<

On February 22, 2002, John Bolton, a leading Administration chickenhawk, who runs the arms control and disarmament office at the State Department, gave an interview to the Washington Times, in which he boasted about the Bush Administration's intent to use nuclear weapons, under certain circumstances. He candidly told the Times that the world had changed so dramatically on Sept. 11, 2001, that it was no longer unthinkable to use nuclear arms against rogue states thought to possess weapons of mass destruction.

Bolton told the Washington Times that to continue with the doctrine of no first use of nuclear weapons reflected "an unrealistic view of the international situation. The idea that fine theories of deterrence work against everybody, which is implicit in the negative security assurances, has just been disproven by September 11," he said, adding, paradoxically, "What we are attempting to do is create a situation where nobody uses weapons of mass destruction of any kind."

It is no coincidence that Bolton's chief deputy at the State Department is David Wurmser, one of the authors, along with Richard Perle and Doug Feith, of the 1996 "Clean Break" report to then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, calling on Israel to abrogate the Oslo Accords, launch preemptive war on the Palestinian Authority, and drive America into an armed attack on Iraq.

On September 14, 2002, President Bush signed a secret document, National Security Presidential Directive 17, which stated, in part: "The United States will continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force - including potentially nuclear weapons - to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies."

On December 11, 2002, the Bush Administration released a declassified version of NSPD-17, under the title "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction." The reference to the use of nuclear weapons was not included in the declassified version, but instead said that the government would "resort to all of our options," an only slightly camouflaged version of the same idea.

On January 31, 2003, the Washington Times published a front-page story, revealing the existence of NSPD-17, which warned, "The disclosure of the classified text follows newspaper reports that the planning for a war with Iraq focuses on using nuclear arms not only to defend US forces, but also to pre-empt deeply buried Iraqi facilities that could withstand conventional explosives."

On February 19, 2003, the London Guardian was the first newspaper to publish the Jan. 10, 2003 Pentagon minutes of the

planning for the Omaha session in August. The Guardian and other major newspapers have received copies of the Dr. Klein memorandum from Greg Mello, who heads a group called the Los Alamos Study Group, which initially received the leak.

A Decade-old policy

The push for a new generation of nuclear weapons, to be used as part of America's offensive military arsenal, has been underway for a decade. It first surfaced in the immediate aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, just as the current Bush Administration's supposedly "new" national security doctrine of preventive war was first promoted by Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby, Eric Edelson and Zalmay Khalilzad back in 1991, when they were all together at the Pentagon.

In April 1991, shortly after Operation Desert Storm, then-Secretary of Defense Cheney commissioned a study of how the United States should respond to the new military strategic reality of the fall of the Soviet Union, leaving the USA as the world's unchallenged military superpower. Wolfowitz, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy, teamed up with his deputies, Libby, Edelman and Khalilzad, and presented Cheney with a plan for an American military empire, striking out against any nation or alliance of nations threatening American military hegemony. The use of a new generation of nuclear weapons was included in the proposed new arsenal.

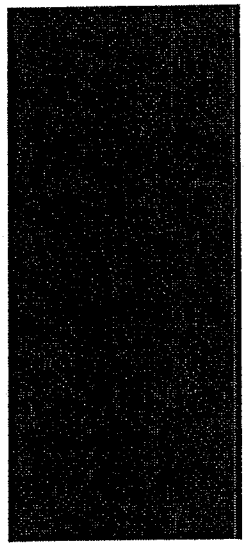
In 1992, when Cheney and his cohorts attempted to include the idea of preventive war, and the offensive use of mini-nukes in their draft Defense Planning Guidance, the proposal was vetoed by President George Bush Sr., at the urging of his top national security aides, General Brent Scowcroft and James Baker III.

Nevertheless, in January 1993, after Bush had been defeated by Bill Clinton, Cheney did put the same utopian ideas into his final policy pronouncement, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy." The document read, in part, "In the decade ahead, we must adopt the right combination of deterrent forces, tactical and strategic ... to mitigate risk from weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, whatever the source. For now this requires retaining ready forces for a survivable nuclear deterrent, including tactical forces. In addition, we must complete needed force modernization and upgrades."

While the language was vague to the average reader, it was crystal clear to the utopians among the defense planners and scientists. By October 1991, the Strategic Air Command of the US Air Force had already commissioned a study on the future uses of mini-nuclear weapons, and two scientists from Los Alamos National Labs had published a declassified study, calling for the development and deployment of "mini," "micro," and "tiny" nuclear bombs.

Of course, the architects of this madness, back in 1991-93 are now back in power again. Cheney is Vice President, his chief of staff and chief national security advisor is Lewis Libby, Paul Wolfowitz is Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Eric Edelman is one of Libby's chief strategists at the VP Office. Zalmay Khalilzad is the Bush Administration's liaison to the Iraqi opposition.

At a Feb. 4. 2003 forum at the Willard Hotel in Washington,



Michael Ledeen, a leading chickenhawk mouthpiece and self-professed "universal fascist," candidly stated that if the United States launches a war against Iraq - which he fully endorses - it will, in reality, be a regional war, also targeting Iran, Syria, Lebanon and even Saudi Arabia. If the utopian schemers in the Bush Pentagon are not stopped, they may trigger more than a regional war. As Lyndon LaRouche has warned, repeatedly, this could be the trigger for World War III. And it could be a nuclear war.

This article appears in the March 7, 2003 issue Executive Intelligence Review.

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Critics Decry Dangers of U.S. Nuclear Arms Policy

Tue Feb 25,10:40 AM ET

By Will Dunham

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Arms control advocates say the Bush administration is taking a dangerous new approach to nuclear arms by exploring a new class of bunker-busting nuclear bomb and threatening nuclear retaliation for a chemical or biological weapons attack.

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Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the Pentagon has an obligation to have "procedures whereby we would conceivably use nuclear weapons," adding, "We've had as a general policy of our country ... not to rule out various options."

New attention has been focused on the administration's nuclear arms policy as President Bush builds a large force in the Gulf region for possible war with Iraq to stop any programs it has to make weapons of mass destruction.

"The Bush administration is reinforcing and, in some ways, expanding the role of nuclear weapons in our military and foreign policy," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association advocacy group.

The Los Alamos Study Group, another arms control organization, last week released notes it obtained detailing a Jan. 10 meeting at the Pentagon to plan an August conference, to be held at U.S. Strategic Command headquarters in Nebraska, on the U.S. nuclear arms stockpile.

Topics to be addressed include "requirements for low-yield weapons" -- nuclear bombs intended to be used against targets such as deeply buried underground bunkers -- and "agent defeat weapons" intended to wipe out chemical or biological weapons that may be stored in such bunkers, according to the notes.

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Kimball said Bush appears to be veering from long-standing U.S. policy, created in the context of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, that the United States would not use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear nation unless that nation waged war against America in alliance with a nuclear state.

"This is a dangerous and ill-timed shift," Kimball said.

"It highlights the reality of the Bush administration's 'do as I say, not as I do' attitude toward weapons of mass destruction," Kimball said.

"Here we are in a just and responsible exercise trying to rid Iraq of nuclear weapons (development) but at the same time we are indirectly threatening the possible use of nuclear weapons," he added.

"We're on a slow slide toward the development of new types of nuclear weapons and the possible resumption of nuclear testing, if this policy is not checked by responsible people in Congress," Kimball said.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, a liberal Massachusetts Democrat, decried what he called a "new direction" in U.S. nuclear policy. He said a nuclear bomb should not be viewed as "just another weapon in an arsenal," saying a U.S. atomic strike on Iraq would be the most fateful decision since the 1945 attack on Hiroshima and would rupture U.S. relations with the rest of the world.

Baker Spring, a defense analyst with the conservative Heritage Foundation, defended the administration's moves.

"If your enemy has decided that you have no rational options for actually using nuclear weapons or concludes that your deterrence policy is but a bluff, then he won't be deterred," Spring said.

"So deterrence is enhanced by having a realistic set of options for actually using the weapons to achieve military and political goals, because then it becomes convincing to the other side that, yes, they can be used and they can be used very effectively to his incredible detriment," Spring added.

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Rumsfeld said the notes "referred not to the development of specific weapons but the analysis that would go into determining whether or not something might or might not make sense."

Bush recently issued a directive stating that America reserves the right "to respond with overwhelming force," including even nuclear weapons, to the use of chemical or biological weapons as well as nuclear arms against the United States, U.S. forces aboard, "and friends and allies."

Bush's directive appeared to raise the possibility that the United States would consider using nuclear bombs against Iraq if, for example, the Iraqis attacked U.S. forces with chemical weapons or shot missiles into Kuwait carrying biological arms.

Defense analyst William Arkin wrote last month that the Defense Department was drawing up lists of possible Iraqi targets such as underground bunkers for nuclear bombs, and was considering a possible pre-emptive nuclear strike.

'DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE'

Military analysts said U.S. forces could get the job done in a war with Iraq without resorting to nuclear bombs.

"We don't need nuclear weapons," said retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney.

"If it's a war of liberation, dropping nukes on people you're trying to liberate doesn't make much sense," he added.

"Anything that we want to do in Iraq can be accomplished without nuclear weapons, easily in fact," said Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute.

"Secondly, we are very, very reluctant to provide any justification for other countries acquiring nuclear weapons. And thirdly, the use of nuclear weapons is totally antithetical to the way that we prefer to wage war now. Our whole concept of war-fighting now is about precision and discrimination. And nuclear weapons just don't fit that doctrine," Thompson added.

Monitor 23 21

the Update

Senator touts facility as site for plutonium pit plant

By BETSY BLANEY
Associated Press Writer

The Pantex nuclear facility in Amarillo would be the ideal choice for a new site to develop plutonium pits that provide trigger material for nuclear bombs, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said Wednesday.

Several facilities, including two in New Mexico, are vying to become home for the Department of Energy's proposed Modern Pit Facility. The facility would process, manufacture and assemble plutonium pits for use at Pantex.

Pantex is the nation's primary assembly and disassembly plant for nuclear warheads and currently repackages old plutonium pits to meet new safety standards. Pantex stores more than 12,000 plutonium pits.

Other possible sites are the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad; Los Alamos National Laboratory; Nevada Test Site; and Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

Los Alamos is developing an interim pit production facility that will begin making as many as 50 certified plutonium pits a year by 2007.

"Building the MPF at Pantex would eliminate the need to transport the plutonium pits, increasing safety, and reducing environmental concerns," Cornyn said in a news release. "Pantex is the most cost-effective site in the nuclear weapons program, and every operation is designed to protect human health and safety, the environment, and against the threat of theft or accidental exposure."

But some people who live nearby don't want Pantex to get the facility, which would create about 1,000 jobs.

"We do not need to build those (pits) in an area that is primarily agricultural, breadbasket to the world, and over a major aquifer," said Jeri Osborne, who lives near the plant and calls Cornyn's safety claims "hogwash."

"We've got problems with the Ogallala Aquifer already," she said, referring to contamination and depletion of the aquifer.

The environmental group Greenpeace also has opposed plans to build the pit facility.

But Cornyn, who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee's Strategic Forces subcommittee and the Environment and the Public Works Committee's subcommittee responsible for nuclear safety, says safety is the key attraction for Pantex.

He met Tuesday with acting administrator of the National Nuclear Security Adminjstration, Linton S. Brooks, and wrote a letter outlining benefits of locating the MPF in the Panhandle.

The facility would begin initial operations in 2018, with full production slated for 2020.

It would have a production capacity of at least 125 pits annually and the ability to expand as needed.

The United States' pit production operations were shut down in 1989 at the energy department's Rocky Flats facility near Denver in response to alleged violations of environmental statutes that were made after a raid by the FBI and the Environmental Protection Agency, according to the EPA's Web site.

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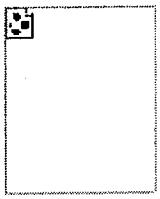

M V Ramana

US nuclear weapons laboratories and the Pentagon have been pursuing the development of nuclear weapons. Thus the hypocrisy of the Bush administration's active pursuit of useable nuclear weapons while accusing Iraq of developing weapons of mass destruction is monumental

On January 10, 2003, 32 senior nuclear weapons managers from US nuclear weapons laboratories, the uniformed military, the National Nuclear Stewardship Administration (NNSA), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense met in the Pentagon to discuss the future of the US nuclear weapons programme. Earlier this week, the Los Alamos Study Group (LASG), a small non-governmental organisation that works for the abolition of nuclear weapons, obtained the minutes from this meeting and released it publicly (see http://www.lasg.org/). The minutes show, according to Greg Mello of the LASG, "the bold sweep of nuclear weapons planning in the Bush Administration."

The purpose of the January meeting was to plan a secret conference later this year. The agenda for the upcoming conference includes an assessment of the stockpile stewardship programme and the effectiveness of the current and future US nuclear stockpile, what weapons may go into a future U.S. nuclear arsenal, how they might be tested, how these weapons might be mated to new delivery systems, and how these are to be related to the other parts of the US arsenal including ballistic missile defence systems. Among the new weapons to be discussed are low-yield weapons, earth-penetrating weapons, enhanced radiation weapons, and agent defeat weapons.

What characterises all of these weapons is that they fit with the emphasis in the 2002 US Nuclear posture review (see The Friday Times, April 5-11, 2002) for more useable nuclear weapons whose use is more credible. This is because over the last decades nuclear advocates have been postulating specific targets, such as deep underground bunkers, as requiring the use of nuclear weapons. Given the current rhetoric about rogue states and terrorism, questions about whether such targets really exist and what threat is really posed by them are never asked. Nuclear advocates also hope that their typically smaller yields would reduce the outrage provoked by their use. The hypocrisy of the Bush administration's active pursuit of such useable nuclear weapons while accusing Iraq, with its crumbling infrastructure, of developing weapons of mass destruction is monumental.

One new element revealed by the minutes of the January 10 meeting is an emphasis on building small quantities of new nuclear weapons. The upcoming conference is to explore possibilities for changing the process for authorising such production. Small production lines would allow for greater stealth; pre-delegation of authority to build would also leave no room for political debate and possible cancellation. It also fits with

2/27/03

modern management techniques of not accumulating substantial inventories; instead weapons are to be manufactured just in time and in the quantities that are needed. The January 10 meeting talks explicitly about a "testing strategy for weapons more likely to be used in small strikes" and raises the possibility that "a requirement for higher confidence in small strikes" might "drive larger test asset inventories".

The January 10 meeting is by no means the only evidence of a push for a new round of nuclear weapons research and testing. Included in the Bush administration budget, for example, is $21 million for design of new or modified nuclear weapons in 2004. The budget for weapons work itself is roughly $6 billion, up from about $3.2 billion in 1995. Even though it maintains a moratorium on nuclear tests, the Bush administration also called for increasing the readiness of the Nevada test site to resume testing.

House Republicans have also supported an expanded nuclear weapons programme. In a review released last week, they laid out a requirement for "a fully capable nuclear weapons complex" and a "confident, capable workforce needed to operate this complex". The review recommends that the time period needed for the US to conduct a nuclear test be reduced to "possibly as low as 12 months" from the current three years and pursuing research on low-yield weapons (under five kilotons yield or about a third of the yield of the weapon dropped on Hiroshima).

The Bush administration and the Republicans in the Congress are clearly singing a tune orchestrated by nuclear weapons laboratories and the branches of the Pentagon responsible for nuclear strategy. Since the end of the Cold War, these institutions have been searching for a rationale for their existence. Through the invocation of a purported threat from so-called rogue states — Iraq, Iran, North Korea and Libya — the Pentagon managed to keep up its high budgets. Even then, to seek to use nuclear weapons against them was a bit laughable. With the Bush administration's new doctrine of preemptive attack, this aim has gained in respect and has resulted in budget increases. Speaking to the San Francisco Chronicle last October, Michael Anastasio, director of the Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons laboratory, put it succinctly: "I actually had a fear for the future viability of the lab... It just feels very different now. It's a positive tone as opposed to a going out of business tone."

Nuclear weapons laboratories have also managed to convert a vaguely defined rogue state threat into a series of technical requirements — the ability to destroy underground command centres, stores of biological or chemical agents, and so on. This effectively shifts the terms of the debate from one of the necessity or prudence of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states to one of whether nuclear weapons could perform the self-selected tasks. Indeed, the fact that they may not be able to fulfil the set requirements could itself allow the weapons laboratories to seek larger amounts of funding for research.

The lessons for South Asia of this nuclear resurgence in the US are clear enough. The institutions that make nuclear weapons and operate them have a vested interest in these massively destructive weapons staying around forever and ever. Nuclear weapons are powerful, and like other sources of power, it also corrupts. What is corrupted is the process for social and popular control over institutions that are supposed to be answerable to the citizens of the country. This has to be challenged at each and every stage, and the earlier the better.

M V Ramana is a physicist and research staff member at Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security and co-editor of Prisoners of the Nuclear Dream

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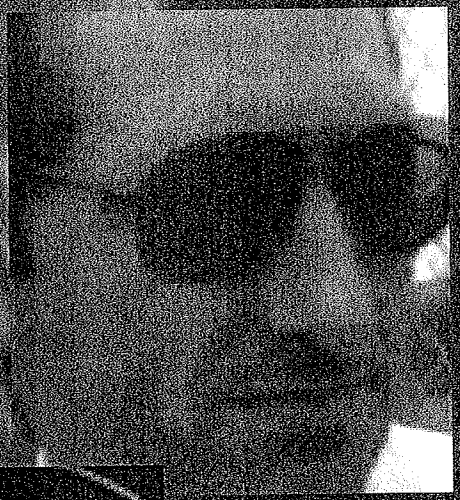

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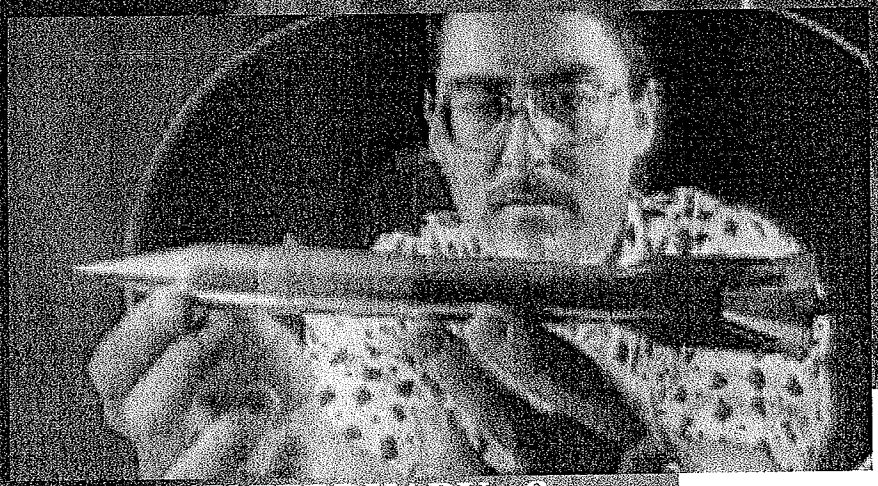

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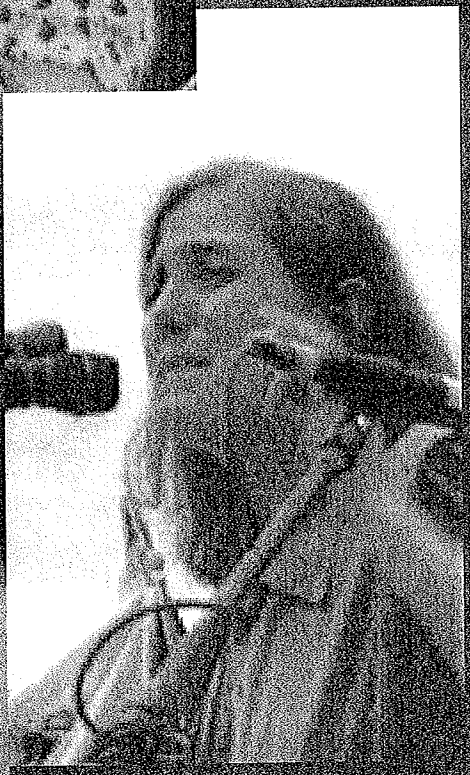

Safety in numbers

Photos by Luis Sarumo Sánchez/The New Mexican

Amy Goodman cites global protests involving more than 30 million people Feb. 15-16 as evidence that most people are against war in Iraq.

Radio host Amy Goodman calls upon 'the power of the people' to stop the potential war against Iraq

3/1/03

By JEFF TOLLEFSON
The New Mexican

With the Bush administration on a sure path to war in Iraq, the only way for people to make a difference is through "grassroots globalization," Amy Goodman, the host of the radio show *Democracy Now*, told a packed house at Cloud Cliff Bakery on Friday night.

■ **Labor activist Dolores Huerta speaks at Salt of the Earth. Page B-4**

She cited global protests involving more than 30 million people Feb. 15-16 as evidence that most people are against war in Iraq.

"The world said no to war. The answer is grassroots globalization. ... There is tremendous hope there," said Goodman, whose talk was part of the Salt of the Earth conference this weekend in Santa Fe. "It is up to everyone to stand up and speak out."

Luis Guerra, a Santa Fe resident, listens to talk of war and nuclear weapons by Pacifica Radio journalist Amy Goodman on Friday evening at Cloud Cliff Bakery.

Goodman noted military planners are no longer talking about whether the United States should invade Iraq but what will happen in a post-war Iraq.

"It's no longer about bombing Iraq. It's about what happens after, and who gets the war spoils," she said. "The war spoils — what are they? Oil. Oil. Oil."

The mainstream, corporate media, meanwhile, has stopped reporting the voice of antiwar protesters as "yesterday's story," she said. So what's left for activists and concerned citizens?

"The power of the people," Goodman said, noting the only way to renew a dialogue is to take to the streets and voice dissent. There's safety in numbers, she said, leading into several stories about people who have been "detained" and questioned by the federal government for voicing their opinion against the war.

From Goodman's perspective, the United States is losing touch with its own values and cherished rights. "I don't think this is the America people died for and fought for for many years," she said.

It was a point made by earlier speakers at Friday night's event.

"We are, in a way, our values," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group. "The United States, as we know it, is changing and in some ways passing away."

For Mello, a disarmament

Please see **IRAQ**, Page B-3

Governor supports UC-LANL contract

By JEFF TOLLEFSON
The New Mexican

Gov. Bill Richardson voiced his support for the University of California's management of Los Alamos National Laboratory on Friday, citing "unprecedented, dramatic action" on the part of the university to address management problems and "change the culture" at the lab.

Flanked by Los Alamos Interim Director Pete Nanos at a news conference in the Capitol, Richardson praised efforts by both the university and Nanos to address allegations of purchase-card fraud, millions of dollars in missing and stolen property and efforts by lab managers to keep these problems out of the public eye.

These scandals have threatened the university's 60-year relationship with the U.S. Department of Energy at Los Alamos, but Richardson said a decision to replace UC would only hurt the laboratory, its employees and ultimately the nation. Once severed, he said, Los Alamos' relationship with a key research institution would be "nearly impossible to reconstitute."

"There were problems, management problems, at the lab, but they are being addressed by an aggressive new leader," Richardson said. "Let's stay the course."

Richardson, who renewed UC's current contract for Los Alamos lab as Energy Secretary under President Clinton, said he plans to write a letter and talk to his successor, Secretary Spencer Abraham, in support of maintaining that contract. Abraham announced plans to review the university's contract by the end of April.

Nanos described Richardson's support as "extremely important."

Richardson also called on the university to form a research consortium with The University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University and New Mexico Tech. Nanos said the lab is already working with these institutions and would be willing to formalize these relationships to take advantage of existing technical expertise within the state.

"We're already reaching out, I think," Nanos said.

IRAQ

Continued from Page B-1

activist who has spent years tracking and criticizing activities at Los Alamos National Laboratory, nuclear planners are running the show in the Bush administration and changing national policy without the consent or knowledge of its citizenry. He noted the nation is developing new, more-useable nuclear bombs despite its commitment to good-faith negotiations aimed at total nuclear disarmament as required by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

What's more, Mello noted, New Mexico might just be the "world capital for weapons of mass destruction," given the presence of Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories and 2,700 nuclear weapons stored in a bunker in Albuquerque. If New Mexico were to secede from the union, it would become the third-largest nuclear power behind Russia and the rest of the United States, he said.

Jay Coghlan, who heads Nuclear Watch of New Mexico, underscored Mello's comments, noting the United States is about to invade Iraq under the guise of destroying weapons of mass destruction while building up its own arsenal.

Hear an audio broadcast of this event at www.santafenewmexican.com.

San Francisco Chronicle
The San Francisco Chronicle

MARCH 1, 2003, SATURDAY, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A4

LENGTH: 1467 words

HEADLINE: Fallout seen from White House **nuclear** policy;

Plans for small bombs, resumed tests could prompt other nations to follow

SOURCE: Chronicle Staff Writer

BYLINE: James Sterngold

BODY:
As the United States moved closer this week to launching a war against Iraq -- in part to prevent it from developing a **nuclear** armory -- controversy grew over the Bush administration's efforts to develop new, "usable" **nuclear** bombs that critics say may encourage the spread of these uniquely destructive weapons.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., on Wednesday described as "extremely provocative and dangerous" administration proposals that would repeal a decade-old prohibition on the development of smaller **nuclear** bombs, allow building "low-yield" warheads, and make it easier to resume **nuclear** testing.

Feinstein said such proposals could prompt other countries to build their own **nuclear** stockpiles in response. She said, "If we are not careful, our own **nuclear** posture may well provoke the very **nuclear**-proliferation activities we seek to prevent."

The proposals, which run counter to 50 years of a policy favoring nonproliferation, have not been officially declared, but their outlines have become clear in recent months from leaked documents, comments by administration and Pentagon officials, and the administration's budget requests.

Supporters say a more assertive U.S. **nuclear** posture is needed to prevent hostile states and terrorist groups from building their own **nuclear** arsenals and hoarding other weapons of mass destruction. The policy would rely more on threats of force and possible pre-emptive strikes than on treaties, negotiations and sanctions, as in the past.

"The Bush administration has pushed a radical redirection of nonproliferation strategy," said Joseph Cirincione, director of the nonproliferation project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Cirincione and other critics warn that the evolving doctrine could start a whole new **nuclear** arms race, from Asia to Latin America.

"If the United States sends signals that we are considering new uses for **nuclear** weapons, isn't it more likely that other nations will also want to explore greater use or new uses for **nuclear** weapons?" Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, asked of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at a Senate hearing two weeks ago.

Rumsfeld countered that the new U.S. **nuclear** weapons being discussed -- so-called "bunker-busters" that could, in theory, burrow underground and destroy caches of enemy weapons -- are needed to deter foes from trying to hide their arsenals in deep tunnels.

"Not having the ability to penetrate and reach them creates a very serious obstacle to U.S. national security," Rumsfeld said.

Supporters of the new policy also argue that the old nonproliferation system of treaties and international organizations, including the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation** Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency, are no match for the ambitions of states with **nuclear** ambitions, like North Korea, Iraq and Iran.

ORIGIN IN THINK TANK

The blueprint for this fundamental policy shift was partly formulated two years ago by a Washington, D.C., think tank, the National Institute for Public Policy, which bluntly called the old nonproliferation system "outmoded."

"Arms control agreements negotiated in good faith can become harmful to national security when they effectively preclude the U.S. capability to adapt to changing times," said a panel of 28 experts. Seven members of the panel now occupy prominent positions in the Bush administration, including the director of the National **Nuclear** Security Administration and the deputy director of the National Security Council.

David Smith, a former arms negotiator and the institute's chief operating officer, said there was "an air of unreality" surrounding the previous nonproliferation policies of restraint and disarmament. "It could never do all the things some claimed for it. It can hinder, but it can't stop proliferation."

In a policy paper issued earlier this month, the House Policy Committee, an influential group of House Republicans led by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M, called for the development and testing of smaller, "low-yield" **nuclear** weapons, claiming that the old nonproliferation polices had worked "largely where they were not needed."

Critics of the nonproliferation agreements also argue that regional ambitions and tensions have consistently thwarted U.S. attempts to keep the **nuclear** genie in the bottle. They point to India and Pakistan, which have built and tested **nuclear** weapons and never signed the **Non-Proliferation** Treaty, despite pressure from the United States and the United Nations.

"It's mostly regional concerns" that cause weapons development, said Ronald F. Lehman II, a Bush administration adviser and director of the Center for Global Security Research at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

"In very few instances is the position of the U.S. weapons program the primary determinant of a decision" to develop **nuclear** weapons, said Lehman, who headed the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under the first President Bush.

CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM

All sides agree that the cracks in the nonproliferation system are becoming more visible.

-- South Korea on Friday confirmed U.S. intelligence reports that North Korea has reactivated a **nuclear** reactor that can produce material for **nuclear** bombs. The communist state, believed to have perhaps one or two **nuclear** devices already, recently renounced the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation** Treaty and is believed to be developing the capability to produce perhaps 50 bombs a year by reprocessing spent fuel from a reactor. Should North Korea build an arsenal, it is feared that Japan, South Korea and even Taiwan would be tempted to develop their own stockpiles.

-- Russia this week told an American official of its concerns that technology it has sold to Iran is being used to develop a **nuclear** weapons program. Iran earlier announced that it is mining uranium, which it is preparing to process, although it says it is for peaceful purposes.

-- Neighboring Pakistan, which already has **nuclear** weapons, is believed to have supplied North Korea with **nuclear** technology, and some analysts fear that rogue Pakistani scientists and technicians may be the source for other countries' -- and perhaps terrorist groups' -- secret **nuclear** development.

-- Brazil has hinted it might need to consider resuming a **nuclear** program. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva criticized the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation** Treaty in his election campaign last year. Last month, his minister of science and technology suggested that Brazil might need to develop its own **nuclear** technologies, although he later said the purposes would be peaceful.

"We have entered a new world of proliferation," CIA Director George Tenet said two weeks ago at a hearing before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

'OUGHT TO BE HORRIFIED'

John Holdren, a former weapons physicist and now director of the Program on Science, Technology & Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, agrees with Tenet's assessment. He blamed, in part, the Bush administration's move toward a new **nuclear** doctrine for removing some of the inhibitions against weapons development.

"Without doubt the (nonproliferation) regime is fragile now and in danger of significant deterioration," said Holdren. "I think it's premature to plan the funeral, but I also think we're flirting with a disastrous situation. The Bush administration ought to be horrified by that prospect."

Some administration officials echo the concern. One government nonproliferation expert called the administration's rejection of the traditional **nuclear** doctrines of restraint and nonproliferation "shortsighted." He added that a resumption of **nuclear** testing, in particular, could severely damage American credibility.

"That would have very negative political consequences," because it would inevitably undermine U.S. efforts to prevent other countries from conducting tests, said the official, who spoke on condition he not be identified.

Such developments alarm defenders of the nonproliferation system, especially those weapons designers who believed **nuclear** weapons were the ultimate deterrent.

"The whole goal of **nuclear**-weapons development was to prevent their use," said Dr. Michael May, a weapons scientist and a former director of the Livermore lab. "I don't know of a more important goal."

May said the United States should continue to do everything possible to eliminate **nuclear** weapons, since they are the one weapon by which an enemy could defeat or at least stop in its tracks what has become the most powerful conventional military force the world has ever known.

"Introducing more widely the one thing that can do us in is just dumb," said May.E-mail **James Sterngold** at jsterngold@sfchronicle.com.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO (2), (1) Above: Pentagon personnel trained this week, donning escape hoods to be used in case of **nuclear,** chemical or biological attack. President Bush has signaled the beginning of an effort to develop smaller **nuclear** arms, prompting critics to suggest other countries would be pushed to build their own **nuclear** stockpiles. / Dennis Cook/Associated Press, (2)Left: Czech Republic task force members in Kuwait are also prepared for **nuclear,** chemical or biological attack. / Bill Lisbon/U.S. Marine Corps

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The nonproliferation system was created almost immediately after the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945. Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower committed the country to a process that, they hoped, would not just limit proliferation but would eliminate **nuclear** weapons entirely. Those principles were enshrined first in the charter of the United Nations and then in the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation** Treaty, signed in 1968. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Eisenhower's landmark "Atoms for Peace" speech at the United Nations.

While nonproliferation never achieved the ultimate goal, its successes have been notable. Even as the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a dangerous Cold War standoff, **nuclear** programs in countries ranging from Sweden in the 1960s to Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s were stopped. Three former Soviet states abandoned their weapons with the end of the Cold War, as did South Africa following its shift to black majority rule. The United States and the Soviet Union slashed their arsenals of long-range missiles in half. In 1987, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to eliminate a whole class of shorter-range **nuclear** missiles.

The regimen reached what weapons analysts regard as its high-water mark just after the first Gulf War and the halting of Iraq's **nuclear** program. At that time, industrialized countries also made a breakthrough agreement under which they strictly limited exports of equipment and materials used for **nuclear** weapons development.

Today there are only nine known **nuclear** states, and six of them are democracies. In the early 1960s President Kennedy and others had predicted that, by this time, there would be up to 30 **nuclear** states.

LOS ALAMOS STUDY GROUP GENERATED THIS ARTICLE

Bush could pay steep price for war with Iraq

ORLANDO ROMERO

Commentary

In the film *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, we encounter two delusional and psychotic generals played by Sterling Hayden and George C. Scott acting out their rants over this country's military superiority over Russia. Peter Sellers plays three roles, including the president who tries to avoid the nuclear holocaust by phoning the Russian prime minister, the mad ex-Nazi Dr. Strangelove, and the English Capt. Mandrake, who tries in vain to get the code that will disarm the nuclear weapons of mass destruction over Russia from the now completely mad Gen. Jack D. Ripper.

Director Stanley Kubrick's "classic black comedy" first released in 1964 is now more apropos than ever. There is so much talk by this administration about weapons of mass destruction held by other nations that we seem to overlook our own weapons of mass destruction and a pending, and quite disturbing, scenario this administration is considering.

In Jeff Tollefson's excellent piece, "New Bombs Amid New Threats," published by this paper (Feb. 23) it appears that George Bush's regime is attempting to encourage the production of new small-yield nuclear weapons aimed at striking and countering enemy efforts "to produce chemical, biological or nuclear weapons."

In essence, this "pre-emptive" production of a new generation of thermonuclear weaponry would undermine and disregard the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It also signals that "the old deterrence relied on restraint for fear of an all-out nuclear holocaust," as Tollefson has stated, "has given way to a new U.S. policy that relies on an apparent willingness to use nuclear warheads, even a first strike, to counter the development of similarly destructive weapons."

It was not surprising to learn that, like Dr. Strangelove, our military hawk from New Mexico, Republican Sen. Pete Domenici "has supported exploring new bunker-busting designs and more generally the administration's nuclear policies." Likewise, our other military hawk, Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., new chairwoman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, is also at the forefront for the support and development of these new thermonuclear weapons.

On the saner side, Democratic Sen. Jeff Bingaman's statement that "we don't need to be threatening rogue nations with nuclear attack in order to deter them from pretty much anything they might try," and Democratic Rep. Tom Udall signing, along with 89 lawmakers, a letter to Bush calling for assurances that the nation will not resume nuclear tests, is a sigh of relief and a sign that not everyone in power approves of nuclear proliferation.

In the movie, because of the general's super-nationalism and, of course, his psychotic state of mind, nuclear weapons are dropped over Russia, which, in turn, triggers its own Doomsday Machine, and the nuclear holocaust begins to a surreal and soothing musical score. While the film might be a dark comedy with truly amusing scenes, it also is a serious, sarcastic, satirical look at how easily our country can become involved in a nuclear holocaust.

It appears that Bush's regime is hellbent on going against world opinion and even against the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. So then, who are we but hypocrites to ask other nations to stop building weapons of mass destruction if we can't seem to control our own impulses? And what is even more disturbing is that this administration seems to go out of its way to keep us ignorant of world opinion. The American media are no better. One has to go to the international newspapers via the Internet to discover, for example, that Spaniards, of all Europeans, are the most strongly opposed to an attack on Iraq — 85 percent of the populace is against a U.S.-led attack on Iraq. Even the conservative and right-leaning *El Mundo* stated, "... Spain will pay a price for its clear and unconditional alignment with the United States."

Europeans are betting that both José María Aznar of Spain and Tony Blair of England and their political parties will pay dearly when it comes time for election. One can only hope the same will happen to Bush's regime.

Orlando Romero is a longtime Santa Fe columnist, author of two books, and retired director of the Fray Angélico Chávez History Library at the Palace of the Governors.

From Nuclear Watch (Progressive Foundation) Spring 2003

U.S. Nuclear Threats and the Future of "Mini" Nukes

By Jerry Mechtenberg-Berrigan

No one likes us, I don't know why
We may not be perfect, but heaven knows we try
All around, even our old friends put us down
Let's drop the Big One, see what happens

We give them money, but are they grateful --
No, they're spiteful and they're hateful
They don't respect us, so let's surprise 'em
We'll drop the Big One, pulverize 'em
-- Randy Newman, "Political Science" (1972)

During a five-day campaign in February 2003, Bush Administration officials repeatedly threatened "preemptive" first use of nuclear weapons in a war against Iraq. Military analysts have kicked around the implications of such talk: Are they bluffing? Could they be serious? What about treaties?

Pundits have lately recalled how Washington has threatened to unleash its nuclear weapons in the past. Prior to the 1991 bombardment of the Persian Gulf, then-Secretary of State James Baker threatened nuclear retaliation if Iraq used chemical or biological agents. In his memoirs, Baker revealed that he was posturing, following the Cold War belief that the real power of the Bomb lies not in using it but in convincing your opponent that you might. So, the question was posed, what's the big deal?

Things have changed since 1991. David J. Smith, an arms negotiator in the first Bush Administration, said to the *Los Angeles Times* Jan. 25, 2003, that whereas previous regimes have threatened nuclear war incidentally, in times of conflict, Bush, Jr. "has set [nuclear first use] out as a general principle, and backed it up by explaining what has changed in the world."

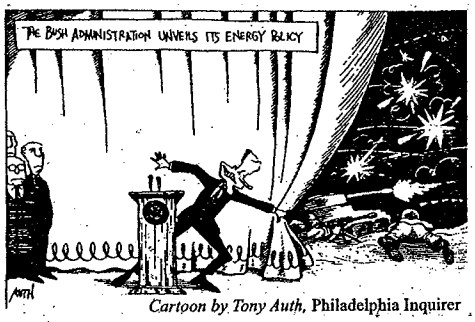
What has changed in the world, when it comes to U.S. nuclear policy, must be understood under the umbrella of the Bush Administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), released in January 2002 (see the Summer 2002 *Pathfinder*). The Congressionally mandated report openly discussed nuclear "preemption," revealed Washington's willingness to use H-bombs against non-nuclear states, and named seven countries now in the Pentagon's crosshairs, including Iraq.

Three elements to be explored below represent developments of the NPR: 1) Administration officials have threatened Iraq with nuclear use; 2) The U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), which has functioned since 1946 only to deploy the U.S. nuclear strike force on orders from the president, had its responsibilities vastly expanded last December; 3) A conference planned for August 2003 at STRATCOM, the "Future Arsenal Panel," will re-imagine, and likely enhance greatly, U.S. "flexibility" in nuclear warfighting by exploring the future of smaller nuclear weapons, nukes "we can actually use." The entire U.S. nuclear apparatus is moving into a more aggressive posture. Will Iraq be the proving ground?

Nuclear Threats Against Iraq

On January 31, 2003, *The Washington Times* revealed the existence of National Security Presidential Directive 17 (NSPD-17), signed by President Bush the previous May. The document said, in part, "The United States [will reserve the right] to respond with overwhelming force -- including potentially nuclear weapons." On Dec. 10, 2002, the White House delivered to Congress an unclassified version of NSPD-17 called "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction." Prepared by Condoleezza Rice and Tom Ridge, it reiterated the above quote, but omitted the specific reference to nuclear weapons. The document charges that for other nations, weapons of mass destruction "are not weapons of last resort, but militarily useful weapons of choice intending to overcome our nation's advantages in conventional forces."

Did you catch that little twist? Here's how Washington gets to do what it wants: 1) cook up the most atrocious, dastardly plot; 2) accuse the other guy of wanting to carry out such a plot against the U.S.; 3) foster the consequent hysteria among the U.S. public; 4) then carry out the atrocious, dastardly plot against the other guy's people -- all the while blaming the victim. At issue, of course, is not other nations' willingness to use nuclear weapons, but our own.



Cartoon by Tony Auth, Philadelphia Inquirer

The weapons talked about in an Iraq contingency are the "mini-nukes" (also dubbed "micro" or "tiny"). The most likely candidate is the B-61 Mod-11 "bunker buster," which is said to burrow 20 feet into the ground before exploding and can be fitted with nuclear warheads carrying payloads of between less than one kiloton, to over 350 kilotons. The Hiroshima bomb was 12.5 kilotons. Advocates of nuclear preemption have disingenuously argued that the radiation released by such a strike would be "limited."

On March 4, 2003, ten Democrat senators, concerned that the new policy "threatens the very foundation" of international arms control and the 33-year-old nonproliferation regime sent a letter to President Bush. The senators wrote, "Recent public revelations ... suggest that your administration considers nuclear weapons as a mere extension of the continuum of conventional weapons open to the United States."

Other critics complain that the war party is "lowering the bar," taking the nukes "out of their lock box," "off the shelf," placing them "on the normal options ladder," and worry that such a direction is "inappropriate where effective conventional means exist." While such arguments presume (as this writer does not) that it is acceptable to maintain a nuclear arsenal if it stays in the lock box, on the shelf, etc., the argument is correct.

STRATCOM Restructured

On Dec. 10 last year, Pentagon Secretary Donald Rumsfeld sent Mr. Bush a memorandum asking for authority to place Adm. James Ellis, Jr., the STRATCOM commander, in charge of the full range of "strategic" warfare options to combat terrorist states and organizations. The memo, quickly approved by Bush, recommended assigning "global strike, integrated missile defense, and information operations" to STRATCOM.

As William Arkin, defense analyst for *The New York Times*, observes, this seemingly concise assignment covers enormous ground, "bringing everything from the use of nuclear weapons, to non-nuclear strikes, to covert and special operations, to cyber warfare, under the purview of nuclear warriors." This is a big change, he reminds us, as STRATCOM owes its very existence to previous Cold War policymakers who considered it vital to erect "a great firewall" between nuclear and conventional forces. Furthermore, the command, whose single mission previously was to carry out the presidential order to launch missiles, has now assumed its own hair trigger decision making power. "If you can find that time-critical, key terrorist target or that weapons-of-mass-destruction stockpile, and you have minutes rather than hours or days to deal with it, how do you reach out and negate that threat to our nation half a world away?" Adm. Ellis asked in December.

The "Future Arsenal Panel"

In February, a leaked Pentagon document revealed that the Bush Administration is planning a secret meeting in August to discuss the construction of a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "mini-nukes," "bunker busters," and neutron bombs designed to destroy chemical or biological agents. The document, released to the Los Alamos Study Group, a nuclear watchdog organization, included minutes of a Jan. 10 meeting in the Pentagon in which it was determined that the "Future Arsenal Panel" will meet at STRATCOM headquarters in Omaha, Neb., the week of August 4. The National Nuclear Security Administration confirmed the authenticity of the document.

According to these minutes, the August panel will attempt to bring the nuclear arsenal in line with the Nuclear Posture Review. On the agenda are "requirements for low-yield weapons, EPWs [earth penetrating weapons], enhanced radiation weapons and 'agent defeat' weapons." "Low-yield" means warheads of less than five kilotons; EPWs are "bunker busters" which burrow into the ground before detonating and are envisioned as "agent defeat weapons." The designers are promoting so-called "low-yield" neutron bombs or "enhanced radiation weapons," which they claim can "destroy" chemical or biological weapons.

The "blending" of nuclear and conventional forces goes both ways. An air force general recently said that by replacing nuclear warheads with conventional ones on intercontinental ballistic missiles, the U.S. military would produce usable "long-range artillery" that could send destruction to any spot in the world within 30 minutes.

Of course the Pentagon can kill hundreds of thousands of Iraqis just by raining conventionally-armed cruise missiles on Baghdad, a city of five million. Indeed, it can bring Iraq -- crippled so severely by sanctions over the past 13 years -- quickly to its knees, without using nuclear warheads. The war will be wrong, even if the nuclear weapons remain in their lock box.

Either way, the Bush Administration has turned Randy Newman's parody into policy. It appears to be literally itching to drop the Big One.

Jerry Mechtenberg-Berrigan is a member of the Anathoth Community and a Nukewatch volunteer.