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## All I want for Christmas is a Green New Deal which is actually green and actually a new deal

December 25, 2018

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Previous [letter](#) (4 Dec 2018): "Help us hire additional staff! With the election behind and legislature ahead, dialog urgently needed"

Previous [Bulletin](#) (251, 11 Dec 2018): "Converging resource, climate, and social crises compel broad, deep transformation -- far more than usually envisioned"

**Dear friends on our New Mexico activist list --**

Merry Christmas everyone. (Hanukkah slipped by us two weeks ago.) We will be visiting with friends later today and with family tomorrow. We hope you all have an enriching holiday season and a blessed and productive new year -- come what may.

### **1. We are still in end-of-year fundraising mode. [Thank you for your contributions and outreach on our behalf!](#)**

Thank you all so much for being our partners in disarmament, and in what we hope will be more effective climate and energy leadership.

Please note the corrected PayPal [link](#) above. We very much welcome your support and that of your friends. To succeed we need that help and solidarity more than ever, and we will return it in every way we can.

There are [many ways](#) to support our work.

This year we hope to establish in government minds, once and for all, that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) cannot be any kind of nuclear factory. This is our biggest single program. We are mostly there, in some offices. The New Mexico delegation remains a big problem.

Also in the new year, we hope to kill the proposed new warhead, called in its successive variations the "Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW) under GW Bush, "Interoperable Warhead One" (IW1) under Obama, and now the "W87-1 Life Extension Program" (W87-1 LEP). This warhead is the only one that requires new pits. It requires them ASAP and therefore generates the need for a pit factory ASAP. It's for ground-launched intercontinental missiles we don't need, which will cost well in excess of \$100 billion (B), and which leading Democrats and former military leaders oppose. For this missile, it will provide the capability to return to three warheads per missile if desired, which is supposed to scare the Russians more than it scares us. Think of it as an extra pack of explosives on the national nuclear suicide belt. We want to cut back and get rid of ICBMs and close their three bases, not enhance them more than current accuracy improvements are already providing. But first, killing the new warhead removes the near-term "need" for a pit factory anywhere.

Also in the new year, we hope to help foment a significant movement toward climate responsibility and community resilience in New Mexico, about which you will hear more from us, including below. New Mexicans are generally passive politically, a sufficient reason in itself for its egregious poverty and inequality.

We *all* have to do this -- you too.

We will continue to contribute our unique and important voice on other nuclear weapons and sustainability issues.

We are looking for dedicated new staff and the means to support them.

By the way, the \$5,000 matching grant we mentioned previously has been fully subscribed. This gives the Study Group \$10,000 for next year's programs from that initiative. That, and other contributions which have come in, give us a solid start for next year -- *thank you*. We are long way from

raising enough funds for what we want and need to do next year, however. If you (or a friend) are in a position to establish another challenge grant, please do contact us.

We say it every year, and it's even more true this year: 2019 will be a momentous year for nuclear weapons policy and for plutonium pit production in particular. With budget woes gaining in salience and the House in Democratic hands, real congressional oversight of nuclear weapons programs could begin again, after a largely-permissive decade. We intend to foster that accountability. The federal government must begin making fundamental budget choices it has postponed.

New Mexico meanwhile is uniquely in the crosshairs. Investments in nuclear weapons -- time, money, committee assignments, membership in "corruption clubs" like the "Regional Coalition of LANL Communities" -- mean more leadership failures from our political class, at every level. We have crises layered upon crises. Our youth are at risk. Our families. We have a huge homeless population. We are beset with violence and drug addiction. Whole communities are being forgotten. The huge weapons labs rule our politicians, whose addictions run not just to nuclear weapons, training Saudi pilots to bomb children in Yemen and related military activities, but also to what Gary Snyder once called "long, smooth injections of crude oil." Violence? Yeah, that's us. Politicians who think these are the only way things can be in New Mexico should be hounded -- I mean literally hounded, with the utmost nonviolence -- out of office.

## **2. If you haven't already, please do listen to Greta Thunberg.**

Her talk at the recent UN Climate Summit and her interviews with Amy Goodman are by now old news. We should have sent them before now. If you have not done so, please do listen carefully to what this 15-year-old has to say, as well as to Kevin Anderson:

- ["Our Leaders Are Behaving Like Children": Teen Climate Activist Confronts World Leaders at U.N. Summit](#)", and again
- ["School Strike for Climate: Meet 15-Year-Old Activist Greta Thunberg, Who Inspired a Global Movement"](#) and in dialog with scientist Kevin Anderson,
- ["Climate Scientist: World's Richest Must Radically Change Lifestyles to Prevent Global Catastrophe."](#)

We praised the [Extinction Rebellion](#) in a [letter](#) of 1 Nov, 2018. So here is more, also from *Democracy Now*.

- [Extinction Rebellion: UK Protesters Are Supergluing Themselves to Buildings to Fight Climate Crisis](#)
- [Climate Strike: Heeding Call of Greta Thunberg, Polish Students Walk Out of Class](#)

If you think her message is compatible with the messages coming from the Sierra Club, Environment New Mexico, 350.org, and most other New Mexico environmental organizations, please listen again.

## **3. The incoming New Mexico gubernatorial administration, and our environmental groups which are preparing to lobby the legislature, have no net climate-friendly, and therefore no climate leadership, policies.**

Sorry to have to tell you that. The "blue wave" in New Mexico is no kind of environmental Christmas present. Does this sound harsh? The reality is harsh.

Promoting solar and wind generation of electricity (to whatever degree turns out to be chosen or possible) just does not add enough in the positive column to overcome the negative climate leadership of allowing, or even promoting as is the case, oil and gas extraction on a large scale.

Neither does attempting to regulate methane emissions balance out the negative impacts of producing methane in the first place. Methane is a very powerful greenhouse gas -- some 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide over the first 20 years. From the ground to the well to pipelines to distribution to use, too much of it leaks for methane to ever be a clean fuel.

And of course, it does make carbon dioxide when it burns, just less than coal.

The "Obama Clean Power Plan" heavily leaned on methane, which is part of why it was going to increase, not decrease, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over 20 years. (The other reason is that it was so very lame in its targets.)

Further, natural gas and oil are produced together. Oil is the far more valuable product. If you want oil you will get methane, which is not valuable enough even to keep in many cases. Gathering pipes are too expensive, so it is flared. Massively in the Permian.

The *consumption* of oil products is devastating to the environment, leaving aside production, transportation, and refining. Yes, we use oil and gas, but let's not kid ourselves. This is not a problem which can be solved with the regulatory paradigm.

We do not know which new well will be the one that tips the earth into irreversible global warming.

The dirtiness of the incoming administration will be all the greater if nothing is done to discourage automobile and air travel -- for tourism, for example. Fossil fuel travel, on the contrary, will be promoted.

We meanwhile see nothing serious in the offing to open non- or low-fossil fuel transportation options.

Thus promotion of solar and wind energy, by themselves, amounts to a kind of political greenwashing for the dirty economy every politician wants to grow, not shrink. It's a con. Politicians pretend they are doing something for the climate when they are not because a) they want your vote, b) they are ignorant of what they are doing, c) they are not courageous enough, d) they are simply corrupt, or e) some combination of the above.

**I am really concerned about this because this is exactly the way all the important environmental, social justice, and antiwar movements have been coopted over the past few decades. We should be rebelling like Greta Thuenberg, not just preparing to lobby the legislature just like 10, 20, and 30 years ago.**

So what to do? In few words, we need to rebel, and bring business as usual to a halt.

#### **4. What does Greta Thuenberg understand better than our environmental leaders?**

We noticed Ms. Thuenberg has a more sophisticated understanding of climate science and policy than many who are in positions of environmental leadership. How so?

First, Thuenberg understands that goods and services embody greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and that we have to change how we live -- radically.

(It almost goes without saying that she also understand that individual virtue is far from enough, which our environmental leaders do understand well but many others do not.)

The implications of *embodied emissions* seem to elude those who seek a crash program for "100% renewable energy" by X date (X is usually in the 2030-2050 range) *without also greatly decreasing the aggregate demand for energy, including electricity.*

**In the absence of deep energy conservation (EC), which is necessarily linked to a broader movement for radical simplicity, crash programs like a "Green New Deal" (GND) will *increase*, not decrease, GHG emissions over the (crucial) short run, for the duration of the program. Why? Because it takes energy and GHGs to a) build and b) install renewable energy (RE) equipment as well as to build and install energy efficiency (EE) infrastructure equipment of all kinds (whether in buildings, transportation, or industry).**

**We are all for a crash build-out of *some kinds* (see below) of renewable energy (RE) -- the *actually renewable* kind, the kind that contributes to sustainable communities. The *green* kind.**

What's not green? Long-distance AC transmission lines, which do nothing to make society sustainable (let alone just) at either end of the transmission line, are not green. They are to "green" what sugar is to food -- a sweet substitute that will make us sick and eventually kill us if we try 100% substitution. Subsidizing new suburban sprawl, or economic growth that inherently depends on oil and gas and embedded energy in products wherever they are made, with RE electricity is not green. Trying to maintain our present way of life using RE electricity is not green. Two-ton electric cars with life-cycle GHG footprints 2-3 times less than decent gasoline cars depending on the circumstances are not green. They are just less brown but not *enough* less brown to matter. What is green is not driving and especially, not flying.

People are not doing the math. Like the monkeys we are, we are just grasping at the cookies offered by politicians and whose who instinctively act like them. This is very tempting for all of us. We have to do better.

**We are also all for prompt, large investments in *some kinds* of EE programs (again, the *green* kind),** which are complementary to RE and in the case of electricity even better in terms of *cost* (or any other way of meeting electrical demand). EE investments are also rich in the *diversity* and *accessibility* of jobs produced. Like RE, EE has great ancillary benefits to households, firms, and communities. Unlike RE, EE is largely independent of geography, weather, and the diurnal cycle.

**But neither RE nor EE can significantly help to mitigate the climate crisis without deep EC and simplicity. Neither can they provide "100% renewable energy" at the current scale of consumption (let alone even more, e.g. for a larger population) by *any* stated year.** There just are no magic technology fairies that can save the American Way of Life. It is going away one way or another, and soon. For a thousand reasons, **sustainability is only possible at much lower consumption levels than the US "enjoys" today.**

Today and for the crucial one or two decades ahead -- or three decades or however many it turns out to be -- industrial civilization is and will remain heavily, if not almost completely, dependent on fossil fuels. Everything we make, build, or do involves fossil fuels and incurs GHG emissions, including everything that comprises a GND. What money can buy, or make happen, is basically the directed use of energy, principally fossil fuel energy, embodied in goods and services. In many applications, liquid fossil fuels have no scaleable substitutes. Their energy density and versatility are fabulously great. They have made us modern.

When we build PV systems we incur greenhouse gas costs. We start reaping net greenhouse benefits later, approximately in the second or third year of operation. Which is good except that if we try to replace a large fraction of today's electrical generation rapidly with RE on a crash basis (as we need to do), GHG emissions will increase, not decrease. We need to lower emissions very rapidly. We have no "carbon budget" left to spend for decades to come.

We can reach high levels of RE electricity quickly in say the residential sector, by a) lowering demand dramatically, b) accepting time-of-use limitations, and c) installing RE systems and batteries. But to do this our entire way of life will change. We will need to substitute investments in insulation and other EE measures instead of some consumption; tolerate wider temperature ranges; actively manage building ventilation, solar apertures, and power systems; share dwellings; forego energy-intensive activities in favor of others which are not; share power in local grids that take advantage of the best RE sites; and other measures. **We will localize, not globalize.** But in all this, we can be very happy.

Needless to say, this program differs substantially from what the "Big Green" groups have on offer, which is basically a neoliberal model of investor-owned interconnected RE, with no cap on total production. That model strips citizens of agency and ownership, expands current monopolies, exports and limits job creation and careers, and maintains consumer, as opposed to producer and conserver, attitudes and identities. It will harm democracy, giving away effective ownership of the sun and wind just as land was given to the railroad barons of the late 19th century but with even more damaging effects in the long run.

To be green, it is essential to *decrease* electrical generation, not increase it by "diversifying" its sources. Adding RE to a fossil fuel consumer society addicted to growth will just allow more demand, including demand for fossil fuels.

To get close to 100% RE for electricity without these deep changes we would have to build much more generation capacity than we now today, because of RE's lower capacity factors, its high intermittency. All these factors -- the speed we need, the scale, the intermittency -- translate into increases in net GHG emissions for a long period under a "100%" RE plan, or GND, that is not also a movement for simplicity and community resilience, production, conservation, and all the social organization and values that go with them.

**Greta, in the choices she is making and suggesting, understands a lot of this, in principle at least. Nearly all US climate leaders do not.**

A separate point worth repeating here is that there are no practical engineering solutions to take the US electrical grid, as it now exists, to 100% renewable energy. It's a long story, but the various proposals to do so are fantasies. Long-haul transport -- heavy trucks, airplanes, and ships -- for which there are no scalable substitutes for fossil fuels, comprise an even greater, uh, "challenge."

Second. Greta understands that wealthy countries like Sweden seem much "greener" than they are because as goods are imported, Sweden exports GHG production. It's there, just "off the books." This general idea eludes US (and NM) climate leaders as well. A major incentive for economic growth -- never questioned by our environmentalists or politicians -- is to buy more "stuff," nearly all imported to our state and many to the country and so not counted against renewable targets.

(Interestingly, Steve Pearce's gubernatorial campaign did call for New Mexico "food sufficiency." Eliminating long-distance food imports to New Mexico or even some of them, would have positive implications for land, water, jobs, population distribution, and society. Overall, New Mexico living patterns are currently unsustainable. Past ways of life, from the early 19th century and before, that we rightly honor here in New Mexico, usually were.)

Third. Greta understands that climate "tipping points," beyond which runaway climate collapse will doom most of nature and civilization, are very close. We hardly know whether to laugh or to cry when we see goals for X% renewables by "2040" or "2050." Such goals are mere posturing. They are meant to take the pressure off politicians right now, and to gull the ignorant.

**The real primary effect of most of the climate "solutions" now on offer from well-meaning academics, environmental groups, and Democratic Party politicians is to "run out the clock" on global warming, making runaway warming and runaway mass extinction inevitable. Offering politically-based illusions instead of science- and logic-based analysis guides what could be effective protest into ineffective dead-end channels, while emissions and atmospheric concentrations continue to rise.**

Finally, Greta understands that if you know about these things, you can't un-know them. To have integrity and mental health, you have to act.

Next time I would like to return to the Green New Deal theme, to the reality that any GND worth it's salt would entail an end to militarism, and the alarming cooptation of progressives.

Again, merry Christmas and simpler, greener new year with nonviolent rebellion to all of us.

Greg Mello, for the Study Group



**Help us hire additional staff! With the election behind and legislature ahead, dialog urgently needed.**

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Previous [letter](#) (1 Nov 2018): "[Extinction rebellion; report on recent meetings; progressives are failing](#)"

December 4, 2018

**"And finally, does the individual know that he is the makeweight that tips the scales?"**

**Carl Jung**

Dear friends --

I regret that it's been over a month since I wrote to you who are on our inner New Mexico list. We have been very busy, as many of you have been as well.

Among other "distractions," I had a very productive week in Washington, DC in mid-November. These trips entail considerable correspondence, detailed analysis, and followup (of which more can always be done).

I will be going back to DC in February, for two weeks. Even now we must stay very involved with DC actors -- this week if possible, because positions are being taken.

It is best to save most issue discussion for a Bulletin, with much wider circulation, later this week.

After that, we seek face-to-face discussions with you and your friends, for example in other organizations and in churches. Emails such as this are not going to galvanize the actions we need.

Thus we hope to see many of you early in the new year. We look forward to that, with bells on! *But it's up to you to make that invitation.*

Your solidarity and participation are very important to us.

More broadly: "we" -- the planet, the country, the state, our communities -- need *everybody* involved now, and not just thinking or feeling or meditating either *but in the public sphere*, in the realm of *publicity*, broadly speaking. (Please don't misunderstand. The distracted masses are not our audience. Various kinds of leaders and decisionmakers are.)

As we keep emphasizing, *many doors are open*, to all of us. All we need do is walk through them, one step after the other, into the brave new world our hands and hearts can mend, or build.

To repeat, *we need everybody*. I mean this in two primary ways. First, we all need to be involved, because we are now in a total civilizational emergency. There is a job for everyone -- for every talent and every circumstance. Finding those jobs is a matter of personal investment, heart, and vision.

The flip side is that we cannot neglect anyone. Nobody is expendable. Nobody is "deplorable." If we who care about the environment don't explicitly include everybody in our plans and policies, our plans will fail. We are in this together.

- **Actions**

- [We want to hire two more staff members. Please help!](#) We aim to hire additional staff in the New Year, for research and writing as well as for outreach and communications. We have already extended an offer to an outstanding young professional.

No, we don't have the financial resources -- yet.

Those of you who have helped so far -- *thank you*. If you *can* help, *please do*. If you are familiar with our work and want to help in another way, *please be our ambassadors*. *Reach out to friends* on our behalf.

FYI, the internet and social media have made it harder, not easier, to economically reach people with substantive messages such as ours, which are not reinforced from existing centers of political power and authority and which (unlike most of the narratives which flood social media these days), do not fall into the major party duopoly. We need financial resources to engage with political leaders near and far, and in our communities, in the coming year.

We still have \$1,000 left to be matched in a 1:1 matching fund. Can you contribute toward this? Or, *can you be the next matching donor?*

- Please keep those letters to editors (LTEs) coming, against plutonium pit production, against your community's (and specific councilperson's!) participation in the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (RCLC). There are a lot of other initiatives you can take on these fronts. Don't wait for us. We are up to our eyeballs in consequential work only we can do.
- We urgently need to open fresh avenues of dialog with and among the progressive community and environmental groups. The New Mexico chapter of 350.org kindly invited me to speak at a recent meeting. The short version of that talk (omitting background nuclear slides) is [here](#). We have a lot more to show and to say on climate and energy issues; we only scratched the surface. We would like to put together a panel early in the new year to better get at some of the most critical issues.

We really are very concerned that the new administration and legislature will fail to advance the state's long-term interests, as Governor Richardson failed during his two terms in office. In particular, we are very concerned that the main environmental groups are not approaching climate and energy issues with a sufficient sense of emergency on the one hand, and with sufficient attention to job creation in vulnerable communities and overall, on the other. See below ("Midterms") for a little more explanation.

At the same time we are very concerned that our New Mexico progressive and environmental groups are giving "aid and comfort" -- greenwashing -- to some of the worst nuclear militarists in Congress. ([Hear](#) Senator Heinrich in action last week on plutonium pits, for example; his and LANL's influence on ranking member Jack Reed audible [here](#).) Can you imagine adequate investment in climate change mitigation at the same time as a, oh, \$1 trillion/year budget for the military, all things included? With a \$1.2 trillion nuclear weapons modernization and deployment program? Neither can we. *The only outcome consistent with our senators' nuclear and military priorities is social and environmental collapse.*

- It is time for direct action. If you think you might want to be involved in any way, please call or write. We should meet. You may be following the [Extinction Rebellion](#) (XR), as we are. We need to talk. The battle royale for the social contract is "on."
- Volunteer. At present, the only way this works for us is with some considerable commitment of time, on the order of 20 hours per week. Call us. Such a commitment would be extremely valuable.

- **Midterms**

The mid-term elections are over, thankfully. Unfortunately no candidates in New Mexico -- or in any of the better-publicized races nationally that came to our attention -- ran on anything like an anti-war, nuclear disarmament or arms control stance, or reality-based leadership in climate change mitigation. We got slogan-level gestures from some.

In New Mexico, we also did not see strong commitments to distributed, locally-owned renewable energy, aggressive energy efficiency, sustainable, equitable transportation, or to the resilient, renewed communities such commitments could build.

As we wrote in a comment to a *Santa Fe New Mexican* [editorial](#), a broad "we" will need to work hard to bring priorities like these into the coming state administration, legislature, and law.

As [was] quoted here [in the *New Mexican* editorial], the governor-elect is a POTENTIAL climate hawk. She will need help and fast from we in the NGO community, who have our own hot air and denial a-plenty. The key to bipartisan buy-in is probably the design and elucidation of clear economic benefits for households, businesses, and the fiscal health of the state. All of us have our work cut out for us. In the meantime we all need to understand that state policy won't be enough, just as federal policy won't be. We have to work locally and creatively, in government and out. Sacrifice and a kind of divine, creative madness, if you will, is needed. We need to get out of our own way. Collapse of our way of life is now certain -- though nobody knows the "how" and the "when" and "how much;" the "who" being always and forever the vulnerable and the poor -- but our attitudes and efforts, and the solidarity and joy we bring, are under our own control.

We are going to have to set aside the liberal ego in favor of some old-fashioned ideas and loves, and open ourselves to greater "verticality" in our worldview [i.e. a moral and spiritual renewal, ala [Solzhenitsyn 1978](#)]. As ever we must fashion policies with the

most vulnerable in mind.

Renewable energy, unless it is locally owned, built, managed, arising within our own communities with social goals uppermost, will not help New Mexico. Neither will policies that do not gently close the wrong doors while opening others. This editorial is of a piece with the ["soft"] climate denial that the recently-elected Democrats bring to office. We need to wake from that.

Very best wishes to all of you as we enter the holiday season. You will hear from us again this week, in a Bulletin, and after that.

Thank you all,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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## Extinction rebellion; report on recent meetings; progressives are failing

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November 1, 2018

Previous [letter](#) (10/23/18): "Upcoming discussion and planning meetings; Heinrich TV ad promoting labs and military"

Dear friends --

### We held meetings in four cities this week.

We had four very interesting meetings in as many New Mexico towns and cities earlier this week.

Interestingly, the best-attended were in Taos and Jemez Springs, not Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Updates were provided on plutonium pit production plans, proposed abrogation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and related nuclear weapons topics.

In Taos, we were hosted by [Cultural Energy](#) (KCEI, 90.1 FM, 112 Civic Plaza Drive, Taos, NM 87571), a critically-important organ of consciousness and connection in northern New Mexico. Help support them if you can.

Considerable discussion focused on the [Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (RCLC), a particularly obnoxious manifestation of New Mexico's dysfunctional political affection for the nuclear-armed gang on "The Hill" (see: "[Stockholm Syndrome](#)"). Through the RCLC this gang has now "occupied" local and tribal governments, claiming those governments and various local politicians as their own, as far as LANL's interests are concerned.

Time will tell if citizens in Northern New Mexico can refocus their governments well away from "blood and a nightmare" -- as a New Zealand mayor once put it to us -- toward real, material respect for human beings in a living landscape. These two worlds are as incompatible as, say, Edward Teller and Gustave Baumann. There will be no positive future in the region if the Weapons Lab Mafia is not dethroned one way or another, because the fundamental purposes of nuclear weapons are injustice, violence, and intimidation. For these purposes, nuclear weapons are used every day.

For Trish and I the real highlights of these meetings came from those of you who attended. Your insights, pertinent questions, and concerns broadened and enriched us. Thank you.

### [A well-organized rebellion has begun against extinction in the UK.](#)

Yesterday was the first day of action in the UK's "[Extinction Rebellion](#)," an international movement which aims to use civil resistance to force governments to mobilize emergency responses to climate breakdown and the broader ecological crisis ("[UK Scientists Risk Prison to Urge Action](#)," 31 Oct 2018).

As their website [explains](#):

We are in an ecological crisis caused by climate change, pollution and habitat destruction; a mass species extinction on a scale much larger than the one which killed the dinosaurs is underway. Our course is set to societal collapse, the killing of millions, likely billions of people - human extinction is possible. The future is bleak and our children are not safe.

Change to avert the worst of the disaster is still technically and economically possible. The changes won't be simple but there is nothing more important or worthwhile. It involves creating a world which is less frenetic and more beautiful; making the necessary changes will also create jobs. This is an emergency situation – action is urgent.



Our Government isn't acting in accordance with what science and history tells us. Therefore our Government is criminally negligent. We have a moral duty to rebel, whatever our politics. Social science shows us that peaceful civil disobedience is an effective way to bring about change. Our lives have meaning and purpose when we follow our conscience and are willing to make sacrifices to protect what we love. We ask others who feel the same way to join our peaceful Rebellion.

An inspiring *Guardian* article of 26 Oct ('[We have a duty to act: hundreds ready to go to jail over climate crisis; Rowan Williams backs call for mass civil disobedience 'to bypass the government's inaction and defend life itself'](#)', by Matthew Taylor) provides background and interviews with some of the leaders:

A new group of "concerned citizens" is planning a campaign of mass civil disobedience starting next month and promises it has hundreds of people – from teenagers to pensioners – ready to get arrested in an effort to draw attention to the unfolding climate emergency.

The group, called [Extinction Rebellion](#), is today backed by almost 100 senior academics from across the UK, including the former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

In a [letter published in the Guardian](#) they say the failure of politicians to tackle climate breakdown and the growing extinction crisis means "the 'social contract' has been broken ... [and] it is therefore not only our right, but our moral duty to bypass the government's inaction and flagrant dereliction of duty, and to rebel to defend life itself."

Those behind Extinction Rebellion say almost 500 people have signed up to be arrested and that they plan to bring large sections of London to a standstill next month in a campaign of peaceful mass civil disobedience – culminating with a sit-in protest in [Parliament Square on 17 November](#).

[Roger Hallam](#), one of the founders of the campaign, said it was calling on the government to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2025 and establish a "citizens assembly" to devise an emergency plan of action similar to that seen during the second world war.

On top of the specific demands, Hallam said he hoped the campaign of "respectful disruption" would change the debate around climate breakdown and signal to those in power that the present course of action will lead to disaster.

"The planet is in ecological crisis – we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction event this planet has experienced," he said. "Children alive today in the UK will face the terrible consequences of inaction, from floods to wildfires, extreme weather to crop failures and the inevitable breakdown of society. We have a duty to act."

Extinction Rebellion is part of the [Rising Up](#) activist group, and organisers have spent the past few months holding public meetings in towns and cities across the country. [much more at the [link](#), recommended]

We believe this is an excellent blueprint for action here in New Mexico and across the US.

Surely it is obvious that building a life-affirming, life-preserving society, let alone mitigating and surviving climate change, are incompatible with support for nuclear weapons and the global empire which requires them.

### **Serious, awakened engagement is needed, now.**

By this week's fourth meeting, discussion turned toward nonviolent direct action. It is sorely needed, among other forms of serious engagement.

Serious engagement is not, however, what educated liberal and progressive New Mexicans tend towards. We dissent but seldom seriously engage, let alone disobey. We prefer -- to pick a particularly forgettable activity -- to hold signs on street corners. Demonstrating, holding signs, and the like, would be more -- a lot more -- valid in a democracy. They (and we) once were.

It is hard for us to think in ways not directly or indirectly driven by one or another Democratic Party agenda or propaganda theme. These are all designed to help establishment politicians -- war machine supporters and de facto climate deniers, every one -- win elections.

Dear friends, we need about a factor of 10 increase in political engagement in New Mexico in order to have better social, political, ecological, and economic outcomes. But neither will doing ten times more of the same thing get us there. Only a small fraction of this tenfold greater engagement should be electoral, because that process is so deeply broken.

In a recent essay ("[Time to Wake Up: the Neoliberal Order is Dying](#)", 26 Sep, *Counterpunch*) Jonathan Cook touches upon what might be called "the selections behind the elections" (h/t Suzie Schwartz, emphasis added):

In what passes for news, the media offer a large stage for powerful individuals to fight elections, pass legislation, take over businesses, start wars, and a small stage for these same individuals to get their come-uppance, caught committing crimes, lying, having affairs, getting drunk, and more generally embarrassing themselves.

**These minor narratives conceal the fact that such individuals are groomed before they ever gain access to power. Business leaders, senior politicians and agenda-setting journalists reach their positions after proving themselves over and over again – not consciously but through their unthinking compliance to the power-structure of our societies. They are selected through their performances in exams at school and university, through training programmes and indentures. They rise to the top because they are the most talented examples of those who are blind or submissive to power, those who can think most cleverly without thinking critically. Those who reliably deploy their skills where they are directed to do so.**

Their large and small dramas constitute what we call public life, whether politics, world affairs or entertainment. To suggest that there are deeper processes at work, that the largest of these dramas is not really large enough for us to gain insight into how power operates, is to instantly be dismissed as paranoid, a fantasist, and – most damningly of all – a conspiracy theorist.

These terms also serve the deception. They are intended to stop all thought about real power. They are scare words used to prevent us, in a metaphor used in my previous post, from stepping back from the screen. They are there to force us to stand so close we see only the pixels, not the bigger picture.

In New Mexico, very little of what "passes for news" discusses *any* of the big-picture crises we face. This leaves 99% of our leading politicians and citizenry in the position of naive children allowed to play games largely at the mercy of powerful out-of-state actors who are setting the rules. This state has exactly one (1) dedicated environmental reporter -- the outstanding Laura Paskus (e.g. "[The next governor must prioritize water and climate change](#)," 30 Oct). Twenty years ago, there were several -- all competent and hard-working, some inspired and brilliant. There is only so much one person can do. Most environmental news stories never happen.

Remember vinyl records? Sometimes a scratched record would play the same bit of music repeatedly. To move on, one had to lift the needle and set it in a fresh groove. Dear friends, our present configuration of "progressive" narratives, organizations, and issues resembles a broken record, one which is driving a lot of the audience bonkers. The Donald Trump presidency came about from not changing the groove, as a result of Democratic Party moral and intellectual failures.

If we "progressives" continue along our present lines, our overall situation will only get worse as the unreality of some of our political ideas collide further with various intractable realities -- political, economic, and ecological. Humility is appropriate for us. Collectively, we really do not understand our situation and are in more or less complete collective denial about our future.

We say we don't want war in general -- war in the abstract -- but we donate to, work for, and reliably vote for warmongers. We remain silent about the war machine -- which is, by the way, the largest single institutional user of fossil fuels on the planet -- in our midst.

We say we want to mitigate global warming, but we do not actually have a practical, equitable plan or vision for powering down our society. And we won't talk about the incompatibility of economic growth with the survival of nature and our own species.

We don't talk much if at all about increasing taxes to replace the state's oil and gas revenues, while winding down that industry. Progressives can think of many ways to spend oil and gas revenues.

We refuse to talk about the war industry controlling the Democratic Party in New Mexico, including its progressive wing.

Environmental groups, with comfortable constituencies that include many of our overpaid nuclear lab workers, swoon over our warmonger senators and provide them with crucial political cover, all the better to corrupt and debase the state with nuclear spending, while making nothing whatsoever of value.

To the extent we in government and civil society do not respond authentically and truthfully to the converging crises we face, we lose legitimacy.

We want to help, however we can, and are ready to talk with you and your organizations. We will work with serious volunteers and interns. We seek both. We urge you to examine the possibilities in your own lives and in the organizations of which you are a part.

Thank you all,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group



## Upcoming discussion and planning meetings; Heinrich TV ad promoting labs and military

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October 23, 2018

Previous [letter](#) (10/16/18): "[At the kairos: build hope, not nuclear weapons](#)"

Dear citizen leaders on our New Mexico "short list" --

### [1. Upcoming discussion and planning meetings at four New Mexico towns and cities: "At the Kairos: Build Hope, Not Nuclear Weapons."](#)

As you all know, our current congressional delegation has been strongly promoting Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for plutonium "pit" production, despite the absence of an adequate facility or viable plan to do so.

The delegation (parroting LANL) wants new *underground* factories because underground factories don't require (LANL asserts) as many safety systems. Providing earthquake safety for both the public and the workers is probably impossible at LANL's present plutonium complex.

With Trump's announcement this past Saturday that he plans to withdraw from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia (relatively factual NYT [article](#), better than previous days'), continuation of the New START treaty, which expires in less than 3 years, is also very much in doubt. Not just *new* weapons, but *more* weapons may be in the cards, which is why setting up round-the-clock "surge" production at LANL, also favored by our delegation, is so important to nuclear hawks despite all the problems and risks. This we had already heard first-hand from Trump's top nuclear weapons official back in July.

The coming midterm elections will at best elect nuclear and defense hawks to our congressional delegation and governor's office.

At the same time, these candidates' stances on crucial environmental issues are also muddled, deceptive, and *too timid to matter much*, at least so far. The scale and speed of locally-owned investments needed to make a decisive difference in the state's future is on very few political radar screens. While we cannot "make the perfect the enemy of the good," the complacency and ignorance of the state's political class augurs for continued economic decline.

We have to shake up this stagnant situation or face social deterioration as converging crises in climate, economy, and society begin to bite harder. No matter who is in the White House in 2021 and after, federal funding for non-military priorities will be threatened as federal interest payments rise and planned military procurements mature. Climate change mitigation is not planned by either major national party.

We need a radical change in priorities, starting with our own. We can find joy and camaraderie if we do.

Meanwhile, local governments and tribes are still officially "on-board," via the [Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (RCLC) in supporting LANL. Support for LANL is support for nuclear weapons and support for the anti-human priorities these weapons (and their wastes) embody and imply. Nuclear weapons bring environmental destruction here and human rights violations worldwide. Promoting LANL means promoting high "defense" spending in the face of looming recession, fiscally-

starved social, environmental, and green infrastructure programs, and as a result of all this, national decline, with good old New Mexico leading the way down. That's what the RCLC stands for. That's what the local government and tribal leaders who are members are being used for.

**Please join in the discussion (~1 hour) and planning (~1 hour) at --**

- **Monday, Oct 29, Santa Fe, 9:00 - 11:00 am, St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail ([map](#)). We will serve bagels, coffee and tea.**
- **Monday, Oct 29, Taos, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Cultural Energy, 112 Civic Plaza Drive ([map](#)).**
- **Tuesday, Oct 30, Albuquerque, 8:00 - 10:00 am, Los Alamos Study Group, 2901 Summit Place NE ([map](#)), We will serve breakfast, coffee and tea.**
- **Tuesday, Oct 30, Jemez Springs, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Jemez Springs Village Conference Room ([map](#)).**

## **2. Fundraising and matching grant progress**

We are off to a decent start on fall fundraising, with \$3,100 received so far (*thank you so much!*), all of which will be matched 1:1, leaving \$1,900 available for matching in that first matching grant of \$5,000. Please reach out to your friends on our behalf if you can, not just for financial support but for involvement in other ways.

We are happy to announce that we are also now receiving support for *some* of our plutonium-related work from Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security. While this is a big help, it does not include *most* of what we do, or what *most needs* to be done.

We need to raise money both to continue our current work in 2019 and to increase our visibility, research, writing, web and social media outreach, publications, and consequently our strength and ability to effect major change. We would like to be able to advertise for, and to hire, two additional staff; to bring in visiting interns; and consequently to ramp up our overall level of engagement, including here in New Mexico, with all of you. We find ourselves in a uniquely promising position, with many doors open and outlets asking for copy. We work long hours but there are only so many hours in the day.

**Your contributions can take many forms:**

- **Matching gifts are obviously very valuable, especially this time of year; some of you might offer such a gift, or ask someone else to;**
- **Some employers will match their employees' contributions;**
- **Remember the Study Group in your will and/or estate plans; memorial gifts, or life insurance;**
- **Donate old cars, boats, or real estate;**
- **Donate stock (thus avoiding capital gains and the associated taxes);**
- **Become a [sustaining donor](#) to the Study Group and contribute a specified amount each month. Being able to depend on a regular income of a certain amount in sustaining donations each month provides organizations such as ours with a big measure of stability;**
- **Ask [Sunpower by Positive Energy Solar](#) to install a photovoltaic system at your home or business and/or ask a friend or associate to do so. When the project is complete Positive Energy will donate \$300 to the Study Group; you must mention our referral when you contract with them; and finally**
- **You, our loyal friends and members, are the only ones who can reach out to your personal connections and email lists. We do not have your personal connections and contacts. Forward this letter, for example, with your personal note. We have an on-line donation portal through [PayPal](#), or anyone can simply mail a check to our office at: 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106.**

Thank you!

You will hear more about strategy in the next Bulletin, which goes to a wider list. We are trying to not repeat too much.

## **3. [Heinrich ad promoting economic myths about NM labs and bases](#)**

Candidate Martin Heinrich has an [ad](#) out promoting the New Mexico nuclear weapons labs and military bases (as well as himself, which candidates must do). In advance of more detailed comments on the labs, bases, and economic development which are coming as soon as we can get back to them, I (Greg) would like to briefly comment on the economic assertions in that ad.

As you know we have written about this repeatedly in the past (e.g. [here](#)).

The most recent year for which we have comprehensive federal spending and tax information is FY2016. In that year New Mexicans [paid](#) \$12.9 billion (B) in federal taxes (\$6,182/capita). The federal government spent \$33.0 B in the state (\$15,876/person). Net federal spending was \$20.2 B (\$9,683/person, the most of any state in the US [as it always is](#)).

The state's GDP in 2016 was \$93.2 B. Net federal spending (\$20.2 B) was, just directly and not counting subsequent transactions, 22% of New Mexico's total GDP in FY2016. Or, if you take taxation as a given and look only at gross federal spending, it was 35% of GDP. A whopping fraction.

But only \$2.7 B (8%) of that \$33.0 B [was military](#). (Heinrich's ad says it's \$3.1 B now, in a larger federal spending total we don't have.)

The Department of Energy (DOE) [spent](#) \$5.0 B in New Mexico that year, 15% of total federal spending. Taken together, 23%, *less than one-quarter*, of New Mexico's federal spending was at the labs and bases.

Defense spending is concentrated in a few places only: three DOE facilities and four military centers, together located in six counties, with a smattering of spending elsewhere. Taxation meanwhile is everywhere. *Most New Mexico counties lose net money in military taxation and spending* (older version of same analysis [here](#), pp. 10-11 amid wider discussion). *That is, when the portion of federal taxation needed to support the military and nuclear weapons is subtracted from defense spending in that county, the result is a negative number for 21 New Mexico counties.* (Unfortunately, detailed county-level data on federal spending is no longer produced.)

Apologies for brevity here. We know there's much more to be said. But long or short, the sum of it all is that military bases and nuclear weapons labs are, for a state like ours with a small population and "thin" economy, an economic curse, not a boon. *Which is what we see all around us.*

"Legal corruption" -- the extensive co-optation of most of the state's important civil society institutions, a problem not further discussed in this short note -- is a major factor.

So which are you going to believe -- a political ad or your lying eyes, as the old joke would have it?

The labs' raison d'etre is, we assert, [illegitimate](#). So why should we expect them to be a fount of anything good? Even useful huge facilities can be, in situations like ours, economic "upas trees," sterilizing the ground for other enterprise ([Pushkin poem](#), highly relevant).

In this regard, we recently ran across a 2004 interview we did with Mayor Bob Harvey of Waitakiri, NZ, then a medium-sized city of a couple of hundred thousand persons. In his view, the key to economic development in NM is first to make a commitment to get rid of nuclear weapons. We can't, in his words, keep investing in "blood and a nightmare" and expect to have positive economic and social development.

Making that switch would set in motion a number of things, he said, changing the attitude of the young people to one of hope and faith in the future, making them more willing to invest in themselves and believe in the society around them. It attracts true "cultural creatives" -- and investment cash. In Waitakiri, he said, they've made their city an "eco-city," with peace and sustainability as key goals, and are working on reversing sprawl with new urban villages linked with better transport, etc. The key is the "turning about," the conversion, which replaces a deranged set of values with a human one. The "amazing grace" - - as in the song, and the story of the song. Nuclear weapons and waste are "anti-enchantment."

Thank you all,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group



## At the kairos: build hope, not nuclear weapons

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October 16, 2018

Previous [letter](#) (9/11/18): "DNFSB reorg dead for now; Obama's undead new warhead -- sole driver for immediate pit production -- rescued again, almost certainly by Udall and Feinstein for the labs in their states"

### Dear citizen leaders on our New Mexico "short list" --

In Christian theology, [kairos](#) is "the appointed time in the purpose of God," the time when God acts.

More generally the classical word *kairos* meant the right, critical, or opportune moment for an action.

Which is always now -- a very easy moment to miss. The Sage of Walden Pond wrote: "In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line."

In the purely *chronological sense*, ***the central historical and ecological reality of our time is that we -- all of us -- are on course for unmitigated catastrophe in the short run***. We are '[Cutting Down The Tree Of Life](#)'."

On October 7, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) issued an important special report, "Global Warming of 1.5o C: Summary for Policymakers" ([full report](#)). For a day or so (or a [few hours](#)) it made headlines around the world, like this in the Washington Post: "[The world has just over a decade to get climate change under control, U.N. scientists say](#)." That said, the IPCC is not just scientific but also intergovernmental. It [waters down the climate science](#) in many ways, saying (for example) there are "safe" trajectories for global warming that "temporarily" exceed 1.5o C, claiming atmospheric CO2 concentrations can be drawn down later. There is almost no mention of positive feedbacks, which [threaten](#) to push the Earth into a self-reinforcing "hothouse" condition inimical to all higher life forms. There is nothing "safe" or stable about today's warming of about 1o C. Current CO2 concentrations eventually equilibrate with warming of 3-4o C and they are not at all safe for sea life right now. Climate catastrophe is not a future event. It is a current process.

Climate change is far from the only crisis at hand. We face a host of synergistic crises, having "kicked the can down the road" not just as regards global warming but as regards:

- the near-term unsustainability of our financial arrangements,
- our vast and growing economic and political inequality,
- our dwindling resource base -- especially, increasingly hard-to-get, affordable liquid fuels,
- our fragile, scarce water and food supplies, and
- the failing, grossly-exploitive and immoral US global empire,

to pick only a few more of our society's failing foundations.

Leaving out all the pertinent details, ***these converging crises, not just climate change, comprise the great storm of our time. We can't escape -- and neither can those who are trying to build nuclear weapons factories and gin up new -- and more -- nuclear weapons. Time is running out for them and for their nuclear megafolly***. As it is for us. At some level they know this, and that is a large part of their desperation to "git 'er done." For us, given even very imperfect knowledge about the timetables of these crises, delay is, shall we say, excellent.

**It is up to us to individually and collectively mitigate this catastrophe to whatever degree we can, by our actions in the public sphere. This is what mature people do, in our time. In our time, this is almost the whole *definition of maturity*.** That is what we mean by an **emergency**. *We stop doing less important things.* As Einstein and Russell said, "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

Don't think this is a dour message. It's *inaction* that's depressing. For those who are "all in," doors open. The sooner we wake up, the more life-saving options we have. Which is **the whole point** (52 sec. video).

In any case, there is no escape. It is time to begin preparing ourselves, our families, and our communities for the **deep adaptations** now required.

Quickly now, a few details.

- **If there is interest, we will hold some discussions near the end of the month.** We want to have public or quasi-public meetings some time late this month in Taos, Santa Fe, Jemez Springs, and Albuquerque if possible. Other locales might be possible later. These meetings would have a discussion format, relatively broad subject matter, and offer a place for solidarity, networking, and resources. **Are you interested? Let us know.**
- **A donor has, wonderfully, offered to match the first \$5,000 in donations received for the Study Group, starting with this message!** We will unfold our fall fundraising campaign over the coming few weeks, but we wanted to let you know about this great offer right now. We are highly dependent on private donations for our work. **Help us if you can.**
- **Please let us know if your community, county, or tribe has withdrawn from the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (RCLC).** The news media has been all over this florid corruption-vehicle (**running compendium** of stories, plus background). Getting communities out of the RCLC is very valuable to our cause, as we keep repeating. It should not be difficult but it must be done locally, not from this office (even if we had the time). There are many ways to facilitate withdrawal -- no need to spell them out here. We need instead, as one of our advisors suggested, something like a "Coalition of Sustainable Synergetic Communities (CSSC). Our towns sure as hell don't need to be paying for nuclear weapons lobbyists, which is the core of what the RCLC always has been and always will be, claims otherwise notwithstanding. ***If you are for LANL, you are for nuclear weapons. If you think northern New Mexico needs LANL, you are a nuclear weapons supporter.*** Please get real, and get past that particular folly. We all make mistakes, but let's not get stuck in them.
- **Letters-to-editors (LTEs) remain powerful.** In addition to their local direct and indirect impact, local LTEs are now often picked up and sent to thousands of people interested in nuclear weapons around the country and in Washington who have subscribed to one or more nuclear news digests. To remind you, LTEs influence local coverage and reporter beat assignments. Coverage of nuclear issues in New Mexico is now at or near a 30-year nadir, in our opinion. LTEs on the issues will help. Also -- clip them and send them on Facebook, your email lists, Twitter, and so on.

We will provide more issue detail in a forthcoming **Bulletin**.

We want to make sure you understand that we want complete nuclear disarmament, unilaterally if necessary, whether possible or not. You have never seen us offering prescriptions for smaller nuclear arsenals and you never will. We think 100% nuclear disarmament is the only non-naive policy goal possible.

**We are going to have to shake up people. We think you should as well.**

For example, we do not think the election choices available in November can change anything significant in New Mexico -- or nationally. Myths about our elections and political parties are killing us. Currently, they are a vast scam.

Finally, for those of you who are "beavering away" at your work for nuclear disarmament and deep sustainability, a member offers this poem:

The beaver lodge is royal,  
Logs silvered to bone,  
Ceilings of blue water  
Or clear ice.

The aspen, encircling,  
Yellow purple pools,  
And then snow's deep silence

Covers peace.

Why, in what sense, is the beaver lodge "royal?" That is a question we must answer for peace, and for the world.

Thank you all,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200





## **DNFSB reorg dead for now; Obama's undead new warhead, sole driver for immediate pit production, rescued again, almost certainly by Udall and Feinstein for the labs in their states**

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Key resources on [nuclear weapons ban treaty negotiations](#), [plutonium and pit production in Los Alamos](#), [internships](#) [Contribute](#) if you can and haven't yet! (We now use [PayPal](#).) Thank you! [Fundraising appeal](#) with hyperlinks. [Contact us](#).

September 11, 2018

**For reference: previous [letter](#) (9/4/18): "Sink the RCLC; save the DNFSB"**

Dear leaders on our New Mexico "short list" --

Today's letter is dominated by the contents of the first appropriations bill to be sent to the floor (possibly this week) to fund the government starting Oct. 1, which contains Department of Energy (DOE) programs including National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) nuclear warhead programs.

We worked with the local papers yesterday on this but it was too complicated to bring anything out in a few late and evening hours. So here are some of the key points to inform your actions and leadership.

**First**, pertaining to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), the House-Senate negotiations on the Energy and Water Development (EWD) appropriations bill contained these passages, sent to us by Senator Udall's office.

- [Conference Report](#) to Accompany HR 5895, p 53:

For expenses necessary for the [DNFSB] in carrying out activities authorized by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended by Public Law 100-456, section 1441, \$31,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That **none of the funds made available by this or any prior Act for the salaries and expenses of the [DNFSB] shall be available to implement any reform and reorganization plan of the [DNFSB], including the plan announced on August 15, 2018, unless any such reform and reorganization plan is specifically authorized by law.**"

- [Joint Explanatory Statement](#), House and Senate, HR 5895, p 52:

"The conferees are concerned with the recently issued Order 140.1, Interface with the [DNFSB], and the potential impacts on the ability of the DNFSB to carry out its Congressionally-mandated responsibilities. **Not later than 30 days after the enactment of this Act, the Department shall provide to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a briefing on how the Order differs from the previous Manual, how the Department plans to incorporate concerns from the DNFSB and the public, and the Department's plans to implement the Order across the organization.**"

This is an outstanding result. Senators Udall and Heinrich really did follow up on this and deserve sincere thanks.

They were not the only ones. This Sept. 4 [letter](#) from Representatives Smith & Cooper of the House Armed Services Committee, to DNFSB Acting Chair Hamilton was truly and rightly scathing.

Note that the authors of this letter are likely to be in the majority in less than two months. (We have excellent communications with this committee, by the way. Please see [this interview](#) for what the likely new leadership thinks. Even if the House changes majority parties we will still be struggling against the hawks in both parties, however, which comprise a majority on

most national security issues. But the situation would still be much improved.)

Since our last [communication to you](#) (Sept. 4), there was another [letter](#) from senators Udall & Heinrich re DNFSB, this time to DOE Secretary Perry addressing DOE Order 140.1.

So you see, they kept on the issue as we had hoped and asked them to do. Favorable press for them resulted ([Sens. Heinrich, Udall ask Perry to suspend order on nuclear oversight](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Sep 5, 2018).

**So the "ask" from us on this issue is simply to thank the senators. Gratitude will need to be complemented by firm disapproval and questioning, however -- see the next item.**

**Second**, the EWD conference product [squandered](#) (pp. 47-48) the foundation for oversight of NNSA's runaway nuclear weapons program that had been provided by the House especially over the summer. This is not simple to understand, I know.

The Republican-led House Appropriations Committee had [fenced appropriations](#) (p. 109) -- that is, *stopped the program* -- prior to any detailed design of an "interoperable warhead" ("IW-1") that was slated to begin in FY19, 20 days from now -- pending a comprehensive report on why in the world such a warhead would be a good idea, or why it would be cost-effective. The Navy has been trying to halt or delay IW-1 for years. Under Obama, they refused to budget money to test it on Trident missiles. And testing it will need. At the pit workshop the Study Group led in Washington on July 12, a senior national security scientist in the Obama White House told our shocked little gathering that reentry vehicles (that's the Air Force term; the Navy calls theirs reentry bodies) typically require anywhere from 65-100 tests, at a cost of about \$100 million apiece. None present disagreed. Only a small part of these costs are in NNSA's budget.

And of our course there's the pits they need. NNSA says [no other warhead will need new pits](#) until IW-3, starting in 2041, whereas the IW-1 would need pits starting in 2030. (Of course, without an IW-1 there is no reason to think there would be an IW-3. The whole idea is fraught with enormous difficulties and expense. It is, basically, a way to keep the weapons labs in business -- indeed growing., even apart from the vast resources needed for pit production.) **IW-1 is what is pushing NNSA to try and run the old LANL main plutonium facility PF-4 in round-the-clock shifts as soon as they can.**

Well, those costs are income in the ledgers of the corporations involved, and the New Mexico senators (and all the representatives including both gubernatorial candidates) are all in favor of bringing in nuclear weapons money, no matter what the cost to the nation or the state's people and environment. Nuclear weapons money hurts the state in myriad ways, but nobody wants to talk about that. Not "progressives," certainly. More on that another time.

The EWD bill being reported waters down the House language to nearly nothing, replacing genuine oversight with a quick-and-dirty report from within NNSA while the program goes forward anyway. **What the Senate negotiators have done is to replace oversight with bullshit.** To repeat previous bulletins, at least half the military "customers" for this weapon have been trying to kill it for about 5 years, *mas o minus*. It is being kept alive by the weapons labs and pork-barrel interests in Congress.

Which pork-barrel interests are present in the Senate EWD subcommittee, but not the House? The short answer: Udall and Feinstein, who represent 3 nuclear weapons labs between them.

IW-1 is particularly important to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), which, in the context of the massive embarrassment of their flagship National Ignition Facility (NIF) -- now widely understood in the inertial confinement fusion community as never having, and never having had, even a remote chance of fulfilling its nameplate purpose: fusion ignition, a subject for some other time -- has been crying in congressional offices for years about not having enough new warheads of their own to design. And LLNL wants back into the Navy "market" (as they put it). The Navy has spurned LLNL designs since the W68 debacle in the 1970s. They don't like LLNL-style design. IW-1 is worth billions to LLNL but more than that it ensures LLNL's survival and the continued nuclear weapons loyalty of the CA delegation.

By the way, Senator Feinstein's husband [Richard Blum](#) is a University of California (UC) [regent](#), i.e. is on the board of directors of the corporations running LANL and LLNL. He was Chairman of CB Richard Ellis, one of the world's largest commercial real estate firms (including in [New Mexico](#)). The URS corporation, one of LANL's operating contractors until it was purchased by AECOM (which is a partner in running LANL for a few more days), was one of Blum Capital Partners' first major investments. Not to belabor the point, but the amount of Democratic-oriented capital represented by Blum and the UC Regents is staggering. UC will be staying at LANL, as a partner in Triad.

IW-1 is important to LANL as a driver for many billions of dollars in capital and program investment in pits. So there you go.

There is other pit language present in the EWD conference report, which was more or less expected and is of less concern.

Also missing from the final EWD bill is any part of the language in the [Senate EWD report](#) (p. 104) calling for a new JASON study of pit aging and lifetimes. Poof -- it's gone, without a word. Here it was:

The Committee directs the Administrator [of NNSA] to enter into a contract with the group known as JASON for a study to assess the efforts of the NNSA to understand plutonium aging and the lifetime of plutonium pits in nuclear weapons...Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the study. The report shall include recommendations of the study for improving the knowledge, understanding, and application of the fundamental and applied sciences related to the study of plutonium aging and pit lifetimes, an estimate of minimum and likely lifetimes for pits in current warheads, and the feasibility of reusing pits in modified nuclear weapons...

**So here's the ask: Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich should be asked whether they support the new IW-1 warhead.**

**It's very expensive, which is just the beginning of the problems with it. NNSA's cost alone (p. 8-36) is currently estimated at \$12 billion, without including the cost of building and operating one (or perhaps TWO) new pit factory(ies). DoD's costs are also going to be in the many billions -- much more than is being openly acknowledged so far. The warhead is, as the House said, a "high-risk" endeavor, even to complete.**

**This is pure weapons lab pork, at a time when humanity faces existential crises. Udall (and even more so Heinrich, in our estimation) need to be publicly shamed for not stopping this warhead. Either senator could do that. To repeat, the vast spending in LANL and Sandia National Laboratories nuclear weapons programs has only hurt New Mexico.**

Thank you all,

Greg, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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## Sink the RCLC; save the DNFSB

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September 4, 2018

**For reference: previous [letter \(8/24/18\): "Wakeup"](#)**

Dear leaders on our New Mexico "short list" --

Thank you for all you are doing in our communities, now under assault in so many ways.

**First**, the time is more ripe than ever to get our northern New Mexico cities and counties and tribes out of the insultingly-named "Regional Coalition of LANL Communities" (RCLC), **and to build an associated public narrative around winding down nuclear weapons altogether, and the nuclear weapons appropriations going to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and Sandia National Laboratories (SNL).**

We don't need more pits (LANL management's fervently desired new mission), we don't need new nuclear weapons (which both labs seek), we don't need all the nuclear weapons we have (just for starters). We would like a vocal minority -- we on this list -- to start calling for winding this industry down. Please help us.

**These labs are world capitals of nuclear weapons promotion. The New Mexico congressional delegation, mostly Democrats are pretty much right up there in leading the world in promoting weapons of mass destruction.**

This industry hurts New Mexico (as discussed a bit below). It does so in part by corruption of our ideas, especially our ideas about ourselves, our society, our economy, and our public morality. They are *demoralizing*.

The RCLC is reeling. The latest news is that there will be a meeting this Thursday night in Los Alamos regarding whether Los Alamos County wants to remain the RCLC's fiscal agent. Since we last wrote there has been [more outstanding reporting and editorializing](#) on this inherently-corrupt "slush fund" (quote from *Rio Grande Sun* [editorial](#) of 8/23/18).

Trish was able to get the [Adams+Crow Investigative Report of RCLC improper use of public funds](#) on behalf of Los Alamos County (8/8/18) (posted without lengthy appendices), and here's the [State of New Mexico, Special Audit, Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (8/7/2018).

Presently, the members of the RCLC are:

- City of Española
- Los Alamos County
- Ohkay Owingeh
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Rio Arriba County
- Santa Fe County (there is a rumor that the Chair of the County Commission has introduced, or may introduce, a measure to withdraw from the RCLC)
- City of Santa Fe
- Taos County
- Town of Taos

Please, please, please:

- Contact your city, county, and tribal officials asking them to end participation in and taxpayer funding of the RCLC. (See the [previous local letter](#) or ones before that for various talking points, or glance over the [newspaper coverage](#).)
- Write [letters to editors](#) (LTEs) ([more on the value of LTEs](#)). Promote your letter with social media.
- Go to public meetings and intervene face to face. If you live in one of the above localities, your elected officials are part of the nuclear gravy train.
- Organize your friends to do the same.
- The underlying issue is not just some details about how the RCLC is corrupt. The RCLC is a roughly \$200,000/year operation, ballpark. LANL's nuclear weapons program is a roughly \$2 *billion*/year operation, not counting a few hundred million in ancillary costs. That's 10,000 times greater. The RCLC is first and foremost a team-building exercise for LANL, a PR campaign aimed at local leaders, to keep them mentally dependent. On the team. Never mind what the RCLC says it is, or its mission statement. Let's not miss the real issue. LANL is not making breakfast cereal. It does not get \$3 billion per year to benefit humanity.\* (\*That's the LANL estimate of next year's total budget, including \$188 M in environmental management [best not to call it cleanup]).

If the people on this list don't make those calls and write those letters, and do those face to face interventions, they won't happen. Trish and I must slay other dragons -- this one's for you.

The RCLC is an organization in crisis, as it should be until its end. This crisis is a golden opportunity to start a bigger conversation about nuclear weapons, federal (and our delegation's) priorities, plutonium of course, and the future of our communities.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Second**, regarding the assault on the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), [please thank our senators](#) for the [really no-kidding terrific letter](#) they wrote to the leadership of the Senate Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, asking that the Trump Administration's new Order restricting DNFSB activities and communications be suspended and that the proposed deep DNFSB staff cut be suspended as well. **Please ask them to follow up on that letter and to inform you of their success or failure.**

There was a tremendous [flurry of activity](#) in this office, in the media, and at the DNFSB itself last week (the [hearing](#) about the new Order was quite substantive, even gripping, for those following this closely) concerning the controversial new Order. (Sidebar: at one point in the hearing a 99-year-old founding member of the DNFSB, Jack Crawford, with whom Trish especially used to meet with in the 1990s, put [his](#) questions on the table about the new Trump Order. Crawford was on the carrier Yorktown in World War II when it was sunk, and is its last surviving crew member.)

The issues may seem a bit technical (though we and the fine pieces done by experienced reporters have explained them, collected [here](#)), and most of the action is in Washington, so we're not putting any further action request out on this [today](#). So apart from contacting our senators and asking them to follow up, stay tuned. Especially with the start provided by our senators' letter, there are plenty of ways for citizens to help save this outstanding small federal agency -- the ONLY public and worker safety oversight agency for the nuclear weapons complex -- and we will put some of them in a Bulletin that goes to a wider audience from which actions could reach other key congressional actors. We are going to stay right on top of this.

Thank you all,

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group



# Los Alamos Study Group

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## WAKEUP

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August 24, 2018

I love Jesus, who said to us:  
heaven and earth will pass away.  
When heaven and earth have passed away,  
my word will still remain.  
What was your word, Jesus?  
Love? Forgiveness? Affection?  
All your words were  
one word: Wakeup.

Antonio Machado, Robert Bly translation

### Suggested actions:

#### 1. Get your city, county, and/or tribe out of the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (RCLC).

- **Why? In a nutshell:**

- Because (as we all know) your city, county, and/or tribe is NOT sustainable, is NOT taking proper care of or adequately educating its children, is NEITHER taking care of its environment NOR beginning the necessary deep adaptation to climate collapse NOR undertaking any significant steps to mitigate that collapse, does NOT have any vision of a sustainable future, and IS facing a storm of catastrophic events for which it is neither prepared nor doing anything significant to prevent, and thus is failing in the core functions of government;
- Because not just RCLC but LANL itself is a destructive scam under any (but especially the present) circumstances;
- Because LANL especially (but also Sandia National Laboratories and the occupying US military) are trying to force a fundamentally false, self-serving "story" on New Mexico to the exclusion of life-affirming and life-giving narratives around which real social and economic development could occur, and the RCLC is a part of this;
- Because our political leaders ARE in a trance; and
- Because if WE and THEY do not wake up, our children and grandchildren will NOT thrive despite our best efforts.
- In New Mexico, the weapons labs are our biggest form of political heroin and a major cause of New Mexico's relative decline (from ~1973 to ~1995) and its subsequent (~1995 to now) failure to thrive (see [here](#) and [here](#)). The RCLC is a major pipeline and pusher for this deadly drug of political somnolence.
- There will never be a better time.
- Remember:
  - What the RCLC does or does not do, its effectiveness, and the validity of its expenditures -- these are not the main issues. The issue is the RCLC itself. The RCLC is LANL's primary (though far from only) "team-building" vehicle for local government leaders. Local leaders THINK they are lobbying (e.g. for cleanup dollars, although that is illegal under the terms of the RCLC's DOE grant). The reality is that THEY, the local leaders, are being lobbied -- to be

complacent, to be "on the team," and to willy-nilly accept a military-industrial-plutonium-nuclear waste identity and story about the future.

- Just in itself, the RCLC is -- seemingly -- a small problem but a big political opportunity -- a gateway to clear political thinking and independence from the military-industrial complex, to which New Mexico is in thrall.
- Refusing to bow to a tyrant seems like a small thing. It is not.
- No matter who is elected, New Mexico will decline further unless we can kick our militaristic, plutonium-laced political habits.

- How?

- Write [letters to editors](#) (LTEs) or guest editorials.
- Find out which of your elected officials have been involved in RCLC junkets; publicize this.
- Meet with elected officials with a goal of getting your city, county, and/or tribe out of the RCLC, immediately.
- If your local newspaper has not yet editorialized against existence of the RCLC, talk to the editors.
- Spread the word in your networks and via social media.

- What are some talking points?

- Look at [this page](#); see for example the *Albuquerque Journal* editorials.
- See recent prior [local letters](#).

2. We urge you to publicly confront -- via LTEs for example or even better, at campaign and campaign funding events -- ALL candidates who are not:

- Advocating emergency action to mitigate climate collapse and to adapt -- deeply -- to the inevitable climate tragedy already in the pipeline; and who are not at the same time
- Calling for dramatic decreases in the scale and international commitments of the US military. It will be impossible to realize environmental and social goals without redirecting a majority if not the bulk of discretionary spending to those ends, rather than to global empire as at present. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) predicts that interest on the federal debt will exceed defense spending by 2023. For this reason alone, in the very short term our society is likely to change dramatically for the worse if it does not begin a dramatic turn for the better. The status-quo "incumbency" in both major parties support decline. New Mexico, economically peripheral and in the climate-collapse bulls-eye, will decline more steeply. The pittance we get from bombs -- sterile for economic development -- will not staunch our relative decline; and who are not
- Publicly opposing construction of one or more consolidated storage sites for spent nuclear reactor fuel, which aside from being very bad nuclear waste policy (for all the reasons you know and we and many others have articulated) would grievously harm this state's reputation and future prospects.

All of our current congressional delegation support the absurd construction of additional nuclear weapons production facilities at LANL. Excuses aside, this is evidence of a deep societal and environmental death-wish, of the suppression of basic human morality, and of a cavalier attitude to international laws and norms. Would such persons be capable of the vision and leadership necessary to turn this state around? The evidence is otherwise.

Elections comprise a small portion of the wide political possibilities available. Let's turn our light around and look within ourselves for the courage to take decisive action whether it be constructive or in resistance -- and, for a few people, for some of the time, dealing with our corrupt electoral system and its reform.

3. Prepare yourself, your family and friends, and your community for "[deep adaptation](#)" to the unavoidable collapse of many aspects of our society we currently take for granted. It is never too late to start talking, thinking, setting priorities, sharing feelings, clarifying values, and making commitments. Some form of collapse is now inevitable; total human and natural catastrophe might not be.

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

In the above, we are not asking you to undertake benign, or merely symbolic, actions that express your opinion or make a point but accomplish nothing. **We are asking you to join us in making a difference.** First, the RCLC. Then, the nuclear weapons mission and pits. Throughout, emergency climate advocacy and the transformation of our own lives and social networks, laying the groundwork for more.

Meanwhile let's get this two-bit, corrupting RCLC thing out of the way.

Some might say, "Oh, the RCLC is not very important. I want to express myself about pit production." That's fine, but please understand that in our representative form of government, if your town or county or tribe is a member of the RCLC it is already expressing itself, in person in Washington or by proxy, as being on LANL's economic development "team" and as

such *in favor of* pit production, notwithstanding whatever resolutions that have been or may be passed.

It would be better to withdraw from the RCLC and *then* pass the anti-pit resolution (along with a lot else).

Many people in New Mexico seem not to understand how colonized they are.

Or some might say, more uselessly and wishy-washily if not also downright amorally, "Let's pass a resolution against pit production *until it can be made safe*." That resolution supports nuclear weapons as long as "we" are made safe. What kind of political statement is that? It is not even possible. It has no problem with threatening genocide. It subtracts from, rather than adds to, the life-giving resistance we need.

Some like the idea of the RCLC lobbying for cleanup money. Aside from being illegal as noted above for DOE funding -- and otherwise illegal under the state's anti-donation clause, isn't it? -- and aside from being demonstrably ineffective at said lobbying, and aside from being redundant to and competitive with the representative government we already have (raising even more serious questions) as well as redundant to the ample lobbying resources of the corporations involved, and aside from the vast inefficiency and mismanagement of the cleanup to date, what's not to like?

Thank you all,

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group

PS: Our web site features new content you might find helpful in your work:

- ["Production Expectations vs. Site Realities and Worker Safety at Los Alamos National Laboratory \(LANL\): A Recipe for Regional Decline,"](#) presentation to the New Mexico Legislature's Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee (RHMC), Aug 15, 2018
  - [Summary](#)
  - [Handouts](#)
- [RCLC resources](#)
- [Resources on the crisis at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board \(DNFSB\)](#)

Our New Mexico senators could rescue the DNFSB if they really wanted to, but they also want pit production. The crisis has been engineered to facilitate nuclear production, including the proposed round-the-clock "surge" in pit production at LANL as soon as LANL is "ready." A task before us is to pour the pressure on to repeal DOE Order 140.1, and save DNFSB in other ways. Please contact senators Udall and Heinrich if you can. They are currently making positive noises, but are they really going to help?

- [Resources on pit production](#)





## Timeless spring; "no significant impact" of key pit facility; end the RCLC

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August 10, 2018

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

- **"Atomic summer" is over; "nuclear winter" still averted; a "timeless spring" of resistance and constructive action continues**

With yesterday's anniversary of the horrific and cruel Nagasaki bombing and last night's informal potluck in Albuquerque, our 2018 "Atomic Summer" has come to a close.

We were generally pleased with the summer's events, or most of them. Like all events, they represented considerable effort, investment, and opportunity cost.

As previously [mentioned](#) the Taos public meeting was quite successful ([full audio](#), [reportage](#)), as were Monday's Hiroshima Day (August 6) events in Los Alamos.

We had an excellent lineup of speakers and very good audience participation in Los Alamos. Some 40-50 people were in attendance, mostly activists, many of whom traveled long distances to be there. **For all those who made the trek up the Hill -- thank you very much.** We must now build on this and present our collective opposition to LANL's main mission, which has done so much economic and political harm to New Mexico.

(The environmental harm is still building, for example through the strategic silence of our elected Democrats about the horrific Holtec [proposal](#) for southern NM. Some of the most powerful lawmakers who fund the nuclear labs, like Senator Feinstein, want a site to send their states' spent nuclear fuel. Hence the relative lack of opposition from the NM delegation to this *worst of all possible nuclear waste plans*.)

Earlier Monday afternoon, eleven of us met with Los Alamos County Manager Harry Burgess, who was gracious enough to meet and field questions without prior notice. Given the sordid Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (RCLC) situation (see below), that human contact was not wasted time.

We aim to make this past Monday's discussion the beginning of a new era of activism against nuclear weapons in New Mexico based on the need for dramatically different priorities, without which our country, civilization, and species may not survive. We don't have much time. The crisis isn't just coming soon. It's here. There is no new normal -- it's downhill from here, until and unless we can stop it. The *New York Times* even seems to [get](#) it -- finally.

The *Los Alamos Monitor* editors decided to combine [coverage](#) of Monday's meeting with that of last Saturday's Pace e Bene protest, which does make editorial sense for them despite the resulting sacrifice of depth.

- **[Finding of No Significant Impact \(FONSI\) for changing the Radiological Laboratory, Utility, and Office Building \(RLUOB\) into a Nuclear Laboratory, Utility, and Office Building \(NLUOB\)](#)**

This was expected but a blow nonetheless. This "bait-and-switch" caper (as a senior staff member in one federal agency described it to us) is central to establishing industrial pit production in Los Alamos. It is not necessary for any other purpose. The original plan for RLUOB was for a light analytical chemistry (AC) facility; by greatly increasing the amount of plutonium that can be handled in the building the number of samples can be increased to handle higher production rates, and some of

the operations now taking place in LANL's main plutonium facility (PF-4) can be moved there, making room for more production equipment in that heavier (Hazard Category II) facility.

I sent these comments to a few reporters yesterday:

Quite a number of good comments [see Appendix C in the [Final Environment Assessment](#)] were provided by citizens and organizations. NNSA's responses are far less impressive.

NNSA is stonewalling. NNSA's ideas about national security apparently do not include protecting the environment, obviously a trend across the whole of this administration. NNSA has abandoned true National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance in favor of a post-hoc "CYA" substitute. The Pentagon is calling most of the shots now, and proper environmental review is a low priority. True independent civilian management of the nation's nuclear weapons complex is being eroded.

NNSA admits its proposed modification is central to a planned multibillion-dollar expansion of plutonium operations at LANL, yet its environmental analysis deals just with a small part of this. It is to be the most expensive building in the history of New Mexico and will handle substances fatal at microgram levels, yet NNSA does not consider the project a major federal action with significant effects on the environment. The project is tightly interwoven with major decisions affecting sites in South Carolina, Texas, and southern New Mexico across multiple DOE programs, yet no programmatic environmental impact statement is planned.

NNSA and LANL are lying. That is the essence of what is wrong with this process. They say one thing and do another. They will say anything in order to do what they want to do. It is a bad faith effort. Citizens mistake what is going on for the actions of a democratic form of government.

Back in the 1940s the AEC's Herbert Marks, later the AEC's first general counsel, remarked after visiting Los Alamos that the Manhattan Project had 'a peculiar sovereignty, one which could bring about the end, peacefully or violently, all other sovereignties.'

Here in the US, it has.

That is all we have time to say about this right now, but suffice it to say this is not the end of the story.

- ***Now is the time: please help us close down the RCLC***

Today's episode of "As the World (of LANL corruption) Turns" is a blockbuster: [Report: Los Alamos County possibly tried to hide misspending](#) (Daniel Chacon, Aug. 9, *Santa Fe New Mexican*).

Be sure and read the comments. Mine:

This is great reporting -- a real breath of fresh air, in a situation that has been sordid ever since RCLC was created.

The problem is not the specifics what RCLC does or does not do. Ask yourself, what is the purpose of this entity, which was set up from the beginning with a highly problematic structure (not strictly government, not strictly nonprofit, not privately corporate), apparently in order to sidestep laws that were designed to avoid the very problems we see. Why was it created like that? What was its original purpose? To lobby, and if so on behalf of what? Certainly that is part of the issue. RCLC lobbies on behalf of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), which is run by private contractors. And that's a big problem: using taxpayer funds to lobby on behalf of private contractors. Will there be an investigation of this at the federal level? We'll see.

But it's more than that. The purpose of the RCLC was also, as Mayor Coss said at the very first RCLC meeting [we were there], to create an institution to carry the idea that the interests of Los Alamos County, LANL, and northern New Mexico local governments and tribes, were identical. That these separate, civil communities and sovereign tribes were all "LANL communities," as Coss put it. (Of course he later knuckled under big-time, becoming RCLC chair.)

This was an entirely new political idea, and it needed a new organization to embody it, which had to be funded somehow. How better than from the public trough? Direct contractor funding (as opposed to indirect, via GRT) would look bad, and would be illegal. Representatives from the various communities that would create legitimacy for the new idea and its institutional carrier had to be taken care of, provided with treats like trips to Washington, expensive meals with drinks, and generally made to feel important. The questionable expenses in question were not ancillary to the mission of the organization. They were essential and -- as the very confused (at a minimum) Ms. Romero has said in so many words -- they were normal. There was an

"understanding." (Unfortunately for the reputations of all involved, there was also a paper trail. Perhaps some of them will be less corrupt in the future.) Why would cities, counties, and tribes contribute tens of thousands to join the RCLC, plus their leaders' valuable time and attention, if they and their representatives didn't get something tangible in return, such as the opportunity to meet with power brokers in Washington and a sense of belonging to something exclusive and prestigious? That requires some trappings! Bring on the fancy wine and whiskey and ball game tickets!

Over the years, congressional appropriations and authorization committee staff have expressed to me how unimpressed (in one case) and appalled (in another) they are by the way RCLC representatives have engaged with them in Washington. "What are all these public servants doing in Washington, on the public's dime?", one professional staff member said to me recently. "Do they imagine that they are somehow going to influence us?" That person describes the RCLC's antics as a form of "endemic corruption" in New Mexico. Administration officials have said as much to me as well. Other staff have spoken to me about the sense of entitlement these representatives bring to their offices -- as if they were somehow deserving of extra funding, just because they wanted it. As far as cleanup goes, the message from one professional staff member was, "If they want more money they must have a solid legal cleanup requirement [like many other sites have]."

It's time to lay this organization down. Its *raison d'être* is corrupt. Even if this is denied its execution has been (and will remain, for foundational, permanent reasons) ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst.

What is most important for we activists to take on board is that the RCLC cannot be reformed. It is the existence of the organization that is the problem. From Kay Matthews' excellent *La Jicarita* [article](#) about our July 30 Taos meeting (thank you again, Kay -- and also again to Robin Collier, our host):

As I've been reporting in *La Jicarita*, activists in Taos and some of the other member groups have been calling for better accountability of the RCLC mission: lobbying strictly for cleanup funding, not nuclear weapons development; conflict of interest issues; and public participation opportunities. A group of Taos citizens has drawn up a list of demands for their representative on the RCLC that will hopefully be presented at the next Coalition meeting. But this question came up at the meeting with the Mellos: Why is there a Coalition in the first place if it's unclear that it adheres to its mission of advocating for cleanup. Greg, who often travels to Washington D.C. to meet with government officials to discuss issues that pertain to LANL, said that he was told these kinds of lobbying groups were dismissed as unnecessary to the budgeting process. Most of those attending the meeting expressed the opinion that the RCLC should be dissolved—too much money was being funneled from the member communities into its coffers.

It can be difficult for all of us to grasp how deeply a colonial mindset has penetrated into our consciousness out here in [the wild west](#). Trying to reform the RCLC is just that. It is a waste of precious activist time -- and one that plays straight into the hands of the nuclear weapons industry.

Perhaps I did not make myself 100% clear in Taos. *The RCLC would not be improved if it focused on "cleanup" only. It needs to be disbanded, period.*

Neither do we think lobbying for "cleanup" contractor dollars at LANL something that is worth doing *at all* by citizens, especially by "antinuclear" activists. Why are antinuclear activists lobbying for Fluor, Bechtel, or any of these companies? They have plenty of their own lobbyists.

Is it for "cleanup" *jobs*? Look at the record. There have been essentially no new cleanup jobs created by these lobbying efforts, but opposition to LANL and its mission -- there is just one main mission at LANL -- has been considerably weakened and distracted.

A few years ago, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued massive grants to some nuclear activist groups in New Mexico and elsewhere (via the New Mexico Community Foundation, further corruption of which was a "benefit" as well) for the purpose of promoting "public participation" in DOE cleanup. It was a classic exercise in redirection or misdirection.

Only a small minority of "cleanup" funds at LANL go to actual cleanup anyway. First, unless something has radically changed, these funds are taxed internally and used to fund LANL overhead as a whole, most of which is for the weapons program because that's the biggest program at LANL.

Second, and again unless this has changed recently, some of these funds end up managing brand-new wastes -- another weapons program subsidy.

Third, poor management and massive inefficiency eat up most of the rest. I have required, designed, and implemented soil and groundwater cleanup programs (for the state, for a private contractor, for a nonprofit) at industrial sites. That was my full-

time job for a few years. Partly from this experience, LANL was and is egregiously inefficient. A retired DOE employee came to us one day a few years back to tell us that LANL's costs were about 3x what costs were elsewhere in the DOE complex. DOE in turn is more expensive than private industry.

Some still want to dig up Area G and truck it all somewhere else (where?). We disagree. We need to spend those and other vast sums on mitigation of, and deep adaptation to climate change. The future danger from Area G is trivial -- to the nth power -- in comparison. Focusing on relatively trivial issues is another form of climate change denial.

This business of begging for money from our would-be nuclear colonial masters, in all its forms, is politically destructive. Once and for all we need to realize that LANL, Sandia, and the nuclear weapons industry have been destructive to our state -- especially to northern New Mexico. Let's not get bought off.

**The way to disband RCLC is for local governments and tribes to get out of it. That should be our focus.** If Los Alamos County wants to hire a lobby firm they can. They don't need help and legitimacy from all the other governments and tribes.

We need to bring a lot of pressure on our local governments and tribes to make this happen.

Thank you all,

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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## **Reminder: Please join us and spread the word about this evening in Los Alamos: "Beyond Hiroshima" panel, 6 pm, Fuller Lodge**

*Please forward this message to anyone you think might be interested.*

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August 6, 2018

**Previous letter** (08/02/18): *Please join Godfrey Reggio, Gilbert Sanchez, Carol Miller, Marita Prandoni, and others Monday, Aug 6, in Los Alamos for the "Beyond Hiroshima" panel discussion at 6 pm in Fuller Lodge, plus direct engagement activities in Los Alamos on the same day from 3 -5 pm*

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

**[Please join us this evening in Los Alamos for the "Beyond Hiroshima" panel discussion at 6 pm in Fuller Lodge \(map\).](#)**

We are looking forward to seeing some of you there, as well as this afternoon at 3 pm.

No RSVP is necessary for the evening discussion but we do want to hear from you if you are coming up this afternoon so we can tweak our plan in response to our numbers.

**At this late hour, it's best for folks not on this list (i.e. who do not receive this email directly) and who have not already contacted us, who want to go up the Hill today, to plan on coming in the evening only.**

**Please do spread the word about the evening event, even at this late date and hour.**

Our panel of speakers this evening includes: filmmaker [Godfrey Reggio](#); San Ildefonso Pueblo leader Gilbert Sanchez; public health expert and activist Carol Miller; writer, educator and mother Marita Prandoni; and me, Greg Mello.

For those of you coming this afternoon, we will meet up in Los Alamos at 3:00 pm outside the Los Alamos Visitor Center, 109 Central Park Square ([map](#); this is one block west of the Bradbury Science Museum and two blocks east of Fuller Lodge, on Central Ave.).

News bits:

- [Pit Production at LANL? A Delusion or Doomsday](#), *La Jicarita*, Aug 4, 2018
- [Budget bill gives LANL pit-making a boost, now goes to president](#), *Albuquerque Journal*, Aug 3, 2018
- [Bulletin 249: Worker safety; pit fever; "Beyond Hiroshima" Aug 6; lab power grab fail](#), Aug 3, 2018

Your solidarity is very important to us at this time. Thank you.

Whether you can come or not, please take a few minutes to contemplate what happened in 1945, on this day and on this coming Thursday. We will certainly "never forget."

These war crimes and the machine that enabled them -- a Moloch which continues today -- changed America dramatically.

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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**Please join Godfrey Reggio, Gilbert Sanchez, Carol Miller, Marita Prandoni, and others Monday, Aug 6, in Los Alamos for the "Beyond Hiroshima" panel discussion at 6 pm in Fuller Lodge, plus direct engagement activities in Los Alamos on the same day from 3 - 5 pm**

***Please forward this message to anyone you think might be interested.***

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August 2, 2018

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

First, a heartfelt thanks to Robin Collier of [Cultural Energy](#) in Taos for a wonderful evening's discussion on July 30 ([audio](#)), about the latest developments in LANL's ever-growing nuclear ambitions and our congressional delegation's role in furthering those. We had a full house. Thank you everybody, it was a great evening.

It almost goes without saying for those of you on this list: Cultural Energy is an enormously valuable resource for northern New Mexico, worthy of all possible support.

**[Please join us Monday, August 6, in Los Alamos for the "Beyond Hiroshima" panel discussion at 6 pm in Fuller Lodge \(\[map\]\(#\)\), plus conversations with Los Alamos officials, same day, 3 -5 pm](#)**

We are planning events in the afternoon as well as the evening. **If you have to pick one or the other, come in the evening. We've got an excellent lineup of speakers and believe it will be a memorable event. A full house would help, politically speaking.**

These are not one-off events. They are the *last* northern events in our "Atomic Summer" series and the *first* in an increasing campaign of resistance and constructive action.

Monday will be the 73rd anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, the first use of nuclear weapons in war.

The cry of "Never again!", has deep and particular meaning for us in New Mexico, on this and every Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversary. This history isn't past.

Yesterday a reporter called Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) "the beating heart not only of today's nuclear deterrent, but of tomorrow's." Perhaps he had been reading [Mary Shelley](#).

Many different parties and forces want to build a plutonium pit (atom bomb core) factory at LANL as soon as possible. On Wednesday, STRATCOM Commander Hyten (recent [photo](#), in LANL's pit production facility) said the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) must resolve its pit production impasse by year's end.

**"By about next spring, we have to be on a path to building them [pits]," he said.**

Let's make sure that doesn't happen. Citizens have beat back pit production plans again and again, for 29 years. We can do it again.

***We really need to say, with many voices, that enough is enough. We see Monday's events as the kick-off for a new wave of permanent and much more trenchant opposition not just to pit production but to the overall nuclear***

***weapons mission of LANL -- an effort quite consciously in solidarity with our broader collective efforts to rise to the full range of converging crises we face. An old saying is apt: "One cut, and all is cut."***

Lately we have been looking at the expanding LANL mission with fresh eyes. Perhaps the effort to build a pit factory is an extension of the Indian Wars. Or the Mexican War. It certainly is "incompatible with the peace we seek for the 21st century," as the Vatican said 20 years ago. By "peace" we now mean human survival and the survival of species we love, and the green and living earth.

***The afternoon, 3:00 to 5:00 pm, Los Alamos Visitor Center and elsewhere***

We will meet up in Los Alamos at 3:00 pm outside the Los Alamos Visitor Center, 109 Central Park Square ([map](#); this is one block west of the Bradbury Science Museum and two blocks east of Fuller Lodge, on Central Ave.).

We will walk and/or drive from there. Our purpose: to visibly engage local officialdom; the precise plan for which will depend in part on how many of us there are. In any case we will be thoroughly nonviolent, legal, tasteful, clear, and firm. We are not just going to hold signs.

If you are interested in participating in the afternoon events please write [Trish](#) or call 505-265-1200.

Our conversations and direct interactions will no doubt take many forms in the coming months and years. This is a start -- or rather, re-start.

We do need your help. Thanks in no small part to our congressional delegation, the Los Alamos community and its leaders have convinced themselves that their financial interests are identical with the needs of the rest of New Mexico, because a little of the enormous taxpayer-provided wealth showered on Los Alamos trickles down the Hill.

Our delegation tells Congress and NNSA that NM is dying for this mission. Dying *from* this mission is closer to the truth.

On Monday and afterwards we must find ways to impress upon audiences near and far that northern New Mexico will not passively accept or welcome a pit production plant to make weapons of mass destruction for Donald Trump or any of his successors.

It's not personal in any way; it's just that this is no longer a legitimate activity. And it certainly will hurt, not help, this state.

***The evening, 6:00 pm, Fuller Lodge: "Beyond Hiroshima"***

Please join us at 6 pm at Fuller Lodge, 2132 Central Avenue, Los Alamos ([map](#)) for a panel discussion on this theme.

As of this afternoon our panel of speakers includes: filmmaker [Godfrey Reggio](#); San Ildefonso Pueblo leader Gilbert Sanchez; public health expert and activist Carol Miller; writer, educator and mother Marita Prandoni; and me, Greg Mello.

As we said in our last letter, it's very important for people outside Los Alamos to come to this event. Los Alamosans tend to be both passive and frightened, as the few with the temerity to come to our events on the Hill have told us -- though we may see belligerence as well. LANL has sometime sent photographers to document who comes to our events, and in today's neo-McCarthyite atmosphere we are sure the security situation is worse than ever. We want to fill the hall to overflowing with disarmament-oriented people who "remember their humanity," in the words of Rotblat, Einstein, and Russell.

Your solidarity is very important to us at this time. We know it is a drive for most of you, but inconvenience brings with it a bit of moral force. Showing up when it's inconvenient means something.

Thank you all,

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group





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## "Atomic summer" events moving to Taos (this Monday, 30 July, 6 pm), Los Alamos (Aug 6, afternoon and evening); no Santa Fe discussion on 30th; ongoing betrayal by Dems, more

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[Contribute](#) if you can and haven't yet! (We now use [PayPal](#).) Thank you! [Fundraising appeal](#) with hyperlinks. [Contact us](#).

July 26, 2018

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

### Taos: Monday, July 30, 6 pm

We are moving the public discussion previously planned for the 30th to Taos, where we will meet in the Cultural Energy studios and conference room, 112 Civic Plaza Drive ([map](#)).

There will be four topics.

The **first** is the shocking betrayal of the public interest in favor of nuclear weapons and the military by the New Mexico Democrats. Specifically we need to provide a brief summary of the current situation vis-a-vis plutonium pit production (and the industrial processing of ~26 tons of waste plutonium from other sites) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). We are really in the hot soup now, and no mistake.

The **second** is the failure, in whole cloth, of New Mexico politics to address our state's serious problems more generally, or more precisely the *de facto denial* of this failure by progressives, most environmentalists, and many others. Tonight we are hosting a potluck in Albuquerque to discuss this (and the next topic as well). We put it this way, in our invitation:

There is a strange disconnect between the "business as usual" politics we see in New Mexico and our actual situation. We here do not think the fall election can, or will, enable sufficient social, environmental, or political improvement to halt or reverse New Mexico's decline, in any way. Large historical and environmental factors are at work, which seem very poorly (if at all) understood by mainstream candidates. Denial is not only rampant, it is nearly total. What sort of responses can citizens have, other than (or in parallel with) working for one or another of the "slightly lesser evil" parties or candidates? Even to raise these questions can help all of us overcome isolation and get our creative juices flowing.

The **third** topic is the firehose of bullshit now coming from mainstream US media on major existential issues, and the concomitant transformation of the Democratic Party into an enthusiastic instrument of the military-industrial-intelligence-federal police complex -- and now, arguably, the dominant War Party in the U.S. As we put it on our potluck invitation:

Our national media and politics, long stuffed with unsupported narratives, have become hysterical and bizarre. At the Study Group, we see a long-running, quite open attempt at *coup d'etat*, or short of that control of the President, being conducted by the national security community and others with the same techniques US intelligence agencies have used for regime change in other countries since the 1940s. We don't like Trump of course, but we grew to dislike Obama as well once we saw how he was governing. At the same time (and for many of the same reasons), incivility has grown to massive proportions. We need to talk about this, and find ways to act. We are not just being sheep-dipped in propaganda any more, we are being drowned. And it's for a reason.

The **fourth** is an evolving "short list" of nonviolent campaign elements which we believe have particular promise vis-a-vis LANL. I am not going to describe those further here but will do so in a forthcoming bulletin, sent to a wider (state, national,

and international) list.

## Los Alamos: Monday, Aug 6, afternoon and 6 pm: "Beyond Hiroshima"

### 1. *The afternoon*

Please join us in Los Alamos in the afternoon and evening of August 6.

What we do there in the afternoon is still under discussion and depends in part on how many people can come. We can tell you it will be thoroughly nonviolent, legal, tasteful, clear, and firm. We mean to impress upon audiences near and far to the best of our ability, on August 6 and in continuing trenchant opposition and protest afterwards, that northern New Mexico will not passively accept or welcome a pit production plant to make new nuclear weapons for Donald Trump or any of his successors.

The (so far unspecified) events will start at 3 pm. Please a) write [Trish](#) if you think you can come at 3 pm and b) please start recruiting as many others as you can. Please reach out to your friends and families, personal email lists, and social media contacts.

You will hear a lot more about this in the coming week. Your early RSVP will help us. Please let us know if you can help in organizing -- we can very much use the help!

### 2. *The evening*

Please join us at 6 pm at Fuller Lodge, 2132 Central Avenue, Los Alamos ([map](#)) for a panel discussion, "**Beyond Hiroshima.**" *It's very important for people outside Los Alamos to come to this event. Los Alamosans are both passive and frightened, as the few with the temerity to come to our events on the Hill have told us. LANL has sometime sent photographers to document who comes to our events, and in today's neo-McCarthyite atmosphere we are sure the security situation is worse than ever. We want to fill the hall to overflowing with disarmament-oriented people who "remember their humanity," in the words of Rotblat, Einstein, and Russell.*

Please write [Trish](#) if you think you can come. We will get the word out more widely but your solidarity is very important to us not just in general but in these Los Alamos events in particular right now.

We promise to have some quite different and complementary voices on that panel.

Please help us make the events of August 6 enough of a success that we can put the subsequent press accounts on the desks of key government actors in the days to follow. We see this as the kick-off for a new wave of permanent and much more trenchant opposition not just to pit production but to the overall nuclear weapons mission of LANL -- and this, quite consciously, in solidarity with our collective broader efforts to rise to the converging crises we face.

Want to know what the pits are for? The planned successor to [this weapon system \(5:43 video\)](#). (You can start 2 minutes in.)

Thank you all,

Greg & Trish, for the Study Group



## Potluck at Mellos Thurs July 26, 6 pm and again Aug 9, 6 pm; parlous state of US and NM politics

July 21, 2018

Dear friends --

If you are interested, please join us for potluck dinners and discussions on July 26 and again on August 9, both at 6 pm, at our home at 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque.

Please RSVP to Trish at 505-577-3366 or email her at [twm@lasg.org](mailto:twm@lasg.org).

As we enjoy one another's company and dinner we would like to informally discuss:

1. The strange disconnect between the "business as usual" politics we see in New Mexico and our actual situation. We here do not think the fall election can, or will, enable sufficient social, environmental, or political improvement to halt or reverse New Mexico's decline, in any way. Large historical and environmental factors are at work, which seem very poorly (if at all) understood by mainstream candidates. Denial is not only rampant, it is nearly total. What sort of responses can citizens have, other than (or in parallel with) working for one or another of the "slightly lesser evil" parties or candidates? Even to raise these questions can help all of us overcome isolation and get our creative juices flowing.
2. Our national media and politics, long stuffed with unsupported narratives, have become hysterical and bizarre. At the Study Group, we see a long-running, quite open attempt at *coup d'etat*, or short of that *control of the President*, being conducted by the national security community and others with the same techniques US intelligence agencies have used for regime change in other countries since the 1940s. We don't like Trump of course, but we grew to dislike Obama as well once we saw how he was governing. At the same time (and for many of the same reasons), incivility has grown to massive proportions. We need to talk about this, and find ways to act. We are not just being sheep-dipped in propaganda any more, we are being drowned. And it's for a reason.

Finally, we hope you enjoy these cartoons, sent by a friend. If, like us, you think they are funny -- or if you don't -- these two potlucks might be just the ticket! Join us if you can. Feel free to bring your spouse, friend, or significant other.

Best wishes,

Greg and Trish





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## Reminder, addendum: Talk and discussion -- AT 6 PM -- in Santa Fe: "Nuclear elitism and atomic nostalgia vs. a real future for New Mexico's people and land"

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Dear friends -- I forgot to include the time in the message below! **The talk and discussion begin at 6 pm!** Thanks, Greg

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July 16, 2018

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

**This is a reminder about tomorrow's talk and discussion, which will concern itself with "Atomic Summer" as a whole, and how New Mexicans are being sheep-dipped in propaganda and set up for further nuclear corruption, contamination, and ruin. The talk will be held at St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail ([map](#)).**

**Please come if you can.**

We hope more and more people will resist the attempted hypernuclearization of New Mexico. This is a good chance to get more informed and make connections with like-minded friends. Learn more about the Obama-Trump nuclear weapons agenda for New Mexico as well as current plans for storing spent commercial nuclear fuel (SNF) near the WIPP site (the Holtec-ELEA plan).

(Tomorrow, by the way, is the Trump-Putin summit, as well as the anniversary of the first nuclear explosion "Trinity" and the Church Rock [spill](#). Relevant to the presidential summit, we hope none of you believe the propaganda about Russia interfering with the 2016 election. See today's [piece](#) by Caitlin Johnstone, and [Friday's](#), to cite two of what must be thousands of cogent critiques by observers from all over the political spectrum. We prefer reason to political cults of any stripe.)

I (Greg) was in Washington last week, leading a successful plutonium pit workshop for academics, NGOs, and people in government. We had a few key government people in attendance, despite the crowded legislative calendar in the last weeks before August break.

I learned things not written in any public document. We now know that *no matter what Congress decides this year*, the Administration (and most Democrats) aim to push Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) into plutonium warhead core ("pit") production as fast as possible, and on as large a scale as possible, because of the wicked Russians (sarcasm). The Administration (and some Democrats -- ours) want LANL to go into double shift production as soon the equipment and people are in place and operating. Safety is obviously not going to be the highest priority. Production as fast as possible is instead the idea. THAT won't work. We aim to stop them. They have no idea what they are getting into.

On SNF, should it come to southeastern NM it is very unlikely to ever leave, for reasons I will explain if asked. Consolidated interim storage (CIS) of SNF is basically a "punt" on geologic storage -- and on responsibility by ratepayers and utilities.

Meanwhile, we had a great demonstration on Friday at the absurdly-named *Tech in the West* symposium. A quite decent [article](#) in the *New Mexican* followed, with pictures. A special, heartfelt thanks goes to the ANSWER Coalition folks who came up from Albuquerque and really "made" this event.

A few of us did a lot of leafleting at the Dr. Atomic opening last night. People were generally receptive (though not always); quite a number of people engaged with us positively about the issues and thanked us, offering food and wine, etc. There

were however police, but no arrests.

If you haven't seen Tony Price's antinuclear art, check out this very complementary article [here](#) and, if you live in or near Santa Fe, get on down to Phil Space (1410 2nd St, [map](#)).

Look to our [calendar](#) for subsequent "Atomic Summer" events!

Best,

Greg Mello

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## "Atomic Summer" cultural events have begun in earnest -- Come join us July 13 and July 16 -- & let your voice be heard!

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[Contribute](#) if you can and haven't yet! (We now use [PayPal](#).) Thank you! [Fundraising appeal](#) with hyperlinks. [Contact us](#).

July 12, 2018

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

We saw many of you this past Saturday, July 7, in Santa Fe for the panel discussion with [Godfrey Reggio](#) and Greg Mello, hosted by the Friends of Tony Price, at the Phil Space Gallery. It was a huge success, standing room only, with about 100 people in attendance. We sincerely appreciate [James Hart](#), [Phil Space Gallery](#) for hosting, the Friends of Tony Price, and especially Godfrey Reggio for his beautiful remarks and praise. It was a wonderful event. I have now posted a video of the event [here on our YouTube channel](#). The video there is not as good as it is in digital here in our office, but the sound is perfect.

Santa Fe pro-nuclear-weapon "Atomic Summer" cultural events that Greg alerted you to in our [May 24th letter](#) have begun in earnest and have in fact multiplied since we last wrote. The Study Group along with a few other organizations and friends are keeping tabs on these events and will be (and some have already started) demonstrating, leafletting, and speaking out as much as possible. Your letters to the editor of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* and the *Albuquerque Journal* are always a very good way to engage and use your voice if you cannot be there in person, or in addition. Greg reminds me that attending and speaking out at these events is an opportunity to get our word out and tell more of the story that is not being told in these forums. We can use these events *for* educational purposes without being used *by* them.

**Join us, with many colleagues and friends this Friday, July 13, 8:30-11:30 am, at New Mexico History Museum, 113 Lincoln Ave. Santa Fe, for a demonstration and protest at the opening of the "Tech and the West" symposium. The opening address has been christened "Welcome back to the Nuclear Age," by the pro-nuclear weapon enthusiasts in charge. If that doesn't make you ill and give you cold chills nothing will.**

**Also, join us this coming Monday, July 16, 6-7:30 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church, Gathering Room, corner of Old Pecos Trail and Cordova Rd, (map), open to the public. We will update you on the events of this "Atomic Summer" and what we can all do to turn this around.**

Quoting Greg from an earlier letter:

"To heal nuclear history it is not enough to dispel the myths and counter the propaganda that aims at creating a nuclear identity for New Mexico, the true goal of which is to pacify the natives -- us -- and prepare us for what amounts to a second nuclear *entrada*. More than this, healing nuclear history calls us to look back to the cultural projects that were underway here in the Land of Enchantment *before* the Manhattan Project, and to a biophilic, humane future, the building of which is our task today. In the long history of efforts toward harmony and respect for human persons in the living landscape, the Manhattan Project finds no place. We need to let it go. *Requiescat in pace*.

Many years ago William Weida, a regional economist with whom I was working, said to me, "New Mexico's greatest economic problem is that it has never realized The Bomb was a mistake." Again: *let it go*. [Professor Weida also commented on the people who believe Los Alamos National Laboratory is *good* for New Mexico, "These are the people for whom 70 years of data is not enough."]

And yet this year, the tourism professionals and brokers of high culture in Santa Fe are embracing The Bomb

more tightly and desperately than ever. Erich Fromm, a co-founder of [SANE](#), wrote, "The destruction of the world is the last, almost desperate attempt to save myself from being crushed by it." The realities of our existential crises today are indeed crushing, but wallowing in nuclear nostalgia -- which, as propaganda, has all too clear an origin and purpose -- is just another escape from the truths and the actions which can set us free."

**Join us at the events above** and also speak out, write letters to the editor, comment often and loudly to your city council, county council, mayor, and any local businesses and museums that endorse these "Atomic Summer" pro-nuclear events. These events are organized to commemorate the bomb and the destruction and killing it has brought -- further demeaning the positive aspects of our New Mexico history, our culture, people, and what we truly are -- we are a culture of peace, not bombs.

Join us,

Trish & Greg for the Study Group

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## Reminder: "Resist the Romance: Nuclear History in the Land of Enchantment," 5 pm at Phil Space Gallery in Santa Fe tomorrow, Saturday, July 7

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July 6, 2018

"...Atom and Evil

If you don't break up that romance soon

We'll all fall down and go boom, boom, boom!"

"Atom and Evil," Golden Gate Quartet

Dear friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

This is a reminder about tomorrow's panel discussion "Resist the Romance: Nuclear History in the Land of Enchantment," to be held at the Phil Space Gallery, 1410 Second Street, Santa Fe ([map](#)), from 5 to 7:30 pm, with [Godfrey Reggio](#) and yours truly (Greg).

My part of the event is entitled, "R.I.P. Dr. Atomic: Healing Nuclear History in the Land of Enchantment," and will concern itself primarily with (non-nuclear) themes of personal, social, and political renewal in our unique historical moment, when history itself is threatened with extinction -- not just by nuclear apocalypse but also by our all-destructive way of life, in which organized greed dictates the imminent end of all things, unless we overthrow it.

To heal nuclear history it is not enough to dispel the myths and counter the propaganda that aims at creating a nuclear identity for New Mexico, the true goal of which is to pacify the natives -- us -- and prepare us for what amounts to a second nuclear *entrada*.

More than this, healing nuclear history calls us to look back to the cultural projects that were underway here in the Land of Enchantment before the Manhattan Project, and to a biophilic, humane future, the building of which is our task today.

In the long history of efforts toward harmony and respect for human persons in the living landscape, the Manhattan Project finds no place. We need to let it go. *Requiescat in pace*.

Many years ago William Weida, a regional economist with whom I was working, said to me, "New Mexico's greatest economic problem is that it has never realized The Bomb was a mistake." Again: *let it go*.

And yet this year, the tourism professionals and brokers of high culture in Santa Fe are embracing The Bomb more tightly and desperately than ever. Erich Fromm, a co-founder of [SANE](#), wrote, "The destruction of the world is the last, almost desperate attempt to save myself from being crushed by it." The realities of our existential crises today are indeed crushing, but wallowing in nuclear nostalgia -- which, as propaganda, has all too clear an origin and purpose -- is just another escape from the truths and the actions which can set us free.

Of course there is a market in pandering to the compulsion to understand, *in the abstract*, where it all went so very wrong. But to get beyond the nuclear repetition compulsion that grips New Mexico politics today we invaders need to go back and build on deeper foundations regionally, and in our civilization. Back to Haniel Long, Mary Austin, Edith Warner, and Aldo Leopold. Back far beyond them to St. Francis, the patron saint of Santa Fe. Everything we hold dear and precious, in every culture, is now existentially threatened. We will heal ourselves and our history only when we truly redeem ourselves from the dark road we are on in this country. We need to leave the Jornada del Muerto and take the royal road, on which we can find

the genuine El Dorado if we become that genuine man or woman. We need to commit, to be "all in," to save the children, and the badgers.

These will be some of the themes of tomorrow's talk.

Look to our [calendar](#) for subsequent "Atomic Summer" events.

Best,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200



## Reminder: First Study Group public "Atomic Summer" talk this evening in Santa Fe, 6 pm

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[Contribute](#) if you can and haven't yet! (We now use [PayPal](#).) Thank you! [Fundraising appeal](#) with hyperlinks. [Contact us](#).

July 2, 2018

Previous letters on New Mexico's "Atomic Summer" [May 24](#), [May 29](#), [June 11](#), [June 25](#)

Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

First, thanks to everybody who came to the SF City Council meeting on Wednesday. Everyone spoke eloquently, covering a number of important facets of current nuclear weapons issues as they affect Santa Fe. Ms. Yasuyo Nugent's self-presentation [as](#) Peace, Hiroshima-style, was moving and powerful (picture on [Facebook](#)). All in all it was an impressive, "just-right" presence.

This afternoon and evening, the Study Group will host an illustrated talk and discussion at St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail ([map](#)), on the "**Status of the Trump/Obama nuclear weapons agenda -- and Santa Fe's role in it.**"

The evening will be divided into four short talks, each followed by discussion of equal length. These will be:

- **Our Context; Intro to Nuclear Weapons and the Obama-Trump plan**
- **Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL): realities, prospects**
- **Plutonium pits: the LANL/Santa Fe role**
- **What you can do**

We hope to see some of you there!

Look to our [calendar](#) for subsequent "Atomic Summer" events.

Best,

Greg, Trish, and gang



## "Trinity" monument is gone from downtown SF; some of us are going to SF City Council tonight anyway to express concern about pit factory plans

If you have been forwarded this message and want to receive these local letters directly, [write](#). Or if you want to be removed from this closed New Mexico list, let us know by return email.

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June 27, 2018

Previous letters on New Mexico's "Atomic Summer" [May 24](#), [May 29](#), [June 11](#), [June 25](#)

Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

The "Trinity" monument is now gone from downtown Santa Fe. (For removal pictures, see [Facebook](#)). Our sources tell us that Mayor Webber called Randy Randall, director of Tourism Santa Fe, last night and told him to get rid of it.

Some of us are going to the Santa Fe City Council tonight anyway to express concern about LANL's plans for a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory.

Though the need is less urgent than it was 24 hours ago, please do come and speak if you have time, or just come to show solidarity, at the Santa Fe City Council tonight at 7 pm.

**This meeting is not at the regular Council chambers but at the Santa Fe Public Schools Educational Services Center Board Room, 610 Alta Vista St. ([map](#)).** If you can, bring a sign of your own making.

The [agenda](#), as you can see, provides for "Petitions from the Floor" very near the beginning of the 7 pm meeting. If you want to speak, be sure and [come early](#).

Our [June 25 letter](#) listed some upcoming events and protests. In Santa Fe, note especially July 2 (public talk and discussion: update on nuclear weapons issues), July 7 (panel discussion), and July 13 (demonstration). Other events are on our [calendar](#).

Tomorrow's meeting in Albuquerque is cancelled.

If you want to help with any of these events, please call Trish at 505-265-1200.

In solidarity,

Greg, Trish, and gang



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## Trinity monument replicated at Santa Fe Convention Center -- come to City Council meeting Wednesday at 7 pm; other upcoming events, protests! Please come!

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June 25, 2018

Previous letters on New Mexico's "Atomic Summer" [May 24](#), [May 29](#), [June 11](#)

Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

### 1. "Death becomes Marcy Street display"

So the June 18 *New Mexican* headline rightly [noted](#), in its must-read article (with pictures) by Tripp Stelnicki. Yes, there's now a life-size styrofoam and plywood replica of the Trinity Site monument proudly displayed at the Santa Fe Convention Center on West Marcy St, next to City Hall.

A number of people have made angry inquiries about this travesty. According to Randy Randall, director of Tourism Santa Fe and the one responsible for putting it there, ~~it was donated through the efforts of Ellen Bradbury Reid, Norris Bradbury's daughter-in-law.~~ [Apparently, Ellen Bradbury Reid had nothing to do with this monument.] It was originally made for a TV show. He thinks it's a great asset to the City. It's already a tourist bus stop, apparently.

Norris Bradbury, as many of you know, ran Los Alamos National Laboratory for a quarter of a century, from 1945 to 1970, throughout the above-ground testing program and the development of thermonuclear weapons.

During the Manhattan Project, Bradbury was in charge of the implosion field test program at Los Alamos and was responsible for the assembly of the Trinity device (the "Gadget").

~~For Ms. Bradbury-Reid, this is a family monument.~~

No one should underestimate the symbolic importance of this prop. Its appearance in Santa Fe is not random. We could say it is much like a dog or cat marking its territory. The nuclear weapons business is pissing on Santa Fe, declaring ownership.

There have been at least [19 local government and tribal resolutions and official letters](#) expressing misgivings or negativity about LANL's mission, environmental impact, and about plutonium warhead core ("pit") production in particular. To the nuclear weapons corporations who profit from LANL and its proposed huge new pit mission (soon ~\$500 million/year forever, enough to buy every politician who has not already pledged his or her allegiance), it's important to show local elite support. This monument does that. It proclaims to visiting nuclear decisionmakers -- the Nuclear Weapons Council members, National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) honchos, congressional delegations -- that the New Mexico nuclear colony accepts the nuclear business. That even liberal Santa Fe can identify with "The Bomb," with its "greatness."

Which is all that matters.

Mr. Randall protested to one angry caller, "But it's just a movie prop! It's neutral -- it doesn't express a point of view!" To which the reply was (as it was related to me), "It's our equivalent of a monument to lynching. It doesn't matter if it is a prop made for a movie about lynching. It has got to go."

Make no mistake, LANL could not exist, or its nuclear mission grow (as it now is) without Santa Fe's supportive (or just

confused, silent, and passive) "charm," its housing, its nightlife, its pretense of normality. Its identity as not (yet) a company town.

We want the monument gone, with maximum moral effect.

**2. Especially if you live in or near Santa Fe, please come and speak up at the Santa Fe City Council this Wednesday evening at 7 pm, not at the regular Council chambers but at the Santa Fe Public Schools Educational Services Center Board Room, 610 Alta Vista St. ([map](#)).**

The [agenda](#), as you can see, provides for public comment in the 7 pm meeting. If you can, bring a sign of your own making. Or not. But please come.

If offered, we don't want a "balanced" set of artistic offerings at the Convention Center. This bizarre monument is not about "art." *We want it gone.* We can have a discussion -- after the monument is gone.

There is a fine statue by Gian Bacigalupa on the corner of Marcy and Lincoln, of St. Francis with a beaver. Is Santa Fe slowly shifting patron saints? That's a good question.

Recent hagiography (in the *Los Alamos Daily Post*) featured an [article](#) about Robert Oppenheimer's martinis. Now *that's* important. Seriously: the fact that such an article could be written and published in a newspaper of record is interesting, is it not?

**3. One recent "Atomic Summer" event: "history" -- and promotion of Trump's proposed new nuclear weapons**

On June 14, Willem Malten and a friend attended an event organized by Recursos (Ellen Bradbury-Reid, again), advertised in a Los Alamos Daily Post article of June 11 ("[Manhattan Project Experts Present Seminar: 'Summer Of 1945: The Road To Trinity' June 14](#)"). As you read the article, please note that the experts have deep family connections to the bombings (i.e. mass murders) of August, 1945 and the LANL nuclear weapons mission.

Here's Willem's quick report, more or less verbatim:

Yasuyo and I went to the meeting in La Fonda ballroom (which supposedly was donated for free). There were probably 300 or more people there I would say, and very established. The talks were kind of interesting and quite long...In the end Yasuyo asked one question and some people 'shivered'.

It became clear that what was really promoted were four ideas:

1. The use of nuclear weapons was a consequence of the violence on Okinawa and the Bataan death march and a slight [!] prejudice against Japanese people;
2. The nuclear bombs were key to ending the war and contrary to people's understanding, actually saved lives;
3. Nuclear radiation doesn't have long term consequences. Marshall and Bikini islands devastation was minor;
4. Since Putin said that he wants to have low yield nuclear weapons, just in case NATO invades, we should have them too; they are useful and we should develop them now.

It was lonely, but good to be there. Yasuyo and I represented the 'alternative view' and also the vast majority of the people in the world. It gave people pause to see that there was a Japanese Hiroshima woman in the room. When we finally came out, Yasuyo and I had to have some tea to calm down.

It shocked me (Greg) that the single most controversial element of the Trump nuclear plan -- (more) low-yield nuclear weapons, now to be put on ballistic missiles launched from submarines -- was being promoted at this event. It underscored what somebody's agenda this summer is, or ends up being because of who's in charge.

We have no idea what other events of this nature are planned. Supposedly there is an "Atomic Summer" brochure but nobody in our group has turned one up yet. It is important to have alternative perspectives at as many of these promotional events as possible. We will try to let you know of these events but we don't know about all of them.

**4. Schedule of Atomic Summer events**

Our own schedule of events this summer is on our [calendar](#) and explained further in the three [letters](#) linked above. See

below for more.

For your thoughtful consideration and schedule planning, here is a [schedule](#) of *some of the* Atomic Summer events in Santa Fe, omitting for the moment the as-yet-unannounced Recursos events and the [six performances of "Dr. Atomic."](#)

Some of our number, and some other groups, will try to go to most of these events. If you want to go with us or others we know about, call Trish here in the office (505-265-1200).

#### **5. This Thursday's meeting in Albuquerque is cancelled.**

Trish is sick at the moment with some sort of bad cold, and I have just returned from Washington with lots of followup to do. We are not in a good position to host a meeting this week!

#### **6. On Monday, July 2, please come to St. John's Methodist Church in Santa Fe at 6 pm, in the Gathering Room, if you want an update on where this Administration and Congress stand on nuclear weapons and what we can do to stop the momentum toward a new bomb plant.**

I returned from Washington Saturday after meeting with staff of key congressional committees and others for a week. It is quite clear that if we here do not stop the plutonium warhead factory, nobody else will. I had good meetings but the situation is not really all that good. The US is a warmongering state and New Mexico is the designated plutonium colony.

I (Greg) had a recent op ed in the Journal about our senator's leading role in this: "[Senators, why do you want a new pit factory?](#)"

By the way, we expect that our senatorial "dynamic duo" will use the Tularosa Basin Trinity victims, descendants of which will probably testify in Congress this week, to show their voters how much they care about selected small victim groups which do not affect, diss, or otherwise interfere with their current corporate nuclear plans.

In the course of successful negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we were pleased that the victims of nuclear testing with whom we worked -- such as Sue Haseldine ([testimony](#), 3:52 video), representing aboriginal nations in Australia -- did not ask for personal compensation, as Sue very clearly explained to us one morning. They want an end to nuclear weapons.

Also by the way, today the Senate successfully passed an Energy and Water Development bill which contained provisions to authorize and fund an interim storage site for spent nuclear fuel. Our senators voted for this bill. It remains to be reconciled with the House version. More on this another time.

Also today, our senators tried, but we do not yet know if they succeeded, to pass an amendment requiring that the Nuclear Weapons Council -- meaning the military, for all intents and purposes -- annually certify LANL's successful progress toward becoming a pit factory. Again they would hand what used to be legislative power to the military -- in this case power over the future of New Mexico, to make it harder to stop.

#### **7. "Land of Enchantment: Atomic Summer,"** discussion with Godfrey Reggio and Greg Mello, Phil Space Gallery, 1410 Second St, Santa Fe, hosted by the Friends of Tony Price, 5 pm July 7

Greg's part of this will be a talk entitled, "R.I.P. Dr. Atomic: Healing Nuclear History in the Land of Enchantment," in which Greg will discuss some of the myths, misconceptions, and strategic silences surrounding New Mexico's atomic past and present, and how a manufactured "atomic" identity is being foisted on the public for the private benefit of a few. Can nuclear history -- which is to say, history since 1945 -- be healed, and if so how? Can Santa Fe and New Mexico emerge from the cultural and political shadow of the mushroom cloud? How? The answers to these questions lie surprisingly near at hand, and point toward a life-affirming road, a royal road, beyond the Jornada del Muerto and through our converging historical crises. If we choose such a path we can truly enjoy it. If we don't, we won't. In either case the recently-promoted nuclear gods and their fake history will fail, just as US leaders feared in the early postwar years.

#### **8. Protests planned -- come one, come all!**

***Last but by no means least, we and other organizations are planning a cross-issue protest for July 13 at the "[Tech in the West](#)" Symposium, starting at about 9 am. Mark your calendars! Details will follow.***

There will we hope be other protests as well after this. Planning is underway. Again, if you want to help, call Trish at 505-265-1200.

I think that's it for now.

In solidarity,

Greg, Trish, and gang

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## Please join us Wednesday 6/13 in Santa Fe for a special "Atomic Summer" action meeting (not open to public or sent to our larger mailing list)

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June 11, 2018

Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

On May 24 we [alerted](#) you to a number of cultural events in Santa Fe's pro-nuclear-weapon "Atomic Summer." We explained our concerns, and alluded to the opportunity we see in this affront. We provided a schedule of our own meetings and events, or rather *some* of them ([calendar](#)).

Our kick-off meeting took place here in Albuquerque on May 31. We barely scratched the surface at that meeting. It was a start.

**Our next (*and very important*) get-together will be in Santa Fe this coming Wednesday June 13, at 6 pm in Room GL103 at St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail (at Cordova Road; [map](#)).** This is an organizing meeting, not a presentation or issue-oriented discussion. It is not a public event. Only those on this short list, plus friends, plus spouses are invited. (Subsequent meetings will be public.) As we said in our [May 24 letter](#), we anticipate having further private strategy meetings with those of you who are interested prior to each Santa Fe public meeting this summer, building on this first one.

At this meeting we want to talk about specific actions we can do this summer -- individually and with our families, in our organizations and churches, and also specifically with the Los Alamos Study Group. We want to talk about possible themes and talking points in letters to editors (LTEs) and guest editorials. We want to talk about specific target audiences and assess the realism of tactics. We want to talk about building capacity. We want to help others lead. We want to foster connections and community. This will be a fairly structured meeting.

Our relatively-intensive "Atomic Summer" schedule will wrap up on Aug. 9, Nagasaki Day. As opposed to the entertainment planned and funded by nuclear-friendly forces, the summer events we plan with you will (we hope and pray) set the stage for a dramatic uptick in nuclear and climate resistance, constructive action, and community, this fall and afterwards.

For reference, here's the list of upcoming meetings again.

In Albuquerque: discussion and action organizing meetings at our main office (2901 Summit Place NE, [map](#)). Light food and beverages will be served. Guest speakers, mostly by Skype for the climate's sake, will appear as warranted. The unprecedented nuclear threats faced by New Mexico are coming to us at a pivotal moment for our state and our country. While it is an election year, elections are far from enough; overestimating what elections (and political parties) can do is a besetting problem we face. There are wonderful opportunities at hand. We hope we can catalyze some new thinking about, and new effective actions to address, the radical crisis we face. These discussions are open to newcomers. Please come.

- June 14, 6 pm
- June 28, 6 pm
- July 12, 6 pm
- July 26, 6 pm
- August 9, 6 pm

In Santa Fe: seminars, discussions, and action organizing meetings. After the first meeting, the three 6 pm meetings at St. John's United Methodist Church (July 2, 16, and 30) will be open to the public and will address current issues in a) nuclear weapons, b) nuclear waste, and c) practical development policies and scenarios for New Mexico. We will Skype in nationally-prominent guest speakers for these larger-format meetings. On July 2, 16, and 30 there will be organizing meetings in the afternoon in Santa Fe by mutual arrangement to discuss campaign elements, actions, and follow-on activities.

- June 13, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail (at Cordova Road, [map](#)), organizing meeting, Room GL103 (not a public event: this list + friends + spouses only)
- July 2, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
- July 7, 5 pm, Panel discussion with [Godfrey Reggio](#), Greg Mello, others, venue TBD, hosted by the Friends of Tony Price, "Land of Enchantment: Atomic Summer"
- July 16, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
- July 30, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
- August 6, Santa Fe; the precise nature of this event and/or meeting will be decided in the course of our planning group meetings.

Since we last wrote, the *battle royale* over which site and state "gets" the industrial pit production mission has continued. Developments up to June 2 were captured in [this blog post](#) (shorter version [here](#)).

We were generally pleased, by the way, with this June 5 [editorial](#) in the *Albuquerque Journal*. We correspond regularly with the press near and far.

An interesting fact: oddly, and of course for their own reasons, the SC delegation – hawks, all – wants the surplus plutonium disposition mission, not the bomb mission. (Local SC boosters want both.) The "progressive" Democrats in NM do want to make new nuclear bombs, and lots of 'em.

On June 7, a federal judge in South Carolina [issued](#) a preliminary injunction which effectively bars the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) from halting the Mixed Oxide (MOX) program to dispose of surplus plutonium, and in this way places NNSA's just-announced pit plan in jeopardy -- as do amendments to must-pass legislation moving through Congress, some sponsored by our New Mexico Democrats. We'll write about this later, but the long and short of these developments is that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) remains in the bulls-eye for industrial pit production.

Also since we last wrote, the new managers of LANL have been announced. Yippee. You can find some of the leading articles on this on our [home page](#).

Alas, the new nuclear arms race -- in part centered right here, in northern and central New Mexico -- is far from the only emergency we face. We need to find a way to have an ongoing [conversation-in-the-midst-of-action](#) about some terrible truths -- which we can make less terrible, in more than one sense. But only if we step up. Only if we truly *live* (see this excellent recent [piece](#) by Chris Martensen.) Many -- most I would say -- people are [far too isolated](#) and are dispirited or worse. Let's fix that. Please join us this summer, starting on Wednesday.

Best wishes to all,

Greg and Trish



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## Please join us Thursday 5/31 in Albuquerque for "Atomic Summer" kickoff strategy meeting

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May 29, 2018

Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

Five days ago we wrote with a [schedule of upcoming meetings](#) for this summer, starting this **Thursday 5/31 at 6 pm, in Albuquerque at the World Headquarters, 2901 Summit Place NE**. The schedule is also on our [calendar](#).

Light food and beverages will be served.

At this first meeting this summer we want to talk about strategy and actions. Later meetings will involve guest speakers (by Skype) as warranted, and as we may decide at Thursday's meeting. These Albuquerque discussions are open to newcomers, as well as to folks from out of town.

The unprecedented nuclear threats faced by New Mexico include industrial pit production, industrial plutonium processing -- *another* big proposed mission at Los Alamos -- and the indefinite (not: "interim") storage of potentially all US spent nuclear fuel in a huge array of shallow concrete vaults in SE New Mexico (plus related handling and subsequent waste processing facilities). We have discussed these in previous [letters](#) and [Bulletins](#). They are coming at us at a pivotal moment for our state, and our country.

Nuclear weapons, materials, and waste are starting to define our state. Sandia National Laboratories may already have a \$3 billion budget; Los Alamos National Laboratory is approaching this.

There are increasingly tight linkages between all plutonium issues, and between plutonium issues and nuclear weapons issues in general. Looking for narrow victories may lead to damaging horse-trading and triangulation.

We want to leverage our collective social and political connections to win on these issues, not just hold signs at various protests, offer comments, etc. That is what we will discuss Thursday. (Feel free to start thinking and exploring ideas on your own or with friends and family in the meantime!)

Please bring your notebook (we can also provide paper if needed).

**Part of what we want to discuss are talking points and themes concerning the above issues, as fodder for letters to editors (LTEs) and for your own outreach to other people and organizations. We'll provide background information on these issues -- especially, at this meeting, the consolidated "interim" storage of spent nuclear fuel -- but it would be better to use our precious meeting time to discuss actions than to go over too many factual details.**

We don't want to approach nuclear issues in isolation from other aspects of our converging crises. We could win narrowly while losing broadly.

We are very concerned that "progressives" in New Mexico are completely "missing the boat" as to the nature and gravity of the crises we face -- what is "coming down the pike." We see enormous complacency in our communities. What do you think we should do about that?

We'd like to discuss social networks with you, how to activate people, and how to deepen our personal and political approaches, to this absolutely unique moment in human history.

While it is an election year, obviously elections are far from enough; overestimating what elections (and political parties) can do is common in many circles. While the candidates certainly differ, none offer anything approaching an adequate response to the overall suite of crises we face. No matter who is elected to the governor's office, for example, it will be very difficult to turn the state around without more radical political change than any of the candidates can openly talk about if they expect to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters and win the election.

So office-holders will arrive in their respective offices with no mandates for the actions needed, even if they do have an inkling of what some of those actions might be, which is probably not the case for any of them. The very nature of political "success," and "progress," have changed beneath our feet. With real (inflation-corrected, non-debt) overall economic growth neither possible (we haven't had it in a long while) nor desirable (climate protection requires simplification and conservation, not just changing technology and efficiency), there will be no rising tide to lift all boats. Standard prescriptions no longer apply.

In fact, our societal "boats" are taking on more and more water (debt, climate change, resource and habitat depletion, pollution in various forms, human trauma) all the time. Protection of the vulnerable -- in society, in habitats and species -- is now paramount. Priorities must be chosen, and some of today's unhealthy attachments must wither before they kill us -- such as our vast military apparatus.

It is an emergency, despite the soothing repetition of the election spectacle.

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello

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## Please join us: talks, discussion Friday 5/25 in Albuquerque: "Russiagate, Syria, and war"; plus "Atomic Summer" events just around the corner!

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May 24, 2018

### Dear citizen activist friends on our New Mexico "short list" --

There's a great deal we'd like to share with you but we have been really deluged with work on pit production -- here, in South Carolina, and in Washington, DC. Thank you for your patience with us.

**First of all**, I (Greg) will be speaking Friday evening along with Richard Becker of the ANSWER Coalition at the Revolution Organizing Center, 2626 Garfield SE, Albuquerque ([map](#)), on Russiagate, Syria, and war ([Facebook](#) event page).

The ANSWER Coalition's blurb on this event:

The media continues to hurl baseless allegations against Russia, manufacturing public opinion useful to the US war machine.

"Russiagate" began as a way for the Democratic party to avoid taking responsibility for its failure in the 2016 elections. But with events in Syria, where Russian military intervention has been decisive in preventing the Syrian government from being toppled by US imperialism, its allies and proxies, there has been a major shift in US foreign policy thinking about Russia toward confrontation.

Join the ANSWER Coalition on Friday, May 25 to talk about the "Russiagate" controversy and its profound implications for US and global politics.

#### FEATURED SPEAKERS:

\*\* Richard Becker, Western Region Coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition and a leading member of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, will discuss the phenomenon of "Russiagate," the new McCarthyism, that is being used to build a consensus in the US for military confrontation with Russia, as well to smear the Left, the Black liberation movement, and to attack independent third political parties, like the PSL. Becker has authored the PSL publications, "Imperialism in the 21st Century" and "Palestine, Israel and the US empire," and both will be available.

\*\* Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group will be speaking on the bipartisan war drive for US empire and how these wars do not benefit the American people. He will also discuss the US war on Syria, and how the chemical attack allegations against the Syrian government are not substantiated by evidence. The Los Alamos Study Group is based in New Mexico, and its work places nuclear weapons in the context of aggression abroad and the militarization of our society at home.

...Light food and beverages will be provided.

We hope you can come and join in the discussion. We have been corresponding and compare notes with a tiny handful of people about the horror show that is Russiagate, part of an openly imperialist foreign policy, for a long time now. We want to expand that circle. We hope you will join us.

**Second**, it's time to unveil some of the "Atomic Summer" events that are in the planning stages around here so you can get them on your calendar if you are interested. First the events, then a brief explanation, with details to follow in due course.

- **In Albuquerque:** discussion and action organizing meetings at our main office (2901 Summit Place NE, [map](#)). Light food and beverages will be served. Guest speakers, mostly by Skype for the climate's sake, will appear as warranted. The unprecedented nuclear threats faced by New Mexico are coming to us at a pivotal moment for our state and our country. While it is an election year, elections are far from enough; overestimating what elections (and political parties) can do is a besetting problem we face. There are wonderful opportunities at hand. We hope we can catalyze some new thinking about, and new effective actions to address, the radical crisis we face. These discussions are open to newcomers. Please come.
  - May 31, 6 pm: initial kickoff meeting, "Land of Enchantment: Atomic Summer." Initial discussion of campaign elements and personal actions.
  - June 14, 6 pm
  - June 28, 6 pm
  - July 12, 6 pm
  - July 26, 6 pm
  - August 9, 6 pm
- **In Santa Fe:** seminars, discussions, and action organizing meetings. After the first meeting, the three 6 pm meetings at St. John's United Methodist Church (July 2, 16, and 30) will be open to the public and will address current issues in a) nuclear weapons, b) nuclear waste, and c) practical development policies and scenarios for New Mexico. We will Skype in nationally-prominent guest speakers for these larger-format meetings. On July 2, 16, and 30 there will be organizing meetings in the afternoon in Santa Fe by mutual arrangement to discuss campaign elements, actions, and follow-on activities.
  - June 13, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail (at Cordova Road, [map](#)), organizing meeting, Room GL103 (not a public event: this list + friends + spouses only)
  - July 2, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
  - July 7, 5 pm, Panel discussion with [Godfrey Reggio](#), Greg Mello, others, venue TBD, hosted by the Friends of Tony Price, "Land of Enchantment: Atomic Summer"
  - July 16, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
  - July 30, 6 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church (Gathering Room, open to public); Study Group organizing meeting earlier in afternoon by mutual arrangement
  - August 6, Santa Fe; the precise nature of this event and/or meeting will be decided in the course of our planning group meetings.

**Third**, there will be other events and action opportunities in Santa Fe this summer, organized in cooperation with the Study Group by The Friends of [Tony Price](#) (the stewards of Tony Price's sculptural *oeuvre*). The July 7 event shown above is one of these events. Their [atomicsummer.org](#) web site has just gone live; a billboard on I-25 will soon follow, with which we have helped a little. As their web site states,

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT: ATOMIC SUMMER is a series of art and educational events intended to resist the dominant, often romanticized, narrative of atomic history in New Mexico. The series will engage the community through art, dialogue and action.

The Friends of Tony Price stand with all conscientious citizens of New Mexico in calling for nuclear disarmament, environmental protection, social justice, and economic sustainability NOW. Your donations will support:

### **But why now? Why "Atomic Summer?"**

One day last month we got a call from James Hart (proprietor of [Phil Space](#) and a Friend of [Tony Price](#)), who had been talking to Godfrey Reggio about the convergence of nuclear-themed cultural events in and around Santa Fe this summer, from the [Santa Fe Opera](#) ("Doctor Atomic"; [sample aria here](#)) to the New Mexico History Museum's "Atomic Histories" exhibition to a "Disruptive Futures Dialogue: Doctor Atomic: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons in New Mexico" at the Lensic, to a two-day "Tech in the West" Symposium, "planned in association with several of the organizations that contribute to the diversity of New Mexico's thinkers: Cinematheque at the Center for Contemporary Arts Santa Fe, Creative Santa Fe, the Lensic Performing Arts Center, the Los Alamos Historical Society, the New Mexico History Museum, the Santa Fe Institute, the School for Advanced Research, and the [Thoma Foundation](#)."

James and Godfrey realized what was going on in all this: *romanticizing The Bomb*.

In addition to the institutions listed, the Manhattan Project National Historical Park and the LANS-run, taxpayer-funded Bradbury Museum will be atomic-themed tourism nodes this summer, along with the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque -- propaganda centers all.

Not mentioned much in the packaging of these events is their central *raison d'être* and indirect prime mover: Los Alamos National Security, LLC, the managing operator of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), which runs the world's most richly-funded facility designing, testing, and building weapons of mass destruction. Under Trump, LANL's nuclear weapons programs are growing like watered corn in the night. Billions in new construction is planned. A thousand new employees will be hired this year. The New Mexico Democratic delegation in Congress is fighting like hell to keep and expand LANL's plutonium processing and pit production missions (both), as we have written (background [here](#); *more on this later* to our larger mailing list; developments occur daily).

Local opposition has been a real impediment to LANL's nuclear expansion over the past 29 years, as even a [partial reading of this recent history](#) shows. Importantly, there have been [nineteen](#) local government and tribal resolutions questioning or opposing LANL's nuclear missions and environmental impact. [Previously](#), New Mexico senators, congresspersons, and a governor opposed building industrial plutonium missions at LANL, as did the University of California faculty and LANL itself. From the corporate perspective, this is a problem. Many approaches to co-opting local and state institutions have been pursued. While generally successful, they have not raised LANL's prestige to the desired level.

In the midst of this ongoing battle for acceptance come the "Atomic Summer" events listed above, [anchored](#) by the Santa Fe Opera.

In making the announcement, Santa Fe Opera General Director Charles MacKay was joined by Dr. Charles McMillan, director of Los Alamos National Laboratories, who said, "The ethics of 1945, which I think are very graphically portrayed in Doctor Atomic, are not that different than the ones that we face today."

In a news release, Santa Fe Opera offered this cheerful observation: "No matter how great its impact elsewhere, Doctor Atomic promises to be overpowering when performed at a place where you can gaze out at the lights of Los Alamos and at a time when we are all just minutes away from possible destruction."

"Overpowering" indeed. [Inappropriate submission](#) is precisely the problem. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that real evil so easily cuts through postmodern consciousness, like a hot knife through butter. These events will use local high-culture packaging to sell mock-sophisticated "complexity" and "moral ambiguity," leading to passive acceptance of a domesticated Bomb, to advance false narratives about history and our current place in it, and above all to increase the prestige of local WMD activities.

We are concerned about creating and valorizing artistic packaging for a fast-growing politics of human disposability at home and abroad. We claim a higher and more central cultural ground. Site Y/LASL/LANL, by contrast, has always been anticivilizational. As Inder Comar [wrote](#) yesterday,

It is time for America to stop relying on its weapons, and to start relying on ethical and civilized principles.

The fate of the U.S. and perhaps the world, rests on it finding a better way to deal with itself, and with others. There will be no meaningful response and preparation for climate change, species extinction and the great refugee crises to come unless the U.S. uses its power in a positive way, and contributes to a world where dialogue, cooperation, and the promotion of peace are the foundation blocks of a civilized order.

When James called, we realized that we had to step up efforts to counter some of the counterfactual narratives and cultural commitments involved -- from the created myth that the Manhattan Project played a significant role in ending the war, to the created myth that the Manhattan Project was primarily the work of physicists rather than chemists (a myth which elevates Los Alamos, where just 2% of Manhattan Project funds were expended, to a more central role than in fact it held) -- and on to the presumption (in "Doctor Atomic") that Oppenheimer's *fictional feelings* are a significant or important subject that should attract our attention today.

"Batter my heart," indeed. What complete and utter bullshit. It ruins -- inverts -- Donne. The "break, blow, burn" happened in *fact*, not in *spirit*, to *Japanese civilians*, not to *Oppenheimer*. It was mass death and a never-prosecuted war crime even by the laws and standards of the day. Without the mass destruction, the neurotic Oppie (neurotic or worse: he was diagnosed with what we could call schizophrenia today after [attempting to poison](#) his grad school professor, Blackett) would not be interesting. He was always the "Little Boy" to the racist, imperialist, and very capable [Groves](#).

Wallowing in neurotic nostalgia for a fictional past on the part of elite culture-brokers and tourism boosters is a dangerous

thing. As a long-experienced regional economist and economics department chair (William Weida) repeatedly said to me, failure to grasp that *The Bomb was a mistake*, and to *put it behind us*, is the central reason economic development of northern New Mexico has failed. The intellectual, moral, and political corruption of our culture by The Bomb is a cancer in our midst. As E.L. Doctorow said,

We have had the bomb on our minds since 1945. It was first our weaponry and then our diplomacy, and now it's our economy. How can we suppose that something so monstrously powerful would not, after years, compose our identity?

It's our job to go beyond the bomb, and we intend to walk that road this summer. Who cares about Oppie's inauthentic suffering today, given what we now face? The power to which Oppie submitted, and which still "enchants" far too many, was never the power to create, only to destroy.

Oh but it is Art! *Bad* art, maybe. If we are healthy, we do not allow moral ambiguity about mass slaughter of defenseless human beings. It is aesthetically revolting. Germany could rebuild after the war because it fully condemned Nazi atrocities. In the US, we can't seem to do that. In New Mexico, we cannot ever seem to leave World War II behind. We still have a WWII economy. There is a repetition compulsion. It's still going on. The theme this summer seems secretly to be: "Out, damned spot" ([Judi Dench](#) in the role). But the action underway in the fast-rising military-industrial complex is just more murder, in ever more places. In any case there's precious little poetry in the "bombastic" Doctor Atomic, as one reviewer who walked out of a performance [wrote](#).

Commodification of nostalgia about war and destruction, as art or "art," -- itself a problematic alienation, but that's another story -- while the world's best-funded nuclear weapons facility, with its huge, operating nuclear dump visible just to the west for visiting opera-goers and the attending lab nuclear weapons workers alike. It's creepy. All that's missing are the snappy grey Hugo Boss caps with the double lightning bolt insignia. Cue [Wotan's ravens](#) -- the last act begins.

So what can you and we, who are working to reduce the violence in our society, who are working for peace instead of war, for real science instead of bureaucracy and corporate greed, actually do to marginalize the quasi-criminal legacy being being celebrated? Let's talk about that.

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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## "US to decide best site for nuclear weapons production" by Friday -- Please call our senators, your congressperson TOMORROW!

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[Contribute](#) if you can and haven't yet! (We now use [PayPal](#).) Thank you! [Fundraising appeal](#) with hyperlinks. [Contact us](#).

May 9, 2018

Dear citizen activist friends on our "short list" --

There are now 48 hours before the May 11 deadline for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) must choose a site to make new atomic bomb cores ("pits") on an industrial scale, for the first time since the Rocky Flats Plants was closed in 1989 ("[US to decide best site option for nuclear weapons production](#)," *Associated Press*, *Washington Post*, etc. 9 May 2018).

(We are very pleased with this AP coverage, by the way, which went far and wide -- and most importantly, into the *Washington Post*. Please read this article.)

For the moment the time for letters to editors on this topic (our most recent plea to you) has passed. There will be time for that later.

**Now we need phone calls, or (better) office visits if you can manage it, to our senators and congresspersons. Contact information can be found [here](#).**

I am sorry for the short notice but we expected this decision -- whatever it will be -- before now. Multiple sources describe high emotions, drama, and intense lobbying in DC.

**Our delegation has been working overtime to add industrial pit production to the suite of missions at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL),** despite the obvious problems. Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham has to our knowledge not been pushing for this, but she has not taken a stance against it either.

They are hiding this full-throated lobbying effort, which has been going on for months, from their constituents.

Earlier today we sent out a detailed briefing for interested members of the press, which you also got ("[NNSA, DoD, DOE poised to deliver decision to Congress on how and where to make plutonium warhead "pits"](#)"). You can find a good deal of background there, and links to more.

A much shorter version that covers the basics was published as a comment this morning on a good [article](#) by the Center for Public Integrity published by the *Santa Fe New Mexican* (the comment was republished on our little-used blog: [Decision on site for plutonium pit production expected by Friday, Santa Fe New Mexican](#)).

You can find more background at our [web site](#) but you don't really need it at the moment.

**The key thing right now is to put our delegation on the spot as much as possible, regardless of what NNSA's so-far secret plan may be. Presumably that plan is finalized, but regardless of that and with an eye to the future, citizens deserve answers to some basic questions from the NM delegation.**

**Our delegation has been supporting the underground factory "module" plan, which NNSA says is infeasible.**

They may complain about NNSA's analysis, but **is that going to make NNSA change its mind, ignore its engineers, and**

build a passel of high-dollar per sq. ft. "modules" -- which might not fit on the mesa or be otherwise practical?

What are they supporting so vigorously? It is a mystery. If modules are "not viable," as NNSA says, does the NM delegation still support industrial pit production at LANL?

If they do, what exactly is the plan they support? Do they even know?

The only other option is a "big-box" pit factory. Where will it be? Next to the old plutonium facility, on that skinny, crowded mesa -- or on another mesa?

Will it have a shallow foundation, or be anchored below the thick powdery layer of volcanic ash that played such havoc with the last plan, requiring solid concrete down to a depth of 130 ft?

What is the new factory expected to cost taxpayers, in up-front and in operational costs?

How will the plutonium be shipped to LANL, and within LANL?

Most important, **why do we need to make pits?** "Because DoD says so" is not an answer.

If our delegation insists on supporting pit production at LANL, they should be able to answer these simple questions. We doubt they can.

That's the sum of our request right now.

There will be much more to say after this decision comes down. It will be momentous, one way or another.

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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For immediate release April 30, 2018

## **Leaked Summary of Nuclear Warhead Plutonium "Pit" Production Analysis Identifies Serious Problems with Los Alamos Manufacturing Plan**

**Document directly contradicts statements by Heinrich, Udall, Lujan**

**Litigation to obtain full analysis proceeds as deadline looms for federal siting decision**

Contact: Greg Mello, Los Alamos Study Group, 505-265-1200 office, 505-577-8563 cell

[Permanent link](#) (tomorrow) \* [Previous press releases](#)

Albuquerque, NM – A leaked [executive summary](#) of the Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) for producing plutonium warhead cores ("pits") completed by the [National Nuclear Security Administration](#) (NNSA) in October of 2017 reveals that NNSA has discovered serious problems with plans to manufacture pits at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The AoA was first briefed to congressional defense committees on November 30, 2017. A redacted 9-page [briefing summary](#) of its findings was subsequently made available to the Study Group. The Study Group immediately filed a [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA) request for the AoA and on March 14 [filed a lawsuit](#) to obtain a redacted version of the unclassified AoA.

On December 18, 2017, senators Heinrich and Udall, with Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, [wrote](#) to Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Rick Perry expressing their "very serious concern" with findings of the AoA, claiming that LANL's proposed "modular" strategy for small underground factory workshops "was conspicuously absent in the AoA."

As the summary shows, LANL's "modular" strategy was carefully evaluated in the AoA, which among other findings concluded that seven modules, each with 5,000 sq. ft. of working space, would be needed, not the two originally proposed.

The AoA examined the modular strategy, which it found to be "not viable."

The New Mexico congressional letter also claims that NNSA's analysis focused on a "110" pit per year (ppy) production strategy, a "significant increase" beyond the Department's [the Department of Defense's, DoD's] stated requirements.

The leaked summary shows this is also not true.

Previous members of the New Mexico congressional delegation in both parties unanimously [argued](#) that LANL was not a good place for larger-scale pit production. Local government [resolutions](#) have opposed it.

Plutonium pits are the fissile component in atomic bombs and comprise the cores of the first explosive stage of all thermonuclear explosives ("H-bombs").

Pits are difficult and dangerous to manufacture. Until 1992, this was the mission of the former Rocky Flats Plant near Denver. At Rocky Flats, these activities resulted in extensive worker illnesses and widespread environmental contamination. Production ceased with a joint FBI-EPA raid on the plant in June, 1989.

Outstanding [historical photographs](#) of Rocky Flats facilities were collected by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER).

Resuming continuous pit production, assuming it is possible, would require billions of dollars in new construction and in operational and waste management costs and impacts.

NNSA's fiscal year 2019 budget request shows pit production expenses (not including waste management and other supporting costs) [ramping up](#) from less than \$200 million today to \$1.2 billion per year by 2023.

The AoA process winnowed pit production alternatives from 41 to five and then to two, one at LANL and the other at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

LANL and SRS were also the main alternatives in two previous siting analyses, in 1996 and 2008. LANL was selected as the interim site for low-level pit production in 1996 on the basis of the theory that no further plutonium-related facilities would be needed at LANL for production of up to 50 ppy. Since then LANL has spent more than a billion dollars on new facilities, with an additional two billion in construction projects underway, aimed at achieving a 30 ppy production capacity by 2026, thirty years later.

NNSA found that attempting to renovate LANL's main plutonium facility (Building PF-4) to meet DoD's requirement of 80 ppy with high confidence would make NNSA's interim production mandate of 30 ppy by 2026 "unattainable," in addition to jeopardizing NNSA's other plutonium missions at LANL.

None of NNSA's viable options, according to the AoA, include retaining pit production in PF-4 beyond its current interim role. "[A]fter a new 80 WR [War Reserve] ppy capability is established, PF-4 can return to the research and development mission for which it was built."

A key finding of the study was that all pit production alternatives are fraught with risk and complexity, and that schedule risks would delay achievement of an 80 ppy capability "to 2033 at the earliest for any alternative."

In the months since the AoA was completed NNSA has also completed an Engineering Analysis and Workforce Analysis for the two viable alternatives, neither of which are in the public domain.

Neither alternative -- a new 80 ppy production facility at LANL, or a repurposed Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MFFF) at SRS -- is specified in any detail in the AoA executive summary or [briefing](#).

NNSA Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty as well as Assistant Secretary of Defense Guy Roberts have both stated in congressional testimony that a final recommendation for reestablishing industrial pit production would be provided to the armed services committees by May 11, a deadline added to the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. NNSA's recommendation will be made in concert with Ellen Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, and Undersecretary of Energy Dan Brouillette.

Pit production will be debated in the scheduled May 9 hearing of the full House Armed Services Committee (8 am MDT, webcast).

For the past 29 years, all Department of Energy (DOE) and NNSA plans to acquire larger-scale pit production have failed, in part because no new pits have been or are needed.

The US possesses roughly usable 12,000 pits, including those already in warheads and bombs as well as other pits which could be used to make more of today's nuclear weapons. Approximately 11,000 additional pits have been declared surplus and are being stored pending final disposition. Today's deployed and stockpiled pits were made [no earlier than 1978](#). They will last until at least 2063 and possibly much longer, [according to](#) a joint report by DOE and the Department of Defense (DoD). (For more, see [here](#) and extensively [here](#).) The Trump Administration's Nuclear Posture Review eliminated the only proposed warhead that would require new pits ([Nuclear Posture Review Calls for Continuing Weapons Modernization](#), Feb 2, 2018). NNSA also has other options for maintaining pits, including (but not limited to) rebuilding the non-nuclear components of pits, a much simpler and cheaper option than building wholly new pits. (For more background, see for example this recent [blog post](#).)

The Study Group has provided an initial set of pit production [recommendations and considerations](#) to NNSA, DoD, the White House, and congressional committees, which anticipated some of the themes in the leaked executive summary.

[NNSA has issued a draft Environmental Assessment](#) (EA) for two essential elements in LANL's pit production capability -- additional upgrades to PF-4, and the transformation of a partially-completed analytical laboratory into a more capable low-level nuclear facility for plutonium, which would liberate space in PF-4 for industrial missions, including pit production. Recent Study Group [comments](#) on the draft EA point out some of the dangers of this approach and suggest that it may be legally deficient.

Further information and news accounts of this developing story can be found on our [pit production web page](#).

Study Group director Greg Mello: "Los Alamos' latest scheme to attract billions of dollars by building one "modular" underground factory after another for years to come has now fallen through, as did previous schemes. When will DOE, NNSA, and DoD learn? The modular strategy wasn't viable or cost-effective, as has been clear for a long time to many parties in government. Its obvious problems, and the lack of any objective analysis of alternatives, were why NNSA conducted this AoA in the first place.

"The complete misrepresentation of this big study by our congressional delegation raises the question of whether they ever read it prior to criticizing it so strenuously. Who wrote that letter for them? LANL? Or did they knowingly mischaracterize NNSA's study? There's a lot of money involved.

"Pit production is not needed at all -- not in New Mexico and not in South Carolina. New pits are not needed for two human generations, even assuming nuclear weapons were somehow "needed" in the first place -- which they are not.

"By any lights, building a new pit factory is wasteful, provocative, and it will also be very difficult -- as NNSA is beginning to understand. It's driven by ideology, not real need. The faster NNSA tries to go, the greater chance of another fiasco. Serious reflection, not repetition of the same old mistakes, is called for. Our country and world face many serious crises. A lack of plutonium pits is not one of them."

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

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[^ back to top](#)

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## 1. Emergency demonstration Thursday, 12 Apr, KAFB Abq, 5 pm: No attack on Syria! / 2. "Rocky Flats South" / 3. Letters to editors: effective, neglected

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April 11, 2018

**\* Please join the Study Group, Stop the War Machine (SWM), and the ANSWER Coalition Thursday, April 12, 5:00pm to 7:00pm at Kirtland Air Force Base, at the intersection of Gibson & San Mateo**

### **No attack on Syria!**

**\* Get our congressional delegation to oppose this war! [Good news](#): bipartisan congressional efforts to stop the latest madness have begun. Make sure your voice is heard!**

Dear friends --

We are pleased that the ANSWER coalition has taken the lead in organizing a demonstration against what would be a catastrophic increase in US belligerence in the Middle East. SWM has joined in and now so have we.

**If you live in the metro area we hope you will join us.** If you do not, we hope you will consider some other form of visible action, such as at a congressional office ([locations](#), [contact information](#)).

All things being equal, we would prefer that demonstrations be at (or in) congressional offices (or another place of power and influence) but we need to work together and follow the leadership being provided in this case. Let's have a big presence if we can and work together from there!

We and our colleagues have been tracking this evolving war and its context very closely for years now, using open-source intelligence from around the world.

**Now, we will organize, with others here and with experts in other states, Q&A and strategy sessions on this war in the coming week or two. You'll hear more about that later.**

Right now I want to say that in my reasonably well-informed opinion there is zero probability that the Assad government used poison gas in Duoma. Even if Assad did, US military strikes would still be 100% illegal, not to mention stupid and appallingly dangerous.

We have to leave all the explanation for another time. Come on Thursday, for starters. I don't think we can afford to have idle talk, given the state of the world. Do you?

**A bipartisan letter being circulated by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Justin Amash (R-MI) calls on the President to consult Congress before ordering missile strikes. That's the minimum, of course, but something our congressional delegation ought to be able to sign.** Apropos of this left-right coalition, you may enjoy this piece by the generally-outstanding Caitlin Johnson: "[We All Need To Unite Against War In Syria, Regardless Of Ideology.](#)"

**There is a comparable letter in the Senate being circulated by (Sen. Tom Udall's cousin) Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) and Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA).**

We do not have the texts of these letters at this time.

Trish just designed a yard billboard for our front yard on this theme. You could do that too!

**We need letters to editors**, ASAP -- see 3. below.

## **2. "Rocky Flats South:" to be, or not to be?**

By May 11, Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, the new Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), will make her recommendation as to whether LANL, or another site (probably the Savannah River Site [SRS] in South Carolina), should be selected for the industrial-scale pit production mission.

On her way to fulfilling a promise to lawmakers to visit every site, Ms. Gordon-Hagerty made a surprise visit to Los Alamos and presumably also Sandia late last week after dedicating a new administrative complex at the Pantex nuclear weapons plant near Amarillo. She has already been to SRS and thus has visited the two top contenders for the big pit mission.

Given her impending decision (to be made with heavy input from DoD, the White House, and Congress) we have been mostly Washington-focused these past weeks. On Friday evening we got off a decision memorandum to her, key congressional staff, and others. We will expand and send that to a wider audience late this week or early next.

Meanwhile some handy resources (for your letters to editors -- see below!) can be found at:

- **[LASG friends ltr](#)** (03/10/18)  
*Will New Mexicans allow Heinrich, Udall, Lujan, Grisham, and Pearce to sell out New Mexico to the nuclear kleptocracy?*
- **[LASG friends ltr](#)** (01/26/18)  
*Monday Jan 29 Santa Fe mtg (note location change!): Pu pit production; Trump nuclear and defense policies: what we can do (with simple dinner)*
- **[LASG friends ltr](#)** (01/15/18)  
*Pit production heating up; Jan 29 mtg in Santa Fe*

This past Sunday, the New Mexican ran an [op-ed](#) of Greg's: "[Lawmakers, seek help for plutonium addiction.](#)" We commend it to you.

**Lately we have been struck by how consistent DOE, LANL, and NNSA have been, for almost 30 years now, in saying that LANL would never have an industrial pit facility.** Small, basic, "pilot," "interim," "capability-based-capacity" -- sure. "Just an analytical lab." But not a mini-"Rocky Flats South." That is precisely what is now being proposed.

**Something has really changed. The corporate profiteers that are LANL, and our Democrats, want to break that 30-year promise to NM communities and tribes.** There has been an implicit social contract, as we explained to Gordon-Hagerty, and New Mexico lawmakers are telling her to break it.

The underlying problem is that too many people enable these lawmakers with their silence, their donations, their support, and their votes. "But they are the lesser evils!", we occasionally hear. "They are nice guys!" *Oh, come on.* Inverted priorities like theirs are ruining our world -- snuffing out the lamp of civilization. I am not kidding. Too many people are in denial about this. It is happening because too few people effectively rebel.

## **3. Letters to editors: effective, neglected**

Ed Kinane at Voices for Creative Nonviolence has a great article ("[Thousands of Hearts and Minds](#)") on the overwhelming importance of letters to editors (LTEs), with great pointers on writing them and how to maximize their impact. Please read it!

For links to the *Albuquerque Journal* and *Santa Fe New Mexican* LTE forms, see [here](#).

**Please.**

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello



## Heinrich to co-host strange "public safety" event TOMORROW -- a good opportunity to demonstrate concern about his prioritization of nuclear weapons production and the military over people and the environment

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April 2, 2018

Dear friends --

It's been much too long since you've heard from us.

Other than a much-needed week with family, we've been working hard here -- and missing many of you as the days go by, with most of our communications directed to DC and the UN, where there is resistance to the nuclear agenda.

**Tomorrow, from 5-7 pm, Senator Martin Heinrich is co-hosting (with Mayor Keller) a "Public Safety and Consumer Protection Fair" at the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center, 501 Elizabeth St SE([map](#)).**

**We are going early to tomorrow's event, at 4:30 pm, to at least be a visible reminder that there are other badly-neglected priorities, and that Heinrich's constant promotion of nuclear weapons is not what the state, the country, or the world needs. Will you join us? We have some nice signs and banners, or you can bring your own.**

It is hard to strike the right tone but we all must try. When the state itself, and its most senior representatives, disrespect international law and the human conscience by promoting policies of aggressive war and the instruments of mass violence, what are we to do? Democrats, alas, are just another war party now.

Most of tomorrow's participants might be sincere as they can be, but still we find the theme of this "fair" more than a little Orwellian. Why do we need this fair? Do citizens really need a meet-and-greet with the friendly FBI, Secret Service, DEA, IRS, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms And Explosives? Is this the event New Mexicans have been longing for -- you know, the one where the future of our state, its children and elderly, and its desiccating environment, are discussed in-depth?

Maybe it is. Maybe this is what the future looks like. Maybe the Senator wants to emphasize the importance of federal law enforcement agencies, which a) wield force, ostensibly for our protection, but also b) take their orders from Washington -- situated as they are in the federal homeland security complex -- and not from our locally-elected officials.

**Maybe Martin is telling us, in this rare public appearance, that now he represents the federal government in New Mexico, not New Mexico in Washington.**

Apart from basking in the latest apple-pie issues, maybe Senator Heinrich is also saying that Mayor Keller, and all the others present, need to stay on his "good side." Without federal money -- e.g. that long-lost grant for the sad ART project -- where would Albuquerque be?

Like I said, we find this event creepy.

In our experience, Congressman Heinrich was the most vociferously pro-nuclear-weapons Democrat in the House. In the Senate he has more competition, but his advocacy for the nuclear weapons laboratories is rivaled only by his colleague Senator Udall.

Heinrich's primary loyalties appear to be to the military and the homeland security/intelligence complex. His other loyalties



are by far secondary, as far as we can tell.

(Like Senator Udall, Heinrich affects to be an environmentalist and may even sincerely believe he is one. We like his solar advocacy, but it doesn't go beyond what is easy and convenient and doesn't accomplish much if anything for the climate. It certainly doesn't make him an environmentalist. Neither do his occasional wilderness and national park advocacy; those too are cheap and convenient greenwashing in our view. "Environmentalists" like Heinrich and Udall are why the planet is going to hell. Do they care? If they cared, wouldn't we see some evidence?)

[Doomsday Forum](#) (Ernie Sturdevant -- thank you) and Stop the War Machine (thank you) have already sent out alerts asking folks to come early to "welcome Martin 'home', as follows.

## Martin's Coming "Home"

**New Mexico's Senator Heinrich is hosting an event here on Tue., April 3 to make it appear there is help for our children, elderly and poor. Let's give this Pentagon/War Profiteer representative the welcome he deserves for his evangelical support of the agenda of comprehensive replacement & upgrade of the nuclear weapons complex which will have to come out of the budgets for children and the elderly. Heinrich has earned the public's disdain for keeping New Mexico's children last in education and first in poverty.**

***LET'S GATHER AT 4:30 PM WITH SIGNS AND BANNERS TO WELCOME MARTIN "HOME."***

For quick background on the plutonium pit issue, please see:

- [LASG friends ltr](#) (03/10/18)  
*Will New Mexicans allow Heinrich, Udall, Lujan, Grisham, and Pearce to sell out New Mexico to the nuclear kleptocracy?*
- [LASG friends ltr](#) (01/26/18)  
*Monday Jan 29 Santa Fe mtg (note location change!): Pu pit production; Trump nuclear and defense policies: what we can do (with simple dinner)*
- [LASG friends ltr](#) (01/15/18)  
*Pit production heating up; Jan 29 mtg in Santa Fe*

Finally, the following guest editorial on this issue will soon appear:

### Senators, seek help for plutonium addiction

Senators Heinrich and Udall, and Congressman Lujan, would like Los Alamos to become the nation's factory for plutonium warhead cores – "pits," in Strangelove jargon.

Is a factory needed? No, but that apparently doesn't matter to them. What's good for Bechtel (or whichever contractor gets the job next) is good for New Mexico, right?

It doesn't matter to them that the DOE and DoD have determined that the 3,800 pits in the US nuclear arsenal will last at least 85 years, or that there are at least another 7,000 modern pits in retired warheads and monitored storage. It doesn't matter to them that pits can be rebuilt without making new ones. They want more pits, underground factories in Los Alamos, and more money for their fat-cat contractor friends, some of which would come back to them as campaign contributions.

Our senators (and Rep. Lujan) seem quite happy that the US is planning to spend at least \$1.2 trillion over 30 years, \$10,525 per US household, to maintain, deploy, and upgrade or replace every single warhead, submarine, bomber, and missile. Nuclear weapons already cost taxpayers \$30 billion annually, more than the total military expenditures of all but 10 countries.

Doesn't this seem...*broken*? As in, *predictive of doom*? Not to our senators. They fight for every million. They are the giants upon whose shoulders the Trump Administration stands. The enablers.

Don't worry, say the contractors. That \$30 billion (soon more) is only a small fraction of our glorious patriotic defense budget. Mattis and Trump have requested a staggering \$886 billion for defense next year – \$7,508 per household, \$2,717 per person, more than the total income of almost half the people in the world.

US defense spending – \$1.7 million a minute – exceeds the combined military spending of the next eight biggest military spenders, most of which are US allies anyway. Not counting these eight, US military spending exceeds that of the combined rest of the world.

Have our senators thought about the opportunity costs of this – costs to the people of the United States, to the children? If so they keep their thoughts to themselves. Do they think the US can actually be sustained with such inverted priorities? Apparently they do.

Or maybe they just don't think.

Looking now at LANL itself, why do they think that LANL, a remotely-sited research facility underlain by active earthquake faults, with an aging plutonium lab built on a narrow mesa, is a good place for a pit factory?

Senators Bingaman and Domenici, then-Congressman Udall, and LANL itself until recently, thought LANL was “not the right fit” for this mission. Can Senator Udall tune in to his inner Congressman?

Does it matter to them that 19 government resolutions have passed in northern New Mexico questioning LANL's mission, environmental impact, and/or pit production? Does that level of opposition really augur for success in a big new high-hazard nuclear operation – especially one with no defensible mission? Or does success even matter?

Does it matter to them that LANL has failed again and again to safely manage its plutonium facility, or even to keep it running, or to manage big projects competently, or that LANL managed sent a radioactive “dirty” bomb down to WIPP, shutting the whole place down and incurring what will be about \$2 billion in extra costs nationwide? That the incumbent LANL contractor has not met, twice in the past 13 years, even the lax standards required by DOE to keep the LANL contract?

Nuclear weapons and the military are not paths to prosperity, here or anywhere. Are there any who can help these gentlemen see the light?

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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## Will New Mexicans allow Heinrich, Udall, Lujan, Grisham, and Pearce to sell out New Mexico to the nuclear kleptocracy?

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March 10, 2018

Dear friends --

As we mentioned in [Bulletin 245](#) two days ago, Senator Heinrich will be questioning the newly-confirmed National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty in a Senate Armed Services [hearing](#) this coming Wednesday, March 14, on the future of US plutonium warhead core ("pit") production.

*Translation:* Heinrich (before, during, and after Wednesday's hearing) is putting as much pressure as possible on Gordon-Hagerty to make sure as much money as possible is spent at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) on pit production.

With the *possible* exception of Rep. Lujan Grisham, Heinrich has the backing of the entire rest of the New Mexico delegation, and all the concentrated power that the LANL contractors (current and anticipated) can muster.

But listen: all this may not be enough to make up for the obvious deficiencies and poor track record of LANL itself, the topographic and seismic defects of the site, the aging facilities involved, the isolation from supporting industries, the poverty, inequality, and high levels of drug abuse in the region, the relative lack of nearby educational institutions, and so on.

As we [said](#), previous senators and congresspersons, including Rep. Tom Udall, did not think LANL was the best place for industrial pit production.

**We would like you to write letters to editors about this, as soon as you can. You can draw on recent [Bulletins](#) and [letters](#) and the links they contain.** Don't worry about any deadline, but please do it soon if you can. Such letters can influence many parties, not least the reluctant press itself.

Oddly enough, New Mexicans have been and continue to be very powerful on this issue. The Study Group really has a unique position in this debate. You are not alone. Our professional relationships on weapons issues span decades in Washington, DC and elsewhere. We are working in solidarity with your efforts large and small.

As we mentioned in a [December 26 letter](#), there are many many other ways (besides letters to editors, so simple!) to bring one's values and hopes and fears and commitments and knowledge into the public realm, starting with actually *meeting and talking!*

We hope you will write short letters (no more than 150 words if you want them published, and you do!), and consider it just one transformative step.

For you, dear readers, there is no need to explain how important it is to not build a factory for atom bombs. And why our silence is permissive for the kleptocratic corporations which make tens of millions each year with no investment of their own, just for showing up.

And why all our social goals and environmental hopes will be dashed if the US military/industrial/congressional complex (as Eisenhower had it in his first draft, before "congressional" was taken out) continues to suck the country dry?

\*\*\*

Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham was mentioned above. She has not joined the rest of the delegation in promoting industrial pit

production, but neither has she opposed it. She needs to hear about this in public places like newspapers, and on the campaign trail. **We would like Rep. Grisham to stand up and be counted.**

\*\*\*

As most of you may already know, the [Holtec Corporation](#), together with the [Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance](#), has submitted an application with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to temporarily store (for a century or more) what they hope will be eventually 120,000 metric tons (MT) of spent nuclear fuel (SNF), at a site about 12 miles north of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). That's roughly 50% more SNF than is now at US reactors. This spent fuel contains more than 350 times as much radiation as was released by all atmospheric nuclear weapons tests ever conducted. It contains over 700 MT of plutonium, more than 3 times the quantity made for nuclear weapons globally. (For this and other important background in a short slide show please see "

[Spent Power Reactor Fuel: Pre-Disposal Issues](#)," Robert Alvarez, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Los Alamos Study Group, Apr 29, 2017, posted Jul 28, 2017). A single reactor spent fuel storage pool may typically contain [vastly more](#) cesium-137 than was released in the Chernobyl accident.

It is virtually certain, we believe, that if spent nuclear fuel comes to any desert site -- in this or any state -- for "temporary" storage, before a disposal site is open for that waste, it will never leave. It will be the worst of all worlds -- no accountability, no disposal, no *nothing*. If you think somebody will be taking good care of this waste in, say, 2050 -- well, I have a bridge to sell you in Manhattan.

The economic and social damage this waste site would wreak would begin the day such a facility became a near-certainty, long before it even opened.

**We want all the Democrats at least in the New Mexico delegation -- Rep. Pearce being something of a lost cause on this matter -- to publicly express firm disapproval to this plan now, before it gathers any more steam. We want you to ask them publicly, in any way you can, to do that.** For more background see [Bulletin 233](#) and the subsequent [open letter](#) to our delegation.

(So what's the answer then, for spent commercial nuclear reactor fuel? Are we just NIMBYs? Not at all. Though we don't work on this issue much, we gave an outline of one answer in [Bulletin 233](#). We think it is far from enough to just say, "No, don't store (or bury) it here!" Or, "Just store it at the reactor sites; we'll figure out what to do with it later!" It is not enough to oppose radioactive dumping.

Yes, the decisions will be difficult. Real answers to all the problems that have been ignored for decades are seldom going to be convenient. If this or any consolidated interim storage site far from reactors were a good idea, we'd be for it. But it's not.

\*\*\*

That's it for tonight. We look forward to seeing many of you in the coming weeks!

Best wishes to all,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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## Monday Jan 29 Santa Fe mtg (note location change!): Pu pit production; Trump nuclear and defense policies: what we can do (with simple dinner)

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January 26, 2018

Dear friends --

Our Monday, January 29 meeting in Santa Fe is just around the corner!

**We'll meet from 5:30 to 8:30 pm in the Gathering Room of St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail (at Cordova Road, [map](#)) for a simple buffet dinner, short briefing, Q&A period, and discussion and planning around actions we can take.** (Call or write if you want to help with food prep!) **Note the changed location!**

We provided some background in our January 15 [letter](#) and in [Bulletin 242](#), particularly as regards the regressive role of our congressional delegation.

These past weeks have seen a leaked draft of the Trump "[Nuclear Posture Review](#)" (NPR) ("[Leaked Trump Nuclear Posture Review Aims to Continue Obama Weapons Modernization, with Significant Tweaks](#)"), the "[National Security Strategy](#)" and the "[National Defense Strategy](#)" ([Summary](#)). We have done some radio interviews on some of this material (see [home page](#)).

The coming two weeks will see the Trump "State of the Union" (SOU) speech (Jan 30) to Congress, release of the final NPR [update: Feb 2], which will differ slightly from the draft, and the federal congressional budget request (CBR) with agency program details (update: Monday, February 12). Also in February we may see an "Engineering Analysis" for larger-scale pit production options at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina.

That is, nuclear issues as a whole, not just pits, and war and peace issues as a whole, are "on the move" -- and not just temporarily either.

**Today there was another [A. Journal North](#) article of interest on pits (please read our explanatory comment).**

**A lot of the problem right now lies with Democrats, and not just in New Mexico.** We have to talk about that because it is leading toward war. It is primarily Democrats who are pursuing the fallacious "Russiagate" meme, to our national peril. Charges that Russia was somehow involved in Trump's electoral victory, or that senior Trump officials had some kind of inappropriate "contact" with Russians, have been refuted more thoroughly and authoritatively more times than I care to count. We now have a "Russiagate" inquiry that continues for political and "deep state" reasons, without any credible evidence involving *Russia* actually, despite the formidable powers of the surveillance state. (The new Russophobia actually began early in Obama's second term, in the fury felt by many neoconservatives and liberal hawks over Obama's failure to initiate a bombing campaign in Syria after the chemical weapons incident of August 2013, as Robert Parry and others have noted. As in many other matters between these two administrations, there is more continuity and development than meets the eye.)

We will not be able to take time to debate the broad topic of our collapsed relations with Russia at this meeting (we will bring resources if you are interested) but please note: they lie right smack in the middle of our road forward when it comes to "what we can do" about pit production, nuclear armaments, the Trump Nuclear Posture Review, and Trump's other national security

policies. Why? **As one White House insider put it to us, Obama failed on nuclear weapons policy and ended up committing to the biggest nuclear weapons investment since Reagan because he lost political "bandwidth" on the Russia issue.** *No kidding.* He gave it away -- or fecklessly and passively allowed it to be stolen by neocons and liberal hawks in his own administration. As a result, relations with Russia are now worse than at any time since the 1950s -- and we are heading into some very perilous waters this year. The US public is almost utterly in the dark as to the basic facts of what we are doing these days, and where. For example, the Ukraine government (that the US and its allies installed, in what Stratfor's George Friedman called "[really the most blatant coup in history](#)") just essentially declared war on Russia. A lot of chickenhawks and imperialists hope Russia will take the bait. Ukraine in that case would burn, and maybe so would we all. These are very dangerous times. To repeat, most people have no idea.

**Our regional response on these issues is critically important. This meeting will be a very good time and place to come together and plan. We have a lot of wonderful friends, here and far away. Many opportunities beckon.**

I hope everyone on this list understands that significant successes toward progressive goals are incompatible with continued wars and militarism, full stop. We don't see that awareness in enough places these days.

Also, as we said before, we are aware of a lot of "low-hanging fruit" in our field these days -- valuable truths which could be revealed with concerted labor. Once plucked and prepared it is easy to spread.

In our previous letter I asked whether anyone knew any New Mexico politicians who are not supportive of New Mexico's oil and gas industry. I didn't hear back from anyone. Neither did I hear from anyone with any explanation of how Obama's methane regulations and Clean Power Plan would make a significant difference in New Mexico's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Well, would they? Do any politicians in either party in New Mexico have any kind of coherent climate and energy platform? Do tell.

Sincerely,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

PS On Thursday February 1, from 5 - 6 pm, Greg will be speaking at [O'Neill's Pub](#), 4310 Central Ave SE ([map](#)) about the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#), sponsored by the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (yes) as part of their "Science on Tap" series.

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## Pit production heating up; Jan 29 mtg in Santa Fe

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January 15, 2018

Dear friends --

As discussed in [Bulletin 242](#) our New Mexico Democratic senators (and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan) are working hard in concert with right-wing ideologues and nuclear weapons contractors to support a return to industrial-scale production of atomic bomb cores (plutonium "pits"), and to make sure this huge investment (with its nuclear waste generation and its risk to workers and the environment) happens at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

**We need your help to change their minds -- and not just on this but on some other key issues as well. They are failing us.**

I (Greg) just returned from Washington, DC, where discussions about [where](#) and [how much](#) plutonium manufacturing, and [when](#) to do it, are underway. Some in Congress and the Trump Administration are asking whether industrial plutonium processing and manufacturing [can be](#), or if so [should be](#), done at LANL. It is not a new question -- see this [2016 amendment](#), with its [126 ayes](#).

Trump's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) now says [some, but perhaps NOT large-scale](#), pit production should be done at LANL. NNSA's own internal review office apparently [says differently](#), according to New Mexico Dems.

Some are asking (2017 [video](#)) whether pit production should be done [at all](#) right now. They (and we with them) are in the minority. So far. The Trump administration has just [pulled the plug](#) on the only new warhead that requires pits (here's the [Nuclear Posture Review](#) which says that, in a searchable pdf).

**Our regional response is critically important now.** We would like to invite our members, supporters, and friends to a short briefing and Q&A period, and then action planning at **The Commons, 2300 W Alameda St** ([map](#)) in Santa Fe, on **Monday, Jan 29th, from 5:30-8:30 pm**. We will provide a simple buffet dinner (call if you want to help with that). **Please come -- this is the time and place to come together and plan "next steps."** **There are many tasks begging for help right now -- a lot of "low-hanging fruit" to pluck. It is much easier to do this now than it would be later, once the die is cast. "Later" may be too late.**

We would like to discuss these matters with our Taos friends but we do not know when would be most convenient for you.

We have updated our on-line record of [New Mexico Local Government Resolutions & Letters addressing nuclear weapons issues at LANL](#). It is an impressive catalog of official local government caution and negativity. It may not be comprehensive for earlier dates but we think it does capture all the recent resolutions. These were supplied to key executive branch and congressional decisionmakers this past Saturday along with other materials as part of our follow-up from DC meetings and earlier letters.

A sad contrast with this (still-evolving!) New Mexico record can be seen in last week's unanimous passage of a [resolution](#) supporting pit production by the Aiken, SC City Council ("[Aiken City Council supports prospective nuclear weapons mission at SRS](#)," Colin Demarest, *Aiken Standard*). The flavor of local boosterism can be seen in this [video](#) of the meeting (at 1:16 to 1:29). One day later, the Aiken County Council passed [a similar resolution](#), also unanimously.

Last Friday (1/12/18), the *Albuquerque Journal North* ran an editorial, "[Debate over 'pits' at LANL may be getting real.](#)" Yes, it is. That day, a congressman and his staff visited LANL to investigate its fitness for this mission; we provided an hour-long pre-trip briefing in DC.

\*\*\*\*\*

There are other pressing subjects we must discuss with at least some of you. One follows.

Cato the Elder (234–149 BC) apparently concluded most or all of the speeches he gave in the Roman Senate with some variation of the injunction, "Carthage must be destroyed" ("[Carthago delenda est](#)"), no matter the subject.

With this in mind we might rightly say -- all the time, in every political context -- "**Global warming and the resulting mass extinctions must be stopped, at all costs.**"

Including that dangerous clause, "at all costs," is realistic because unchecked global warming and the resulting mass extinctions are, in themselves, greater than any other costs which could ever be imagined. If global warming proceeds unchecked, and positive feedbacks kick in heavily, there will be no one left to "imagine" anything.

A year ago we said [issues must be triaged](#). And so they must.

Global warming phenomena are outstripping the slow-to-evolve models of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Please see for example David Spratt's new piece, "[What we learned about the climate system in 2017 that should send shivers down the spines of policy makers.](#)" We need to be "asking" much more of our elected officials. "Asking," that is, in ways that can't be ignored. There's a lot to talk about there.

Some of you will have seen this piece from the excellent communicator Dr. Joe Romm: "[2017 crushed a major temperature record and scientists are sounding the alarm](#)" (subtitled "All the natural influences should have made the year cooler than normal, not hotter than normal.")

Then, of special note to New Mexicans, we have his "[NASA just made a stunning discovery about how fracking fuels global warming](#)" (subtitled: "Natural gas is not part of the climate solution, it's part of the problem.")

We don't know any New Mexico politicians -- candidates and elected officials, both -- who are not supportive of New Mexico's oil and gas industry. Do you? Isn't everyone in the legislature happy to have more oil and gas taxes to spend?

Here's another question. Do you think Obama's methane regulations and Clean Power Plan, touted by Democrats as normative (and as reasons for environmental endorsements, funding, and votes), would make a significant difference in New Mexico's overall greenhouse gas emissions? If so, please do send the math on that. You see, there is a lot to talk about.

Sincerely,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

PS On Thursday February 1, from 5 - 6 pm, Greg will be speaking at [O'Neill's Pub](#), 4310 Central Ave SE ([map](#)) about the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#), sponsored by the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (yes) as part of their "Science on Tap" series.