



Los Alamos Study Group

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November 15, 2022

Informal last-minute reminder, agenda for tonight's emergency Ukraine meeting in Albuquerque, and by Zoom

Dear friends --

In case you have forgotten or missed the Zoom coordinates sent in [Bulletin 314](#), we will be hosting an emergency meeting regarding the Ukraine war tonight at 6 pm Mountain Time at the Albuquerque Mennonite Church, 1300 Girard Blvd NE ([map](#)). Yes, that is in one hour.

The agenda is below. Zoom coordinates are: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84589349156?pwd=dIBaNGZ1eHFsY2Y4WTdaWTFMV0lBdz09>. Meeting ID: 845 8934 9156; Passcode: 222238. Zoom participants will be able to listen but not otherwise contribute at this meeting.

Best wishes to all,

Greg, Trish, Donna, Steve

Emergency Ukraine meeting: schedule/agenda 11/15/22

1. Welcome to all (in person and listening on Zoom) and introduction by our host: we encourage listening with open hearts and to engage in dialog rather than grandstanding, etc.
2. Study Group role going forward
 - a. Few meetings apart from actions. Our role will be more supporting, informing, helping, catalyzing.
 - b. We aim to keep a frequently-updated information page.
 - c. We don't have to agree with everybody about everything. We want to work with people who want peace.
3. The situation we face in Ukraine (Study Group, Steve Starr by Zoom)
 - a. None of the broader social and environmental goals we seek can be achieved without a practical modus vivendi with Russia, China, and the other "enemies." The entire fabric of our society and environment is at risk.
 - b. We are focused about a) war escalation by the U.S. and its allies and b) additional U.S. funding for the war. We can't affect what the Russian and Ukrainian governments do except as U.S. action may affect them.
 - c. The action timeline is in part short. Two time periods are useful: < 1 month (lame duck Congress before Christmas, ground in Ukraine not frozen, and < 3 months (embraces first weeks of new Congress, initiation of possible winter offensives).
 - d. FAQ, &A -- and *concerns*
4. Possible public speech and actions
 - a. Possible actions. These are actions which we each feel are or might be realistic for us.
 - b. Possible allies down the road (we aren't waiting).

Who	Immediate actions (<1 month)	mid-term actions (<3 months)
Individuals/families		
Group/collective actions		
Possible allies		

- c. Prioritizing group/collective action(s)
 - d. Audiences
 - e. Specific needs people may have and how to meet them
5. Scheduling any group/collective actions, b) volunteering
 6. Contact information (share)
 7. Sources of information (LASG promises more). Western MSM very unreliable.
 8. Final thoughts, feelings (from audience, listen, record)

PS if you don't want to be on this list, [send a blank email here](#).

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously to this list (08/29/22): [Come one, come all to the press conference tomorrow \(8/30/22, 10:30 am MDT, State Capitol Rotunda\)](#)

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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

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August 29, 2022

Come one, come all to the press conference tomorrow (8/30/22, 10:30 am MDT, State Capitol Rotunda)

Dear friends --

Thanks to an alert reader we realize that we didn't actually ASK people to come to the press conference tomorrow.

If you are interested, please do come!

We have a few speakers lined out, representing organizations that have endorsed the [Call](#). It will be a relatively simple and people-oriented event.

If you haven't endorsed the Call, please do!

Expect more from us soonest, as there is a lot going on.

Greg, Trish, and gang

PS if you don't want to be on this list, [send a blank email here](#).

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously to this list (07/28/22): [Impromptu lunch tomorrow 7/29 in Santa Fe? If you are interested!](#)

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July 28, 2022

Impromptu lunch tomorrow 7/29 in Santa Fe? If you are interested!

Dear friends --

As it turns out Trish and I will be in Santa Fe tomorrow for meetings near the beginning and end of the day, and a noon window has just opened up between those meetings.

If anyone wants to join us for a lunch discussion at Maria's New Mexico Kitchen, 550 W Cordova Road ([map](#)), please do. Apologies for the last minute invite but it's a change of plans for us too.

We'll meet from noon to 2 pm.

We don't know if we will have a room all to ourselves -- it will depend on the number of RSVPs. So if you know you can come, please [drop a line to Trish](#) tonight or tomorrow, or call her at 505-577-3366.

I am not going to prepare a talk but will be happy to take questions on the usual range of topics -- those you have seen in our bulletins and letters, including some of what we all might most effectively do in this time of crisis.

Mostly we want to hear from you and know your concerns, and enjoy the company of friends we don't get to see very often.

Thank you for your support, all of you, through the years and recently.

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

PS Especially with four billboards under contract, we are very much in fundraising mode. They are cheap per view but costly in aggregate! Peer-to-peer fundraising is very important as we [said](#).

Among the easiest ways to give is through [PayPal](#). Here are several more, from our [web site](#):

- Matching gifts are obviously very valuable; 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);
- If you are age 70½ or older and make a contribution directly from your traditional or Roth IRA to a qualified charity, you can donate up to \$100,000 [without it being considered a taxable distribution](#);
- 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;
- If you live in New Mexico, ask [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.
- We have an on-line donation portal through the [PayPal Giving Fund](#) which does not deduct a fee from your donation; or
- Anyone can simply mail a check to our office at: 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously to this list (07/20/22): [Short update and report: new poll on Ukraine. August 2 event cancelled](#)

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July 20, 2022

Short update and report; new poll on Ukraine, August 2 event cancelled

Dear friends --

- **First**, we have cancelled the August 2 event at Fuller Lodge in Los Alamos.

As interesting and generally valuable as that would be, we estimate that the distractions and political confusion we see in northern New Mexico would be deadly to success, despite the hard work of a few and generous contributions of historians and others. So, unmark your calendars! We'll have to discuss Russia and the Manhattan Project a bit later.

- **Second**, we can report that the tide is very slowly turning in Washington as regards pit production -- turning and *churning*.

Congress and the uniformed military are beginning to understand that a) Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) can't make enough pits, and therefore b) the Savannah River Site (SRS) had better be successful if there any significant number of pits to be made -- ever -- AND this will cost more money right now than the Biden Administration allowed NNSA to put into its funding request to Congress. So the armed services committees want to give more money to SRS.

Congress does not yet openly grasp the horrific price tag for its two pit factories -- although committee staff can certainly add just as well as we can -- and what that implies for the old, small, inadequate, explicitly unsafe factory-to-be at LANL, with its inadequate support facilities, inadequate housing and transportation, inadequate staffing -- its inadequate everything.

A lot of people think LANL has a pit production facility that "just" needs to be upgraded, modernized, and expanded somewhat. These little adjustments will "just" cost [at least \\$16 billion](#) or so through this decade and will go on up from there with no apparent endpoint, as first one and then another expensive new facility is going to be required.

Barring a miracle, getting back to the production level of 10 pits per year that LANL had 10 years ago -- less than one per month -- is going to take at least a year longer than previously anticipated, because, according to LANL documents, LANL accomplished only 7 months of work toward the 10 pit-per-year goal over the 20 months that ended in September of last year. (How well they have done since then we do not know.)

Well over a billion dollars was dissipated in those "lost months." More than that will be required to get back on schedule, LANL says, if that is even possible. Meanwhile the production capacity of LANL is zero, as it has been since 2013.

The probability of meeting the 2026 production goal is now officially "To Be Determined," but we know from other sources that it is...shall we say...low.

LANL is therefore in a race to get as much built and as many people hired as possible, before too many people figure out what a boondoggle it all is.

As noted [previously](#), LANL and NNSA have largely given up on hiring from northern New Mexico. In NNSA's words, LANL has already "depleted the local talent pool in northern New Mexico" (p. 25). There is still hiring going on, but as well-placed sources in Washington have been telling us for months, LANL considers the local labor market "tapped out," which no doubt it is.

The long and short of it is that the United States has no coherent or even viable pit production strategy at this time. As long as NNSA policy depends on LANL to make pits on an industrial basis, as opposed to just running a demonstration and training program at LANL, the U.S. will be building TWO new pit factories. That is the sad outcome of misguided attempts to bring all that work and money to New Mexico.

- **Third**, we discussed all this and much more this past Friday at Maria's New Mexico Kitchen in Santa Fe.

They did NOT give us the private room we expected but the company, discussion, and food were good!

We really enjoyed seeing those of you who came. Lots of careful notes were taken, and really good comments were made and questions asked. *Please keep in touch with us, and we will try to do the same. We do not want all the talent present last Friday to spread to the winds, never to be seen again!*

We spoke of the international, national and regional importance of LANL's new mission, and its vulnerabilities.

The importance can be summed up by saying that the U.S. cannot have an arms race without a pit factory very soon, and northern New Mexico, perhaps New Mexico as a whole, cannot survive as a remotely democratic entity if it hosts one.

The vulnerabilities can be summed up by saying the people have all the power in this as in other cases. We lend legitimacy and permission to the pit production mission. Silence is assent.

We didn't get a chance to talk much about the Ukraine war and the feverish Russophobia spread across the land, although preparing for nuclear war with Russia has been LANL's central organizing principle since 1945, and is the sole purpose of the "war-reserve" pit production mission at LANL.

In that regard, some of you may be interested in a brand new [poll](#) released by CNN this week showing that a majority of Americans disapprove of President Biden's Ukraine policy. The details (p. 22) are interesting. Democrats, liberals, college graduates (especially white ones), and older people are more supportive of Biden's war

policies, which have been extremely provocative and militaristic. Others are not. Those of lower income, and those without a college degree (especially if they are white), are the most "antiwar" of the groups interviewed.

Here I want to insert a bit of dialog from a good panel discussion in July of last year in Europe on "[Mass Formation and Totalitarian Thinking in This Time of Global Crisis](#)," led by Mattias Desmet (machine translation):

Justus Hoffmann (00:51:06): This is something I have encountered so much—to finish this—my personal experience is that people with certainly above average intelligence and high, let's say academic credentials like lawyers, doctors, psychologists, they seem to me to be more susceptible to this kind of manipulation. For example, my father's side of the family, my father was the only academic, he was a chemist, a chemical engineer. Everybody else on my father's family side they are hairdressers or they have a mechanic shop and you can talk to them and they're very educated on these topics. You can have a conversation with them and they let you speak, you let them speak and you can come to a consensus of sorts even if it's to agree to disagree. This is my experience with people who work construction, who are craftsmen, handymen, whatever. They have no academic background and they are more open to discussion and more open to being convinced that you may be onto something than most academics I know.

Prof Desmet (00:52:33): That's something that was already mentioned by Gustave Le Bon in the 19th century: the higher degree of education, the more susceptible to mass formation.

Viviane Fischer (00:52:42): But why is that?

Dr Wodarg (00:52:44): This is because of education. Just think what education means.

Prof Desmet (00:52:47): Yes of course. You could see education as a process in which you learn to think for yourself. But you could also see it as a process that you learn to think like everybody else.

Dr Wodarg (00:53:03): You learn to obey.

That said, and returning to last Friday, we discussed what each of us can do, in the most practical terms.

- **Fourth**, what can we do?

At the outset most of us have to sit ourselves down and realize that history is not going to be changed by some convenient little actions taken in our spare time. We have to remind ourselves of this because we are subtly told otherwise by all those who, often with the best of intentions, are selling one kind of fake democracy or another. There's nothing wrong with seemingly small actions, if they are undertaken in a wholehearted, transformative manner. We ourselves must be ready to be transformed. "Does the individual know that he is the makeweight on the scale?" asked Jung. Generally no, he or she does not.

It's in that spirit that all our suggestions have been offered over the years. If we suggest putting up a yard sign, people tend to say "How can that help?" Well, one yard sign can help a lot, and a personal campaign to coordinate emplacement of yard signs in dozens of yards would be on quite a different level, wouldn't it?

The rest are details, and perhaps too obvious. Yard signs, check -- call or write us. Initiate discussions in your churches and other groups, check. Get them to endorse the [Call for Sanity](#) and convince others to do so also. Write letters to editors -- a lot of them. Recruit interns.

Don't bother talking to the New Mexico delegation; they won't listen to you. It's a waste of your time and it sends the wrong signal. Withdraw your support and tell them why.

Some of you know people who could help pay for our billboards and other expenses. Nothing is cheap, as we all know, least of all skilled people. LANL is dying for 'em.

We, Trish and I, are working mostly on projects directed toward Washington, where nuclear weapons decisions are largely made and where we have hard-earned access that we must use.

The rest of what needs to be said should go to our full mailing list, so I will close for now. Thank you so much for your precious attention and godspeed in your efforts at this time of crisis.

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously to this list (07/13/22): [Please come to a strategic discussion this coming Friday July 15 at 12:00 pm at Maria's New Mexico Kitchen in Santa Fe](#)

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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July 13, 2022

Please come to a strategic discussion this coming Friday July 15 at 12:00 pm at Maria's New Mexico Kitchen in Santa Fe

(A few of you have received this invitation already. For you, this is a duplicate message. We look forward to seeing some of you on Friday!)

Dear friends --

This past Friday a few of us met to discuss some strategic aspects of our work here, as well as some realities and implications of the Ukraine war.

This coming Friday, July 15, at 12:00 pm we will have another lunch in the same place, Maria's New Mexico Kitchen, 550 W Cordova Road ([map](#)). We hope you will attend.

We are opening the meeting to a larger group, hence this email. Space is somewhat limited, so please [RSVP](#) by email or phone 505-265-1200 ASAP.

At this meeting we want to discuss the nuclear production bullseye painted on greater Santa Fe and northern New Mexico and what to do about it, in the context of changes we are seeing in our world.

More:

The Study Group hasn't changed politically but our country has -- radically. As we [said](#) back in May, abandonment of Ukraine war opposition by progressives in Congress is part of a momentous political realignment.

That pro-war realignment is part and parcel of the co-optation and/or intentional destruction of most peace and disarmament organizations by liberal foundations aligned with the Democratic Party. (This is a long story but a vital one. See for example Dave Lindorff, *Salon*, "[Peace-washing: Is a network of major donors neutralizing activism in the peace movement?](#)"; Sada Aksartova, "[In Search of Legitimacy: Peace Grant Making of U.S. Philanthropic Foundations, 1988-1996](#)," Darwin BondGraham, "[Coopting the Antinuclear Movement](#)," *Counterpunch*.)

Tacit support by local liberals, progressives, and environmentalists for the industrial pit production mission at LANL is an unfortunate part of this realignment.

If allowed to proceed this huge new mission will destroy our communities. This will happen through the economic forces unleashed on housing markets, through the subordination of our politics and educational institutions, through economic and political pressures placed on the Pueblos, through road congestion, through development pressures in our cities and counties and the resulting blight, shoddy construction, and sprawl. New Mexico would become a nuclear colony as never before. Inequality would grow even more.

Gentrification in places like Dixon is already well underway. Even remote locales like Ojo Sarco (new local nickname: "Dixon Heights") are feeling the pressure. In Santa Fe, realtor Don Barker recently defined the lower-end housing market as "less than \$800,000."

As for the Pueblos, we were recently contacted by a man in partnership with former tribal council members seeking to build on Pueblo land (among other things) a campground for "space tourism" on the Main Hill Road. The campground's obvious market is LANL construction workers, not tourists, as we told him. We alerted allies in the Pueblo. It's in their hands now.

The wider point is that \$20 billion or so in sudden, [additional](#) nuclear weapon investments at LANL over the coming decade or so creates ample carpetbagging opportunities, in much the same way as the "WIPP Route" around Santa Fe created new sprawl. The road, not the waste, is the greater problem.

Recently, Santa Fe narrowly missed hosting a national administrative-training-conference center for nuclear weapons at the Midtown Campus (NNSA's proposal), in part thanks to our and others' collective work. So far we and others have done our level best to oppose John Rizzo's ugly, inappropriate mid-rise tech-worker apartments in western Santa Fe and central Los Alamos. The proposed new road through the Caja del Rio, and the proposed new Rio Grande bridge, also appear dead for now, as attractive as they are for NNSA and LANL.

The proposed new power line through the Caja is still very much alive however. So are, as far as we know, LANL's efforts to acquire new offsite, out-of-LA-County facilities, in addition to the three properties NNSA has already leased in Santa Fe.

There are a lot of pieces on the pit production chessboard.

NNSA and Triad are desperate, as we will discuss on Friday. The good news is that LANL's pit mission is failing and could be made to fail farther and faster. Deadlines won't be met. I won't tell you all the ways this is happening in an email. You will have to come on Friday for that.

As an aside, you may not know that nuclear weapons production at the Pantex plant in Amarillo is now proceeding on a 24/7 basis. The whole nuclear complex is straining to rebuild itself while upping warhead design and production.

Under conditions of megadrought and economic decline, every additional commitment to nuclear weapons as the centerpiece of our economy -- and willy-nilly, our culture -- makes it more likely that these commitments will be permanent.

What's it all for? Not for deterrence, so-called. It's for arms racing with Russia -- for MIRVing a new missile with new warheads built with a few new pits, sort of a lame demonstration of "prowess" -- at a life-cycle cost of a quarter trillion bucks (exclusive of warheads). Money like that does grease a lot of wheels. From the Triad/Heinrich/Lujan perspective, it's also to get Congress so vested in emergency, then permanent, pit production at LANL that it halts investment in South Carolina's much more appropriate site and facility, so as to double down at LANL again and again, bringing an unending gusher of money, and new facilities, and new hires. The SC site cannot produce pits for a decade or more and may never. LANL is supposed to begin next year.

A program this [vast](#) seems to escape the ability or political license of journalists to write about it.

Fewer of LANL's hires will be local than many expect. NNSA has written that northern New Mexico is "depleted" of the skills and qualities LANL needs. In private meetings, NNSA says the northern New Mexico labor market is "tapped out."

There is no way LANL can execute the pit mission with its existing facilities. The \$13 or so billion in construction alone this decade -- for new construction and for repairs - is just the beginning. Those who think pit production at LANL is the "lesser of two evils" don't understand what's coming, if we don't stop this now. "[Resist beginnings.](#)"

We are working intensely, and making some progress. "Horrible" truths are beginning to dawn on members of Congress about this. One of them: The U.S. has no viable strategy for managing its bloated nuclear stockpile. Too many pigs got to the trough.

Thank you for your help and hard work so far. Without it, there would already be a new factory at LANL, [three or four times over](#).

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

PS: Consider penciling into your calendars a **panel discussion we will have in Los Alamos at Fuller Lodge on Tuesday August 2, at 7:00 pm**. We will discuss a less-known aspect of the Manhattan Project. According to General Groves, the Project was organized and conducted with the idea that Russia was the primary, enduring enemy. Already by the fall of 1945 the first targeting study of twenty Russian cities was developed. By June 1946 the first theoretical nuclear war plan against Russia was approved by the Joint Chiefs. Pit production was by then taking place at Los Alamos' big new plutonium facility, "DP Site," which began operation a month after Japan surrendered.

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously to this list (06/14/22) [Reminder: talk and discussion in Santa Fe tomorrow, 6/15/22, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. "Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine"](#)

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June 14, 2022

Reminder: talk and discussion in Santa Fe tomorrow, 6/15/22, 6:00 to 8:00 pm, "Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine"

[Permalink](#) for this letter (tomorrow). Please forward. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously (06/07/22): [Taos meeting Friday 6/10: "Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine."](#) [Santa Fe meeting Wednesday 6/15: meanwhile coffee, open house at LASG tomorrow, 8:30 am](#)

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"Thus in the deepest sense the walk to the gas chamber was only the last consequence of a philosophy of business as usual," wrote Bettelheim. It was "a last step in no longer defying the death instinct, which might also be called the principle of inertia." ("Inflation, Scarcity and the Road to Survival," Andrew Nikiforuk, 6/10/22, The Tye)

Dear friends --

As mentioned previously, the Study Group will convene a talk by me (Greg) and discussion in Santa Fe **tomorrow evening, Wednesday 6/15/22, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation**, 107 W Barcelona Road ([map](#)).

Our title and topics will be **"Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine."**

We will be happy to entertain and answer if we can, burning questions on related topics as well. Our state, country, and world are now in a far greater crisis than most people realize. The question of nuclear war is now more current than at any time in the last 40 years. Our "polycrisis" bears on LANL's massive expansion, and our "democratic" processes and values, far more than we can summarize in these letters and bulletins. We need to talk face to face. Our communities are asleep.

Please come tomorrow if you can.

Background (repeated from the 6/7 letter, so much could be added but we'll do that tomorrow)

As mentioned last time, some background for the Ukraine part of the discussion was provided in our [May 10 letter](#). A lot has happened since then, obviously.

This [May 10 letter](#) to selected congressional staff is our most recent published update on plutonium warhead core ("pit") production. Follow the links for more.

Two of the most important articles on what is really in play "in Ukraine" this week:

- [Some Other People's Thoughts On The U.S. Role In The Ukraine And Europe](#), "Bernhard," Moon of Alabama blog, 6/7/22, citing
- ["The World Doesn't Work That Way Anymore,"](#) Alistair Crooke, *Strategic Culture*, 6/6/22.

These analysts may or may not be right, but if what they say is shocking to you please accept our sympathies. We are all in for rude awakenings.

Also, today [i.e. 6/7/22] someone sent us an interesting Anatol Lieven piece, ["Why Russian intellectuals are hardening support for war in Ukraine"](#) (*Responsible Statecraft*, 6/6/22), citing the important essay by Dmitri Trenin, ["How Russia must reinvent itself to defeat the West's 'hybrid war'"](#) (RT, 5/23/22).

As to the escalating problem of censorship and propaganda, please see many of the recent articles at [Consortium News](#), now under fire precisely because of its quality and veracity. Again, our democratic losses are greater than most people realize.

There will be no open house tomorrow at the Study Group

Last week's open house was quite successful, we thought. Despite that, there will be no open house tomorrow at the Study Group. We were delighted to learn late last week that our children and grandchildren would be visiting this week. We can't manage an open house at this time.

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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June 7, 2022

Taos meeting Friday 6/10: "Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine;" Santa Fe meeting Wednesday 6/15; meanwhile coffee, open house at LASG tomorrow, 8:30 am

[Permalink](#) for this letter (tomorrow). Please forward. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously (06/05/22): [Monday 6/6 in-person/virtual discussion with Indivisible Albuquerque: nuclear weapons, Ukraine, propaganda, and what we can do: yard signs available: LASG coffee Wednesday 6/8 8:30 am](#)

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Dear fellow citizens --

The world is changing very fast now, faster than many of us realize.

Taos meeting this Friday, 6/10

Please join us on Friday, June 10th from 1:30-3:30 pm at the Taos Public Library, 402 Camino De La Placita ([map](#)), for "Propaganda, plutonium, and the proxy war in Ukraine." Erich Kuerschner, scholar and activist, will also speak. There will be plenty of time for discussion.

If you are in the area and are concerned about the war in Ukraine and about radically expanding nuclear weapons production at Los Alamos please come, and bring a friend!

Santa Fe meeting next Wednesday, 6/15

For those in the greater Santa Fe area we will take up these same topics (or a close variation, incorporating new material and events) a week from tomorrow, Wednesday 6/15, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 107 W Barcelona Road ([map](#)).

Background

As mentioned last time, some background for the Ukraine part of the discussion was provided in our [May 10 letter](#). A lot has happened since then, obviously.

This [May 10 letter](#) to selected congressional staff is our most recent published update on plutonium warhead core ("pit") production. Follow the links for more.

Two of the most important articles on what is really in play "in Ukraine" this week:

- [Some Other People's Thoughts On The U.S. Role In The Ukraine And Europe](#), "Bernhard," Moon of Alabama blog, 6/7/22, citing
- ["The World Doesn't Work That Way Anymore,"](#) Alistair Crooke, *Strategic Culture*, 6/6/22.

These analysts may or may not be right, but if what they say is shocking to you please accept our sympathies. We are all in for rude awakenings.

Also, today someone sent us an interesting Anatol Lieven piece, "[Why Russian intellectuals are hardening support for war in Ukraine](#)" (*Responsible Statecraft*, 6/6/22), citing the important essay by Dmitri Trenin, "[How Russia must reinvent itself to defeat the West's 'hybrid war'](#)" (RT, 5/23/22).

As to the escalating problem of censorship and propaganda, please see many of the recent articles at [Consortium News](#), now under fire precisely because of its quality and veracity. Again, our democratic losses are greater than most people realize.

Open house

As noted previously, tomorrow morning at 8:30 am the Study Group will serve beverages and snacks from 8:30 am to 10:30 am or so to anyone who would like to visit. There's a lot to talk about these days!

If this proves valuable we will do it again the following Wednesday, and so on.

Right now we have plenty of organic kale from the backyard garden! Please help us eat it up!

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

Los Alamos Study Group

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June 5, 2022

Monday 6/6 in-person/virtual discussion with Indivisible Albuquerque: nuclear weapons, Ukraine, propaganda, and what we can do; yard signs available; LASG coffee Wednesday 6/8 8:30 am

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously: (5/10/22) "[Thursday evening public discussion in Albuquerque: Ukraine, propaganda, progressives supporting Nazis and war](#)"

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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[Contribute](#). Volunteer. Contact [Greg or Trish](#).

Dear friends and colleagues --

We -- Trish and Greg -- have recently returned from family visits and have been furiously catching up these past few days.

The event tomorrow

[Indivisible Albuquerque](#), a Democratic-Party-affiliated group, has asked Greg to speak on nuclear weapons, Ukraine, and what we all might do to help. They have kindly opened their meeting tomorrow to any of you who would like to attend, either in-person or virtually.

The talk and discussion will be at O'Neill's Pub (4310 Central SE, just W of Washington St., [map](#)) at about 6:00 pm ([video link here](#)).

Some background for the Ukraine part of the discussion was provided in our [May 10 letter](#). A lot has happened since then of course, some of which we will discuss tomorrow (and in other meetings this month).

Some of the new developments regarding plutonium warhead core ("pit") production were summarized in this [May 10 letter](#) to selected congressional staff.

This should be a very interesting discussion. We hope you can attend one way or another!

Yard signs

We have finally gotten around to printing a new yard sign for our home and office:



As you can see it is similar to our antiwar billboard in Bernalillo ([photo](#)).

This yard sign is 30" x 48" and is made of rugged heavy vinyl with grommets in the corners enabling it to be strung between, say, two metal fenceposts. If you want one

we will ask our local printer to print one for you! Last year they cost \$60 each. The posts cost ~\$6 each at a hardware, home, or farm store. We also have a handy tool for pounding them in and perhaps (a) volunteer(s) will appear to do that. We have one additional order so far. We'd love to have ten, or a hundred!

You could also design and print your own sign. The point is: speak up in whatever way feels best to you, and do it publicly please.

Open house

On Wednesday morning at 8:30 am the Study Group will be serving coffee, tea and of course lovely water, from 8:30 am to 10:30 am or so, to anyone who would like to visit. There's a lot to talk about these days and it is not happening in enough places! Also, we are meeting new people and we'd love to have a scheduled opportunity to meet some of you in a more relaxed setting.

If this proves valuable we will do it again the following Wednesday, and so on.

At the moment we have a surfeit of organic kale from the backyard garden and will be harvesting more on Wednesday morning, so we should have some to give away! Please help us eat it up!

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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Los Alamos Study Group

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May 10, 2022

Thursday evening public discussion in Albuquerque: Ukraine, propagand, progressives supporting Nazis and war

[Permalink](#) for this letter (later). Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously: (02/03/22) "[What can we in New Mexico do?](#)"

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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Dear friends and colleagues --

The push for a longer and more intense war in Ukraine has only gotten worse since our Bulletin of 12 days ago ("[Bulletin 299: Emergency call to action: stop Biden's proposed \\$33 billion war escalation](#)").

Apart from the stalwart [ANSWER Coalition](#) and our own small efforts, we are unaware of any current organized opposition in New Mexico to the U.S. war against Russia in Ukraine and elsewhere.

No other New Mexico organization, church, political party or group within a party, and no member of our congressional delegation is *to our knowledge* doing or saying anything against this war.

We haven't made an extensive search and perhaps we are mistaken. We would be delighted if that were the case! *Please tell us if so!* Also feel free to let us know if you are an active part of any national organized opposition we should know about.

But regardless of whether opposition to the war in New Mexico is entirely absent, or just very weak and invisible, we are in a very strange situation, in this state and in this country. We evidently need to talk about this. So:

On Thursday May 12, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, in the large meeting room of the Albuquerque Mennonite Church, 1300 Girard Blvd. NE ([map](#)), the Los Alamos Study Group will lead a discussion about the conflict in Ukraine.

This war, long in the making, is reshaping the world's security architecture as well as affecting U.S. domestic politics in every area, from climate and energy policies, to our growing propaganda and declining freedom of speech, to our economy.

The risk of even more direct, and even more open, U.S. and NATO involvement in the war against Russia is very high. An abyss lies before us. Most actors in both political parties are enthusiastically rushing toward its gaping mouth -- including, as James Carden recently wrote, American [progressives](#). *Not one* progressive member of the House joined the 10 Republican members who voted against the "[Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022](#)," signed into law by President Biden yesterday.

Why are American progressives supporting Nazi forces and a Ukrainian government that protects and rewards them? Why do so few people question official narratives about the war, and the actions of the Ukrainian government in the war? Why don't more people seek high-quality, independent sources of information to compare and cross-check what is happening and why, when so much is at stake? Why are so many intelligent people ignorant of the genocidal policies enacted by the post-Maidan Ukraine governments?

Also as of yesterday, the proposed new package of military and other aid to Ukraine was [separated](#) from the more controversial covid relief package so it could be passed by Congress more quickly. Why are "we" -- that's all of us now -- sending mountains of weapons into a war zone, which will deepen and prolong it this war, killing more and more people? Where is the peace community? Is there one?

What can be done about this?

Please come and join in this important discussion! Bring your friends!

Related, our promised antiwar billboard went up in Algodones on May 5 ([photo](#)). We need to get a proper web page up with resources about the war ASAP and hope to have that done by Thursday.

Some of you have probably seen Greg's interview with Brian Becker at *BreakThrough News* ("[Escalation in Ukraine: The Nuclear War Danger is Real](#)," May 4, 2022). This has had a lot of views and was further spread by [Caitlin Johnstone](#) and then [Consortium News](#).

Previous recent work on this subject: on our lists:

- [Bulletin 294: Please consider forwarding this fine statement from UNAC re Ukraine](#), Mar 23, 2022
- [Bulletin 293: Ukraine conflict: If you want a ceasefire \(as we do\), stop firing](#), Mar 5, 2022
- [Bulletin 292: Statement on the Ukraine conflict and war with Russia](#), Mar 1, 2022
- [The Ukraine Conflict: What's Behind It? Why Is It Important?](#) Sep 26, 2015 presentation, reposted Feb 25, 2022

In other places:

- [The Huge Gap Between How Serious Nuclear War Is And How Seriously It's Being Taken](#), *caitlanjohnstone.com*, Mar 16, 2022
- [Nuclear expert speaks on the dangers of war between the US and Russia](#), *World Socialist Web Site*, Mar 15, 2022
- [A Proposed Solution to the Ukraine War](#), *Consortium News*, Greg Mello, Mar 7, 2022; Zeit-Fragen Cooperative, [Current Concerns: The Automatic Earth](#)

The Study Group has an "inner group" with whom we share a little bit of the very best information and analyses as we see and find it daily. Some of us share a lot more between one another. Structurally, this situation isn't too great. Trish and I are full-time nuclear experts, with non-inconsiderable entre in Washington despite our disarmament, peacenik, and climate-hawk views. We can't drop our litigation, decisionmaker education, lobbying, and media work to go very far down the road of organizing, especially under current languid conditions.

So who will? At one time we could do both, but the U.S., and New Mexico, and their institutions including many NGOs, have now all moved far to the *de facto* political "right," at least as the term was used 20 years ago. And we all now live and work in an almost total propaganda sphere, with the confusion that entails for so many. So while the war and its support -- by progressive Democrats, for example -- is a huge problem, it is also a symptom of even bigger problems that affect all the issues we face.

Right now, the best simple thing I can think of to do is to throw open our "inner group" to more people. We have powerful adversaries, so we cannot create an open list where trolls take over as we almost invariably have seen elsewhere. If you want to be in a much larger information flow about the issues we are working on, please write.

We always ask that you think of volunteering with us, and we must perforce always look for financial support as well.

See you on Thursday!

Greg Mello and Trish Williams-Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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February 13, 2022

Please call or write your legislators ASAP: help defeat the Hydrogen hub Development Act, HB 228.

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously: (02/03/22) "[What can we in New Mexico do?](#)"

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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Good afternoon, friends --

Today I would just like to forward [yesterday's alert](#) from Paul, Roxanne, and the rest of the team at [Retake Our Democracy](#), in which they urgently ask for calls, letters, and virtual conversations with state legislators to defeat the latest incarnation of the Hydrogen hub Development Act, [House Bill 228](#).

It would be well to make those calls and write those letters as soon as possible -- TODAY and TOMORROW, and until this bill is defeated.

Retake has produced an excellent summary of what's at stake ("[Our Best Shot at Stopping the Hydrogen Train and Thoughts on Long-Term Legislative Strategy](#)"), and their good summary of the issues is also [here](#) as a stand-alone product.

In the New Mexico legislature, especially in years with only four weeks of regular session, time is always of the essence. Now there are only four days left in this session and decisions will be made very quickly. As Retake explains, the Governor is pushing this bill hard, despite previous defeats this session.

We have inveighed against this suite of technology deceptions for a long time in many places, in letters, newspaper comments, full page ads, and a teach-in at the Capitol. Please help defeat this bill.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group --

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February 3, 2022

"What can we in New Mexico do?"

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously(1/10/22): [Guest editorial: environmental analysis at LANL?: Archbishop virtual press conference re nuclear disarmament tomorrow 9 am](#)

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious.

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Good afternoon, friends --

(The more practical part of this letter is at the bottom. Scroll down to read it first if you wish. We left it there because those practical suggestions need to be properly introduced. Our historical context is changing.)

There is a great deal afoot in the public sphere, with many fine possibilities for engagement -- and enjoyment. While to a great extent this is always the case, the present moment seems more labile than usual.

Why? We aren't sure. Perhaps for these reasons:

- Some large propaganda narratives are getting awkward for our news media and officials to maintain. Others are strongly contested by significant minorities of voters. We could make a fairly long list.

In our view, it's important to realize that most of the mainstream media, especially the so-called elite media, are now providing more propaganda than truth regarding many or most major issues.

Much of the deception is accomplished by omission, but there is also an increasing slavishness -- parroting the same exact same perspectives uncritically -- and an increasing number of highly-consequential, flat-out lies. Most national journalists are now in the business of pitching narratives, with little or no questioning of authority.

The more "the news" is curated along official lines, and the more that independent journalism is policed, censored, and cancelled, the more obvious -- and uglier -- the situation is getting. Appropriately in our view, Americans now have very low -- and declining -- trust in the news media, with 34% having no trust at all. Only "7% of U.S. adults say they have 'a great deal' and 29% 'a fair amount' of trust and confidence in newspapers, television and radio news reporting." This is very good news.

As Caitlin Johnstone correctly [points out](#), our near-total immersion in officially-sanctioned propaganda -- propaganda that is in one way or another connected to the coercion, i.e. violence, that is the monopoly of the State -- creates deeper effects than just establishing this or that narrative. It undercuts independent thought *in general* and creates obedience and passivity *in general*. Many if not most of our political leaders and national security actors want us to trust The Authorities (i.e. themselves) reflexively and completely, including with our very lives and those of our children. They crave that trust to perpetuate their own careers, ideologies, and profits (e.g. LANL, see below). In other words, what's at stake are souls. Having a soul can be a source of economic friction in the "job market," and is antithetical to the entire notion of a "market" to the extent that the "jobs" on offer are degrading, immoral, or useless. We leave this here without going deeper, although it is very germane to our first suggestion below.

Much depends on whether young people can avoid being morally uprooted in this way, as they make decisions about their futures. They are the most vulnerable among us.

- Confidence in major institutions is appropriately low and [generally falling](#) over the last year. It's not good news that many of our major institutions are failing, but it is good news that many people see this.
- The number of people who think the country is [on the wrong track](#) has increased by 17% over the past 7 months, to 66%. They are right. This number is all but certain to grow further this year as environmental, economic, and foreign policy crises multiply, with few responsible and effective policies visible.
- Officially, inflation is at a [39-year high](#). It is higher still if historic methods of calculation are [faithfully applied](#), as most people see for themselves.
- Resource limitations are becoming economic limitations. In the U.S., and First World generally, declining prosperity is [inevitable and underway](#), even as inequality reaches [grotesque proportions](#). A growing global energy crisis is now upon us, the scale and effects of which we in the US see only the smallest part, so far.
- Globally, the US empire is failing. The exceptionalist ideology that has guided this and every administration so far is resulting in historic foreign policy debacles. We agree with "b" at the [Moon of Alabama](#) and many other analysts that 1) since Obama, the U.S. has attempted to use Ukraine as a battering ram to harm and ultimately break up Russia and 2) that this has failed and will continue to fail, at great cost to U.S. dreams of continued world domination.

Truly historic changes are now occurring. "Business as usual" has ended; the "old normal" is gone and the situation will remain too dynamic for any "new normal" to stabilize. The U.S. as we have known it is more or less in free-fall. So there's a lot to do -- many ways to open our eyes, and to serve.

It is better to act in freedom by what light we have, rather than be acted upon, as a victim or a "non-player character." As Spanish physicist Antonio Turiel put it ([video](#), at 23:35) at our November 5, 2021 [demonstration](#),

We are now in a situation in which some sort of collapse cannot be avoided. But what you can choose is the way in which you are collapsing. You can collapse in a more democratic manner, or you can collapse in a more authoritarian manner. This is the actual truth of the thing...go local, go resilient...climate change is real and it is going to complicate your life. You are going to struggle with many things at the same time, but if you understand well what you are doing, and you make a decision to do the right thing, you can [be mentally free]. You can improve your life in many senses. It may be different from your current expectations, but you can live a very plentiful life. If you just take the [upper? meaning, higher or more noble?] decisions -- and mainly, you do not allow others to make your decisions for you.

People often ask, what can I do -- say, about the tremendous push to build a nuclear weapons factory at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)?

Before answering, it's important to realize that the mental framework most of us bring to this question, and really to all the major crises in our society, is no longer adequate.

We don't live in a democracy. Government responds [mainly to the super-wealthy and corporations](#).

This is a plea to be realistic. The world will not be rescued -- or in New Mexico, a fascist, neocolonial dystopia avoided -- with an hour's work here and there by disorganized individuals, or by people who don't want to offend the powers-that-be (which in northern and central New Mexico includes the nuclear labs and the ruling Democratic Party).

The powers-that-be will change in major ways only if they sufficiently fear for their careers. Until then, they are the *last* people who will be persuaded. Meanwhile there are other audiences, more receptive, which can be reached directly. In this state, this is what we mostly recommend as explained below.

There's a big difference between making a gesture, and planning realistically how to win and then carrying out that plan. Castles in the air are fine, but as Henry Thoreau said we need to build foundations under them.

So let's. Many of us are constrained in various ways -- by our health, by our obligations as parents and caregivers, by economic precarity, by the crucial roles some of us have already undertaken in society. Believe me, we get all that. We each contribute how we can.

But let's be serious regardless. **"Make-believe democracy," buoyed by an altogether unwarranted optimism, is perhaps the greatest problem we face, after sheer distraction.**

The introduction to Robert Bly's *The Sibling Society* contains these pertinent lines:

It is hard in a sibling society to decide what is real. We participate in more and more nonevents. A nonevent transpires when the organizer promises an important psychic or political event and then cheats people, providing material only tangentially related. An odd characteristic of the sibling society is that no one effectively *objects*. Some sort of trance takes over if enough people are watching an event simultaneously. It is a contemporary primitivism, "participation mystique," a "mysterious participation of all the clan."

Kierkegaard once, in trying to predict what the future society would be like, offered this metaphor: People will put up a poster soon saying, *Tonight John Erik will skate on thin ice at the very center of the pond. It'll be very dangerous. Please come.* Everyone comes, and John Erik skates about three inches from shore, and people say, "Look, he's skating on thin ice at the very center of the pond!" A lecturer says: *On Friday night we will have a revolution.* When Friday night comes, the hall is filled, and the radical talks passionately and flamboyantly for an hour and a half; then he declares that a revolution took place here.

We don't need "activists" and we don't need "protests." We need to seek truth, and we need resistance based on it.

Obviously, "environmental cleanup" is not resistance and has nothing to do with nuclear disarmament -- except at LANL, insofar as removal of legacy transuranic (TRU) waste competes for space in the shipments of new TRU waste from pit production heading to WIPP. Which it very much does.

Apart from this, "cleanup," to the extent it is real, without the quote marks, is a *separate* good thing from preventing a nuclear arms race. LANL will never be completely -- or likely very much more -- cleaned up, of course. Legacy TRU waste, some of which is dangerous until it is permanently buried deeply at WIPP, can and should be removed as soon as possible.

By the way, the U.S. will never sign the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW). We were deeply involved in the negotiations that produced this Treaty, but we were never so deluded as to think the U.S. would sign it -- or that it would be a good basis for organizing in the United States, let alone in New Mexico! It's one of those generic distractions we mentioned earlier, except insofar as it shows that many countries have rejected nuclear weapons and are starting to take action to affirm a global norm against them. The TPNW does *not* "make nuclear weapons illegal" for countries which have not signed and ratified it. The *use* of nuclear weapons was and is already illegal in nearly all circumstances under long-standing humanitarian law, as is the *planning* to use nuclear weapons (under the Genocide Convention), as is the *foreign basing* of nuclear weapons (under the NPT). For its States Parties, the TPNW expresses, refreshes, and extends these laws and norms in important ways. In time the States Parties may decide to take further action together against nuclear weapons. All that is another story, for another time.

As always, letters to editors (LTEs) and guest editorials can be helpful but they will not even remotely suffice absent nonviolent direct action and direct, targeted education in various forms. The expansion of the nuclear weapons mission at LANL isn't occurring for rational reasons. It's happening because of greed and the lust to dominate. Don't imagine that your excellent, rational arguments will persuade NM decisionmakers. They won't.

So what can be done?

Please understand that New Mexico is in a special situation. Generalities won't do. The LANL pit production project is the largest nuclear warhead project in the U.S. It is happening here and now. If we don't oppose this *in particular* we aren't opposing nuclear weapons at all. We are just blowing hot air.

1. LANL is having a hard time recruiting for its pit production and other missions. We hear this from various sources in both New Mexico and in Washington, DC. The language we are hearing is that Northern New Mexico is pretty much "drained of bodies"... "tapped out." *This is one of the greatest concerns of nuclear managers nationwide -- and at LANL.* Two or three thousand more staff must be hired, plus temporary construction workers, on a net basis. Roughly 500 staff retire or are otherwise lost each year. This is a real problem for LANL and a real opportunity for peace-loving people.

The lab is "partnering" with our NM colleges, universities, and high schools (see below) to build a "pipeline" (their word) to provide LANL with the workforce it needs for plutonium pit production.

Persuasion will be fruitful in many nonviolent, loving ways. You -- and your friends, your church, your organizations -- can do this.

For sickening (and helpful!) background, you can see some of LANL's hiring efforts [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Hopefully these pages will inspire you to stop this outrageous takeover of young bodies and minds before it goes any further.

Trish asks:

Do you want your child, relative, friend, or neighbor to get caught up in this whirlpool of plutonium? They will certainly be paid well, made to leave their conscience behind, be rewired to believe a brand new narrative, sign over their privacy and family history. And there is nothing "sustainable" about this, from any perspective.

Why aren't more New Mexicans outraged by LANL's blatant takeover of our schools, our youth and our workforce? Surely some of you could speak to your church, schools, families, at your work places, at your city and county councils. Why aren't more people getting mad about this? I don't hear much from any of the community organizations about LANL's takeover and ruination of our state. Have all of you given up? You think NM isn't worth fighting for? Are you thinking New Mexico is the "sacrifice zone" and we just have to swallow what crap we are given?

This makes me furious. I cannot understand people who spout how much they love New Mexico and at the same time stand by and let LANL and the NNSA just walk all over us and ruin our state and our children's future. Climate change and poverty are here, but LANL's goal of manufacturing plutonium pits for nuclear weapons does not have to be a part of our future. As New Mexicans we already have a lot on our plate to try and combat climate change, poverty, lack of healthcare, bottom of the charts quality of education, etc. Why would anybody want to damage our state and our children's future even more by inviting LANL to control, destroy, and contaminate at will?

According to [LANL](#), there are now eight formal partnerships in place between LANL and regional colleges and high schools for workforce "pipeline" programs, mainly for pit production, including the following universities and colleges. They also have partnered with some, possibly all, northern NM high schools. These institutions are:

- **New Mexico Highlands University** (Computer Science, Teacher Education)
- **Northern New Mexico College** (Radiation Protection)
- **Santa Fe Community College** (Science, Machining)
- **University of New Mexico-Los Alamos** (Mechanical Engineering, Project Management)
- **Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation** (Los Alamos Employees' Scholarship Fund, Northern New Mexico Inquiry Science Education Consortium)

There are many ways to intervene at these and any schools. Educate the educators and keep the war machine out of our schools. Call your friends and get started!

Here are some other suggestions for effective disarmament action *in New Mexico*. This is not an all-inclusive list by any means, and as you can see some categories are broad.

2. Relentlessly bird-dog politicians in public events so they can't get away from the LANL pit production issue. *Our concerns, and their actions, have to be focused here and now or they are worse than useless.* "Nuclear disarmament" is much too general and pie-in-the-sky. "No pit production anywhere" is an artful dodge, since LANL is the only place pit production can happen for at least a decade and a half. That is the crucial and decisive decade in human existence.

You may ask, "Whom do you serve, really?" "Why are more weapons of mass destruction a good thing, and why are they good for New Mexico?" You will have dozens of similar questions.

Don't ask them for an environmental impact statement, by the way. As we said last time, that water has long ago [gone under the bridge](#).

3. Let politicians know you are pulling any and all contributions and you are reaching out to everyone you know to do the same (and if you want, change your registration away from their party and tell them about it) unless their party leaders and congressional representatives start visibly opposing preparations for pit production at LANL. Go on the political offensive, visibly and forcefully.

4. Organize nonviolent direct actions that impede LANL operations and recruitment, of any of 1,000 different ways.

5. Recruit individuals and especially groups to sign the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)." The bizarre reluctance of many people to stand with others in public against pit production is revealing.

6. Raise money so we can hire help at the Study Group to take advantage of the abundant opportunities we see, and to **advertise widely** ([like this](#)).

7. Find ways for churches to support young people in climate and disarmament vocations and gap years -- including working with us. We have helped many young people on their way to important careers, and some have told us that their time with us was life-altering in a very positive way.

New Mexico's negative contribution to climate protection comes in two major ways: as a leading oil and gas state, and as the leading nuclear warhead state, upholding the Empire with better and more* weapons of mass destruction. (*Yes, *more*, in the case of pits for the proposed W87-1 warhead vs. using only the existing W87-0

warheads in a single warhead configuration as currently deployed, with no "upload hedge.") Climate leadership in New Mexico means decreasing one or both of those major negative "contributions." NM's recent increases in oil and gas production are [swamping any climate benefits](#) from the state's proposed energy transition.

8. Organize meetings at which we can speak and educate others. It takes a lot more time to organize meetings than to speak at them or conduct them more generally. Our knowledge and relationships make our work among decisionmakers in Washington DC uniquely valuable, and our analysis needs a much wider audience. We need time to do these things. We are counting on you to help organize in New Mexico.

9. There need to be conversations among Catholics as to how to put Archbishop Wester's articulate [Letter on nuclear disarmament into practice locally](#). It is up to us to follow through and fulfill the teaching provided in that Letter. *The Archbishop's letter is not self-executing*, in other words. We aren't sure that everyone understands that, at this point. It's up to us. It always was.

Will the Archbishop and the Archdiocese sign the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)," we wonder? Twice in the past, the Archdiocese has agreed to statements calling for no new construction pending environmental analysis (in the early 1990s, hard copy in files) and [no pit production](#) at LANL. (The Archdiocese signed as part of the New Mexico Council of Churches, which included the Archdiocese. We were present.) So the "Call for Sanity" is not necessarily a huge leap for the Archdiocese.

10. Other churches can follow the same path, again with the consciousness that general disarmament statements are like motherhood and apple pie: standard political fare. (In fact the US government has *already* agreed to complete nuclear disarmament, *in a binding treaty*. That happened in 1968; the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons went into force in 1970.)

11. Recruit volunteer help for us. Volunteer yourself!

12. Get out of your political comfort zone. Most of you are Democrats. Reach out to other parties. Bring Independents, Republicans, Libertarians, Greens, and Socialists into the picture whenever and wherever possible. In recent history, some Republican presidents (hint: whose last names are Bush), cut the U.S. nuclear arsenal a lot. Clinton and Obama did not. Find and promote anti-war and nuclear disarmament candidates in *every* party.

Thanks for all you are doing, and for your solidarity in these challenging times.

Greg and Trish, for the Los Alamos Study Group

Los Alamos Study Group

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January 10, 2022

Guest editorial; environmental analysis at LANL?; Archbishop virtual press conference re nuclear disarmament tomorrow 9 am

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously (1/05/22) [A wonderful New Year to all -- thank you: fundraising, recruitment reminder: Call for Sanity: Innovation Triangle](#)

*****Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#)*****

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Dear friends --

Good afternoon everyone. As the week gets started there are some fresh developments that may be of interest.

1. Guest editorial submitted to *Santa Fe New Mexican*

This may be useful to you in your own outreach activities. We don't know when it will be published so it seems better to send it along now.

Letters to editors (LTEs) and guest editorials remain powerful tools, within reach of everyone. (See "[How to write effective letters to the editor](#)" and "[Thousands of Hearts and Minds](#)." [Ed Kinane](#)). You will see and say things differently than we do, which is wonderful. LTEs affect not just editorial stances but also news assignments.

Anyway here it is. Forward to your friends if you like. Sooner or later it will appear in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, we believe.

Can Santa Fe survive as a nuclear weapons suburb?

Many Santa Feans understand that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the most lavishly-funded nuclear weapons facility in the world, has embarked on a new mission: making plutonium warhead cores ("pits") on an industrial scale, to involve 4,000 full-time personnel and 24/7 operations.

It's among the dirtiest and most dangerous missions in the nuclear weapons complex, not seen at LANL since the 1940s. It's centered in an old facility built for research and development, now to be driven far beyond its original capacity.

LANL predicts it will spend \$18 billion to start up production over this decade. In constant dollars this is 15-fold what the Manhattan Project spent in New Mexico – indeed it dwarfs the cost of every other project in New Mexico history.

LANL's pits will cost at least \$50 million apiece, 200x their weight in gold. A single LANL pit, assuming all goes well, will cost as much as the combined annual salaries of 1,000 New Mexico teachers, or the equipment for 5,000 residential solar systems. A major reason our society is failing is because it is kept on a war footing.

This huge program has nothing to do with national security, except in the negative sense. It is not needed to maintain any stockpile weapon. As military planners say, it's (very) "early to need" and there are now perfectly sound, cheaper plans to do without LANL's production should something go wrong. Why wait?

After extensive analysis under both Obama and Trump, in 2017 the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) firmly rejected what is now LANL's pit plan. The New Mexico delegation fought back, enlisting congressional hawks to help blackmail the Trump administration into building an unheard-of TWO pit factories. Up to now a barely-functioning Congress has gone along with the game. Time will tell just how long this scam holds up.

LANL's pit production, for all its cost and danger, just isn't enough to support any foreseeable US stockpile. If LANL is a pit factory, there will be two.

What about Santa Fe, then?

On July 18, 1945, Harry Truman wrote in his diary, "Believe Japs will fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland."

Will Santa Fe "fold up," democratically and spiritually, when this new "Manhattan" fully appears? Is the faith of that man of peace, Saint Francis – the very name of this City – obsolete to political leaders in the City, and the state?

What exactly would Santa Fe stand for or mean, if nuclear weapons – the ultimate in human disposability – became its main tangible product? When our schools and community colleges direct our young people into LANL's "pipeline" of plutonium minions? Or do you suppose their potential for creativity, compassion, and wisdom could be better developed in other ways, as the region faces the towering crises of the 21st century?

Can "Santa Fe" survive as a nuclear weapons suburb? It certainly can, as a kind of nuclear "Pottersville": a sprawling, increasingly-ugly "city" with growing inequality, a vacuum where shared ideals should be, with no real urban center or shared human purposes, its most cherished traditions washed away by too much money given to too few people doing "work" society doesn't need or want. It would be a City divided against itself to be sure, with plenty of poverty, human tragedy, and crime.

"Without vision, the people perish." Santa Fe could be a city that aims for justice and peace, where the obligation of respect binding us together is fostered, where the potential of every child is honored. Those political values are incompatible with manufacturing more nuclear weapons.

2. Is the Department of Energy (DOE) going to conduct a new Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL, and if so what would it mean?

The *Los Alamos Reporter* got an interesting scoop last Thursday evening (1/6/22): "[DOE/NNSA To Start New LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement](#)."

As you know, you and we worked hard for such an outcome -- up until September of 2020, when NNSA formally [ruled against writing a new SWEIS](#) for the foreseeable future.

A demand for a SWEIS is still one of the five elements of the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)."

If DOE is going to write a new SWEIS for LANL (there has been no formal announcement as yet), what would it mean? The short answer is, *we don't know* -- it depends on whether NNSA is willing to put LANL's pit production on the table, halting further investment in starting up industrial production. The chances of that right now are less than a snowball's in hell. *That could change and eventually it will*, but we aren't there yet. Color us "profoundly skeptical" of NNSA's SWEIS plan.

Concerned as we were that NNSA would use this announcement for public relations purposes *without even contemplating changing the pace of its investments at LANL even an iota*, we sent [this explanation](#) to a few key reporters in news media.

The *Los Alamos Reporter* wrote from those and other comments on Saturday ("[Los Alamos Study Group Responds To DOE/NNSA Announcement Of Plans For LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement](#), Jan 8, 2022).

As you will see there, the only reasons we can think of for NNSA to look at a SWEIS right now are these:

- to protect the agency against litigation for all the decisions and investments it has made between 2008 and today;
- to provide legal "cover" for future big projects, which NNSA will do without much if any transparency as to the actual nature of these projects, as was done in 2008, through the use of "scenarios" that encompass the projected impacts of projects without actually needing to be clear about what they are; and finally
- to provide disgustingly-great public relations to NNSA -- "see, we are so open -- you can submit a *comment!*" -- so that its pit production and any other controversial projects (e.g. industrial plutonium oxidation) can proceed unimpeded.

As we said over the weekend, the only way LANL could write a legal SWEIS now would be to rescind its [September 2020 decision](#) and halt further investment in pit production. Which would be great.

Now that NNSA has made this quasi-announcement, we will make sure the evolving situation is explained in the introduction to the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)."

3. Tomorrow (1/11/22), Archbishop John Wester will hold a press conference on his Pastoral Letter, "Living in the Light of Christ's Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament."

The press conference will be livestreamed at 9:00 am MST on [YouTube](#). The pastoral letter and a summary will be available online [here](#) tomorrow at 7 am.

The Archbishop's evolving nuclear disarmament ministry, which follows the strong leadership of Pope Francis, was most recently evident in a [prayer service and sign-dedicating ceremony](#) at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe last month.

He has promised to continue the disarmament conversation in his diocese, which we greatly welcome.

There is a rub. In our culture, feelings and opinions are easily conflated with actions. *Preparations for plutonium pit production at LANL comprise the largest nuclear warhead program in the United States. In fact it is the largest nuclear warhead program since the end of the Cold War. It is really not enough to speak out against nuclear weapons in general without addressing the uniquely huge, new, aggressive nuclear weapons program in his own Archdiocese.*

In other words, there is a danger of pious generalities that lack specific application. "Fine words butter no parsnips."

This is his and also our great challenge, here in the very belly of the nuclear beast. Virtue signalling, without sacrifice and risk, is now commonplace and it is worse than useless unless it quickly grows into something more serious -- which it often does not. Many people are all for "nuclear disarmament," in the abstract. That and three or four dollars will buy a cup of coffee at Starbucks.

But are they against pit production right now, right in front of them, and if so what are they going to do about it?

These are the conversations we have to have, no different than the difficult conversations we have to have about climate change. Platitudes will not suffice. The Archbishop will need help from all of us -- for political cover, for backing in the Church, and for tough love if needed -- to lead on this issue.

If you aren't able to be involved in helping the conversation evolve in the Archdiocese, each of us can also lead in our own churches, environmental groups, political parties, friendship networks, and organizations.

Be well, everybody, and more soon,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

Los Alamos Study Group

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January 5, 2022

A wonderful New Year to all -- thank you; fundraising, recruitment reminder; Call for Sanity; Innovation Triangle

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

Previously(12/07/21) [Los Alamos to "NM Innovation Triangle:" you are maintaining a menace to public safety and are ordered to demolish your building ASAP](#)

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#)

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Dear friends --

All of us here at the Study Group send our best wishes to each of you for a truly blessed new year! We hope you are all well, as we are.

We are very grateful for your solidarity and support -- and very excited about the opportunities we see in the year ahead.

1. Thank you; fundraising and recruitment reminder

To those of you who responded to last week's [funding appeal](#) or who sent contributions earlier, [thank you](#). Your support gives us wings. (We are quite proud of the [breadth](#) of our public support, by the way!)

It does not seem wise to spell out in detail those elements of our 2022 work plan which are languishing for lack of funds. You probably have some idea.

As we said in [Bulletin 290](#) we are [hiring](#). Among the best ways to advertise for help is through friends like you. Some of the specific projects we have in mind can be accomplished by short-term or part-time help, or by steady, mature volunteers. And then there are internships, which have helped quite a few people toward fulfilling careers. As we said last time, we [do](#) take care of our people. This costs money of course.

In a world all-too given over to pretense and spectacle, it may need to be said that we are dead serious about nuclear disarmament, starting with preventing production of additional warheads, or warheads of new types. The fact that the United States currently has no operating factory in which to produce plutonium warhead cores ("pits") is substantially due to our work here and in Texas over the past three decades, work in which some of you have played important roles.

If you want to be involved in this kind of serious work, please do call or write us. We depend a great deal on word-of-mouth referrals of people and financial resources. Be our ambassadors. If you need more background information, call or write. If you want us to speak to your group, we can probably find a good time.

That said, we are still working through a few emails from late 2021 we have not answered. If yours is among them, we'll get to you.

2. If you haven't done so, please endorse the Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production

To those who have endorsed this [Call](#), [thank you](#). This small act of solidarity helps strengthen resistance to a new arms race, in multiple ways.

The [list of endorsers](#) has been quietly growing -- three more as I write this (thank you!). As of today there are 60 organizational and business endorsers and 227 individual endorsers.

One question many of us are asking is, why aren't more environmental and progressive groups -- in New Mexico especially -- stepping up? This is after all only a small expression of solidarity, and the impacts of nuclear weapons production are profound and growing.

We've heard a few excuses but that's all they are. We don't want to embarrass organizations or individuals but -- [hello, where are you?](#) It is good to repeat that we have been working with what Arundhati Roy has called "the power of proximity" for three decades now. Please take our word for it: this is important. Passivity is the main problem. As Einstein put it: "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it."

Trish and her friends defeated a huge nuclear weapons factory very quickly and easily in Texas in 1990, simply by the ferocity of their immediate challenge. As she says, "They don't go where they aren't wanted." That quick, fierce opposition saved a [ton](#) of work. In New Mexico the tendency of the liberal community has been to mumble something about how important "jobs" are and then complain about the resulting nuclear waste. If we want the New Mexico delegation and news media to oppose what might be called "nuclear hypercolonialization," we better be clear about whether we want it ourselves. Fortunately, courage and clarity are as contagious as confusion and fear.

Often people ask "What can I do?" One good answer is: [please recruit endorsers to the Call](#).

We have made some small changes to the text, by the way. We've dropped the bullet point opposing Santa Fe's Midtown project, since that (failed) project has gone back to the drawing board (literally). NNSA and LANL have committed themselves to long-term leases in other Santa Fe locations as we have [described](#). In our judgment the "Midtown project" reference is increasingly confusing and may create hesitancy. LANL also seeks to modify an existing building to create a large new [biological](#)

[sciences laboratory](#) (BSL Level 2) in the area -- meaning, they want it quickly -- but Midtown has no suitable buildings.

We won't add new commitments in the text of the Call, of course. We did add a clarifying phrase about the proportion of discretionary spending devoted to the military during the pandemic years -- that proportion went down temporarily, due to massive covid relief that was passed in those two years (see footnote 14 in [Bulletin 288: US nuclear weapons since 2020: continuity and change](#), Dec 7, 2021).

We added some new introductory language, which we think is important:

At Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), plutonium warhead core ("pit") production is slated to begin in 2023 and ramp up through the mid-2020s, long before any "need" related to maintaining current US nuclear weapons, at current deployment levels. LANL's pit production program is required only for producing new warheads as soon as possible, not for maintaining any old ones.

We'll publish an overview of pit production for Congress and others just as soon as we can. Meanwhile, perhaps the best recent overview for the general public is this: [Unprecedented weapons production mission at LANL threatens regional decline, loss of autonomy: what can this committee do?](#) (slide deck for the Radioactive & Hazardous Materials Committee, Nov 12, 2021).

Slide 9 in that presentation provides some detail and references as to why LANL has never had an industrial pit mission before. Some people who don't want to oppose LANL's new mission excuse themselves by claiming LANL has had this mission for decades. Well, one doesn't plan to spend [\\$18 billion](#) to build and start up a capability one already has.

3. The LANL-oriented "Innovation Triangle" (see [LASG friends ltr \(11/30/21\) Nuclear-weapons-oriented "innovation triangle" developments, tax changes, pitched to NM legislature: see also the subsequent letter for more](#))

The developer may seek tax breaks for very wealthy investors like himself in the coming legislative session. To some extent the pump has been primed, as noted previously. At the moment we have no staff time to devote to legislative participation, whether to help good bills or expose bad ones, so please alert us if you hear of anything.

We do expect that the developer will eventually seek approvals and/or height limitation relief in the Santa Fe City Council. We see nothing on any current agenda but as you know these things can move VERY quickly if enough votes are quietly arranged ahead of the last-minute agenda notice.

It is well to repeat what we said in early December:

Please call the Santa Fe city councilors and tell them NOT to introduce, or vote for, any roll-back of the City's height ordinance -- least of all for [the New Mexico Innovation Triangle]. This "plutonium profit food chain" monstrosity would bring a whole train of negative consequences for the city, region, and state, as previously discussed [\[here\]](#).

Be well, everybody, and more soon,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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