

Los Alamos Study Group

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December 12, 2023

Resolution opposing all LANL pit production at Santa Fe City Council tomorrow evening, Wed. 12/13/23; web version of full-page ad on pit production available; help if you can and stay tuned for more

(Previous letter, 11/07/23): [Call for ceasefire in Palestine Thurs 11/9; halt LANL pit factory and expansion at the Santa Fe City Council Wed 11/8; come to the panel in Santa Fe on a new arms race Thurs 11/16](#)

Good morning friends --

My apologies for not writing sooner to this special, mostly local list. We've been busy as can be. We try to write only on relatively important occasions, or with ways to participate we think are particularly valuable locally, which we are doing today. Content of wider national interest goes to our main mailing list, which you are also on.

First, with the help of Santa Fe City Council members Renee Villarreal and Jamie Cassutt, a pretty good City resolution opposing all pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) will be introduced at the Santa Fe City Council meeting tomorrow evening. It is item 16c on the [agenda](#). The operative part of the resolution echoes the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)."

We are asking interested people to come to City Hall (200 Lincoln Ave, [map](#)) at about 6 pm. It is especially important for representatives of organizations, businesses, and churches who have endorsed the Call to come. Bring a small sign if you like with an appropriate message; we will bring extra signs also.

We aren't sure exactly when this resolution will be come up, as the order of business can be (and often is) changed. "Petitions from the Floor" usually happen close to 7 pm. We will also have a chance to meet among ourselves in the hallway west of the Council chambers. Trish and I will be happy to see everybody, and you will be able to meet our part-time organizer Bex Hampton as well. Bring your questions -- and insights!

There won't be a vote at this meeting. As you can see on the agenda, it won't be voted upon until 1/10/24, with a new Council in place, after it goes through the Quality of Life Committee on 1/3/24. **This meeting will be a chance to show the Council, and the news media, how much support there is for preventing construction and operation of a new plutonium warhead factory in Greater Santa Fe, before it goes into committee.**

As you can see on the [agenda](#), you can also attend virtually or submit written comment. If you are local, your physical presence would be more impactful than a virtual presence.

Contact information for the Mayor and current City Council is on [this page](#). On January 1, Alma Castro will be replacing Renee Villarreal and Pilar Faulkner will be replacing Chris Rivera. Two of the incumbents were reelected and four others did not need to run. To reach Ms. Castro or Ms. Faulkner before the City's web site is updated, the [City Clerk's office](#) will surely hold postal mail for them.

This resolution is non-binding, of course. Should it pass, and until it passes, we anticipate making good use of it however!

Second, tomorrow's *Santa Fe Reporter* will publish a "centerfold" ("double-truck") ad of ours, which can also be downloaded [here](#) as a pdf. In it, we try to lay out some of the basic issues -- local, national, and implicitly international -- involved in accelerating pit production in order to increase the U.S. nuclear stockpile of accurate, modern warheads. This ad can function as a sort of "primer" for your use. We have lacked an up-to-date, quasi-comprehensive, popular introduction to these issues. This was the cheapest way we could find to disseminate that information.

Of particular note is the role of LANL and therefore Santa Fe in enabling -- or not enabling -- an early increase in deployable accurate nuclear warheads, to use on a new missile system. Effective local resistance to this new mission has great national and international significance.

A second ad will follow next week.

Third, please help us recruit more endorsers for the [Call for Sanity](#). If everyone on this list signed up one more person or organization, that would be outstanding!

Fourth, please contact us if you want to more involved. Just call or write any of us ([Greg](#), [Trish](#), [Bex](#)), or call the office and leave a message (505-265-1200).

We will send updates on other issues to the larger list in a little while, which you will also get.

Thank you for your participation and support,

Sincerely,

Greg and Trish

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

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

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Our [Ukraine page](#), updated daily: the most accurate, important, and readable news and views we can find. Please read and forward widely. Please protest the central U.S. role in this war however and whenever you can.

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November 7, 2023

Call for ceasefire in Palestine Thurs 11/9; halt LANL pit factory and expansion at the Santa Fe City Council Wed 11/ 8; come to the panel in Santa Fe on a new arms race Thurs 11/16

Previous letter (10/09/23) [Press conference and rally, Santa Fe City Hall, Wednesday Oct. 11 at noon; mobilization also at 5 pm same place, same day; other actions](#)

Good morning, friends --

First, we want to amplify the ANSWER Coalition's call for actions in support of Palestine this Thursday, Nov. 9 ("[Shut it down for Palestine](#)"). Greg and Trish are on travel out of state until Saturday visiting elderly family members while we can, and just before that Greg was in Washington, DC, so we haven't been as visibly supportive of local actions as we would have liked to be. Like almost everyone, we are grieving, angry, and frustrated.

We are as yet unaware of specific actions planned in New Mexico this week. This throws the mantle of leadership to each of us. Please try in whatever ways you can, large or small, to keep up the pressure on for a ceasefire. We are all watching -- and supporting with our tax dollars -- a genocide. We don't need to provide any analysis or summary here; you all have access to those.

There are also a lot of developments in the *other* war, the bigger one, the war against Russia in Ukraine in which we are supporting neo-Nazis and the criminal former comedian posing as president of Ukraine. Please see and use our [Ukraine page](#), which we maintain daily. We are available to the news media and in principle to citizen groups, but we can only do so much. It is a shocking disappointment that so many "antinuclear" and arms control organizations and academics cannot oppose U.S. and NATO warmongering and domination (real and attempted), all of which decisively prevents meaningful arms control negotiations and more fundamentally, the cessation of conflict -- stopping the killing. This lack of opposition to U.S. foreign policy is an engineered outcome orchestrated by the liberal foundations which fund these groups -- in the case of grassroots groups, particularly the ironically-named Ploughshares Fund.

Second, The October 11 press conference and rally were rather successful overall, garnering local media attention ("[Anti-nuclear activists push City Council to oppose LANL pit production](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct 11, 2023) as well as modest attention in the nuclear policy world ("[...Antis denounce LANL pit production](#)," Oct 13, 2023):

About two dozen people, including members of the Los Alamos Study Group participated in the protest outside the council's municipal headquarters and spoke during a public comment period before the council.

"The planned addition of a plutonium warhead factory to LANL poses serious problems to the region, and is entirely unnecessary from any sane perspective," Greg Mello, director of the Los Alamos Study Group, [said in a statement](#). "The pits it would make aren't 'needed' for a long time, even assuming the U.S. retains a large arsenal, which binding international law requires the U.S. to negotiate away. LANL's Rube-Goldberg, Jerry-rigged pit program is driven by greed and the mistaken idea that more and different warheads will help bring peace into the world. Los Alamos is metastasizing into a more virulent global menace than ever, as well as an increasingly intrusive local headache."

Thank you to those who helped with that event, especially those who came from far away. We were particularly pleased by the trenchant yet *happy* tenor of those events.

We believe opposition to the LANL pit factory is unconsciously welcomed by many parties in the media and elsewhere, even by many so-called adversaries. The "scene" is incomplete and unbalanced without it. The hawkishness and fearfulness of the times call for committed resistance, which the above articles acknowledge to the extent they can given the modest turnout.

There are other news articles gestating, by the way. We believe an important one will appear tomorrow.

Third, if you are local please come to the Santa Fe City Council tomorrow and speak opposing preparations for LANL pit production and the metastasis of LANL into the surrounding region. You can also join the meeting and speak via Zoom; see these [participation details and the agenda](#). We explained our approach to this resolution in our [October 9 letter](#). As you can see there is no resolution on tomorrow's agenda; today is the City Council election and the first time we can reasonably hope for consideration and passage is the *next* meeting, on November 29.

Fourth, please help us recruit endorsers to the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). The number and political influence of the organizations and businesses opposing LANL pit production is very important to success.

Of note, all national arms control organizations, emboldened by support from Nuclear Watch of New Mexico and the thundering silence from many others in this state, seek to make LANL the nation's only pit factory. We strongly disagree with this approach, which accelerates pit production far beyond any real need, [enables](#) production of a brand-new warhead, and is crucial to the new nuclear arms race neoconservatives have recently unveiled ("[America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States](#)," Oct 2023). Given the nature of the LANL site and its location relative to Native American ancestral and current geography, it is also racist. Since there is no realistic possibility of stopping the Savannah River pit production plant, given the very strong technical case for it and the universal support it enjoys across government, all that is being accomplished by these groups is the endorsement of LANL as a pit factory. Meanwhile asking for LANL's aging, crowded, 24/7 pit factory to be "safe" is just so much piss in the wind.

Fifth, on November 16, from 6-8 pm, we will be hosting a nationally-webcast, panel and audience discussion of the above-mentioned proposed new nuclear arms race, at the Unitarian Church in Santa Fe. Panelists will include [Peter Kuznick](#), who will speak on how this plan is being received internationally, [Steven Starr](#), and myself. Please come if you can, and mark your calendars. We will send out a Zoom link in a day or two to our main mailing list (which includes this one).

Sixth, I can report from recent first-hand experience that Congress is not currently processing issues as rationally as in the recent past. There are many reasons for this, most of which will be apparent to you (e.g. time pressure, high partisanship, war psychosis, strong lobbying by nuclear weapons interests). Less apparent reasons: refuge being taken in bureaucratic processes by smart but relatively powerless actors, and new staff not really understanding how far the norm of accountability has fallen. There are organization-specific problems, like the lack of a quorum at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, traceable to the lack of leadership from the White House. Subjectively we can add to these the anxiety engendered by the partially-repressed awareness that the state of the Union is very deeply distressed.

The famous fog of war -- of multiple wars now -- is rising to new heights in Washington. We must do what we can to pierce it, as it is deadly. Hence all the above.

Thank you for your participation and support,

Sincerely,

Greg and Trish

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October 9, 2023

Press conference and rally, Santa Fe City Hall, Wednesday Oct. 11 at noon; mobilization also at 5 pm same place, same day; other actions

Previous letter (10/02/23): [What you can do to help oppose plutonium pit production: more](#)

Good afternoon friends --

As mentioned in the last letter, we are asking the Santa Fe City Council to pass a resolution opposing all plutonium warhead core ("pit") production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The City did declare its unconditional opposition to pit production at LANL in resolutions [2003-64](#), [2005-39](#), [2006-104](#), and [2008-17](#), before LANL was assigned an industrial pit production mission. Resolution [2005-39](#), in addition to opposing nuclear weapons production, also inter alia affirmed the identity of the City of Santa Fe as supporting and leading in nuclear disarmament pursuant to international law, and rejected as immoral the policy of nuclear deterrence.

We have provided a draft resolution along these lines to Councillor Villarreal opposing all LANL pit production, and also opposing the creation of satellite LANL laboratories and classified offices in the City of Santa Fe, as well as any offices for classified work. We are also asking the City to call on the New Mexico congressional delegation to:

- Halt all preparations for plutonium pit production at LANL, including but not limited to the Los Alamos Plutonium Pit Production Project (LAP4);
- Prioritize removal and disposal of legacy plutonium waste from LANL over production of additional nuclear waste from nuclear weapons activities, including manufacturing and preparations for manufacturing; and
- Decrease federal spending currently allocated for nuclear weapons activities and increase funding to support human security, community resilience, and environmental protection.

These demands are similar to those in the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#), now supported by 112 businesses, nonprofits, and religious organizations as well as more than 500 individuals.

By way of background, LANL is proposing one or more new "mini-campuses" in Santa Fe and/or Bernalillo or Rio Rancho as a way to make more room for pit production at LANL ("[Los Alamos to metastasize as weapons mission outgrows site](#), Jul 17, 2023). ("[LANL Growth & Mission support](#)," Kelly Beierschmitt, Jul 18, 2023) ([video](#) of LANL presentation, start at 4:45). LANL leases three properties in Santa Fe already, with roughly 500 staff working there and/or in Santa Fe homes. LANL envisions 3,600 staff working somewhere offsite by 2028 ([p. 11](#)).

In 2019, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) was authorized to take over the entire Midtown property, if chosen by the City to develop that property ([DOE/NNSA Proposal for an Innovation Campus, Midtown Santa Fe](#)). While this proposal is not active, it shows how serious NNSA and LANL can be where new "campuses" are concerned in what is perceived as a choice "bedroom community" for LANL.

We are having a press conference and rally outside the Santa Fe City Hall (200 Lincoln Ave., [map](#)) this Wednesday October 11 at NOON, near the humble statue of St. Francis (whose exemplary faith and practice are all too easy to forget, even in a City named for that faith).

Representatives of a number of organizations will be speaking, as well as others who have endorsed the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). We are inviting the mayor and councilors and we will have copies of the proposed resolution.

We will also be mobilizing for the possibility of in-person public comment on the resolution at 5 pm, again at the City Council, which will be meeting in the same location as the press conference earlier. Right now, public comment is the 17th item on the [agenda](#). Ideally they would move public comment towards the beginning of the meeting, which we will request, but we are not expecting that.

You can also join and make a comment remotely -- see <https://santafenm-gov.zoom.us/j/83716254269>.

- On a computer: Attendees should use the "Raise Hand" function to be recognized by the Mayor to speak at the appropriate time.
- On a phone: To join the Zoom meeting using a phone, use the following phone numbers and Webinar ID: US: 1 (346) 248-7799 - Webinar ID: 837 1625 4269. Phone attendees should press *9 to use the "Raise Hand" function to be recognized by the Mayor to speak at the appropriate time.

We do not know at what time such input will be allowed.

You can send a written public comment and email to the Mayor and City Councilors ([addresses](#)) asking them to pass a resolution stating they oppose ALL pit production at LANL and oppose any further LANL encroachments into Santa Fe, including opening any kind of "mini-campus."

We encourage you to personalize your comment with information about how LANL encroachment in Santa Fe, and the expansion of its plutonium and nuclear weapons missions affects you and/or your organization.

You can post your comment here: <https://santafe.primegov.com/public/portal#> by clicking the blue speech icon to the right of the Oct. 11 "Governing Body - Regular Meeting."

Also, **please reach out to organizations and businesses asking them to endorse the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)**. Solidarity is growing, to stop the madness of producing more nuclear weapons, as the screams of war ring ever louder.

It is all too easy to forget: **LANL is a menace to the entire world. LANL's huge new mission of industrial pit production is incredibly important to the U.S. war machine. This is not the LANL that most people are used to. It's now a huge center for a global nuclear arms race, the best-funded facility for weapons of mass destruction in the entire world, and one that is undergoing a metamorphosis into something far more impactful and more ugly than ever.**

Please come on Wednesday if you can.

Sincerely,

Greg, Trish, Bex, and Jessie, for the Los Alamos Study Group community

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October 2, 2023

What you can do to help oppose plutonium pit production; more

Previous letter (09/25/23) [Reminder: Oppose plutonium pit production at LANL. meet in Santa Fe this Wednesday 9/27/23 at 6:00 pm. St. John's Methodist Church](#)
(Subscribe/Unsubscribe and other links at bottom)

1. Good meeting last week
2. Ukraine, thank you for grasping the nettle of understanding; please forward
3. Eight electricians contaminated with Be at LANL
4. What you can do

Good afternoon, friends --

We hope you are all doing well and enjoying the great weather, or Great Weather, whichever applies.

First, we had a pretty good meeting last Wednesday in Santa Fe. Twenty people attended, with several younger people and other people we had not met before. In the last third of the meeting we spoke along practical lines, about which more below (at 4.).

On behalf of Trish -- who is recovering nicely from knee replacement -- and myself, and on behalf of our part-time assistant scholar-organizers Jessie and Bex, *thank you*, to those who came in person and the many others who were with us in spirit, here locally and from afar.

We have posted the briefing slides we used ("[Plutonium Pit Factory at LANL: Dead End for New Mexico and the U.S.](#)") plus 8 other slides, 7 of which deal with aspects of the local economic situation as it relates to the expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). These didn't get included in our last-minute meeting preparations. You will be able to supply some of the questions that go with that partial data. The eighth slide deals with the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina.

Second, we did not talk about Ukraine at that meeting. So I urge everyone to take a look at our [Ukraine page](#), and please please please forward it to your friends.

Why? From Alastair Crooke's [essay](#) posted today:

The Ukraine war is not about 'democracy promotion'. Western intelligence services have had a history of close links with Ukrainian ultra-nationalism, dating from the end of WW2. Possibly, these committed ultra-nationalists were seen as ideal material for stirring a war against everything Russian – that which Brzezinski had in mind when he wrote his *Grand Chessboard* in 1997.

In any event, it was on this particular pillar – ethnic-cultural mobilisation vs the Russian presence, culture and language in Ukraine – that western intelligence services focussed. Efforts were made by these services and U.S. State Department to place members of this constituency into key positions in politics, security and the military in Ukraine – initiatives that were accelerated in the wake of the Maidan coup.

An evident legacy now is that Zelensky is hamstrung by the political primacy of the hard Right that refuses any, and all, negotiations with Russia, and demands only Moscow's surrender.

Last week's Canadian parliamentary debacle inadvertently gave an insight into the depth of the Ultra-nationalist Ukrainian constituency that was given passage to western states – including to the U.S. and Canada – in the wake of WW2, when Canada's Parliament accorded standing ovations to a former member of the Waffen SS during a visit by Zelensky to the Canadian Parliament. Yaroslav Hunka was among around 600 members of the Galicia SS Division who were allowed to settle in Canada after the war. The point here is that this constituency in Canada, and its analogues elsewhere, forms a backbone to lobbyist support for Kiev, and is the one most closely tied to the U.S. Deep State.

Back to the Brzezinski doctrine: Does this Canadian imbroglio remind us that the sub-plot originally conceived by Brzezinski was identity-driven cultural war? Certainly, Ukrainian officials have embraced repeatedly, the aim of cleansing *all things Russian* from Ukraine. Democracy promotion may have been a pretext, but the quiet part always was to foment violent animosity towards Russians – and to Russia, as a cultural 'idea'.

Third, the first of the articles I mentioned at the meeting, about recent contamination of eight electricians with beryllium (Be) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), appeared (our archived version is here, but do go to the original if you have access to it, as those clicks show public interest: "[Eight workers exposed to beryllium dust at LANL, a recurring problem](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Sep 27, 2023).

It was a good article. I added this comment:

Thank you Scott for finding the time to do this, amid everything else you must cover.

That DOE Enterprise Assessments report is more categorically harsh than I ever could be. This case and that prior report raise obvious questions, such as why "big DOE" made no apparent followup, what is the status of staffing and activity for chronic Be disease prevention at the site office, and whether the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) is doing anything about it either -- which could only be advisory, but still would be better than nothing. (DNFSB has a very small staff, to be sure, but if they don't ask Congress for a lot more they won't get it.)

We believe the site office is charged with delivering a pit factory, come hell (for workers) or high water. Overall, NNSA is staffed with too many "yes-men" and "yes-women." They work in a bubble that fears sunlight and the outside world. A symptom of that narrowing of personal responsibility is the constant use of the word "mission," as in "delivering on the mission." This language, which was not prevalent 20 years ago, illustrates a mentality associated with the military and with contractors paid for completing a specific task, not civil servants who are supposed to adopt a wider viewpoint -- one that includes, in this case, adequate emphasis on worker safety. By 2015, the Department of Labor had paid death benefits for more than 1,600 LANL workers, not counting those families who received private payouts in return for promised silence about the egregious circumstances of their relatives' deaths. Yet LANL recently published an orientation briefing for new employees saying that too much safety is a problem for the mission, citing the World War II mores of the Manhattan Project as precedents. This incident is a wake-up call, one NNSA is alas unlikely to heed. Triad and NNSA need to reconsider the wisdom of their crash program to hire thousands of new workers and hundreds of outside contractors, pressing forward on the new pit factory "mission" on a 24/7 basis to meet an arbitrary deadline in what are often cramped, legacy facilities with complicated hazards.

Within Triad, accomplishment of "the mission" is driven in part by huge bonuses for senior management, who already make outrageous salaries. Underneath all the bustle is The Questions That Must Never Be Asked: what is the purpose of "the mission." Is it logical? Is it coherent? Is it a wise use of taxpayer dollars? Does it serve life?

This is not the end of this story. We await an answer from the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board (DNFSB). Another media outlet is also going to write about this and related matters, based on some sources we supplied and others they are digging up.

It's important to realize that without the supervisor of these electricians requesting analysis of the dust in which they were working, LANL would not have done the analysis. LANL told these workers there was no hazard and that personal protective equipment would not be needed. The entire episode would have been an unheard "tree falling in the forest" without the electricians themselves demanding answers post hoc.

Fourth, there are many ways to help fight pit production at LANL, which is the most important direct nuclear weapons policy intervention available to people in New Mexico (and among the most important nationally as well).

The first step is to be very clear what you want, as there is confusion about this in some quarters. Like the endorsers of the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#), we want no (as in, zero) plutonium warhead core ("pit") production at LANL, "first and foremost, but also elsewhere." We aren't interested in weaselly language like opposition to "expanded" pit production at LANL (what the hell does that mean?), "small" pit production at LANL, or "Goldilocks" production at LANL, or "10-20" pits per year at LANL, or pit production only after it is declared "safe" by the DNFSB (a ridiculous idea). Beware these ideas. Tens of billions of dollars, and hundreds of nuclear materials and waste trucks, will be driven through the loopholes inherent in those notions.

(That "elsewhere" in the Call is SRS. Information about future pit production at SRS is available on [this page](#). The political realities of pit production as they relate to the two sites are summarized in the last slide in from Wednesday's slide deck, not shown then but posted [here](#) now. Longer and richer explanations of these and related realities and how they affect what we think should be normative pit policy can be found in "[Toward a viable plutonium pit production plan: part 1, LASG Letter to Congress](#), May 18, 2023 and [part 2](#), June 9, 2023.)

So here are some ways to help:

- Recruit organizations (especially) but also businesses and individuals to the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). This is foundational work, which helps in *many* ways.
- If you live in Santa Fe, write or call City Councilor [Renee Villarreal](#) soonest. She is contemplating introducing a resolution opposing LANL pit production and the creation of satellite LANL laboratories and classified-work offices in Santa Fe. Tell her you oppose ALL LANL pit production, without conditions, and ALL expansion of LANL into the City of Santa Fe. She has our proposed resolution in hand, in part based on the strongest of [prior resolutions](#).
- Make public comment to the Santa Fe City Council supporting the above-described opposition at its October 11 Council meeting. The City will eventually post the links a) announcing this meeting and b) enabling public comment. We will monitor this closely but you can as well. It is amazing that a City Council meeting 9 days from now is not on the official on-line calendar yet but such is the case. In the coming days, we will post our proposed language as well. For now, the basic idea of total opposition to LANL pit production, and opposition to LANL expansion into Santa Fe, is enough.
- Put up a yard sign. Ask us for help if you want to.
- Write letters to editors (LTEs) or guest editorials. LTEs do matter, and writing them helps refine one's thoughts, as they must be brief.
- Help us distribute stickers, window posters, and bulletin board fact sheets, and other materials against pit production (coming soon).
- There's a lot more I could put here, some of which we have already discussed in-house, but let's wait for now. In the meantime and to ripen the moment, please join us in outreach.
- Yes, funds also help, a lot. It is very likely that the people you know, and the people they know, have enough spare money to basically end the nuclear arms race. Not instantly, but without LANL pit production there is only so much that can be done in the arms racing department. Write or call us. We have more strategies than are wise to put here.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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September 25, 2023

Reminder: Oppose plutonium pit production at LANL, meet in Santa Fe this Wednesday 9/27/23 at 6:00 pm, St. John's United Methodist Church

Previous letter (09/20/23) [Come to a meeting to oppose plutonium pit production at LANL in Santa Fe on September 27 at 6:00 pm at St. John's United Methodist Church!](#) (Subscribe/Unsubscribe and other links at bottom)

Good afternoon --

Please do come to this meeting if you live in the area. Bring your friends, your family, including those in religious communities, in environmental and justice organizations, and in public service organizations of all kinds.

Whether or not they can come to this particular meeting, encourage them and (especially) their organizations to endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#).

Of possible interest, Trish tells me this interview went well (and was edited nicely): "[Plutonium Pits, New Bombs, Los Alamos Never Learns – Greg Mello](#)," Nuclear Hotseat, Sep 5, 2023.

Also of possible interest in relation to the overall *context* of our work is this short talk yesterday to the adult education group of the Albuquerque Mennonite Church: "[War, life and peace in the U.S. post-democratic decline](#)"; [audio with Q&A](#) (about one hour).

There has been a small spate of pro-nuclear-weapons news articles about warhead modernization, especially at Los Alamos, generated by the *Associated Press*. First were these national articles:

- "[Inside the delicate art of maintaining America's aging nuclear weapons](#)," which is all pro-nuclear fluff and includes the rather glaring error:
- "The core of every nuclear warhead is a hollow, globe-shaped plutonium pit made by engineers at the Energy Department's lab in Los Alamos, New Mexico, birthplace of the atom bomb."
- [This is what it's like to maintain the US nuclear arsenal](#)" (more fluff)
- [Watchdog: Nuclear states modernize their weapons, Chinese arsenal is growing](#)" (more pro-nuclear fluff)

And then one more tightly focused on Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), published just this past weekend:

- "[Birthplace of the atomic bomb braces for its biggest mission since the top-secret Manhattan Project](#)."

New Mexico AP reporter Susan Montoya did a much better job than the author of the previous pieces, but even with a quote from me casting some shade ("For some time Los Alamosans have seemed numbed out, very involved in superficial activities but there is a very big hole in the middle where thoughtful discourse might live") this story was quite not up to her usual high standard, in the opinions of several people who contacted us.

These kinds of stories are being generated because liberal, pro-nuclear weapons foundations are funding AP.

We have done yeoman work helping some reporters with what should be blockbuster stories, supplying whistleblowers and NNSA documents for stories that could practically write themselves. These stories have however been hanging fire for a month or more. We will see what actually comes forth. We aren't confident in good outcomes. If we weren't stretched so paper-thin we would have already written these stories ourselves. The papers have bigger megaphones, so that's the hope. Increasingly it is a vain one.

Returning to Wednesday's meeting, there is a real absence of *public* opposition to pit production at LANL. Thousands of people do oppose it, but most opposition is atomized, and not public. Private opinions are frankly useless, if they do not manifest in the *public* sphere in any of a thousand ways. Come on Wednesday to hear more about how "we" -- meaning, with your help -- propose to do that.

Finally, please do check out our [Ukraine page](#), which we update daily with fresh information, analyses, and commentary. This war is a hinge in world affairs, and in the history of all those involved, including the U.S. Please, please, please, send your friends, family, and organizations to that page and to the fine references we provide there. It is an antidote to the war propaganda which saturates the U.S. in particular.

On the subject of propaganda and the very dangerous psychology of totalitarianism now afoot, you may be interested in [Mathias Desmet, 8 minute speech to EU Parliament on the the necessity of speaking up at this historical moment](#), *Twitter*, Sep 19, 2023.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

Los Alamos Study Group

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September 20, 2023

Come to a meeting to oppose plutonium pit production at LANL in Santa Fe on September 27 at 6:00 pm at St. John's Methodist Church!

Previous letter (08/18/2023): [Legislative meeting Monday, gm testimony / City of Santa Fe City strongly opposes pit production, nuclear weapons, LANL expansion for same](#) (Subscribe/Unsubscribe and other links at bottom)

Friends, good afternoon --

Please accept our apologies for not writing sooner. We've been busy behind the scenes on a number of developing nuclear weapons stories, plus we've taken some personal time for knee surgery (Trish).

For those who oppose the growth of nuclear weapons missions locally in New Mexico, and specifically those who oppose plutonium pit production in Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the issues have matured to the point where a larger, practical discussion could now be very fruitful.

With this in mind we'd like to invite you to a meeting in Santa Fe this coming Wednesday evening, September 27 at 6:00 pm, at St. John's Methodist Church (1200 Old Pecos Trail, [map](#)).

Our initial outreach about this meeting is already bringing in new faces and organizations. As we noted on August 23, local opposition to pit production at Los Alamos is growing. Pit production at LANL, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), is also predicted to be delayed further than was thought in January and February of this year. Whistleblowers and refuseniks are starting to come forward. The Study Group is growing, as well.

After presenting some updates, we will be seeking your help on some new initiatives of our own at this meeting. Some of these initiatives are still under development, so it is better to not try and list them here.

If you can't come, and don't want a plutonium factory at Los Alamos and want to help do something about it, [drop us a line](#).

It's important to realize that being "against nuclear weapons," or "in favor of nuclear disarmament" (or nuclear abolition, or the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons) is peachy, but such opinions butter no bread.

Greater Santa Fe is the epicenter of the largest nuclear warhead project since the end of the Cold War. Nothing else comes close. Not only is Los Alamos slated to become a factory for weapons of mass destruction for the first time since 1949, but the overall nuclear weapons effort at LANL now exceeds the capacity of the Los Alamos site, as well as the highways serving Los Alamos, and the local housing and labor markets.

One result is that LANL now seeks to open satellite labs in Santa Fe and/or Bernalillo or Rio Rancho. Another is local labor markets, especially in the construction crafts, are being drained of talent.

Another is that LANL now wants to open a nuclear waste dump on-site again.

Building this factory is the largest capital project in the history of New Mexico by far, with the sole exception of the interstate highway system, the cost of which is roughly comparable, in constant dollars, to pit production startup at LANL. Should it proceed it will cement New Mexico's identity in the federal system as an internal nuclear colony. Already, income statistics are already beginning to show greater income inequality as a result of pit production, and that's just the beginning. Money will be spent, but overall there will be economic *devolution*, not *development*, from this giant hunk of polluted nuclear pork. A few plutonium princelings and princesses -- poor them! -- do not economic and social development make.

You should hear about some new developments before this meeting. Stay tuned.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

PS Official narratives about Ukraine are suddenly cracking apart. Please see our [Ukraine page](#). We may not be able to update that page today due to other commitments, but for sure there will be much more up there tomorrow. It is really important to break the spell of unreality that surrounds this U.S. proxy war, a spell created by propaganda. Anything you can do will be helpful. You might already realize that since the Study Group's opposition to this war was front page news in the New Mexican ("[Anti-nuclear activist opposes helping Ukraine, encourages peace](#)," Santa Fe New Mexican, Feb 5, 2023), somewhere between one and two Vietnam's-worth of Ukrainian men have died needlessly in this war. The longer it continues, the worse the outcome will be for Ukraine.

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

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

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August 18, 2023

Legislative meeting Monday, gm testimony / City of Santa Fe City strongly opposes pit production, nuclear weapons, LANL expansion for same

Previous letter (08/17/2023): [Want to oppose pit production? Talk to us / The New Mexican implicitly comes out for pits / Ukraine / Resilience](#)

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Friends, good afternoon.

First, if you are interested, on Monday 8/21/23 the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee (RHMC) of the New Mexico Legislature will meet in Los Alamos in the Council Chambers of the Los Alamos County Municipal Building ([agenda](#)), starting at 9 am. We have submitted our brief testimony (we will have 7.5 minutes, with as much again for Q&A) and posted it on our web site: "[It is time to request a halt to plutonium pit production at LANL.](#)" We have kept this testimony quite simple. It is also blunt.

This will be our (Greg's) fifth presentation to this committee, which as far as we can tell has taken no action regarding LANL's proposed pit production mission. We have repeatedly emphasized the Committee's possible role in fostering transparency, but at this meeting LANL and NNSA will be meeting with the Committee in executive session, away from the public and any reporters.

Until 1:45 MDT, the meeting will be [webcast](#).

As you can see from the [agenda](#), the Committee will be hearing about a number of topics from a number of people. It is only the second meeting of this committee this year. As you know, state legislators are not paid and the committee has no staff of its own.

Second, as we noted [yesterday](#), the managing editor of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* has [come out](#) in explicit favor of major LANL expansion into Santa Fe, to better accommodate pit production on "The Hill."

This might be a good time to remind ourselves -- and the *New Mexican* -- of what the City of Santa Fe has officially said about pit production and nuclear disarmament, lest anyone think that nuclear weapons manufacturing was ever accepted in Santa Fe previously.

Referring to [New Mexico Local Government Resolutions & Letters addressing nuclear weapons & plutonium pit production at LANL](#), we see that between 2003 and 2008 the City of Santa Fe formally objected four times to plutonium pit production at LANL without any conditions. Opposition was absolute. After 2005 opposition was a given, so it went in the "whereas" section of the latter two resolutions.

The Town of Taos and Taos County -- home of the *Taos News*, also published by the *New Mexican* -- are also both on record opposing plutonium pit production without conditions (in 2008).

(Later, the City of Santa Fe objected twice to plutonium pit production at LANL "until all nuclear safety issues are resolved, as certified by the independent Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board." This unfortunate and rather weaselly language presupposes a process which does not exist and for which there is no legal mandate. It assumes the "independence" of an agency which has struggled to maintain its very existence in the face of political interference.)

Official opposition to nuclear weapons by the City in 2005 was unequivocal, calling for the City to lead the way toward nuclear disarmament, referencing binding international law.

When we brought this 2005 resolution to the Council, we were fortunate to have with us a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing, Mr. Keijiro Matsushima (see [p. 32 here](#)). In fact he almost died in Santa Fe after visiting LANL, where we sowed sunflower seeds together (one seed for each victim) near the "V Site" where the Hiroshima bomb was made. He has since died but his [testimony](#) is available on-line.

Here is Mr. Matsushima with Ed Grothus at the latter's Black Hole in Los Alamos, and speaking to a crowd at the CloudCliff in Santa Fe:



(bigger)

For reference, here are some key passages from those four Santa Fe resolutions:

[City of Santa Fe Resolution 2008-17](#), passed unanimously Feb 13, 2008

-- *Objecting to proposed nuclear weapons complex "transformation" activities at Los Alamos National Laboratory, including expanded plutonium pit production*

- *"WHEREAS, plutonium pits are used as the "triggers" for weapons of mass destruction and plutonium creates health and environmental hazards; and*
- *"WHEREAS, the governing body of the City of Santa Fe does not support the creation of further health and environmental hazards related to nuclear weapons for the citizens of Northern New Mexico."*
- *"WHEREAS, it is declared the policy of the City, through previously adopted resolutions, to promote nuclear disarmament through the Mayor's Peace Initiative for Cities of Peace; and*
- *"WHEREAS, the governing body has previously passed Resolution No. 2003-64 and 2006-104 opposing expansion of "pit" facilities construction at LANL;...*
- *RESOLVED...that the governing body hereby states its objection to the expansion of nuclear weapons activities at the [LANL], including further increased plutonium pit production.*

[City of Santa Fe Resolution 2006-104](#), passed unanimously Aug 28, 2006

-- *Objecting to proposed expanded nuclear weapons activities, including plutonium pit production, at the Los Alamos National Laboratory*

- *"WHEREAS, plutonium pits are used to "trigger" existing nuclear weapons and will be used in future new-design nuclear weapons;*
- *"WHEREAS, the governing body of the City of Santa Fe does not support the creation of further health and environmental hazards related to nuclear weapons for the citizens of Northern New Mexico."*
- *"WHEREAS, it is declared the policy of the City, through previously adopted resolutions, for Cities for Peace, Mayor's Peace Initiative to promote nuclear disarmament*
- *"WHEREAS, the governing body has previously passed Resolution No. 2003-64 which opposed expansion of "pit" facilities construction at [LANL];*
- *RESOLVED...that the governing body hereby states its objection to the expansion of nuclear weapons activities at the [LANL], including further increased plutonium pit production.*

[City of Santa Fe Resolution 2005-39](#), passed unanimously Apr 13, 2005

-- *Supporting compliance by the United States with the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons*

- *(See original at the link above for sweeping disarmament language, rejecting nuclear deterrence altogether)*
- *The governing body calls upon our elected representatives to Congress as well as upon our Governor to publicly:*
 - *Reject all proposals to build new or expanded factories for nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons components*

[City of Santa Fe Resolution 2003-64](#), passed unanimously, Aug 13, 2003

-- *Objecting to the location of a Modern Pit Facility in Northern New Mexico*

- *WHEREAS, plutonium pits are used to "trigger" nuclear weapons*
- *WHEREAS, the use of plutonium creates health and environmental hazards*
- *WHEREAS, the governing body of the City of Santa Fe does not support the creation of further health and environmental hazards related to nuclear weapons for the citizens of Northern New Mexico.*
- *RESOLVED...that the governing body hereby states its objection to the [DOE] regarding the location of a new and or expanded modern pit facility in Northern New Mexico.*
- *RESOLVED that...the governing body hereby states its objection to the construction and operation of the modern pit facility anywhere*

If you don't want a plutonium factory at Los Alamos, and you want to do something about it, [drop us a line](#). If you have time to help that would be great.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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

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Our [Ukraine page](#), updated daily: the most accurate, important, and readable news and views we can find. Please read and forward widely. Please protest the central U.S. role in this war however and whenever you can.

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Los Alamos Study Group

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August 17, 2023

Want to oppose pit production? Talk to us / The New Mexican implicitly comes out for pits / Ukraine / Resilience

Previous letter (08/01/2023): [Pit presentation slides; more on Hiroshima/Nagasaki/Russia; Patrick Lawrence on the Bidens and the opportunity at hand; LANL seeks to expand into other cities](#)

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Friends, good morning.

We hope you are enjoying the summer -- in New Mexico, a dry one to be sure!

First, we have been working hard on plutonium warhead core ("pit") production, as well as getting the word out about the multidimensional ethical, military, economic, and diplomatic [failure that is the Ukraine War](#), helping journalists, helping local anti-pit-production citizenry, and of course, keeping body and soul together.

We will be starting up meetings with anti-pit-production citizenry next week. If you want to be involved please [write us](#).

Second, as some of you have seen, the managing editor of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* has [come out](#) in explicit favor of LANL expansion, into Santa Fe no less.

The primary if not the only cause of LANL expansion is pit production. So the *SFNM* is in print supporting our new not-so-little Rocky Flats Plant. See "[Satellite campuses make sense for crowded Los Alamos lab](#)," Aug. 12, 2023 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, along with my (Greg's) published comments.

Our earlier press release about this: [Los Alamos to metastasize as weapons mission outgrows site Lab management to present before local government Tuesday 7/18/23, 6 pm MDT](#), Jul 17, 2023. Here is [LANL's July 18, 2023 presentation & proposal](#). (You can also see the 7/18/23 presentation and subsequent discussion at the Los Alamos County Council [web page](#).)

Related, here is NNSA's 2019 proposal for taking over the entire Midtown Campus in Santa Fe: "[DOE/NNSA Proposal for an Innovation Campus, Midtown Santa Fe](#)," Oct 31, 2019.

The current proposal for satellite minicampuses [doing classified work](#) in Santa Fe and/or Bernalillo or Rio Rancho may include, per NNSA and LANL, biological laboratories investigating human pathogens. NNSA has already [issued](#) a "categorical exclusion" for this work under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As people in the present administration told me (because they didn't want it to happen), this would be "gain-of-function" research, leaning on LANL's classified computing assets to explore possible bioweapons (for defense purposes, of course!).

These details aside, it is a momentous, unprecedented development for top editor in the main newspaper chain in northern New Mexico to come out implicitly in favor of pit production and LANL's new giantism, with all its implications for the future of surrounding communities and the state. Want an affordable home in the area? Fuhgetabout it. Tired of traffic jams? Get used to them. The 20,000-person-LANL that the *New Mexican* is so happy about would drive a stake through the soul of Santa Fe, which frankly is already on life-support.

Nearly all supposedly anti-nuclear NGOs are actually passive with respect to, and some actually support, the creation of a new Rocky Flats in their own back yards. Large national funders and arms control organizations are also perfectly happy to support creation of new ICBM warheads using the pits LANL aims to create. For shame.

Third, Ukraine. Please do read our [daily Ukraine selections](#) and pass them on. Taken as a whole, they are excellent discussion materials and far better than anything in the mainstream media, for sure. We make occasional comments, provide special recommendations (the "Featured" items) and we pull out some of the main points when we have time.

For those interested in nuclear disarmament and arms control, ending the Ukraine conflict is the very first step. It is entirely within U.S. capability to do that, *in a single day*, provided that Russia's core security needs are met. Every day that passes with no peace offer from the West means more Ukrainian deaths (and Russian deaths, far fewer) as well as less favorable negotiation conditions for Ukraine.

Said differently, Ukraine has lost this conflict. Without the U.S. propping it up, the deaths would stop. The silence from churches and supposedly antinuclear NGOs makes them co-responsible for these deaths. Absent habits of moral courage, a kind of armor which is ours to create if we choose, we will pay a heavy price for our collective apathy and paralysis.

Fourth, we all need to pay attention to personal, family, and community resilience as we prepare to head into the fall. The confluence of governance crises affecting all branches of the federal government, the exponential rise of federal interest payments (which now exceed the Pentagon budget on an annualized basis), the weaponization of the legal system against the administration's main opponent, the patent failure of the Ukraine War project (now running on fumes or more precisely, rivers of Ukrainian blood), the rise of global alternatives to the neocolonial, hegemonic "rules-based global order," and much more which could be added, comprise a highly-combustible political and economic mixture.

Under these conditions the Gandhian "constructive program" must remain in the forefront for most people and communities. It is important to resist the depredations of

the military-industrial-administrative state, and even more important to secure livelihoods and to choose vocations that build and sustain our communities. If we had more and better leadership, there would be work and livelihoods for everyone. We can't leave anyone out.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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August 1, 2023

Pit presentation slides; more on Hiroshima/Nagasaki/Russia; Patrick Lawrence on the Bidens and the opportunity at hand; LANL seeks to expand into other cities

Previous letter (07/31/2023): [Video of July 22 event: crisis in the presidency: no "peace festival" for us, thank you](#)

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Friends, good afternoon.

First, yesterday the link to our plutonium pit production slide presentation on 7/22 wasn't live. Oops -- [here it is](#). I did not show the last couple of slides at the meeting. Some of the issues may be new to many people and organizations active on nuclear weapons issues, who are unfamiliar with LANL's intractable geography and logistics.

Second, one of our advisors sent a link to a [fine interview](#) with Peter Kuznick by Paul Jay, covering much the same material as Peter covered at our meeting, but with more detail and with some good historical photos included as well as some illustrative movie scenes (he had a whole hour this time). The entire program is excellent; Peter's comments zero in on the role of U.S. postwar ambitions in the use of the atomic bombs at roughly 30 minutes into the program.

Third, after sending yesterday's letter we saw Patrick Lawrence piece, also published yesterday, "[The Bidens' Burisma Bribery](#)" (*Consortium News*, Jul 31, 2023). As Lawrence says, he was initially wary of accepting the magnitude of what is now in the public record, in FBI documents, bank records, and Joe Biden's own statement in public (about getting the Ukrainian prosecutor fired who was investigating Burisma).

At the Study Group, we began to raise the Burisma issue back in 2014, because of the web of links between Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales, Hunter Biden, Devon Archer, Ukrainian oligarch and neo-Nazi supporter Ihor Kolomoysky (who became Zelensky's main patron), John Kerry's son-in-law Christopher Heinz (founding partner of Rosemont Capitol), and others. A subsidiary of Rosemont Capital, Rosemont Realty LLC, (which employed Javier Gonzales) was for a time the largest owner of commercial real estate in New Mexico. In the run-up to the 2014 Ukraine coup, even former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson was involved, as were the Clintons. All this is old news, not worth detailing now.

What is not irrelevant is the recent testimony of a trusted long-time confidential FBI source that the Zelensky regime has abundant *kompromat* on Joe Biden. So do a lot of people, at this point -- people like Victoria Nuland (as of three days ago, promoted to Acting Deputy Secretary of State). It would be the height of naivete to think that Biden family influence-peddling has nothing to do with decisionmaking in this administration.

It will be difficult for the administration to contain this scandal. In addition to being a powerful "good government" issue, it could be a terrific opportunity for the anti-war movement. Think about it, then decide.

Fourth, for some reason no local news media have picked up on the story of LANL's desires to open what LANL calls "minicampuses" in Santa Fe and/or Bernalillo or Rio Rancho, which would do classified national security work, including laboratory work. This concept was presented to the Los Alamos County Council on July 18 ("[Los Alamos to metastasize as weapons mission outgrows site Lab management to present before local government Tuesday 7/18/23, 6 pm MDT](#)," Jul 17, 2023). It's a big story, we think.

(See also "[Los Alamos National Lab seeks up to 100,000 sq. ft. of laboratory space somewhere within 50 miles](#)," May 6, 2021; [LANL leases second office complex in Santa Fe as nuclear weapons growth pushes admin staff off "The Hill": 2,000 more staff needed for "24/7" plutonium "pit" production mission for only 20 pits/year](#), Mar 8, 2021.)

In 2019, NNSA proposed to buy and develop the entire Santa Fe City-owned Midtown property. Their proposal, obtained by us via FOIA, was not accepted. Will a smaller version be accepted now? Midtown is an obvious choice for LANL, and the City [appears desperate](#). NNSA can easily handle the site's environmental problems, as they said in their proposal, and their pockets are very deep.

So many people think the Manhattan Project ended a long time ago. In New Mexico, it certainly hasn't. It's growing.

Fifth, if you want to take a more active part in opposing nuclear weapons development, or opposing the Ukraine war, please write. The opportunities here in New Mexico are so very, very rich -- if there is interest. We are working pretty much all the time here on a national basis, and frankly have an unparalleled record of success. Many New Mexicans seem discouraged. We aren't.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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July 31, 2023

Video of July 22 event; crisis in the presidency; no "peace festival" for us, thank you

Previous letter (07/12/2023): [Ukraine over the tipping point; more on July 22 event in Los Alamos; comment on generic "nuclear disarmament"](#)

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Friends, good afternoon.

I (Greg) hope everyone is well and enjoying the summer, hot though it be.

First, we had an excellent event in Los Alamos on July 22nd. We are very grateful to the 20 or so of you who drove up "The Hill." Another 50 or so persons attended virtually. . There were four people present from Los Alamos. No media came, either in person or virtually, which is par for the course. We have finally posted a [video of the meeting here](#), delayed somewhat this past week by other responsibilities. Fuller Lodge, unbeknownst to us, has infamously poor internet service; if you tried to attend from afar and couldn't get into the meeting, please accept our apologies.

In the first half of the meeting, Peter (Kuznick) presented what were in his estimation the top omissions in the current box-office hit "Oppenheimer" film, as he approached the evening's main historical topic, which was the role played by the ambition by "subdue the Soviets" in the overall conception and management of the Manhattan Project, including of course the Trinity test.

It should be obvious by now to all (but isn't) that the nuclear bombing of Japan had little or nothing to do with ending the Pacific war, and everything to do with sending a signal to the Soviets. As Peter said, the Soviets understood that signal perfectly. Only, contrary to the hopes of (Jimmy) Byrnes and Truman, the Russians weren't cowed. They got the signal all right, and the Cold War was on.

Fast forward from then to now: the Russians still aren't cowed, to the consternation of the neocons, today's successors to Byrnes and Groves. Instead, Russia, and China also, are "going from strength to strength," in George Galloway's words (see "[Final Corruption of the American Republic](#)," George Galloway, Jul 30, 2023, starting at about 7:20; thanks to Steve Starr for passing on this speech last night.)

In the second half of the Fuller Lodge meeting I provided a review of pit production, with a few new bits included. The slides I used are [here](#) (and also in the Zoom video).

For those who helped with all this, thank you. Your solidarity means more than we can easily say.

Second, Galloway's title (above) is not necessarily hyperbole. The U.S. government, and therefore we, are in a pretty big crisis. Those who are only exposed to mainstream media may not know how much evidence of corruption -- of government, and of the President and his family -- is now in the public domain.

Speaking personally, I am staggered by the depth and breadth of the lies in which our former Republic is now marinating. Not just in this instance, of course. Pervasively, now.

All this goes far beyond any partisan concerns. We have argued (in [Bulletin 325](#), 02/18/23) that unless the Nordstream bombing is investigated -- and if warranted, the President and others involved impeached -- there is little hope for democracy in the United States. We have a Constitution. To keep it alive, we have to use it. The alternative is much, much worse, as we are starting to see.

We recommend Alastair Crooke, "[The 'Scandal Implosion' Stratagem: Will It Work for Ukraine?](#)", published today. As we note on our [Ukraine page](#), "*Crooke is invariably insightful and rewarding to read. His essays are sequential and cumulative. Often, his links carry the subterranean part of his argument. Here, he explains how the Western narrative will try to use the 'scandal implosion' technique to escape the political consequences of its self-made Ukraine trap. It won't work.*"

The Biden corruption that has subsequently come to light is much easier for citizens to understand than the Nordstream bombing, less hemmed-in by secrecy, and for these reasons harder to ignore. To the extent we do ignore it, we signal our acquiescence to authoritarian rule, our disinterest in democracy. James Kunstler, in a sarcastic [review](#) of recent developments, concludes with this bit of wisdom: "[R]emember: the government is not our country." No it is not, even though many New Mexicans -- steeped in the federal spending that is the "[mother's milk](#)" of our politics, think it is. That attitude is the colonial mind in a nutshell: hang onto the federal teat even if it is radioactive, incapable of producing economic and social development, and morally repugnant. Federal money first, resource extraction second, and the people, last.

One would think that easing the Biden crime family out of the limelight would be a high priority for Democrats, in time to rebuild the Party for the fall 2024 elections. That may happen.

In any case the ongoing catastrophe in Ukraine, the deepening scandal engulfing the President, the visible collapse of U.S. political leadership around the world, and the rapidly-rising cost of financing the federal debt (which now exceeds the defense budget and is rising like a rocket) -- just to mention the most obvious looming crises -- are going to rock quite a lot of boats, very soon. Many important policy issues are going to be "back-burnered" for now, in DC.

As we keep saying, the Ukraine war needs to be on everyone's front burner. There is too little opposition to it from people who should know better.

A phone call from the President could end the war in a day, as Trump (and I believe RFK Jr.) have both said. Congress could do it fairly quickly, by barring the use of further US funding for the war. No matter what, Ukraine is going to lose territory. Get used to it. [Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto](#): "There will be no better

conditions for peace negotiations than the present,' Szijarto told journalists on Friday following his meeting with the Turkish foreign minister, Hakan Fidan. 'Yesterday's conditions were better than today's, and tomorrow's conditions will be worse than today's.'"

Third, the Study Group will not be participating in the so-called "Peace Festival" in Albuquerque next weekend, which does not appear to have any particular meaning. Unlike most political rallies, including antiwar rallies, there are no central organizing values or shared political demands (like, for example, [these](#)). Many of the cosponsoring organizations are not anti-war, and/or do not oppose building a nuclear weapons production plant either in New Mexico (or for some groups, anywhere at any time). Some are closely connected to the Democratic Party, which is the Party which is most identified with creating the present war (out of its 2014 coup d'état in Ukraine) and for that matter, with demanding plutonium pit production in New Mexico. The strategy -- a common one, nationally -- seems to be one of creating a risk-free, commitment-free spectacle of pseudo-solidarity among diverse groups, with an unspoken rule of excluding people not in our "tribe." Fake, feel-good "activism," in other words. We strongly feel that this is not the time for a "peace festival," if there ever is such a time. We think there isn't, at any time, but having a "peace festival" while the U.S. is involved in an expanding proxy war with Russia is creepy, actually.

The introduction to Robert Bly's *The Sibling Society* comes to mind, as a warning:

...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.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

PS: As most of you know by now, Biden is coming to New Mexico next week. When exactly and where we do not know.

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Our [Ukraine page](#), updated daily: the most accurate, important, and readable news and views we can find. Please read and forward widely. Please protest the central U.S. role in this war however and whenever you can.

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July 12, 2023

Ukraine over the tipping point; more on July 22 event in Los Alamos; comment on generic "nuclear disarmament"

Friends,

Good morning.

First, we urge you to read, and forward, the daily selections on our [Ukraine page](#). If you are a member of any formal or informal group with a passing interest in whether we have a planet to live on or money to spend on any social, environmental, or infrastructure need, or if you or anybody you know is an educator, these selections might be useful as bases for discussion.

Today's selections, which reflect the outcome of the NATO meeting which ended today as well as an interesting documentary, are particularly interesting. Larry Johnson notes the change on the battlefield ("[The War in Ukraine Shifts Decisively in Russia's Favor](#)," Jul 11, 2023):

What France and the U.K are proposing [providing long-range missiles] is an open provocation and, if carried out, represents a direct attack on Russia. Putin and members of his national security team have signaled clearly that there will be a response. This means we are entering a very dangerous phase in this war because the frantic desperation of the West is leading it to entertain military operations that will elicit retaliation. Russia is not going to consent to being a punching bag. At some point I anticipate that Putin will order the Russian military to start shooting down sophisticated U.S. and NATO ISR drones and disrupt, if not eliminate, the Elon Musk's Starlink network. Russia also is likely to attack and destroy Joint and Tactical Operation Centers in Ukraine as part of its overall effort to degrade Ukraines ability to carry out offensive operations.

Russia reportedly hit Odessa's port yesterday (Monday) with a missile strike as a prelude for ending the grain deal and asserting its control of the Black Sea. That will be a blow to Ukraine and Turkey and there is little the West can do in response without creating a casus belli for Russia to hit targets where NATO advisers are located.

In one of yesterday's selections Michael Brenner ("[The New 'New World'](#)", Jul 10, 2023) asks what happens when "when reality confronts narcissism:"

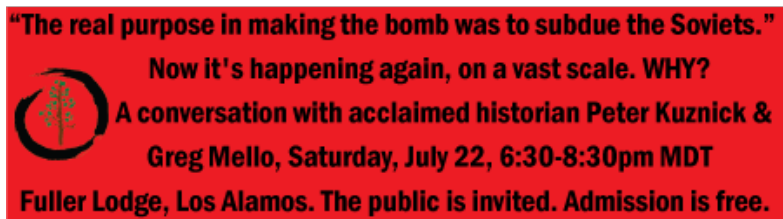
The oddity in this woeful performance lies not in the serial misjudgments per se. It is that most are not the outcome of a deliberate policy process. Rather, they appear as rash, compulsive and disconnected effusions.

These decisions and actions express an irrepressible urge to fill a want, a desire, a selfish need. They are expected to achieve their aim because that is the natural outcome due the privileged self. This behavioral pattern is pure narcissism — writ large for the collective elite persona.

What happens when reality punches the narcissist(s) in the face? When the Russian army is on the Dnieper? When deindustrialization joins with inflation to drag the EU into depression? When the Sino-Russian bloc of BRICS breaks the American controlled phalanx of financial overlords?

These are good questions. We don't know the answers -- Brenner suggests some -- but dangers do run very high.

Second, please help us recruit in-person attendees (some of whom will car-pool with others, right?) for the [July 22 event in Los Alamos](#):



"The real purpose in making the bomb was to subdue the Soviets."
Now it's happening again, on a vast scale. WHY?
A conversation with acclaimed historian Peter Kuznick & Greg Mello, Saturday, July 22, 6:30-8:30pm MDT
Fuller Lodge, Los Alamos. The public is invited. Admission is free.

You can save and insert the image file in social media as needed for spreading the word, or use [Bulletin 330](#), which has much more detail and also a Zoom link for those who cannot travel or are too far away to come in person.

By "conversation" we mean a conversation between the live audience and the two speakers, after their presentations -- a panel-of-two with Q&A and audience comments.

It is significant and important that this event is in Los Alamos, where the largest investments in the world are being made to produce a) additional, and b) new nuclear warheads.* (*Other countries are also investing, but here in the U.S., thanks mostly to the uniquely weak bargaining position of government relative to contractors, the work is hyper-expensive. See "[Structural Features Making NNSA an Unusual Federal Agency](#)," memo for VP Biden, 2016.)

[Why are we doing this?](#)

- Basically, what happened in 1945 is terribly relevant today because neoconservatives in the U.S. have created a state of proxy war and near-war with Russia, AGAIN, as anti-New-Dealers and a cabal of capitalists and military leaders including Groves did then. I think Dr. Kuznick will help us understand this better than most of us do.
- Unlike in 1945, Russia is now a peer nuclear state. It has a robust economy and a much more unified polity than the U.S. does, or NATO countries do. From the realist perspective, what is being done by our leaders today is REALLY stupid (see Brenner, above, and our whole Ukraine page).
- For decades, the (Trinity-)Hiroshima-Nagasaki anniversaries have focused largely on the past. To the extent they have focused on the present and future that focus has not usually been concrete. It is past time for the sharp realization that we are living in a crucial moment in living nuclear history, with events taking place right here and now in our neighborhood, events that echo those of 1945. We can't change the past. The only *time* in which we can act is the present, and the only *place* we can powerfully act is where we stand.
- This state of near-war with Russia has dramatic ramifications in our region and for the U.S. as a whole. The crash program to build new pits at LANL is falsely portrayed as necessary to deter (a resurgent, malevolent) Russia.
- If these narratives are not challenged, humanity and most of the biosphere could well be destroyed. There is no better time or place to do so. History does not often provide such a wonderful, clear-cut, opportunity to a specific region and group of people (that's you and me) to avoid a looming catastrophe.
- The wasteful, poorly-strategized LANL program is beset with problems, as NNSA foresaw. It is weak. It requires an absence of opposition to succeed. Public dialog is deadly to stupid, greedy plans for more weapons of mass destruction. That is why it is suppressed. We are not going to be suppressed. The largest capital endeavor in the history of New Mexico, which due to its scale and shocking purpose has the potential to paralyze all competing political agendas, should have a little public exposure, don't you think?

Third, we are less and less impressed with generic calls for eventual "nuclear disarmament." Absent opposition to the Ukraine war, and absent opposition to plans to build a nuclear weapons factory on our very doorstep, such calls don't make sense to us. We said as much in a published comment in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* ("[Archbishop to denounce nuclear arms on Trinity test's 78th anniversary](#)", Jul 10, 2023, on our web site with published comment). We are aware of powerful efforts by national grantmakers and other organizations to support pit production at LANL -- basically to advance the nuclear colonization of the state. The same grantmakers are also "all in" on supporting the war against Russia. We oppose them. It is important to understand, as we wrote, that "fine words alone butter no parsnips."

Best wishes,

Greg, Trish and the Study Group gang

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July 10, 2023

July 22 event in Los Alamos: outreach help wanted and needed!

Friends,

Good afternoon. We hope you all are well, and enjoying the summer.

I am writing to ask you to help us with outreach for our July 22, 6:30 pm MDT presentation and discussion in Los Alamos, described in [Bulletin 330](#), entitled:

**""The real purpose in making the bomb was to subdue the Soviets.' Now it's happening again, on a vast scale. WHY?"
-- a conversation with acclaimed historian Peter Kuznick and Greg Mello in Los Alamos, July 22.**

As we said in the recent Bulletin, in-person attendance is very important at this meeting. It is important at all meetings, of course, but in Los Alamos we cannot count on local attendance. Many people in Los Alamos have told us that they are afraid of being seen at an event which questions LANL programs or the rectitude of LANL's/"Site Y's" role in 1945, or today.

Many of you have asked, "what can I do?" We have usually provided a short menu of options. **Right now, for the next 12 days, for those of you who know people within driving distance of Los Alamos, we are asking you to help mobilize those friends to travel up the Hill to Los Alamos for this event.**

Everything valuable in our field requires some minimum level of commitment. No commitment = no value. We know there is always some resistance in our communities to going to Los Alamos, more than to business or recreational travel of equal inconvenience. That resistance is a measure of the value of making the trip -- witnessing in that small way; expressing our collective solidarity against the production of *new* (and *additional*) nuclear weapons. With others.

Bear in mind that this meeting will be in an historic building at the heart of the World War II Manhattan Project in Los Alamos, just a few feet from the house next door where General Groves confessed to his British friends that "[t]he real purpose in making the bomb was to subdue the Soviets."

That informal dinner-table comment expressed a world-dominating mentality, common in conservative, anti-New-Deal circles at that time, that was the beginning of an arms race that has impoverished this country, and installed a military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-academic-think-tank-media complex that largely rules our country, taking for itself the lion's share of discretionary federal funding every year.

For those who live far away, or as a last resort for those who can't drive up, we have provided this Zoom link, as the gathering will be livestreamed via that medium, subject to these limitations:

- You must register in advance.
- No questions or chat will be available to those who are not physically present.
- You must either have a computer camera or photo identification in order to take part remotely.

Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtc-2trjsjHNOjGquQDeq020XeeaZBHZgf>.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

We will put a short ad on our [web site](#) suitable for forwarding via social media. Feel free to make up your own!

Greg, Trish and the Study Group gang

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June 15, 2023

Pit production zoom today; halt military "aid" to Ukraine, which just kills more Ukrainians, accept peace

Friends,

Good afternoon.

First, here are the Zoom coordinates again for today's presentation and discussion, as described [here](#). This is, to repeat, the largest warhead-related program in at least 35 years, larger than the Manhattan Project in constant dollars.

Time: Jun 15, 2023 05:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join the meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86011967811?pwd=NnpCRXcwU3RlZmRYZVJvTGJNczdtQT09>

Meeting ID: 860 1196 7811

Passcode: 636584

Second, you and your peace-oriented friends may be interested in some of the latest updates posted on our [Ukraine page](#). Trish and I just posted a longish comment there.

We know that most New Mexicans are highly uninformed -- and worse, mis-informed -- about what has happened and what is happening in Ukraine, and what it means for all of us.

Because so few citizens are speaking out, the situation is getting worse and worse.

Study Group director Steve Starr just sent along a fine [comment](#) from the [Moon of Alabama](#) blog from "JustAMaverick." I will leave you with it.

Good Morning from the Empire of Lies and Chaos where I wake each morning, grab my coffee and watch the decline and fall of the western world in real time. I'm a big history buff, have a degree in history, but lately have had a very hard time sinking my teeth into anything other than the history happening right before my eyes.

I used to read about the lead up to World War One and wonder how leaders on every side could be so ignorant and arrogant, so incompetent and did not comprehend the danger and subsequent consequences of their actions. Now I understand. I used to wonder how a democratic and well educated society as Weimar Germany could fall under the spell of the Nazi party, and allow themselves to be sleepwalked to their doom. Now I understand.

When I was twelve my brother lent me his copy of *Animal Farm* [and] a couple years later, 1984. I was too young to fully comprehend them at the time, although I was smart enough to know that both contained some essential truths about humans, their societies and the potential for mass control, surveillance and propaganda. Now, I totally understand. I see it every day...everywhere. Back then, it was an adventure of the mind. Now it is not an adventure, it is a nightmare.

Ukraine was a bridge too far for the Neo-Cons and the Globalists. A mistake of epic, of historic proportions. Never underestimate the destructive potential of hubris and arrogance. If you repeat lies enough times in order to brainwash the masses, you will ultimately also brainwash yourself to believe those same lies in a self orchestrated doom loop.

We enter the danger zone. Those in power will do anything to maintain that power and as that power slips through their fingers, lost in their own self created illusion and delusion, sure of their own divine right to rule the world, with unlimited hubris and arrogance, they step by step lead the entire world toward a conflagration the likes of which hasn't been seen...perhaps ever in human history.

Unless something drastic changes our current course, we head full steam into the perfect storm.

We see almost no peace activism in New Mexico. Even small steps will mean a lot.

See some of you this afternoon.

Greg, Trish and Study Group gang

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June 3, 2023

LANL plutonium safety violations; Russophobia in the antiwar "left,"; any pit production is "expanded" pit production

Friends --

Good afternoon. Some of you may be interested in these two news articles about NNSA's recent enforcement action about some egregious safety violations at LANL:

- [Triad Hit By DOE With Preliminary Notice Of Violation \[PNOV\] For 5 Nuclear Safety Issues At Plutonium Facility PF4 In 2021](#), *Los Alamos Reporter*, May 31, 2023
 - This article has lots of details about the incidents if you want to avoid reading [the actual PNOV](#).
- [Los Alamos National Lab contractor cited for 2021 violations](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Jun 2, 2023
 - I (Greg) added a comment, quoted below at the *. **People need to know that being against "expanded" pit production at LANL isn't being against much if anything, as all non-zero pit production is "expanded."** See below.

The first to briefly report on this important story, by the way, was Dan Parsons at *Exchange Monitor* ("[LANL contractor cited by NNSA for series of plutonium facility safety violations in 2021](#)").

Re Ukraine, the US continues to do its best to prolong the war forever under the deluded theory that this will exhaust Russia and eventually some Yeltsin-like person will become president there. ("[Blinken Dismisses Calls for a Ceasefire. Says US Must Build Up Ukraine's Military](#)," Kyle Anzalone, *Antiwar.com*, Jun 2, 2023). One of two featured articles on our [Ukraine page](#) today.

Also featured is an interesting piece by Scott Ritter ("['Waging Peace': How a tour of Russia showed me that propaganda perverts reality in the minds of Americans](#)," RT, Jun 2, 2023), containing this important observation:

" Upon my return home, I was able to access my email account, which I was not able to do while in Russia, and immediately stumbled upon an intramural discussion among people I respect, who possess similar professional backgrounds and anti-war inclinations. It revolved around the issue of whether there was anything more Russia, and in particular Putin, could have done to avoid a war in Ukraine. Some amongst this group insisted that Putin had no choice but to act, while others argued that there were always options short of war that could have been pursued.

What struck me about this debate was the reality that, save for very few exceptions, the underlying analysis was conducted from an American point of view, with little or no regard as to what would be politically possible in Russia, or what the factual foundation of the problems being discussed were. The mirror-imaging of American perspectives onto Russian reality resulted in the creation of a counter-narrative that was as fundamentally flawed as it was factually challenged. For those who argued that Putin could have avoided war, their arguments lacked any grounding in Russian reality or the facts of the case.

The lack of insight into how Russia functions created artificial expectations of Russian behavior which, when not met, generated angst among the participants about the irresponsible actions of Putin and his government that in turn helped feed an overall anti-Russian narrative. As this debate underscored, even among well-meaning people inclined to have an open mind about the country, Russophobia and an overall ignorance of the Russian reality creates pre-conceived intellectual obstacles which are difficult to overcome."

As Steve Starr remarked to some of us the other day, Russophobia is a species of racism. It's ugly as well as being a mental disease. There are many who say, "Oh, I love the Russian people but I hate Putin (or, the Russian government)." These people haven't thought enough yet about Putin's consistent, high popularity and what it says about his policies, including those involving Ukraine.

Greg

***Published comment by Greg Mello in today's *New Mexican*:**

Thanks for the important article, Scott and editors.

Yes, all investment in pit production at LANL should be halted. That is our preferred policy takeaway. I don't think Jay is saying that -- up to now Jay has argued that LANL should be the ONLY pit production site in the nation -- but perhaps he can clarify that apparent contradiction in this space. It's important for this to happen, because many people far away perceive that his organization and many others want pit production at LANL, as long as it is not "expanded."

The problem centers on the word "expanded," as in "expanded pit production." It implies there is some pit production, or some capability to do pit production, right now. But there isn't. Pit production is not being "expanded" at LANL. There IS no pit production at LANL, or even the capability for any. LANL, and NNSA itself, foster this confusion, pretending there is more capability at LANL than there is.

There has never at any time since the early 1950s been any "reliable" pit production at LANL. ("Reliable" production is NNSA's term for industrial production, production that goes beyond technology demonstration and can be used as the basis for a warhead production program.)

There has not been any stockpile pit production AT ALL at LANL since 2007-2012, when LANL made 30 pits that were fed into an existing warhead maintenance program over those 6 years in what amounted to a technology demonstration. After that, LANL's entire pit program was shut down for safety violations, and because there was neither the need nor the capability to make pits.

This is much more than semantics. Changing LANL over from technology "sustainment" to "reliable" production at even 30 pits per year is expected to be a \$16-\$19 billion dollar effort lasting well past 2031 and possibly (i.e. probably) until 2033-2035, according to NNSA. To reliably produce as few as 20 pits per year, NNSA will need essentially all the people, infrastructure, and equipment needed for 30 pits per year.

So it's the FIRST step that's the real doozy -- creating ANY actual, reliable pit production capability, not "expanding" something. It's the FIRST step that will cost more than \$15 billion and commit the entire region to be the home of a plutonium-based complex, with all the nuclear waste and the economic, social, and moral impacts that implies.

The lab never wanted that job starting in 1946, when Norris Bradbury and other senior managers issued a report begging to be rid of it. Much later, Domenici and Bingaman didn't want it when they were senators. In their time, pit production was not really needed and it STILL is not needed. Up to 2018, even NNSA didn't want pit production in LANL's old PF-4 facility at ANY permanent level and made a formal decision to never do what NNSA is doing today.

Nationally, many people -- including ostensible "antinuclear" folks -- are saying, "Let's have LANL make all the pits, but let's not have EXPANDED pit production at LANL." This formulation is at odds with reality and in effect -- contrary to most people's intent -- quietly endorses the status quo program ("the program of record") at LANL. Because of the huge infrastructure investment and the hiring necessary to staff 3 work shifts and drive LANL's old, small plutonium R&D facility well past its usual operational pace (and as we see in this report, past safety "red lines"), pit production at LANL is a job where if you are in for a dime, you're in for a dollar.

Let's oppose ALL pit production at LANL and ALL pit production for the coming decade, which is we believe the best policy for the country as well as the region and the world.

A better way to clarify what "expanded" pit production means is with numbers (why didn't I think of this earlier?). So making 10 usable ("war reserve") pits per year, reliably, is "expanded" pit production. LANL has never done that (since, possibly, a couple of years plus or minus 1950). Who is for 10 pits per year at LANL and who is against it? Twenty pits per year is REALLY expanded.

So Jay, do you oppose 10-20 pits per year at LANL? Are you willing to write an open letter to Frank von Hippel, Marylia Kelley, and Tom Clements in South Carolina, or better still to congressional committees, saying you oppose all pit production at LANL?

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June 2, 2023

Quick update; more frequent letters coming to this list; let's be more than colonial complainers

Friends --

Good afternoon.

It's been awhile since we wrote anything on this "Activist Leaders" list. Yet apart from a week or so of family travel, we've been working darn hard here -- just not on local events or other developments that seemed appropriate for this listserve.

We're changing that!

First, in case you missed them, here are some recent articles you received via our main listserve (*of which this "activist leaders" email list is a subset*):

- ["NNSA's effort to restart plutonium warhead "pit" production will cost more than the Manhattan Project. Why is NNSA trying to build two pit factories at once -- one that is adequate, and one that is not?,"](#) press backgrounder, May 27, 2023, referencing in particular ["Toward a viable plutonium pit production plan: part 1,"](#) LASG Letter to Congress, May 18, 2023 and an updated ["Pit Production Startup Costs By Site and Year,"](#) May 11, 2023;
- [Bulletin 326: Update, fundraising, town hall, Ukraine, pit production now to cost more than the whole Manhattan Project,](#) Apr 26, 2023; and
- ["NNSA cites Los Alamos National Laboratory for multiple "serious" plutonium safety violations in 2021,"](#) press release, May 31, 2023.

Greg is headed to Washington DC next week to discuss these matters and others with quite a few people on The Hill and elsewhere. We've been very busy here with correspondence in advance of that trip. Above all we will patiently explain, in DC, why LANL cannot and should not be a pit factory and is unlikely to succeed at that mission, and why "we" don't need the warhead in question.

We've taken time to debunk some mistaken articles from nuclear weapons promoters and arms controllers (e.g. our friend Frank von Hippel), *both* camps saying the pit program at LANL should continue as planned for the foreseeable future. Great. We will send out more on that to our main listserve ASAP.

We will be hosting a national zoom call on nuclear weapons modernization shortly after Greg's return from Washington; stay tuned for that announcement.

1. These "Activist Letters" are going to come to you much more frequently, even if most of them are short. The frequency may be more than some of you want; others will appreciate the richer content, which will not go to our main listserve. The content here will be more informal and action-oriented as well.

If you like what you see, please share these letters any way you choose (e.g. with this [permalink](#)), and encourage others to sign up. **To subscribe [send a blank email here](#) and to unsubscribe, [send a blank email here](#). If you unsubscribe from this list you will still be on our main emailing list.**

We and everyone we talk to see a lot of political paralysis in New Mexico. Collectively we act like the proverbial deer in the headlights. Trish and I are at times heartbroken by this deathly failure of imagination and vitality. For example, how many guest editorials against the Ukraine war do you see in our newspapers, for example? We see zero. How many against pit production at LANL? One or two, rarely -- not enough to sway editorial policies (yet -- stay tuned).

We are already sharing resources and insights among a small group of friends daily and will now be broadening that circle. Those who want to stay will stay.

2. Our [Ukraine page](#) is a very useful resource to peacemakers, which we hope you will be. We have kept faith with you, updating that page daily or near-daily with the most useful, most accessible, most reliable information and analysis available to us.

If we aren't shocked, scared, or angry we aren't paying enough attention. It's not a virtue to sit around and wait for the fallout, or for the last crust of bread to be taken from hungry children to finance the latest *wunderwaffen* for Ukraine. It may be feel hopeless to speak out but that's precisely why it is necessary, and why speaking out is so powerful. A single candle lights up a very dark cave. I suppose you understand that this war is leading the collective West into dark places.

3. Many people are at a loss as to what to do. People tend to look at the challenge in the wrong way, from the outside as it were. *Let me suggest speaking out publicly in whatever way you can, as conscientiously as possible. You can't go far wrong.* Put up a yard signs. Write comments in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* (a very efficient and timely way to reach a significant number of interested people, not just the passive masses *who really don't matter politically*). You can write op-eds of course, but they are filtered and must be infrequent. Get in front of audiences in person, or get me (Greg) in front of audiences. *Don't* bother writing or calling NM congresspersons. Public tabling is very good. You will think of other things to do. *The main thing is to do them, publicly. Put yourself out there as we have done* (for example, ["Anti-nuclear activist opposes helping Ukraine, encourages peace,"](#) *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Feb 5, 2023).

Every one of us is in a different situation. Some of the best of us are barely making ends meet. Others are not well, or have close family members who are ill and need extra help. All that said, most of us have more freedom than we use. We must use it or we will lose it.

4. Know a promising young person of any age?

If somebody wants to work and make a difference, there are ways we can enable that here. We do have a pretty good time with it too.

5. There is very little practical, public opposition to nuclear weapons in New Mexico, including among some demographic who used to oppose them. Generalities are worse than useless of course. Being against nuclear weapons is more or less like being in favor of motherhood and apple pie. Hopefully you can see how useless and sterile that is. Gestures of purity get boring pretty fast. A new meaningless slogan we have heard is "multilateral disarmament." It sounds like the State Department and it means exactly the opposite of disarmament.

Also obviously, *complaining* about something is not the same as opposing it. *Being a victim of things that happened in the past* is not the same as opposition to what is happening now -- often, it's an easy substitute.

Many wring their hands about New Mexico being a "nuclear colony." It is, but *complaining merely* is a very colonial thing to do. What are you going to do about it?

Some people say they are "against all pit production," which is fine except it butters no parsnips. None. Not one decisionmaker in government -- not one member of Congress and no one in the Executive Branch -- shares that view or will *ever* share that view as long as the U.S. is an empire and has a military budget half the size of the planet. Not to mention being in an escalating war with a nuclear peer adversary. We are also "against all pit production" as we have often said (e.g. in some detail [here](#)), but that and \$4 will buy us a cup of coffee. Are we against pit production right now, here, or are we among the deluded who conflate *potential* pit production in the late 2030s with *actual* pit production this year, as if time, climate change, so many other pertinent realities didn't exist?

As we have said (FWIW -- it's too obvious), all paths to disarmament lie through peace with Russia and China. It is idle and irresponsible to talk about nuclear disarmament while remaining silent about the war we in the U.S. have cultivated against Russia. Of course, many people are deeply uninformed about this war. As somebody said the other day, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him think.

6. So let's talk about all this! If you want to do so, please set something up! If we can, we'll come!

So look for shorter and more frequently letters henceforth. And please look at the [Ukraine page](#). Discuss it, and take action. If you or your friends are reading or watching the trash that passes for the national press, you cannot help but be misinformed. We need to have, as RFK, Jr. said, a "mature conversation" about Ukraine, as we do about pit production, and some other things.

We miss many of you and hope we will have a chance to see you soon,

Greg

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April 21, 2023

Study Group lunch discussion this coming Monday 4/24 re pits, nuclear weapons, waste; THANK YOU for attending the April 4 town hall

Friends --

First, *thank you* for attending the April 4 town hall if you were able to do so. Our last two lead-up letters about the most important issues to be addressed in that meeting were [here](#) and [here](#), in case you missed them. We also held educational meetings in two cities, which some of you attended.

With at least 250 people attending in person and another 200 on-line, the April 4 town hall was the best-attended "anti-nuclear" event in New Mexico since the early 1980s, although the focus was rather fuzzy.

Some news media reported on the event (e.g. "[NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby Offers Frank Answers On LANL Plutonium Pit Production And More During Hybrid Town Hall Meeting In Santa Fe](#)," *Los Alamos Reporter*, Apr 11, 2023 and "[Stop making nuclear weapons': Activists press federal chief on LANL pit push](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Apr 4, 2023). Thanks to many of you, opposition to plutonium pit production was a strong emphasis at the meeting.

There is much more that could be said, and discussed, about the issues that came up in that meeting. We've been doing that among our most active members and we do need to write about it in some depth.

Meanwhile we have had to turn almost our full attention and engagement to events in Washington, DC, where the annual cycle of budget hearings has begun. There is much to be done in that context, where the near-future of nuclear weapons (including pit production) is being decided.

Second, in what we hope will become a monthly series, the Study Group will be hosting a short talk and discussion over lunch [this coming Monday 4/24 in Santa Fe, at noon](#). Please join us!

Space will be limited, ***so if you are interested please let us know as soon as possible***.

We can touch upon these initial topics to get discussion going:

- The latest revelations from NNSA about its ongoing struggles to rebuild production capacity and what they mean;
- Did you know that the estimated cost for NNSA's overall effort to restart pit production is now larger than the whole Manhattan Project, in constant dollars? Here, LANL start-up costs for pit production are going to be about 20 times what the Army spent at Los Alamos through the end of 1945.
- Other NNSA projects are also in trouble, as is the defense industrial base as a whole, in comparison to the production capacities of our so-called "enemies" Russia plus China.

We are open to other topics as well, as time allows.

We are hoping attendees can enjoy some relaxed, informal fellowship and conversation in what we hope will be a positive, uplifting, exploratory atmosphere. This will be a discussion, not a presentation.

Third, please do avail yourself of our Ukraine [web page](#). Please share this resource with others, as what is happening in and around Ukraine is a fulcrum for major and quite rapid historical changes, not understood or truthfully explained by the mainstream media. You have to read and think for yourself. There is almost zero antiwar activity in this state or country.

By the way, this page gets "special" attention from mystery bots, almost certainly from one or more three-letter agencies. Somebody "loves" us.

Fourth, the Study Group is impecunious these days, and we can't easily bring on board the young people who have expressed interest in helping, say as interns. You are the reason we can work at all, and the collective "you" are a major reason NNSA has been back-footed on the production of new pits. **To the extent you can act as ambassadors for us, please do.**

We will soon send out some products of wider interest to our main list serve and elsewhere, and of course to Congress, so we won't repeat those more substantive things here.

Best wishes, see some of you Monday,

Greg, Trish, and the Study Group

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April 4, 2023

Reminder: Town Hall in Santa Fe tonight, 6:30 pm (come early if you want to speak), bring signs. Talking points: "No pits here, now, ever."

Key points:

1. Come to tonight's [Town Hall](#) and ask your friends to come.
2. Come early and sign up if you want to speak.
3. If possible bring a harmless (e.g. paper or cloth, no sticks!) sign with a simple message, such as "No pits!" or "No pits -- here, now, or ever" or "No pit factory at LANL!"
4. Attend in person, not by Zoom.
5. Issues related to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) are linked to, but distinct from, the question of whether Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) becomes a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory. Per DOE and NNSA, in the event of a conflict transuranic (TRU) waste from pit production will always take precedence over legacy waste and surplus plutonium waste from all sites in the U.S., in transportation and disposal. There will always be space at WIPP for TRU waste from pit production. The federal government will never allow pit production to be stymied by a lack of TRU waste disposal capacity.
6. The Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) process for LANL now underway is not an honest, democratic process that will provide citizens with a way to "let their voices be heard" about nuclear weapons policy. Don't be suckered into thinking it is. It is a purely administrative process -- a box NNSA must tick -- not a democratic one.
7. The proposed "dilute and dispose" (D&D) approach to surplus plutonium is unnecessarily expensive, time-consuming, risky for workers, and environmentally impactful. It wastes space in WIPP. Oxidizing tons of plutonium metal in LANL's old plutonium facility is a bad idea. Building a new plutonium facility for this mission or for pit production is a terrible idea. Simpler, safer, cheaper, better alternatives are available for surplus plutonium.
8. None of the local environmental and safety protections and the environmental cleanup that most of us seek, as well as the minimization of hazardous materials transportation, will be possible if LANL is transformed into a plutonium manufacturing and processing hub. Political support for plutonium pit manufacturing and the development of a "plutonium workforce" ("jobs!") are the main reasons LANL is being considered as a plutonium processing hub despite its physical limitations. In 2018, in response to an NNSA plan that might assign the pit mission to the Savannah River Site (SRS), the New Mexico delegation [made sure](#) LANL was designated as the "Plutonium Science *and Production* Center of Excellence for the United States." It is in part the perceived acceptance of pit production which brings still other dirty missions to the Santa Fe area.
9. The LANL pit production mission is in [trouble](#). It is not "cast in concrete." It did not begin in 1996 -- that was explicitly an "interim," technology sustainment mission (see [slide 9](#)) -- but rather only in 2020, in the last months of the Trump Administration. Pit policy is currently under review by the Nuclear Weapons Council (which includes NNSA), DoD, and congressional committees.

Friends --

We hope that many of you are able to come to the [Town Hall](#) being hosted this evening by Santa Fe County. It is a rare opportunity to speak to audiences near and far, with your words and your signs, and your presence.

There will be many problems discussed (having the world's best-funded nuclear weapons facility in your back yard brings a lot of problems), so if you want to get the message across that you don't want LANL to be a pit factory ***your mere presence will not be enough. You will have to use words.***

Hopefully you will be able to speak when your turn comes up but time could be limited. **Come early and sign up if you want to speak.**

We urge you to bring a sign, perhaps made of paper or cloth or other harmless material which could not be interpreted as presenting any security issues.

It might say, "No pits!" That's pretty brief but it would do. Or "No pits -- here, now, or ever." Or "No pit factory at LANL!" Be as creative as you like, obviously.

We provide some limited background and talking points here, but the key thing is to get across that one simple message above. Let nothing distract us from that.

We spoke earlier today with County Commission Chair Anna Hansen, who did the hard work of making this meeting happen and deserves credit for that. She emphasized that this will be an opportunity to ask questions and to expect real answers, as well as to make comments.

Some questions can be answered but please also be aware that questions also have a tendency to place the questioner in a supplicatory, weak position, given the large

number of people present. It is not the same as asking a question one-on-one, or in a small group. Inevitably, asking questions of "The Authority," who is also the one with all the money and the one who is *acting*, is more like being a *subject*, without the agency a *citizen* would have. Usually (but not always) asking a question in a forum like this represents a lost opportunity. Well-considered comments are more valuable, frankly.

As for us here, we aren't going to ask questions per se but rather will be speaking as part of a longer conversation we are having and we all can have, in multiple times and places and modalities, aimed at changing official minds about the LANL pit production mission, a mission inherited from the Trump Administration. **We want to convert and awaken these and other officials, and other decisionmakers in Washington DC, to the realization that making pits at LANL here and now is a terrible idea.**

It is possible to "attend" this meeting remotely and to submit questions using this Zoom [link](#). **We urge you to come in person.**

Commissioner Hansen tells us that remote "attendees" will be able to ask questions, per Department of Energy (DOE)/National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) request. While this appears to be more "convenient," do you see how disempowering this is? There is no concept of democracy here. It is pure administration.

"Attending remotely" is oxymoronic. Those two words have opposite meanings. Disembodied "attendance" has little or no political impact, in proportion to the minimal effort and commitment it requires. It is better suited for subjects than for citizens. To then use this highly-limited form of appearance to ask filtered questions of "The Authorities" is like pouring water on the fire we need to keep citizenship warm (or rather revive it from its present moribund state).

The administrative public relations processes advanced by DOE and NNSA in every possible venue are toxic to health and well-being. It's an addiction.

(The true "[space of appearance](#)" where people can gather together to discuss, act, and build the future is fragile. A "town hall meeting" is only a meeting to the extent people *meet*. Right now, the French understand this better than us; see the recent "[French Streets and American Sofas](#)," Patrick Lawrence).

Regarding point 5. above, pit production generates TRU waste. At a production rate of 80 pits per year (ppy), DOE and NNSA calculate that pit production will generate 14.4 cubic meters (m3) of TRU waste per pit. This waste will go to WIPP, regardless. As DOE and NNSA [say](#) (p. 65), "In addition, use of WIPP capacity for national security missions such as pit production would be given priority in the [WIPP capacity] allocation process."

Pit production is NNSA's largest endeavor and the largest endeavor the agency has ever had. NNSA is DOE's largest component. The Department of Defense (DoD) -- more than 20 times bigger in dollar terms -- is adamant, as is Congress, that the U.S. have a significant pit production capability. There is zero chance that any President will fail to request, or Congress fail to support, construction of an adequate pit production capability. (LANL does not and cannot provide that.)

The present point is simply this: **the federal government will never allow pit production to be stymied by a lack of TRU waste disposal capacity.**

Best wishes,

Greg, Trish, and the Study Group

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April 2, 2023

Important public town hall in Santa Fe Tuesday, April 4: "No pits. Not here, not now, not ever."

Santa Fe County is [hosting](#) a Town Hall, featuring the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Department of Energy Environmental Management (DOE EM) leadership on **Tuesday, April 4, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, at the Santa Fe Convention Center, 201 W. Marcy St. ([map](#))**. There will be opportunity for comments and questions from the public.

We urge you to attend and bring your friends, for the purpose of speaking out against LANL's huge new mission of producing plutonium warhead cores ("pits") for a new generation of nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

Our best current information is that you must sign up *in person* to speak, so we recommend arriving early.

The news media will be there; signs opposing pit production are important visually. Also, it is possible that for reasons of time not everyone will be able to speak. Bring flexible signs, without sticks (which are sometimes not allowed).

A number of topics will be addressed by multiple official speakers and by community members. The central, simple message we want to convey is: "No pit production. Not here, not now, not ever." In that order.

We would like Dr. Jill Hruby, the NNSA Administrator, and other officials present to take away the understanding that LANL's new, polluting, pit mission is strenuously opposed, adding to the delays, cost increases, and management problems they already face at LANL.

Good evening friends --

As we [noted](#) on March 27 and before that in our March 22 press release ("[Schedule for Nuclear Warhead Core \("Pit"\) Production Slipping. Costs Increasing: NNSA's Strategy is Failing.](#)"), there have been dramatic developments in federal plans to construct, equip, and operate a plutonium warhead core ("pit") production plant at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) -- namely, [5-7 years of delays](#) to full production at LANL. NNSA also expects costs to rise even further than previous estimates.

These developments, combined with delays elsewhere, hold the potential to curb the U.S. appetite and ability to conduct a nuclear arms race. They also create, in northern New Mexico, a superb and unique opportunity not shared with any other locale in the U.S.

Santa Fe County's Town Hall this coming Tuesday is an outstanding opportunity to reach multiple audiences nationwide as well as locally with the message that many of us do not accept LANL's new pit production mission. Contrariwise, the absence of visible and audible opposition will be taken as public assent to that mission.

The Town Hall has been arranged by Santa Fe County Commission Chair Anna Hansen, who deserves credit for doing so.

There will be a number of environmental issues raised at this meeting, briefly discussed further below. Nearly all of these issues originate from pit production past, present, and future (plutonium-239, in all its forms, has really only one use) and every one of them will be exacerbated tremendously by pit production at LANL.

Some people hope that pit production at LANL can be done "safely." This would be difficult anywhere but in LANL's old, crowded buildings, situated near active earthquake faults on poorly-consolidated volcanic ash sediments, in relatively close proximity to residences in Los Alamos, with an impossible schedule to meet and the necessity of working 24/7 to do so with an inexperienced commuter workforce, it is a vain hope. New Mexico political leaders [used to understand that](#).

In 2017, DOE and NNSA ruled out using LANL main plutonium facility for permanent production work. As the agency [wrote then](#), "...after a new 80 WR ["War Reserve," i.e. acceptable quality] [pit per year] capability is established, PF-4 [LANL's main plutonium facility] can return to the research and development mission for which it was built."

Dr. Hruby's "predecessor-plus-one" General Klotz, appointed by Obama, led a rigorous [analysis of alternatives](#) which concluded among other things that a) it made no sense to build two pit factories, something nobody had ever taken seriously anyway, b) LANL's old PF-4, in which a number of non-pit-production missions are also done, would be unable to house a reliable pit production mission and shouldn't have one, and c) the best (cheapest, least risk, fastest) overall plan would be to utilize an unfinished new plutonium facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS) for pit production.

Naturally, this plan was attacked by the New Mexico delegation. A new NNSA Administrator was meanwhile appointed who had little background in the field, and the highly-political result was a 2018 [recommendation](#) to build two pit factories, contrary to NNSA's own technical and managerial judgment of the year before. This recommendation was legally ratified in September 2020 ([here](#) and [here](#)), despite the far greater costs and competition between the two sites for scarce skills and equipment, which is now a problem for NNSA.

The only advantage of re-tooling PF-4 as a production facility was the supposed speed in which this could be done. That advantage is now evaporating, as the problems NNSA and independent examiners warned about have come home to roost. Meanwhile the tremendous impacts of this mission on our region are just beginning to be felt

-- environmental impacts, social impacts, political impacts, cultural impacts.

As we have repeatedly explained, the pits LANL is supposed to make aren't needed for anything but new warheads. DoD already has enough modern, "safe" warheads, with relatively "young" pits (they slowly age), to arm all the new silo-based missiles they want.

Dr. Hruby has inherited a stupid plan. Congressional hawks teamed up with the then-New Mexico delegation to push this nasty monstrosity, which is now failing.

There are quite a few other issues that will come up at this meeting. I want to keep this brief so I am not going to bring them up here, which will only complicate what needs to be a very simple and clear message.

LANL is an extremely expensive place to make pits, by the way. The new schedule and cost increases at LANL will make LANL pits cost \$91-106 million apiece, as much as a brand-new 400,000 square foot high school. *What are we doing?* This is a public policy nightmare, which you can discuss in your comments.

Don't expect too many answers to big questions, by the way. We have already asked. NNSA doesn't have them.

April 4 is just the beginning. We have lots of ways to fight this and we are confident we will win.

Please join us, at this critical juncture.

Please come on Tuesday and bring as many others as you can. **Please bring a sign opposing pit production. A simple one will do. Not everyone there opposes LANL pit production, so we have to be clear about this, visually and audibly.**

Best wishes,

Greg, Trish, and the rest of the Study Group

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March 29, 2023

REMINDER: Important public meeting in Santa Fe TOMORROW, Thursday March 30, 6 pm -- come one, come all

Good evening, friends --

This note is simply to remind you that the Los Alamos Study Group is hosting an important public meeting in Santa Fe this Thursday, March 30, at 6 pm, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at 107 W. Barcelona Road ([map](#)); please tell your friends, and come. There is good news, fresh opportunities -- and as is usual with all things nuclear, dangers.

We very much hope you will be able to attend tomorrow's important meeting, the first we have held in Santa Fe in many months.

Don't forget to check our [Ukraine page](#) for daily updates! Trish posted an insightful essay by Alastair Crooke there yesterday that discusses the difficulty the U.S. and West have in rolling back their failed strategy of using (up) Ukraine as an "anti-Russia" in the face of the mass delusions they themselves have created in our populations ("[L'Entente Is a Bitter Pill for the West](#)," *Strategic Culture Foundation*, Mar 27, 2023).

Getting a jump on tomorrow's postings, "Simplicius" just [posted](#) a very interesting update on Bakhmut (soon to be called Artemovsk again).

Big things are happening over there, which affect us all. Arms control is dead sure enough ("[US To Withhold Nuclear Weapons Data From Russia As Last Treaty Collapses](#)"). The hatred that has been ginned up here in the West is very dangerous for our survival. Scott Ritter: "This is what it has come to, the end of arms control, the end of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the beginning of the end, the abyss. We are staring it in the face."

All this comes right down to us in New Mexico, in spades -- or rather, in plutonium pits.

Please come tomorrow. Bring friends. For a few more details see the previous [letter](#)! We will try to answer what questions you may have.

Best wishes,

Greg, Trish, and the rest of the Study Group

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March 27, 2023

Important public meeting in Santa Fe this Thursday, March 30, 6 pm; please tell your friends and come; there is good news

The Los Alamos Study Group is hosting an important public meeting in Santa Fe this Thursday, March 30, at 6 pm, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at 107 W. Barcelona Road ([map](#)); please tell your friends about it and come. There is good news -- and with it, fresh opportunities.

Good afternoon, friends --

For those of you who were able to attend the good antiwar rally in Albuquerque on the 18th of this month, or did other antiwar actions, *thank you*. Please keep checking our [Ukraine page](#) for daily updates. There are enormous historical events taking place that will affect everyone. We've been closely following events there for the last nine years. Share that page with your friends.

We very much hope you will be able to attend Thursday's important public meeting, the first we have held in Santa Fe in many months.

Since our last meeting there have been dramatic, and very welcome, developments in federal plans to construct, equip, and operate a plutonium warhead core ("pit") production plant at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) -- namely, *massive delays*.

There are other nuclear weapons developments to report and discuss as well, both good and bad.

There is very little in the news about any of this. (Did you know, for example, that LANL plans to build a nuclear waste disposal site to support pit production? Probably not. The newspapers haven't touched that.)

By June of last year, we had obtained documents describing an anticipated 1-2 year delay in LANL pit production. By early February, the delay expanded to [roughly 4 years](#) to reach full production, i.e. to at least 2030. Now, it is [5-7 years](#), to the 2031 - 2033 timeframe. Costs have meanwhile shot up even further.

These developments, combined with delays elsewhere, hold the potential to curb the U.S. appetite and ability to conduct a nuclear arms race. They create, in northern New Mexico, a superb and unique opportunity not shared with any other locale in the U.S. It is an opportunity for us to show our quality.

If you don't want to be a nuclear-colonial subject, now's the time to stand up and firmly say so. Silence *is* taken as assent.

These pit production delays do not, by the way, affect existing nuclear weapons at all. They do have the potential to stop entirely *new* nuclear weapons, and/or hold down the *number* of new weapons.

The prospect of nuclear sobriety is very welcome, but *we aren't there yet*. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Pentagon could also decide to double and triple down on their LANL mistake -- to throw even more money at the problem and eliminate the "red tape" that slows them down. (There is a big nationwide [plan](#) for that, if you are interested.) Should that happen -- well, "Katie, bar the door."

It is very important to jump on this right now in part because of a [public meeting on April 4](#) hosted by Santa Fe County involving NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby. What Jill comes away with from this meeting will depend on the level of engagement and *the clarity of the message against ANY pit production at LANL and ANY pit production in the coming decade, for starters*.

There will be a number of environmental issues raised. All of them originate with and from pit production and every one of them will be exacerbated by pit production at LANL, should it start up and then continue. Officially, Santa Fe County has not and does not oppose pit production at LANL. Neither do many others.

Some people foolishly hope that LANL pit production can be done "safely." It never has been and can't be. A few believe New Mexico should accept a "small" pit factory and therefore make no effort, serious or otherwise, to oppose it.

There's nothing "small" about what is being slowly built at LANL. Starting up production at LANL is going to cost at least another \$12 billion on top of the \$7 billion already spent. Each LANL pit is going to cost about \$100 million, about as much as a brand-new 400,000 square foot high school. This is by far the largest project in the history of New Mexico, in dollar terms. Our politicians hope it will be a fountain of money and jobs. It already is a fountain of inequality and nuclear waste. *We need to talk about this.*

Acceptance of LANL pit production directly enables a nuclear arms race, and all the environmental woes that go with it.

It is critical to get the word out *right now* about the enormous folly of new-warhead production here and now, *not new warhead production late in the next decade, after other developments are virtually certain to make the whole issue moot one way or the other.*

Please come on Thursday and bring as many as you can. We will try to answer what questions you may have.

Best wishes,

Greg, Trish, and the rest of the Study Group

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Los Alamos Study Group

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March 16, 2023

Ukraine; Biden's Manicheism; the U.S. cannot even conduct a nuclear arms race, let alone win one

Friends --

It is Thursday, March 16. Trish and Greg are visiting children and grandchildren near Amarillo, TX this week.

Please support in any way you can the ANSWER Coalition's [anti-war rally](#) (pdf of flyer) on Saturday, March 18th in Albuquerque, at 2 pm on the corner of San Mateo & Gibson just outside Kirtland Air Force Base. Forward this flyer [image](#), send out their [Facebook link](#), announce the rally in meetings, publicize it in whatever other ways you can, come (with your friends!) if you live reasonably near, or organize a parallel public event in your own community!

First, re Ukraine, the wider U.S. war on Russia, and the madness in this administration and among hawks in both major U.S. political parties, these few articles seem to capture recent developments.

- [Russia Warns the United States about Continued Support for Ukraine by Downing MQ9 Reaper](#), Larry Johnson, *A Son of the New American Revolution*, Mar 14, 2023
- [New Bakhmut Report: High Casualties - Low Morale - Russian Tactics](#), *Moon of Alabama*, 15, 2023
- [BREAKING: Russian Su-27's Finally Down American Drone Near Crimea](#), *Simplicius the Thinker*, Mar 14, 2023

I (Greg) find Alastair Crooke's big-picture insights valuable. His article of March 13, 2023 ("[Betting All on Hegemony: Risking All. To Stave Off Ruin](#)") is quite worthwhile. (U.S. readers probably want to read past his comments on the revealing internal U.K. government documents about lockdowns). His conclusion:

Hence, we have seen Biden – lacking an alternative – resorting to radical Manichaeism to bolster Authority against his domestic opponents in the U.S. (ironically casting them as enemies of 'democracy'), whilst using the Ukraine war as the tool by which to cast the West's war on Russia too, as an epic struggle between the Light and Dark. These Manichean ideological source-codes for now, dominate western liberalism.

But the West has put itself into a trap: 'Going Manichean' puts the West into an ideological straight-jacket. It is a crisis of the West's own making. Put bluntly, Manichaeism is the antithesis to any negotiated solution, or off-ramp. [Carl Schmitt](#) [link added] was clear on this point: the intent of conjuring up the blackest of enmities, precisely was to preclude (liberal) negotiation: How could 'virtue' strike a bargain with 'evil'?

The West is too dysfunctional and weak now to fight on all fronts. Yet there can be no retreat (without some de-legitimising humiliation of the West).

The West has gambled all on its fear-led, 'emergency-crisis' managed 'control' system to save itself. It's hopes now are pinned on its 'Beware! The big boss has gone angry-mad' act; he might do anything', which it hopes will cause the world to back-off.

But the Rest of World is not backing off – it is becoming more assertive. Fewer believe what the western Élites say; fewer still trust their competence. The West has recklessly 'placed its bet'; it may lose all. Or, more dangerously, in a fit of anger, it may kick over others' gaming tables.

I would like to add that in our considered opinion, any U.S. attempt to conduct an arms race with Russia or China, let alone both, will fail. This is rather a momentous reality. Neocons and hawks do not understand this -- or if they do to some extent they believe the U.S. can generate lots more weapons, and even nuclear weapons, by simply trying harder, removing "red tape," and appropriating more money. The image of the U.S. as "arsenal of democracy" is their spoken or unspoken frame of reference. The reality is that this point, there is little ability in the U.S. to generate a much bigger military, or nuclear, arsenal on a relevant timescale (and little democracy).

This merits a longer essay. Far short of that consider just the following, just as regards nuclear warheads. First, the major National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) study "[Evolving the Nuclear Security Enterprise](#) (Sept, 2022) includes, right at the beginning and as a reason for the study in the first place, the following:

The team conducted over 250 interviews with federal and M&O senior leaders and subject matter experts from across the NSE.ii The team also interviewed select Department of Defense FFRDC program leaders and former or retired NNSA and national laboratory leaders...During the team's site visits, **most respondents agreed that the current operating environment will not get the enterprise to where it needs to be to meet mission. On the current path, warhead modernization programs, facility construction, and capability recapitalization will continue to slip and, even worse, we may not be able to attract and retain the needed workforce.** (pp. 2-3, emphasis added)

In February, I attended the 2.5 day [Nuclear Deterrence Summit](#) organized by Exchange Monitor Publications. At this meeting, I would say that there was considerable nervousness -- an edginess -- regarding the ability of NNSA to meet its mission commitments. The entire meeting was devoted to ways to overcome perceived schedule and mission delivery problems. An informal conversation between sessions with an auditor revealed that all or essentially all line-item NNSA construction projects were experiencing some kind of delay, which is not surprising given the recent covid pandemic and on-going supply chain problems. Quoting now from Exchange Monitor Publications editor Dan Leone, the following two [anecdotes](#) (paywall) are revealing:

“It’s been almost an hour, probably, since I talked about pit production.” -- NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby, Feb. 14, 2023. [emphasis added]

Hruby made the remark a half-hour through an hourlong appearance that included the summit’s opening keynote address and a lengthy question-and-answer session with the audience. It was the first session of the day.

The standing-room-only crowd appeared to get the joke.

Pits are the fissile cores of nuclear-weapon first stages. The NNSA is building two new pit factories: one at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, one at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. The one in Los Alamos could be ready by the end of the decade.

People on stage at the conference talked about things other than pits, but not often.

...

During a question-and-answer session with four senior managers from NNSA’s production and test sites, an audience member took advantage of the ability to ask anonymous questions via mobile device and put the panel on the spot about how the government’s nuclear-weapon factories might return to a Cold War footing — or something even more severe.

“As we look at the geopolitical context,” the unidentified summit-goer asked in fluent strategic jargon, “if the nation has to upload the hedge to accommodate roughly doubling the number of counterforce targets, at least partially rebuild the hedge and deploy some hundreds of new theater nuclear weapons all in the next five to 10 years, how could the sites posture themselves for that?”

The room abruptly went the kind of quiet rooms usually only go when they’re empty.

On the stage, the NNSA’s production-site managers glanced around without speaking. They had spent the last hour discussing some of the challenges of coping with the agency’s current program of five serial nuclear-weapon modernizations — the largest workload of the 21st century by far, but nothing remotely approaching the frenzy of the Cold War.

It was anyone’s guess who would break the nervous silence weighing down the room, and if no one would have guessed that it would be Eric Wollerman, the president of Honeywell Federal Manufacturing and Technologies in Kansas City, Mo., who had just finished quite a detailed story about polymers, anyone would have understood.

“We don’t have any requirements to do that,” Wollerman matter-of-factly answered the anonymous questioner. “We don’t have any funding to do that. But we can stand ready to serve whenever we need to,” said the man in charge of the NNSA’s factory for non-nuclear nuclear-weapon parts.

The pulse returned to the room.

Laughter broke out. [Nervous laughter, I would say.] Then applause

That’s it for now, thank you all so much for your efforts.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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

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March 14, 2023

Ukraine protest and updates, pit production delays and cost increases in NNSA's new budget

Please support in any way you can the ANSWER Coalition's [anti-war rally](#) on Saturday, March 18th in Albuquerque, at 2 pm on the corner of San Mateo & Gibson just outside Kirtland Air Force Base. Forward this flyer [image](#), send out their [Facebook link](#), announce the rally in meetings, publicize it in whatever other ways you can, come (with your friends!) if you live reasonably near, or organize a parallel public event in your own community!

Good afternoon, friends --

First, re Ukraine. There is good news: some elite opinions are beginning to change -- some truth about the situation is beginning to break through the groupthink. Since we last wrote you on Saturday, these are the most valuable articles we have seen (and some of them are very valuable indeed).

You can find them linked on [our Ukraine page](#). Please share that page, and [this email](#), with your friends! Discuss -- and protest! And as we said last time, we need a serious U.S. domestic investigation of the Nordstream sabotage incident, to show ourselves and world that we still can do democratic things, followed by impeachment of senior officials if warranted. Please be active! We aren't seeing op eds against the war, or -- apart from the coming one in the box above -- protests. Want a yard sign? We have them, or make your own.

Featured • [Ukraine - Media Start To Acknowledge Reality](#), Moon of Alabama, Mar 14, 2023

GM: It is irresponsible and unethical to send more arms to Ukraine. All it accomplishes is killing more people. About 80-90% of the people dying will be Ukrainian. All the loudmouth chickenhawk jingoists who want to send arms to Ukraine should head to the firing range for a few weeks and then to Bakhmut or Avdiivka and see what it's like. I am just kidding, because they wouldn't survive. Dear President Biden: stop the war right now, and start negotiating, without preconditions.

• [Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis says supporting Ukraine is not a 'vital' U.S. interest, calls the war a 'territorial dispute'](#), Sarah Elbeshbishi, USA Today, Mar 14, 2023

• [Zelensky makes call on key Donbass city](#), RT, Mar 14, 2023

GM: Zelensky continues, with U.S. and NATO help and/or supervision, to sacrifice the lives of men and boys for no decent reason at all. What one Ukrainian woman said about it last month: "[Kneel down and ask forgiveness](#)."

• [Germany is not a sovereign nation – Moscow](#), RT, Mar 13, 2023

GM: We have been stunned by Germany's subservience to the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Yet the German public is awakening, albeit slowly, as the recent rally of 50,000 people at the Brandenburg Gate against Germany's participation in the Ukraine War testifies. Without cheap energy, Germany's industries will be hamstrung and some are already leaving. Loss of the Nordstream pipelines is a real body blow to Germany's economy. Lord Ismay's remark about the purpose of NATO still applies: "to keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

Featured • [China steps up, a new era has dawned in world politics](#), M.K. Bhadrakumar, Indian Punchline, Mar 11, 2023

"The US' humiliating exclusion from the centre stage of West Asian politics constitutes a "Suez moment" for the superpower, comparable to the crisis experienced by the UK in 1956, which obliged the British to sense that their imperial project had reached a dead end and the old way of doing things— whipping weaker nations into line as ostensible obligations of global leadership —was no longer going to work and would only lead to disastrous reckoning.

... "What the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis have brought to the surface is the latent geopolitical reality that the Global South rejects the policies of neo-mercantalism pursued by the West in the garb of 'liberal internationalism.'"

Featured • [Echoes of Maidan: Georgia has a huge Western-funded NGO sector and regular outbreaks of violent protest, is there a link?](#), George Trenin, RT, Mar 11, 2023

"What led to this violent confrontation is perhaps difficult to understand from the perspective of a Western reader. It wasn't a "civil society" uprising in the sense you might find, for example, in a country like France. Instead, it was organized by people whose livelihoods were threatened by the proposed legislation.

"Fyodor Lukyanov: As another ex-Soviet state is gripped by violent protests, is a Ukraine-style coup on the cards?

"In a poor country like Georgia, foreign-funded roles pay multiple times better than local gigs. By taking on the NGO industry, the government went up against a powerful, and relatively well-heeled lobby."

• [US-Ukraine Unity Is Cracking Apart](#), Dave DeCamp, Antiwar.com, Mar 12, 2023

• ['Rigorous' Maidan massacre exposé suppressed by top academic journal, Kit Klarenberg](#), The Grayzone, Mar 12, 2023

GM: I do not find the paper submitted. To see prior papers on this topic from Dr. Katchanovski type "Ivan Katchanovski Maidan" into a search engine. Many other investigations have come to the same conclusions but apparently none so thorough.

• [NATO country leader Orban believes that the West is very close to seriously proposing sending NATO troops into Ukraine](#), Mats Nilsson, twitter.com, Mar 11, 2023

• [Saturday Reader's Mailbag Extravaganza. Answers](#), Simplicius the Thinker, Mar 11, 2023

Of note, the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA's) [budget request](#) was published yesterday. We haven't had time to pore over it in detail. We can however say that NNSA has:

- **Increased the estimated total capital cost of LANL's flagship pit production project by \$1.1 billion (31%) over last year's estimate; and**
- **Pushed the estimated completion date out three more years, to the 4th quarter of 2031.**
- **Projected operations costs for pit production at LANL are estimated to be over \$1 billion per year by 2028, as we predicted.**
- **A new nuclear facility is now to be built to manage liquid transuranic wastes, along with many "small" projects (i.e. "small," as in the size of brand-new high schools or major highway projects).**

Other big-ticket nuclear facilities will be necessary as this project proceeds. We don't yet know if any trace of those appears in this budget, but we'll look over the next day or two.

Meanwhile LANL is, in Thom Mason's words, "at the end of the world's longest cul-de-sac." LANL finds it difficult to recruit and retain people who want to spend their careers handling plutonium. The cost of LANL's pits, no matter how you add it up, will dwarf the cost of the warheads into which they are supposed to be put. Before these latest cost increases and delays, and using NNSA's cost figures, LANL pits were going to [cost](#) in the \$50 million to \$80 million range, each. Now it will be much more. And they are entirely unnecessary, even for those who want to deploy today's huge nuclear arsenal forever. LANL production is early-to-actual-need, unsafe, and inadequate in every way. It will add unnecessary pollution and delay if not prevent LANL cleanup. It will drive up the cost of housing in Santa Fe and clog our roads. Pit production can be postponed until the mid-2030s, when the larger, safer, better-located (ten times the distance to the site boundary), single-shift, brand-new Savannah River facilities are supposed to come on line.

Delaying pit production is the very best option we have. It allows all parties to reconsider what they are doing.

We see the Administration has zeroed out the funding line added in by Congress last year for the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM-N) nuclear warhead. Good for them. The budget continues maintenance and "reduced program requirements" pending full retirement of the B83 bomb, which at first glance looks like a compromise with the hawks who want to keep it indefinitely.

So: more to follow on this.

That's it for now, thank you all so much for your efforts.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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March 11, 2023

Antiwar rally 2 pm Saturday in Albuquerque; LANL pits delayed, endorse the "Call for Sanity"; Ukraine update; the Nordstream investigation (and likely impeachment) "imperative"

Dear friends --

Good afternoon. This is "Thursday's Letter" (two days late), to our New Mexico members and others who are interested. Forward it to your friends!

Please support in any way you can the ANSWER Coalition's [anti-war rally](#) on Saturday, March 18th in Albuquerque, at 2 pm on the corner of San Mateo & Gibson just outside Kirtland Air Force Base. Forward the flyer [image](#), send out their [Facebook link](#), announce the rally in meetings, publicize it in whatever other ways you can, come (with your friends!) if you live reasonably near, or organize a public event in your own community!

We expected to send out a detailed review of the Administration's budget request yesterday, but no detailed budget request was provided. By law, it is due on the first Monday in February. As a federal official said to me last year when the budget was delayed, "We thought that when this administration came in, the grown-ups would be back. Boy were we wrong."

If you don't want the U.S. to rush into the production of plutonium warhead cores ("pits") in service of a new arms race with Russia and China, by building and operating a factory complex in Los Alamos, please endorse the [Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production](#). Ask your friends and groups you can influence to do so also!

The many people who have been endorsing LANL as the sole pit factory have failed -- as was obvious would happen. LANL pit production is now delayed at least four more years, and we know of no one in government who thinks LANL can do this whole mission. It can't. Having a pit factory at LANL, given LANL's inherent inadequacies and problems, means the U.S. will build two factories. Making LANL into a pit factory was never the "lesser of two evils." It was a fantasy, and the result is deplorable from every perspective except contractor profits and arms racing.

Go to our [Ukraine page](#) for news and analysis, and ***share it with your friends! PLEASE!*** There are a lot of appalling misconceptions about this war in our communities.

As Caitlin Johnstone [said](#) the other day, "*We're going to have to wake up sooner or later, and because of the stakes involved it is very important that we do everything we can to try and make sure that it is sooner.*"

It hardly needs to be said but it is virtually impossible to understand what is going on in the world by using a cell phone alone. A decent-sized screen, keyboard, pointing device, and sound are going to be necessary. Of course, time spent with legacy media -- in print or on a screen -- on this highly-propagandized topic is much worse than wasted. All of us are susceptible to polished propaganda that reaffirms our group's preferred narratives and our own preexisting biases, reduces or prevents cognitive dissonance, and lowers anxiety. Thinking is required, not just emotion. Once false ideas are implanted they can be very hard to excise.

Since our last letter we posted the following articles and interviews, the best and most accessible we have seen and heard during that time:

Mar 11, 2023

Featured • [Ukraine's Death by Proxy](#), *The Chris Hedges Report*, Mar 11, 2023

Featured • [Georgia: The Color of Foreign Influence](#), Brad Pearce, *Ron Paul Institute*, Mar 10, 2023

- [Moscow condemns 'Nazi celebration' at White House](#), *RT*, Mar 9, 2023
- [Russia Strikes Kyiv, Odesa & Kharkiv - Col Doug Macgregor](#), Judge Napolitano, *Judging Freedom*, Mar 9, 2023
- [Western Media Dumps Stories on Nord Stream Sabotage Shifting Blame from US](#), Dave DeCamp, *Antiwar.com*, Mar 9, 2023
- [Tulsi Gabbard: Biden administration is trying to sell us on this absurd cover-up story](#), *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, Mar 10, 2023
- [A Hard Night in Ukraine](#), *South Front*, Mar 9, 2023

- [Russia Launches Barrage of Missile Strikes Across Ukraine](#), Dave DeCamp, *Antiwar.com*, Mar 9, 2023
-

Mar 10, 2023

- [Lavrov lays into West's latest Nord Stream explanation](#), TASS, Mar 9, 2023
- [Protests in Georgia Revealed their True Goals](#), *South Front*, Mar 10, 2023
- [Southern Advances Amid Prigozhin's Momentous Speech](#), *Simplicius The Thinker*, Mar 8, 2023

Featured • [Georgia Is Targeted For Regime Change](#), Andrew Korybko, *The Automatic Earth*, Mar 9, 2023

Mar 9, 2023

- [Scott Ritter \(@RealScottRitter\) explains why Russia is denazifying Ukraine & how "slava ukraini" is the "sieg heil" of Ukraine](#), Jackson Hinkle, *twitter*, Mar 8, 2023
 - [House Votes Down Resolution to Withdraw Troops from Syria](#), Dave DeCamp, *Antiwar.com*, Mar 8, 2023
 - [When it comes to Nordstream and F-16s the U.S. Opts for Ham Handed Political Gestures](#), Larry Johnson, *A Son of the New American Revolution*, Mar 8, 2023
 - [Jeffrey Sachs on Seymour Hersh, Nord Stream Bombing, Ukraine & the Cold War with China](#), Mar 7, 2023
(h/t *Erich Kuerschner*):
"When we look at the background to this, we can see that the obstacle to peace and coexistence is the drive for U.S hegemony.
"What I can tell you is what we are doing makes no fundamental sense at all. To have a war that threatens nuclear annihilation so that NATO can expand is beyond Reckless." "That the negotiations came close to success last March until the United States stopped them is incredible.
"The U.S 'motivation is to be number one in the world and that's the beginning and the end of it. And if that means war with Russia, that's war with Russia. If that means war with China, that's war with China.
" It's in all of our security interests by the way that NATO stops enlarging because it's bringing us to the brink of the Third World War."
Full transcript here: <https://bit.ly/3kTLbCO>
-

Mar 8, 2023

- [Nord Stream Attack - 'Officials' Throw More Chaff To Hide The Real Perpetrators](#), *Moon of Alabama*, Mar 8, 2023
- [As Bakhmut Falls, US May Turn From Ukraine, Starting With Pipeline Story](#), Joe Lauria, *Consortium News*, Mar 8, 2023
- [The weight of Russian manpower is crushing Ukrainians](#), Douglas Macgregor, *Real America, YouTube*, Mar 7, 2023
- [Support for Ukraine aid in decline across West – polls](#), *RT*, Mar 7, 2023

In the absence of a plausible alternative theory or body of evidence that might dislodge the observed circumstantial evidence (see our [Ukraine page](#); a search there using "Nordstream" will pick up most of the articles; be sure and add [this one](#) from September) and [Seymour Hersh's account](#), we must take the Hersh account of the operation very seriously. (Other anonymous eyewitness accounts have also surfaced, of unknown veracity, which we have not posted.)

The individuals Hersh names as alleged masterminds and supervisors of this deed need to be made to testify before Congress, under oath, as an early step in a much-needed investigation.

If, after this investigation, serious allegations (or worse) of guilt remain, articles of impeachment can be drafted. This process is necessary to retain something like a constitutional government. This process would culminate in impeachment if merited, then trial in the Senate, and if parties are found guilty, removal from office.

If a major act of war and environmental terrorism has been perpetrated by a small cabal in the executive branch -- not only against Russia but also our close allies, Germany especially -- without approval by Congress, this is a vastly more serious "high crime" than the collection of presidential actions collectively called "Watergate," or any of the predicates for presidential impeachments in this century, if not ever.

We need not worry about the prospect of the inexperienced Kamala Harris assuming the presidency. A presidential election looms. It is the *process* of investigation and impeachment on these grounds which would chasten any short-term, caretaker Harris administration. We believe Biden is today not much more than a short-term figurehead, which is also what Ms. Harris would be.

As former senior CIA analyst and presidential briefer Ray McGovern has assessed -- correctly in our view -- it will be impossible to create peace in Ukraine while the cabal who brought the 2014 coup, and then very intentionally provoked this multifaceted war against Russia with the idea of winning it, remains in office. This is true *a fortiori* if they also masterminded the destruction of these pipelines, as Hersh is hardly alone in alleging. At a minimum this cabal includes Joe Biden, Anthony Blinken, Victoria Nuland, and Jake Sullivan. Other high officials were also involved, according to Hersh (as they would need to be).

Should the current President be eased from office for other reasons (two are available: mishandling of classified information, and mental debility) or should he retire from public life in 2025 without running again, the Nordstream co-conspirators and their many ideological allies will remain powerful. Investigation and as warranted impeachment are necessary to at least partially excise the rot and keep it from growing further. Other crises have already begun. Our embedded neocons, which now

control foreign policy, comprise a millstone around the country's neck. We can't afford them.

Ask yourself, what would the kind of people who blew up this pipeline not do?

Here's one thing our out-of-control national security state might do: use "lower yield" nuclear weapons to avoid military defeat, on the theory that battlefield nuclear use would not escalate. In fact this past Thursday (March 9), STRATCOM Commander General Anthony Cotton said there was a "strategic gap or challenge" in the availability of low-yield, non-ballistic nuclear weapons that do not generate a radar signature -- i.e. low-flying, tactical nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. "Deploying such a weapon would deter our adversaries' perceived advantage of limited use." ("[U.S. faces low-yield nuclear weapon shortfall against Russia and China, STRATCOM commander says](#)," Dan Parsons, *Nuclear Security & Deterrence Monitor*, 3/10/23, paywall).

U.S. citizens who aren't willing to think seriously about the implications of this bombing and what needs to be done about it have not really come to grips with what peace in Ukraine, and peace with Russia and China, will require. It hardly needs to be said that there will be no nuclear disarmament, or cooperation on climate issues, while one war rages and another is threatened.

Absent impeachment, a general strike, economic collapse, or a combination of these, it is difficult to see how the U.S. national security state can be brought back within constitutional limits. Absent curtailment of the national security "Deep State," all attempts at social justice, environmental protection, and economic sustainability will fail. Absent a resolution of these serious allegations, no one will even know the extent to which the U.S. government is legitimate ("conforming to the law or rules").

In other words there is at this point, a legal and moral investigation -- and if warranted, impeachment -- imperative.

That's it for now, thank you all so much for your efforts.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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March 7, 2023

Ukraine losses mount toward critical point; ANSWER rally against the war is now 2 pm (not 1 pm), March 18, Albuquerque; nearly half U.S. citizens believe WWII is near

Dear friends --

Good afternoon. Per our promise to you, this is "Monday's" Letter, a day late, to our New Mexico members and others who are interested.

There are a number of policy issues we are reserving for the forthcoming Bulletin 326, expected Friday of this week after the Administration's budget request is released. The "budget is the skeleton of the state stripped of all misleading ideologies," [Rudolf Goldscheid](#) famously said in 1917. So we'll see.

1. Ukraine is flailing and failing; Zelensky sacrifices thousands of men and boys in Bakhmut

Please see our [Ukraine page](#) and [share it with your friends!](#) It is a terrific near-daily update of what can be hard-to-find news and analyses.

As was the case with Vietnam, many people *think* they understand why the U.S. is expending so much treasure and (Ukrainian+plus+mercenary) blood in Ukraine. As Mark Twain put it, "The trouble with the world is not that people know too little; it's that they know so many things that just aren't so."

I want to emphasize that Ukrainian children are going to the front lines, as child soldiers. Here's a Chris Cuomo [interview](#) with two of them. [Here's](#) the head of the Wagner group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, asking Zelensky to let soldiers leave Bakhmut before even more of them die in more hopelessly one-sided battles, including people like the three POWs he showcases, an old man and two boys. The short life-span of many of these fighters, sent to the front after as little as two weeks training, is indeed short. Multiple sources confirm the situation is much as Prigozhin says, even the *Kiev Independent* (via [Moon of Alabama](#)).

Today, the pressure created around the world by Seymour Hersh's article about the U.S. blowing up the Nordstream pipelines has resulted in an extremely lame [attempt to deflect blame](#) onto nebulous non-state actors. We will post more on this tomorrow.

The military situation is resulting in political divisions, some of which you can read about on our Ukraine page.

Why does this matter? Firstly, because the present confrontation carries an increasing danger of World War III, i.e. nuclear war, as [over 40% of Americans now see](#).

Secondly, because the damage to our society and others by our [near-total investment in enormous lies](#) creates the risk of a real downfall, not just decline, already baked in. Alastair Crooke ("[How Could Western Intelligence Have Got It Wrong. Again? They Didn't. They Had Other Purposes](#)"):

If that were the purpose (to acclimatise Russians to defeat and ultimate Balkanisation), Western propaganda has not only failed, but it has achieved the converse. Russians have coalesced closely together against an existential western threat – and are prepared to 'go to the wall', if necessary, in defeating it. (Let those implications sink in.)

On the other hand, falsely promoting a picture of inevitable success for the West inevitably has raised expectations of a political outcome that is not only not feasible, but which recedes further into the far horizon, as these fantastical claims of Russian setbacks persuade European leaders that Russia can accept an outcome in line with their constructed false reality.

Another 'own goal': The West now faces the task of de-fusing the landmine of their own electorate's conviction of a Ukraine 'win', and of Russian humiliation and decomposition. There will be anger and further distrust for the Élites in the West to follow. Existential risk ensues when people believe nothing the élites say.

Plainly put, this resort to clever 'nudge theories' has succeeded only in toxifying the prospect for political discourse.

Manipulation of the masses has worked all too well. This is a train we need to get off while we can.

To repeat the obvious, it is useless and irresponsible to discuss nuclear disarmament without demanding an end to the U.S. war against the other largest nuclear weapons state.

2. Please support the ANSWER Coalition's anti-war rally on Saturday, March 18th in Albuquerque, at 2 pm on the corner of San Mateo & Gibson just outside Kirtland Air Force Base.

The [demands of this rally](#) are, "Peace in Ukraine - No to Endless U.S. Wars!" and "Fund People's Needs, Not the War Machine!"

As noted last time, this rally is in solidarity with the rally that [ANSWER](#), [UNAC](#), and many other organizations are organizing in Washington, DC on the same day. We are also endorsing that DC rally.

Please tell your friends in and near Albuquerque to come to that March 18 rally if they are in any way concerned or upset about U.S. support for the war in Ukraine.

Now is also a good time to make new anti-war signs, devise street theater, and in general let your creative juices flow!

That's it for now, thank you all so much for your efforts.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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

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March 3, 2023

Ukraine news and views; antiwar rally March 18; pending guest editorial; pit production precis

Dear friends --

Good afternoon. We hope you are well and enjoying the mixed spring weather!

This letter is going to our New Mexico members and others who are interested. This mailing list is a subset -- about 40% -- of our main mailing list. Given the crises we face we are going to increase the frequency of these New Mexico letters to twice a week, starting this coming Monday and Thursday. As a reminder,

- To subscribe to our New Mexico Activist Leaders listserv (this list) [send a blank email here](#). To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#).
- To subscribe to our Main listserv (less frequent, broader content) [send a blank email here](#). To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#).

We will try to keep these local letters relatively brief and informal.

[1. Please help us reach more people, re Ukraine and via these mailing lists](#)

The most basic (and very helpful) thing you could do to help is to [promote subscriptions to these mailing lists](#). In our community discussions, we notice that most people have little idea what is going on as regards nuclear weapons in their own back yards (or elsewhere). The news media can only do so much. They are thin on the ground. The same lack of knowledge is evident when it comes to the present war against Russia, now very close to the abyss of World War III. Too few understand this and we are frankly desperate to get the word out. [So please help us](#).

Our [Ukraine page](#), updated daily or nearly so, is of particular interest. As noted previously, we select these few offerings from a wider intel "take" for quality and educational value to active citizens. On that page we also recommend a few key web sites and authors. (This short list is biased away from some longer quality podcasts that we don't have time to listen to and so can't knowledgeably recommend.) [Please help us "socialize" our Ukraine page](#). Don't bother with the mainstream media, aka Big Brother. It's harmful.

[2. Please support the ANSWER Coalition's anti-war rally on Saturday, March 18th in Albuquerque, at 1 pm on the corner of San Mateo & Gibson just outside Kirtland Air Force Base.](#)

There are a diversity of organizations endorsing this rally (including us). It's focus is "Peace in Ukraine." We are sure we wouldn't agree with every single political view of all these groups, if we bothered to investigate them, but why should that matter? People who will march only with those with whom they agree on everything won't accomplish anything.

This rally is in solidarity with the rally that [ANSWER](#), [UNAC](#), and many other organizations are organizing in Washington, DC on the same day. We are also endorsing that DC rally.

[Please tell your friends in and near Albuquerque to come to that March 18 rally if they are in any way concerned or upset about U.S. support for the war in Ukraine.](#)

[Now is also a good time to make new anti-war signs, devise street theater, and in general let your creative juices flow!](#)

[3. We said we would be having a public meeting about Ukraine.](#)

We will, and soon, but our schedule is not our own right now. [Meanwhile please get as many people as you can to ANSWER's rally on the 18th](#). The antiwar cause needs TV coverage, and that means larger numbers of people in one place at one time, as well as creativity. Remain nonviolent in word and deed, please.

[4. The "Rage Against the War Machine" rally on February 19 in Washington was wonderful.](#)

Apparently this needs to be said because some mainstream commenters didn't think so. I (Greg) was already in DC so I went. The [speeches](#) were quite good; the atmosphere was mellow and accepting, and the rally was quite diverse. I was able to meet up with colleagues. As we have said before, what united people there was more important than their differences on other issues. We do not agree with the various small-minded critiques we have seen and heard about. Code Pink did not allow Medea Benjamin to speak but she was there; we think she should have defied her organization and spoken anyway (easy for us to say, huh?). UNAC did not endorse the rally, which is too bad also. These days, it is not necessary to sow division; our Zeitgeist favors it. Multiple speakers addressed this problem; perhaps [Jimmy Dore](#) was the most eloquent. We guesstimate that about 2,000 to 3,000 people were present. For the arm-chair critics who say that is too small, a) the pre-rally opposition from other groups sure didn't help, b) it's a start, and c) that just means we all have to get cracking to make the numbers larger.

[5. Pending guest editorial by Greg in the Santa Fe New Mexican](#)

We aren't sure when (or if) this will run. So here it is:

Ukraine, Propaganda, Mass Formation, Liberation

We live in a society in which critical thinking is scarce, propaganda is pervasive, and "groupthink" is enforced. In a recent [essay](#), former British diplomat Alastair Crooke writes, "So arguments no longer revolve around truth. They are judged by their fidelity to the tenets of singular messaging. You are either 'with the narrative' or 'against it'. Remaining loyal to 'the group' becomes the highest morality. That loyalty requires each member to avoid raising controversial issues, questioning weak arguments, or calling a halt to wishful thinking. And to further reinforce conviction in the rightness of the 'narrative,' those outside the bubble must be marginalized and, if necessary, their views mercilessly caricatured to make them seem ridiculous."

Replacement of individual thought with group-enforced ideology is especially widespread in the most influential part of our body politic: the news media. There, ideological conformity in the face of contrary evidence reigns to a degree not seen since at least the McCarthy era. This is true as regards many life-and-death issues, not just Ukraine.

Many people know this. Earlier this month, Gallup and the Knight Foundation [found](#) that half of Americans "feel most national news organizations intend to mislead, misinform or persuade the public." Only 25% of Americans disagreed; the rest were unsure. Overall, trust in the news media is declining. Which is as it should be, given the barrage of "big lies" to which we have been continuously subjected since about 2016.

What will happen when the propaganda-built "house of cards" surrounding the Ukraine conflict collapses? For we as individuals, part of the answer lies in how deeply we incorporate official U.S. government lies into our identities and social commitments – how deeply we allow ourselves to be gaslighted.

People are starting to wake up. On February 24 Rasmussen released a [poll](#) showing that just 21% of voters now think Ukraine is winning the war, down from 32% in [December](#). Forty-six percent (46%) see the war as a stalemate, up from 38% in December.

Political leaders are also changing their tune. Consortium News is the latest to [report](#) that "western leaders privately say Ukraine can't win the war."

Consider the silence around the Nordstream sabotage. It is virtually certain that Joe Biden and several people around him orchestrated this attack, as strong evidence [suggested](#) last fall and renowned journalist Seymour Hersh now [claims](#). If this crime is not investigated and punished, what remains of law and our Constitution? Where is the news media on this?

In any groupthink situation there are three groups: the "believers," those who "go along to get along" (the largest group), and the dissenters. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed, it is useless and often dangerous to reason with the true believers, as they are impervious to rational argument.

The power of the ideologues in the first group depends on the degree of conformity in the second group and on the amount of public dissent from the third. As Matthias DeSmet (*The Psychology of Totalitarianism*) notes, dissonant voices usually do not succeed in breaking through the first group's "hypnosis" but do limit its depth and can prevent atrocities. DeSmet concludes, "The first and foremost task is to keep speaking out. Everything stands or falls with the act of speaking out. It is in the interest of all parties."

The Ukraine War is the altar on which the Biden Administration has chosen to sacrifice not just Ukraine but, unless we can stop them, civilization as a whole. What each of us does now, or fails to do, has consequences for ourselves, and for others, that far exceed those we might expect in normal times.

[6. Important comment on pit production in the Santa Fe New Mexican](#)

Here's the article and Greg's comment, broken into paragraphs for readability: [LANL still has responsibility to monitor Russian nukes after treaty suspension, lab head says](#), (with [comment by Greg Mello](#)), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Feb 27, 2023). The comment is important because it lays out the basic situation re pit production in a few words.

Here is an excerpt from something we wrote recently on the same topic:

Reliable war reserve (WR) pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) will be [delayed at least four years](#) from the statutory requirement, with an unknown production schedule in the interim (NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby to Mello, 2/14/23). As a result, combined production from both sites is now required to be greater than 80 WR pits per year for some years, with the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) carrying the additional load – which it can do and then some (Savannah River Nuclear Solutions CEO Stuart McVean 2/14/23; other privileged sources). This is a dramatic setback, one which marks defeat of the ill-conceived efforts to focus all pit production at LANL. It paves the way for scaling back and terminating industrial pit production at LANL and has significant impacts to the design and production schedule of W87-1 and W93 warheads...Attempts to block construction of the SRPPF have failed, because LANL's pit production potential is severely and inherently constrained, while the SRPPF and the Savannah River Site enjoy manifold advantages, not least in safety and capacity. At the same time, endorsement of LANL as a pit production site means endorsing pit production a decade prior to any actual need, for current and planned delivery systems, thereby endorsing the new weapons this additional early production would enable.

Note carefully that we are not endorsing pit production at SRS, which is not expected to begin until 2036. We are describing engineering realities.

That's it for now, thank you all so much for your efforts.

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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February 8, 2023

Ukraine news with comments and excerpts; bookmark for future reference if desired

Dear friends --

Good afternoon!

The articles below are now linked at <https://lasg.org/Ukraine/Ukraine.html>; the comments and excerpts will follow shortly. Scroll down for previous days. Look there every day for more.

Please advertise this web site to your friends via social media. We are working on multiple fronts, preparing for meetings in DC, and so are depending on you and your friends.

There's a lot of ignorance about this war in our communities. Hence this note. It's very important to speak up clearly at this time.

Also, we are seeking volunteers and interns. We take care of our people. Call us.

The Hersh, Lawrence, and MacGregor pieces will be particularly illuminating to many people. One approach is to discuss them with close friends, or in a religious community setting.

I suppose everyone knows that there will be no decent solutions to any social or environmental problems while war strengthens the sinews of violence and operates from within on the structures of our government. "War," said Randolph Bourne, "is the health of the state." The heavy-lidded, bestial health.

Feb 8, 2023

- [How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline](#), Seymour Hersh, Feb 8, 2023

Hersh's account, based in part on anonymous interviews, adds to previous accounts (e.g. [this one](#)), based on open-source data and analysis. Bernhard and commenters took up the Hersh account in a posting [today](#). It was an unprecedented act of terrorism against U.S. allies (Germany primarily but not exclusively) and the environment, as well as of course Russia. Useful for understanding the legal implication of Biden's publicly-stated conditional commitment to "end" Nordstream: no congressional oversight was deemed necessary if the military was in charge. Key role of Norway, which like the U.S. also benefited financially. Hersh's source: "The only flaw was the decision to do it."

- [State of the Union: Biden Says Beating China Should 'Unite All of Us'](#), Dave DeCamp, *Antiwar.com*, Feb 7, 2023

"The president made little mention of the war in Ukraine besides platitudes about "standing up" for vague principles. "Putin's invasion has been a test for the ages. A test for America. A test for the world. Would we stand for the most basic of principles?" he said...Overall, Biden's speech focused very little on foreign policy. He closed the speech by saying, "May God protect our troops," but did not mention any of the wars they are fighting in [Iraq](#), [Syria](#), [Somalia](#), and [Yemen](#)."

- [Patrick Lawrence: The Press Reckoning on Russiagate](#), *Consortium News*, Feb 7, 2023

"As Glenn Greenwald remarked in a lengthy "System Update" segment reviewing the Gerth series, however much contempt you may have for the corruptions of the American press, you are not contemptuous enough.¶ For a long while I have held to the thought that the day may come when the American press and broadcasters would have some kind of come-to-Jesus awakening and begin a new and excellent era as a freestanding pole of power.¶ Gerth's series persuades me that this is no longer a realistic expectation. Russiagate deformed the function of media, and media's understanding of its function, beyond repair. Over the past seven years mainstream American media have come to see — embrace, indeed — their task as the conveyance of official propaganda.¶ We must not be so surprised or shocked. This is what happens to empires in their declining phases."

- [NYT On Ukraine - Real Reporting. Propaganda For Balance. Ominous Warning](#), *Moon of Alabama*, Feb 7, 2023

NYT: "Exhausted Ukrainian troops complain they are already outnumbered and outgunned, even before Russia has committed the bulk of its roughly 200,000 newly mobilized soldiers. And doctors at hospitals speak of mounting losses as they struggle to care for fighters with gruesome injuries....The first stages of the Russian offensive have already begun. Ukrainian troops say that Bakhmut, an eastern Ukrainian city that Russian forces have been trying to seize since the summer, is likely to fall soon. Elsewhere, Russian forces are advancing in small groups and probing the front lines looking for Ukrainian weaknesses. The efforts are already straining Ukraine's military, which is worn out by nearly 12 months of heavy fighting....Losses among Ukrainian forces have been severe. Troops in a volunteer contingent called the Carpathian Sich, positioned near Nevske, said that some 30 fighters from their group had died in recent weeks, and soldiers said, only partly in jest, that just about everyone has a concussion."

- [On the edge of essentially all out war with Russia](#), *Straight Calls with Douglas Macgregor*, *YouTube*, Feb 7, 2023

Excellent 23 min. video interview with Macgregor. Concisely discusses background, current military situation, and the need for negotiations without preconditions, which could lead to a ceasefire if sincere. Nota bene, Ray McGovern believes, and so do we, that such negotiations are impossible with

Blinken, Sullivan, and Nuland in their current positions.

- [America Sleepwalks Into War with Russia](#), Francis P. Sempa, *RealClear Wire*, Feb 3, 2023

Conservative analyst longing for listening to restraining, experienced, realist voices, marginalized in the U.S. today.

- [Truth About Tanks: How NATO Lied Its Way to Disaster in Ukraine](#), Scott Ritter, *Sputnik*, Jan 28, 2023

Battle tanks are far from a military panacea given modern anti-tank weapons. Extensive training and maintenance are required, as well as sophistication in combined-arms operations. Western tanks, at this stage, will hurt Ukraine more than help it.

Thank you so much for all your solidarity and your work in the communities for peace writ large and small. Looking forward to seeing some of you later this week,

Greg and Trish

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January 2, 2023

Meetings for potential volunteers this coming Thursday (1/5/23) in Santa Fe & Friday (1/6/23) in Albuquerque

Dear friends --

Good morning!

We will be having meetings for *potential* volunteers this week (i.e. anyone who thinks they *might* want to work with us, in some specific ways we will suggest at these meetings):

- In Santa Fe this coming Thursday 1/5/23 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, in the Community Room of the Main Santa Fe Public Library (145 Washington Ave, [map](#)); and
- In Albuquerque this coming Friday 1/6/23 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, at our office and home (2901 Summit Place NE, [map](#)).

If you think you might be interested, why not come and learn more? Don't be shy!

You can see the overall background for this call for potential volunteers in our recent [bulletins](#) and [letters](#). We hesitate to explain too much in advance of these meetings in this short note -- except to say this: the situation in which we find ourselves in New Mexico, in the heart of the "nuclear weapons enterprise," and in the U.S. as a whole, is unprecedented in many ways. For one thing, a great deal is happening that almost nobody around here is talking about. The new and very real threat of nuclear war is a taboo topic, as is the related transformation of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) into a production plant -- with, as LANL now says it wants, its own on-site low-level nuclear waste disposal facility, among many other necessary additions.

We need to foster serious discussion and [opposition](#) in our communities. We do not see much of either. A few -- even a very few -- brave people could make a huge difference. configurations which led to

Meanwhile here in the office, we are gearing up for significant involvement with the new Congress (which is part of why we are [looking](#) for interns).

Thank you so much for all your solidarity and your work in the communities for peace writ large and small. Looking forward to seeing some of you later this week,

Greg and Trish

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