

Nuclear weapons activities in New Mexico

Presentation to No False Solutions Conference, Las Vegas NM

Greg Mello and Trish Williams-Mello, Los Alamos Study Group, March 23, 2024. Only 12 slides were shown.

And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such....

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

Martin Luther King, Beyond Vietnam, April 1967



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To subscribe to the Study Group's New Mexico listserve, send a blank email to lasg_activist_leaders-subscribe@lists.riseup.net

Blog: <https://lasg.org/wordpress/>

“Coming attraction?”

Greetings from

PLUTOPRIA

*Richland USA
Ozersk USSR*



Nuclear Weapons (NW) Work in New Mexico

- Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Best-funded NW facility in the world. Currently adding thousands of people to build, operate plutonium warhead core (“pit”) factory; start-up cost ~\$20 billion (biggest project in history of NM by far).
- Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). Second to LANL in funding globally.
- Kirtland Underground Munitions Maintenance and Storage Complex (KUMMSC). Most nuclear weapons at one site in the world.
- Defense Nuclear Weapons School (DTRA), KAFB
- National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Albuquerque Complex (1,200 staff). Administrative center for nuclear warheads.
- NNSA Office of Secure Transportation (OST), national headquarters (Mesa del Sol)
- Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), disposal of transuranic (TRU) waste from nuclear warhead work

Stockpile Stewardship: How do we sustain the nuclear deterrent




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B61-12
US Air Force
Strategic Bomb

B61-12
US Air Force
Strategic Bomb



What LANL and SNL design and build: effects



800 kt nuclear blast (e.g. Russian SS-18)

Fireball: 5,774 feet diameter (shown roughly at scale in plane of "Big I")

Center of fireball ~ 3,000 feet above ground zero in this picture

At 6 miles the fireball would appear more than 300 times brighter than the desert sun at noon

Blast wave travels 3 miles in about 13 seconds

Certain mass fires ($\geq 20 \text{ cal/cm}^2$) radius 5.35 miles

Probable mass fires ($\geq 10 \text{ cal/cm}^2$) radius 7.5 miles

Airblast $\geq 5 \text{ psi}$ out to 4.0 miles on the ground; $\geq 1.5 \text{ psi}$ to 9.3 miles

3rd degree burns (11.2 cal/cm^2) with 100% probability to 7.1 miles

Modern thermonuclear warheads have far larger energy yields than the primitive nuclear explosives used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

One large nuclear explosion would utterly destroy all of Albuquerque, or Santa Fe.

The purpose: terror (de-terr-ence).





New Mexico

Total Awarded Amount

\$34.8 Billion

from 45,215 prime awards

[View awards to this state](#)

Details ⓘ

Population	2,088,070 (2017 est.)
Awarded Amount Per Capita	\$16,686
Median Household Income	\$46,748 (2016 est.)

From USAspending.gov
Does not include military bases.

Awarding Agencies

Name	Awarded Amount	% of Total
1. Department of Energy (DOE)	\$10.46B	30.03%
2. Social Security Administration (SSA)	\$8.72B	25.01%
3. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	\$6.95B	19.94%
4. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	\$1.85B	5.3%
5. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	\$1.30B	3.74%

Recipients

Name	Awarded Amount	% of Total
1. MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS	\$10.71B	30.75%
2. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES NEW MEXICO	\$6.07B	17.41%
3. TRIAD NATIONAL SECURITY LLC	\$5.21B	14.95%
4. NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS OF SA...	\$5.10B	14.65%
5. NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	\$558.86M	1.6%

Site Estimates

(\$K)

Site	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Request				
			FSE	WA	DNN	NR	Total
Los Alamos National Laboratory	3,445,510	3,999,598	-	4,053,066	450,997	-	4,504,063
Los Alamos Site Office	19,550	22,947	23,545	27	-	-	23,572

LANL cleanup funding requested for FY24, 287,479 (\$K). @82% WA, 19,307

Other DOE at LANL, 130,223 (\$K); FY22 work for others, 340,00 (\$K), defense

NNSA Albuquerque Complex	1,154,992	1,569,300	660	1,108,508	186,184	-	1,295,352
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Total DOE at Albuquerque, 1,305,384 (\$K).

Sandia National Laboratories - New Mexico	2,660,172	2,774,322	-	2,681,391	265,181	-	2,946,572
Sandia Site Office	85,250	86,269	27,283	-	61,607	-	88,890

SNL work for others (FY22): 1,396,900 (\$K), all defense more or less @84% WA, 22,918

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant	10,558	9,160	-	-	15,064	-	15,064
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(This is NNSA funding only. Total WIPP spending requested for FY24 is 464,326 (\$K))

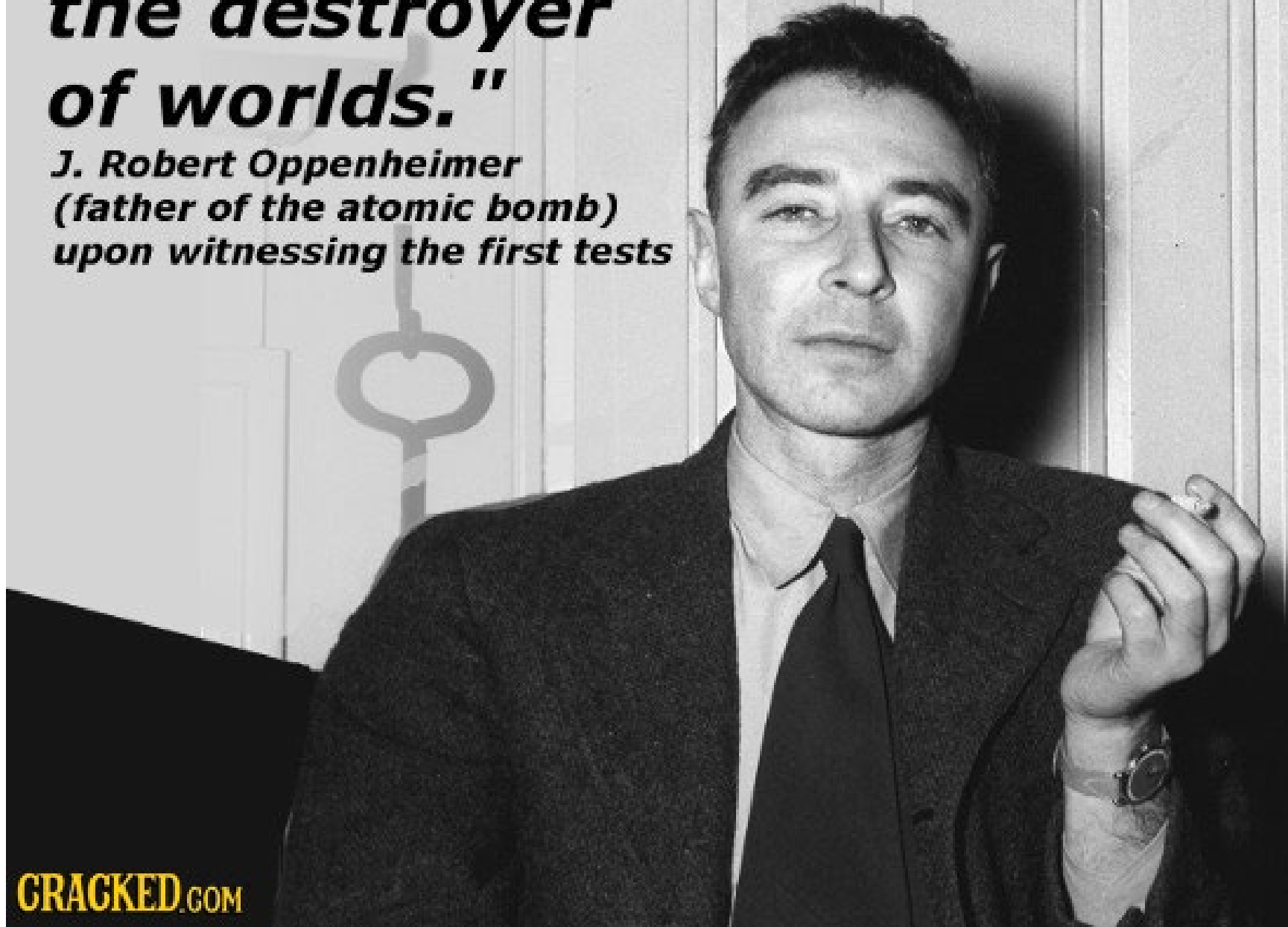
Grand Total	20,656,000	22,162,564	538,994	18,832,947	2,508,959	1,964,100	23,845,000
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So NM hosts 7,885,217 (\$K) (42%) of NNSA nuclear warhead spending this year (if/when finally funded).

Total DOE spending requested in NM for FY24 is 10,043,171 (\$K). Of this, at least 8,637,022 (\$K), or 86%, is nuclear warheads, cleanup, and nuclear waste disposal. This is an understatement because a considerable part of DNN (Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation) deals with the disposal of surplus warhead materials and other nuclear weapons issues.

***"Now I am become Death,
the destroyer
of worlds."***

***J. Robert Oppenheimer
(father of the atomic bomb)
upon witnessing the first tests***



**“Going
over to
another
order”**

Approaches to NM's increasing colonial status

First, everybody must stabilize their lives to some degree. This can be a big job and it will be harder and harder to do. This challenge conditions what follows here.

1. Trying to understand it. This is not so easy. Our minds are the primary locus of colonization. We have to work there. We are not free. We think thoughts invented by others to stick to the primitive parts of our brains, i.e. our emotions, fears, and need for belonging. We are brainwashed into believing things which aren't true and fighting against each other and our natural allies, with results that include paralysis, despair, impoverishment, division, addictions, and death.
2. Leaving NM, or: mental distancing, denial, distraction, escapisms and addictions
3. Whining and careerism; cashing in on colonialism; remaining immature; playing on liberal guilt for personal and career advancement
4. Joining the colonizers; becoming a comprador, direct employee, or a servant
5. Resisting, while helping construct and preserve a just, sustainable society at some appropriate scale; embracing others
 - Holding to nonviolence and respect is the definition and basis of success.
 - The "constructive program" is the centerpiece; resistance one of its activities
 - Service is essential for maturity and the acquisition of moral standing and is part of the road and the destination.
 - We should only do things which win in the doing as well as the result, and leave everything else aside.
 - We don't have time for fake resistance, which abounds.
 - We need to acquire skills and do useful work in our communities. "Get your living by loving," said Thoreau.
 - Be aware of efforts to distract, delay, divide, dissipate, and destroy resistance.
 - We need to organize ourselves to face dramatically falling economic prospects nationwide. This could happen fast.
 - We need to lead, including by getting elected to offices.

Some hallmarks of solutions which are not false

- Local ownership and control, with all the challenges, responsibilities and uncertainties attendant on that
- Small scale
- Inclusive respect for all beings, especially the young and the old, including the non-human, including communities.
- Independence and personal freedom, non-cooptation and non-subservience, in balance with responsibility.
- Simplicity, frugality, efficiency, conservation (“Simple living”)
- Continual search for truth of all kinds and reliable, liberating knowledge (“High thinking”)
- Foster a wide range of skills, undercutting the control of monopolies and bureaucracies (“High skill”)
- Build community resilience to social, natural, and economic hazards
- Be reality-based
- Involve thorough nonviolence
- Are conservative of traditions, building on them, including spiritual traditions. Deepen, don’t dispose.
- Stability and solidity as to place, land, people, and memory. Don’t “melt into air.”
- Creative, artistic, expressing and fostering the *elan vital* that consumerism has smothered. Accept grief, embrace joy.

Some of the context (two slides)

- Multidimensional, multinational debt crisis; debt service now >\$1 trillion on an annualized basis, no end of debt service growth in sight. Growing economic crisis of nearly unlimited downward potential. Widespread unemployment coming, possibly with hyperinflation. We are past the point when this could have been avoided. In U.S., high and growing inequality, lack of economic security, homelessness. All across the first world, prosperity is falling. Financial systems need “growth” to settle debts. Real growth is past.
- Multipolar breakdown in Congress, loss of oversight ability
- Overt intel agency involvement in lawfare now
- An “aged out” president mentally incapable of fulfilling presidential duties and who ALSO is guilty of bribery, AND an incompetent VP AND a major political party that will do and is doing virtually anything to win
- Leading R candidate hated by half the country, made subject to “lawfare” attacks in numerous venues
- Electoral corruption on a vast scale, of multiple kinds. Policy reforms are likely impossible except on margins.
- Recent US destruction of major European energy source in terrorist attack; almost certain U.S./Ukrainian involvement in mass murder in Moscow; U.S. assistance in targeting key infrastructure and military in Russia
- Widespread censorship, media consolidation and control
- Academic, medical, and nonprofit cooptation, control, cancellation of dissenters

- Huge investments in failed neo-Nazi Ukraine war, now intensifying, with no way for Ukraine to win, U.S. and NATO facing the bitterness of a massive strategic defeat. Wider war likely; nuclear war possible.
- Lock-step support for on-going Israeli genocide, delegitimizing U.S. government in most eyes; related new war on Yemen. Pattern: U.S. loses control over proxies.
- Sharp rise of multipolar world, BRICS+, loss of US prestige (“the face of power”) and influence, complete denial of this by U.S. leadership
- Loss of military dominance to both Russia and China
- U.S. critical resource and supply chain crises, fragility and contagion of financial linkages
- U.S. critical de-skilling, worst in civilian sector
- Past the global peak of oil production (2018), EROEI falling. Master variable in loss of prosperity. No renewable energy substitutes.
- At, and soon past, the ragged US peak of oil production. Dependence on fracked shale reservoirs in very few locations with high depletion rates.
- Climate crisis of growing severity (so-called “drought” in NM), potential runaway irreversibility; severe weather events and disasters increasing
- Famine rising; migrations rising; habitats and species declining; “development” goals receding
- Collapse of arms control (nuclear, biological) due primarily to U.S. actions

From <https://lasg.org/ActionAlerts/2021/Bulletin287.html>: Antonio Turiel took up the question of hydrogen as an energy vector, first as a physicist at the Spanish National Research Council and then as a working political analyst with a keen grasp of the dangers of energy colonialism.

After discussing the extreme inefficiencies of "green" hydrogen, which arise from fundamental physical causes not subject to "breakthroughs," he observed that these inefficiencies would inevitably result in massive social and geographic inequality, were large-scale "green" hydrogen ever implemented. A "hydrogen economy" would translate those inefficiencies into deprivation for those in the producing regions. Only a tiny minority could benefit, if anyone. The rest would live in abject misery. "Blue" hydrogen, for its part, is a net energy sink and greenhouse gas source, assuming the carbon capture it requires could be made to work at all. You can see more details from a recent article of his here.

Turiel's parting words:

...We are now in a situation in which some sort of collapse cannot be avoided. But what you can choose is the way in which you are collapsing. You can collapse in a more democratic manner, or you can collapse in a more authoritarian manner. This is the actual truth of the thing.

...[We are seeing] technological tales that we are going to be able to do incredible things that we have never been able to do in all these decades. But now magically they are going to appear, to pop up [just when they are needed]. Don't rush into these things. They are fairy tales. I understand that they are appealing but they are not true.

The question at the end is: go local, go resilient. [connection failed] ... climate change is real and it is going to complicate your life. You are going to struggle with many things at the same time, but if you understand well what you are doing, and you make a decision to do the right thing, you can free feelings [free your feelings? Or simply, be free]. You can improve your life in many senses. It may be different from your current expectations, but you can live a very plentiful life. If you just take the [upper? meaning, higher?] decisions -- and mainly, you do not allow others to make your decisions for you.

Extra slides

Is gradual democratic reform, as we usually think of it, possible? Probably not.

- Michael Glennon: The “Trumanite” institutions (DoD, NSC, and CIA, to which we can add NNSA) have all but conquered the “Madisonian” institutions.
- In Ray McGovern’s formulation, the “MICIMATT” (military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-MEDIA*-academic-think-tank) complex reigns supreme. Add foundations. (*most critical, per Ray)
- NNSA and its contractors have acquired unique political powers and immunities deriving from the existential nature of nuclear weapons. (For a glimpse of some see ["Structural Features Making NNSA an Unusual Federal Agency,"](#) memo for VP Biden, 2016; there are many others).

It is possible to map out saner alternative policies, which we must in general do. Some of these may be adopted if we survive the POR and “business as usual” otherwise, let alone these doomsday recommendations.

We must in the meantime be realistic: the U.S. is currently on the road to nuclear war with Russia. Arms control may be impossible for a generation. Even absent war, the federal priorities implied in this proposal are deadly.

Apart from the obvious, we need:

- *Action*, as well as *work* (see the essential Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*), action defined as having certain qualities and transformational potentials
- *Nonviolent* action and *conflict* (see Galtung's summary of Gandhian conflict guidelines)
- *Ideological tolerance* (our best allies may be those with whom we mostly disagree, but can work with due to our mutual *respect* and *integrity*)
- *Respect*, the political analog to love, i.e. the equivalent of love in the public sphere
- Both *resistance* (the minor part) and a *constructive program* (encompassing Arendt's *labor* and *work*, the major part of any movement; see next slide)
- Face-to-face and possibly wider organization levels, with certain desirable qualities, including *subsidiarity*
- *Roots*, or the acceptance of responsibilities, as in Weil, *The Need for Roots*, her prescription for rebuilding France after the Nazi defeat
- A vertical or spiritual dimension suffusing and transforming all of our activity (see following slide).
- Practical *wisdom* and *discernment*, to find our way out of the labyrinth made for us

Somewhat random elements and qualities of constructive programs for activists

- Self-organization, e.g. ability to acquire and manage real property as needed to stabilize our material foundation and/or be productive (solar energy, horticulture)
- We must acquire practical skills and business skills to survive, let alone thrive.
- A productive relationship with capital and those who have some; the villains are not the 90% or even, on a national basis, the 99%.
- A productive, rather than a consumer, orientation overall.
- A better balance between rights and responsibilities than we generally see; more of the latter and less of the former, both as to ideal and as to daily life
- Service, on a small or also on a larger scale
- Simplicity (see Ted Trainer)
- Continual education
- Creative participation in the arts, or music (Blake: “A musician, an artist, an architect: the man or woman who is not one of these is not a Christian.”)
- We may wish to consider more extreme examples, e.g. the Beguines, as conditions change.

Abridged from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "[A World Split Apart](#)," June 8, 1978

We have placed too much hope in political and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life. In the East, it is destroyed by the dealings and machinations of the ruling party. In the West, commercial interests suffocate it. This is the real crisis. The split in the world is less terrible -- The split in the world is less terrible than the similarity of the disease plaguing its main sections....

[Man's] task on earth evidently must be of a more spiritual nature. It cannot be unrestrained enjoyment of everyday life. It cannot be the search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then cheerfully get the most of them. It has to be the fulfillment of a permanent, earnest duty so that one's life journey may become an experience of moral growth, so that one may leave life a better human being than one started it. It is imperative to review the table of widespread human values. Its present incorrectness is astounding. It is not possible that assessment of the President's performance be reduced to the question how much money one makes or of unlimited availability of gasoline. Only voluntary, inspired self-restraint can raise man above the world stream of materialism...Social dogmatism leaves us completely helpless in front of the trials of our times. Even if we are spared destruction by war, our lives will have to change if we want to save life from self-destruction. We cannot avoid revising the fundamental definitions of human life and human society....Is it right that man's life and society's activities have to be determined by material expansion in the first place? Is it permissible to promote such expansion to the detriment of our spiritual integrity?

If the world has not come to its end, it has approached a major turn in history, equal in importance to the turn from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It will exact from us a spiritual upsurge: We shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life where our physical nature will not be cursed as in the Middle Ages, but, even more importantly, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon as in the Modern era.

This ascension will be similar to climbing onto the next anthropologic stage. No one on earth has any other way left but -- upward.

The special problem of colonization and post-democracy in New Mexico and the U.S. (I)

- Shall our colonial status be something to overcome, or something on which to capitalize?
- The psychological aspects of our post-citizen status, in our post-democracy, are not easy to see or overcome, individually or in a group. Few are truly free. Alexis de Tocqueville:

Thus, after having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.