



# Los Alamos Study Group

*Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability*

12/13/01; Embargoed until noon Saturday, 12/15/01

## **Citizen Inspection of Los Alamos National Laboratory, Public Forum**

Visiting Experts in Lab Security, Biological Arms Control to Join Local Staff; Join Us If You Can

**The tour will begin from DeVargas Mall North at 9:30 am, where participants will meet in front of the offices of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce. The tour will conclude at approximately 2:00 pm in Los Alamos, and participants will return to Santa Fe by 3:00 pm if not before.**

**There will also be a panel discussion regarding the issues raised in the tour at 7:00 pm at the Unitarian Church in Santa Fe, located at the corner of Galisteo Street and Barcelona Road. There is no charge for either event.**

**Contact:** Greg Mello or Blake Trask, 982-7747

SANTA FE & LOS ALAMOS, NM— On Saturday, December 15 we invite you to join us for an informative tour and roadside inspection of key sites at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

For many people, LANL is a kind of “terra incognita”— a place one has read about, but perhaps never really visited. Few citizens have seen, for example, the LANL plutonium facility, where the Department of Energy (DOE) and the University of California (UC), which runs LANL, are attempting to restart the manufacture of nuclear weapon cores, called “pits” in nuclear weapons jargon. The aim of this inspection and tour is to help foster democratic participation in decisions about LANL by providing first-hand, fundamental information about the site, its programs, and its future plans, in a context of regional safety and security.

We will be joined by two visiting experts. The first is Peter Stockton, former senior advisor to DOE Secretary Bill Richardson on the physical security of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. For 22 years, Mr. Stockton was the senior investigator for subcommittees of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and was deeply involved in a number of major congressional investigations, including diversion of bomb-grade fissile material to Israel, the death of Karen Silkwood, bribes made by U.S. corporations to foreign officials, and others. Most recently, he has served as DOE Secretary Bill Richardson’s personal assistant on security affairs throughout the weapons complex, and as a consultant to the Project on Government Oversight (POGO) on the same subject.

Joining him will be Edward Hammond, an expert in biological weapons treaty compliance and biotechnology issues. Mr. Hammond works at the Sunshine Project, a nonprofit research organization based in Austin, Texas, that seeks to prevent the hostile use of biotechnology. He has just returned from negotiations in Geneva that sought, despite U.S. non-cooperation, to strengthen implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The sites at LANL we plan to see (or at least stop nearby) at LANL include:

- LANL’s main waste disposal site, “Area G,” where about 11 million cubic feet of nuclear and chemical waste is “permanently” disposed, with more nuclear waste being added each week. This facility has never received an operating permit, and the New Mexico Attorney General’s office has said it “must close.”
- The Los Alamos Critical Experiments Facility, site of two successful mock “terrorist attacks” conducted by U.S. Special Forces in recent years, in which plutonium was “stolen” or “detonated” in an improvised nuclear device by the “terrorists.”

- The plutonium facility, the site of plutonium pit production for the U.S. nuclear weapons complex, slated to grow in current plans.
- The core lab area, which is the location of the proposed biological weapons defense research laboratory, and where the world's largest and fastest computer will soon be built, for nuclear weapons, genomic studies, and other research.
- The LANL proton accelerator, the core of a proposed underground surrogate nuclear testing complex whose tunnels will, if built, stretch across much of the lab, with an estimated cost of \$1.6 billion.

At each technical area, subject-matter experts will speak and answer questions posed by members of the public. Information packets providing lab-wide as well as site-specific background will also be provided.

**It is very important to note that this inspection is not a civil resistance activity. No laws will be broken, and we will obey all DOE security directives. We will remain at all times on roads normally open to the public, and will be careful not to impede traffic in any way.**

The evening's panel discussion will have two parts, each lasting approximately one hour. The first will focus on security at LANL and its relation to specific facilities and programs, and how it might be improved, drawing largely on the experience of Mr. Stockton and his colleagues at DOE headquarters.

The second will focus on major new initiatives at LANL, including a relatively-brief review of surrogate nuclear testing and plutonium pit manufacturing, and, somewhat more extensively, LANL's proposed expansion of research into biological weapons and defenses against them.

There will be ample time for discussion, both during the formal presentation time and afterward.

Please come if you can. We expect the discussions to be frank, factual, and point the way toward greater security for the region and the nation.

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