

"How Santa Fe liberals and environmentalists are enabling plutonium pit production at LANL in support of Biden's failing foreign and nuclear policies, and what we can do differently"

April 29, 2021

The Manhattan District bore no relation to the industrial or social life of our country; it was a separate state, with its own airplanes and its own factories and its thousands of secrets. It had a peculiar sovereignty, one that could bring about the end, peacefully or violently, of all other sovereignties.

Remarks made after visiting Los Alamos by Herbert S. Marks, later General Counsel, Atomic Energy Commission.) Quoted in part in ["Atomic summer" over; "nuclear winter" still averted; "timeless spring" of resistance and constructive action continues](#)

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

Dwight Eisenhower, [Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors](#), 4/16/53



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“Only he who knows the empire of might and knows how not to respect it is capable of love and justice.”

“Such is the nature of might. Its power to transform man into a thing is double and it cuts both ways; it petrifies differently but equally the souls of those who suffer it, and of those who wield it.”

“Thus it is that those to whom destiny lends might, perish for having relied too much upon it.”

Simone Weil, “The Iliad, Poem of Might,” 1939

"Does the individual know he is the makeweight that tips the scales"?

Carl Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, 1957

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.” MLK, “Strength to Love,” 1963

Agenda

1. “What you can do” – more generally (15 minutes presentation, 15 minutes discussion)
2. “What you can do” – more particularly (ditto for times). *This is where we hope some of you will volunteer.*
3. How Santa Fe liberals and environmentalists are enabling plutonium pit production at LANL (ditto for times).
4. The nuclear and foreign policies of the Biden Administration (ditto for times).

“What you can do” – more generally (I)

We have phrased this in the second person because we want to focus on what you can do. Unless you are really working with us, the “we” in “what we can do” is a dangerous, undefined pronoun, as tempting as it is to use.

That said, what we all can do is inseparable from how we do it and hence from who we are as individuals and as social beings.

Nothing significant will change without a real moral awakening and THAT is the common element in what the Los Alamos Study Group is doing in this state, in DC, and everywhere. We are not trying to get rid of nuclear weapons to make the world safe for consumerism or the nihilism of Meow Wolf, or for an imaginary solar future built on raping poorer countries for minerals, or anything else like that. Our society and environment are collapsing and we are trying to wake up to our adult roles in the present historical moment, which may very well be humanity’s last opportunity.

The Study Group is not trying to get hundreds or thousands of calls and letters to ask anybody to do X, Y or Z. We are not preaching to the masses or to masses of voters. We are trying to reach and relate to individuals – you.

Advocacy has its place but our polity now needs informed dissent as well if not more so. We straddle two paradigms, but the former is far weaker than most assume.

Then, thirdly, we need to collectively build sustainable ways of life, the Gandhian “constructive program.”

Having lost their souls, our communities (which aren’t communities any more) need re-ensoulment or if you prefer re-civilizing, a long process. Tragedy on an unimaginable scale will certainly come as a result of what we have done, but it is better to change our minds and hearts (*metanoia*) sooner rather than later, which will be too late.

“What you can do” – more generally (II)

Our communities will not have souls until we more widely recognize and to the extent possible fulfill our mutual obligations. Human rights, on which too much of our jurisprudence and social movements are now based, are an insufficient basis for ensoulment and civilization.

Given florid failures of community and governance, and of democratic modes of reform, and given the existential crises we face, society needs base communities that provide material, intellectual, emotional, social, political, and spiritual support for individuals and households. The churches have largely failed in this. Some might rise to the occasion -- but time's a-wasting.

Please don't think in terms of the masses – what will sell, or whether others will understand. This way of thinking is very common. Our vocation is truth. Not many will understand anything new at first, especially if it is uncomfortable. What's most missing is leadership and moral courage.

Regarding LANL and pit production, the Study Group's specific aims are what they were in 1989, when we began: to help end U.S. pretensions to empire. What is new is that these pretensions are now very dangerous, due to the climate crisis, various resource crises, public health crises, the climate crisis, and the “Thucydides trap” of late-imperial belligerence and miscalculation. Without immediate cooperation (aka “peace”), the world is doomed from climate change.

Northern New Mexico hosts the best-funded nuclear weapons complex in the world. It is our specific duty to humanity and nature to prevent Greater Santa Fe from becoming the next Rocky Flats, or to be taken over by functionaries of the national security state. It is a duty we frankly cannot avoid if we want to be human.

“What you can do” – more generally (III)

If we can stop pit production at LANL, pit production will be delayed a minimum of 10 years overall.

Failing to stop pit production in the here and now is hypocritical to say the least.

If we can stop pit production for 10 years, a W87-1, especially a MIRVed W87-1, is unlikely.

As long as pit production is halted, the U.S. will not be able to produce brand-new nuclear weapons. Thus the U.S. will not be able to compete with Russia in a nuclear arms race. U.S. exceptionalism and presumption of dominance will not be sustainable. The U.S. will have to respect sovereignty. Peace will have to break out.

I think we have a duty to not allow ourselves to be distracted, to avoid trivialization, and a duty to not allow ourselves to be divided those who seek to do so, e.g. by skin color, gender, or age, and a duty to not be naïve or to be deceived by others. If we would be citizens. If we would be human. We must reclaim our humanity.

We want to work with you:

- Help recruit others to come to events, and for you to help educate others, and to be ambassadors for us (to that end, the coffee mugs we brought are branded “icebreakers.”)
- Volunteer with us: in research, in communications, in outreach, in fundraising, in networking
- We need lawyers, right now.
- Help find us staff members, interns, and volunteers. We can hire. Groups like ours need *vocations*, not more people writing letters. Impact is exponentially related to knowledge, skills, commitments. We need apprentices, or mid-life helpers, who often have many skills, plus maturity. We do not need people who want just to use us.

Relatively easy things to do

- Leave political parties. The Democratic Party functions as a mafia in New Mexico. It is the left arm of the national security state here, the Republican Party being right arm. Whatever advocacy might be done on national security issues or climate issues or energy issues while being in either Party, or a wing of either Party, or while supporting one, is with few exceptions prevented by the fact that support for the Party and its candidates is assumed.

(Speaker's note: Quote from friend re leaving the Dem Party; *Citizens United*; Gilens and Page;
<https://charleshughsmith.blogspot.com/2021/04/the-people-have-lost-faith-in-state-and.html>)

- Be informed. Useful news sources (list). Action, education and social connections all go together (see: base communities). If we would be citizens, we have a duty to not be ignorant, or to be tools of propaganda from any source -- and to not be passive.

One thing we all need to understand is the reality of collapse, which is upon us. The trajectories are impossible to know, but the sky is filled with swans, many of them white, others gray. There are [dragon kings](#). Various collapse phenomena – events and reactions to events, such as the covid pandemic -- will dominate the policy process, which is now a combination of largely blind momentum and largely blind reactions. Brad Holian: “When the blind giant begins to dance – watch out.”

- We need nonviolent actions: marches, protests, that have the appropriate symbolism and the appropriate commitment. Attending is easy; organizing is hard. We need help recruiting for these actions. We need continuity in them.
- We need pressure to end the RCLC, but ordinary advocacy is not working. (Update: with less cooptation by citizen groups it might finally BE working)

More

- Reach out to Trump supporters, MAGAs, Republicans, and libertarians. The antiwar left made a big mistake in not doing so in 2017-2020. Reach out to environmental organizations, though this is likely harder.
- Research and oppose the Rizzo developments. Research and oppose the Buckman treated sewage pipeline.
- Oppose LANL Electric Power Capacity Upgrade (EPCU) (explain).
- As an integrative project on both national and local scales, work on military spending and imperialism
 - Get organizational sign-ons to recent letter
 - Reject militarism and nuclearism
 - Reject military and nuclear jobs
 - Get that statue taken down from City Hall in Santa Fe
 - Halt the Orion Center, etc.
- Bird-dog our electeds all the time. Give no quarter on issues of war and peace. They will carry sociopathic, genocidal narratives and policies unless they don't. If they do, work to shame them. Expose, confront, shame. Praise where warranted but not without including direction. Don't be used.
- Get local churches to support full-time climate and peace young persons.
- Convince young men and women of good families to become new kinds of monastics. Boldly go where no one has gone before. Actually, some us have. We need more shock troops in our nonviolent social revolution.
- We need to demand transparency, which requires unremitting legal action.
- Some of you can go into the schools.