

Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

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Pushing ahead with development of an array of above-ground non-nuclear testing facilities is critical to the future of Los Alamos National Laboratory, a University of California advisory panel has concluded.

In a report that will be presented to the UC Board of Regents in San Francisco Thursday, the panel said the Department of Energy's emerging Science-Based Stockpile Stewardship Program is a viable alternative to what was once the centerpiece of nuclear weapons research work at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California: underground tests in the Nevada desert.

"The stewardship program proposed by DOE provides a very compelling framework for the laboratories as they plan for the future," said Sid Drell, chairman of the UC President's Council on the National Laboratories.

The report by the advisory council, made up of 30 leaders from industry and academia, comes at a time when the Clinton administration is seeking to conclude a comprehensive test ban treaty with other nuclear countries.

Full-scale underground nuclear tests have been banned in the United States since 1992. The Clinton administration wants to put a halt to all nuclear tests, no matter how small the yield, by the end of the year.

Drell said if that goal is achieved, it will pose a "challenge" to weapons scientists at Los Alamos and Livermore, who in the past have relied on underground tests to provide a wealth of data related to nuclear weapons.

"Success in meeting the challenge to maintain our nuclear deterrent without underground nuclear tests is predicated on developing a strong" stewardship program, Drell said in an August letter to former UC president Jack Peltason.

A series of letters written over the past several months by Drell to UC officials was attached to the council's report. The university made the entire package available to the media late last week.

As a replacement to actual tests, the Department of Energy is trying to develop an array of facilities that would simulate nuclear weapons tests through the use of non-nuclear explosions, computers and lasers.

One of these is the much ballyhooed National Ignition Facility, a \$1.1 billion laser planned for Livermore.

Another is Los Alamos' \$124 million Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest Facility, which is only partially built because of a legal challenge to the project by two Santa Fe organizations, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and the Los Alamos Study Group.

The council's report, in addition to evaluating Los Alamos' stockpile stewardship work, gives high marks to a variety of lab programs in areas such as advanced computing and weapons and space physics.

Greg Mello, of the study group, dismissed the report as "self-congratulatory."

The council's "job was to bless what was going on at the labs and that's what they've done," **Mello** said.

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Author: Keith Easthouse

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Report: LANL possible site for most bomb work

7/24/96
By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

Los Alamos National Laboratory is a potential site for almost all aspects of bomb production work in the scaled-down nuclear weapons complex planned for the 21st century, according to a report released Wednesday by the Department of Energy.

The "Implementation Plan" identifies Los Alamos as one of two sites under consideration for work the laboratory has not performed since the 1950s: building plutonium cores for bombs in the nuclear arsenal.

The other possible site is the DOE's Savannah River plant in South Carolina.

Los Alamos is one of three sites under review for the manufacture of another key nuclear weapon part for stockpile bombs: "secondaries," which contain uranium.

The other sites under consideration are Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and the Oak Ridge

facility in Tennessee. Oak Ridge is where most of the DOE's weapons-related uranium work has been centered in the past.

Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque are both candidates to build non-nuclear components that contain high explosives.

The lab may also be called on to examine plutonium cores — called "pits" — in existing weapons to ensure they are still sound.

Additionally, the plan says that above-ground nuclear testing facilities — some of which could be at Los Alamos — could take the place of full-scale underground nuclear tests, which have been banned since 1992.

At Los Alamos, such facilities include the partially constructed Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest Facility, which is tied up in the courts because of a challenge by two Santa Fe activist groups, and the not-yet-built Atlas Facility, which would look at radiation and aging effects on existing stockpile weapons.

The plan rejects other possible approaches to the handling of the nuclear arsenal in the 21st century, including dismantling it altogether, restoring it to its Cold War proportions, or simply performing maintenance work as bomb parts age.

The plan provides the most detailed picture yet of what Los Alamos' role would be in a future nuclear weapons production complex. The DOE is expected to release a "draft environmental impact statement" in coming weeks that should provide greater clarity about the roles DOE is proposing for Los Alamos.

The implementation plan was blasted by a local activist.

"This document is an elaborate rationalization for an illogical and incredible continuation of nuclear work throughout the country," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group.

Last year, John Immele, program director for nuclear weapons technology at the lab, said the lab was "looking forward to playing a role in a smaller

(nuclear weapons) complex."

Immele said maintaining the "capability for small lot fabrication" at Los Alamos would reduce the nuclear danger by maintaining the deterrent value of the U.S. arsenal.

At the same time, he said such an approach "may be the most inexpensive way to go" and "might be the best thing for the country."

It has long been suspected that Los Alamos might take on plutonium production responsibilities since it is the only place still operating in the country with the capability to build significant numbers of pits.

It has been less clear that other work, such as manufacturing uranium secondaries, might also be centered at the lab.

The plan does not specify how many plutonium pits the lab would be expected to build annually. Both lab and DOE officials have said publicly in the past year that a probable number is about 50 pits per year. This compares with the more than 1,000 pits a year that used to be built at the Rocky Flats plant near Denver.



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New, and stupid

By WILLIAM M. ARKIN

"We have no new weapons, missiles or warheads, on the drawing boards or in design." Adm. Henry G. Chiles, Jr., commander in chief of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), repeated the reassuring mantra of the nuclear custodians on June 7 before the Naval Submarine League.

If the statement weren't so definitive, contradictions wouldn't seem so sinister. After all, the Clinton administration has made it clear that it expects nuclear weapons to be around as far in the future as one can imagine. And since warheads aren't getting any younger, and none have come off the production line in more than five years, logic says that sometime soon replacements will have to be fabricated as obsolete systems reach the end of their useful life.

If ever there were a candidate for retirement, it is the colossal B53 gravity bomb, the oldest nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal. At least that is what the custodians think. They want to modify smaller B61 bombs to replace the nine-megaton behemoth. Their justification, besides age, is significantly improved safety.

The replacement program was revealed in September by the Los Alamos Study Group, an energetic watchdog located in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The group calls the B61 replacement "provocative from an arms control perspective," and speculates that it will be used to attack deeply buried targets in the Third World. And they point to various statements and pledges that the United States is not developing new weapons.

It isn't "new," the Energy Department responds. In the way of these flaps, Los Alamos Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold states that "the actual modifications are mostly minor, are mostly mechanical, and this modification involves no change to the nuclear package," thereby requiring no explosive testing. It isn't even a "new" mission, lab insiders argue—

the B61 intended to take over the B53 job has already been tested as an earth penetrator in a series of 1980s tests called "Hellbender," and all B61s have some limited earth penetration capability. The replacement, their argument goes, doesn't even represent an improvement in U.S. capabilities.

But why get bogged down in semantics? New or not, this is not a case of the simple replacement of an obsolete system. It is sinister, and what is more, it is busy work merely to occupy the nuclear faithful. The reason is that the B53-B61 trade is barely a stopgap. Warheads built between 1962 and 1965 are to be replaced by ones built between 1969 and 1971. Sure the newer ones are "safer," but so what? Are they needed?

The replacement is, more than anything else, merely something for the nuclear mafia to do. In the Faustian bargain that bought their support for a test ban and a job redesignation as Maytag repairmen, it is tolerated under the "stockpile stewardship" program. "I will be thankful to have the B53 retired," says nuclear warhead and testing insider Sid Drell, who agrees that since there are no changes anticipated to the B61 "physics package," it should not be considered a new warhead.

Like most other boosters of stockpile stewardship, Drell ignores why the replacement warhead is being pursued. The actual purpose is not, as the Study Group asserts, for the Third World. The new B61 mod 11 would be a bomber-delivered, late-arriving, earth-penetrating weapon intended to burrow after Russian military commanders and leaders in their underground bunkers. The squabble over whether the proposed warhead is "new" or intended for Tehran obscures the wasteful and pernicious truth that nuclear warfighting is alive and well.

The very idea that the B53 "needs" to be replaced, in this age of START, "cooperative threat reduction," and "detracting" is cynical and bizarre.

Sure Admiral Chiles's STRATCOM identified the requirement, and the joint Energy and Defense Department Nuclear Weapons Council—godfathers to the nuclear mafia—approved the request. Four congressional subcommittees evidently gave their written approval of Energy's secret reprogramming request to fund development of the "new" B61 Mod 11. But that doesn't mean the warhead program makes any sense, or that it passed muster at the secretarial or White House level, or could stand up to public scrutiny.

On a number of occasions in the 1980s the Reagan administration included various earth-penetrating warhead programs in their budgets. But none was ever produced, given their low priority compared to Trident II or the MX missile. When hardliners were finally successful in arguing that Moscow was building super-hard bunkers that existing weapons might not be able to get at, the B53 was removed from mothballs to shore up the "gap."

The same arguments no longer apply. Deterrence is perfectly healthy without the burrowing nuke. What is more, these shenanigans are hardly going to solve the turn-of-the-century problem of figuring out what to do when warheads really do need—in the logic of nukes forever—to be replaced. The long-term disarmament versus modernization conundrum is not debated, partly because the new-not new, more safety-no testing argument dominates.

The best solution now is to retire the 50 B53s that currently gather cobwebs at bomber bases. And then get on with a real discussion of what will happen to the other six nuclear warhead types that the United States will have left when they also turn thirtysomething. ■

William M. Arkin is an independent expert on defense matters and a Bulletin contributing editor.

LANL to get \$300 million for upgrades

2/29/76

By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy plans to pump \$300 million into facility upgrades at Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1998 to 2005 as part of its new approach of managing the nation's existing nuclear stockpile, rather than building new weapons.

The plan, which is in draft form, could provide employment for as many as 275 workers at the lab, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said at a news conference Wednesday.

The new plan, known as "stockpile stewardship," requires department officials to monitor the existing nuclear arsenal and provide upgrades when necessary. President Clinton's decision to halt production of new weapons and ban all nuclear testing forced the DOE to adopt this approach.

The department will rely on Los Alamos to do work that used to be performed at the Rocky Flats facility near Denver: build-

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said the plan could provide employment for as many as 275 workers.

ing plutonium cores, or "pits," for weapons in the nuclear stockpile.

Previously, Los Alamos has built small numbers of pits each year, but only for experimental purposes.

According to lab officials, there is some uncertainty about how many pits the lab will be required to build each year as it replaces aging components in existing weapons.

Estimates range from 20 to 80 per year, with 50 being the most likely number. That would provide employment for 150 workers, according to Tim Neal, program manager for materials and

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process technologies at the lab.

In the event of a worsening of international tensions or a discovery of a serious flaw in an existing weapons system, the lab might be called on to build up to 80 pits per year, providing employment to 260 workers, Neal said.

Neal said such a production level would be the maximum the lab could handle, even with the planned upgrades to facilities.

Most of the production-related positions would be filled by existing employees shifted from other work, Neal said. There will be some "new hires," however.

Los Alamos will also be home to a \$48 million weapons testing facility called Atlas under the plan unveiled by O'Leary. An-

other 15 jobs would be required to operate the Atlas facility, according to the DOE.

The \$300 million for Los Alamos represents the lion's share of the \$500 million the DOE plans to spend for upgrades at all its sites.

However, T.J. Trapp, acting deputy program director for nuclear materials and stockpile management at the lab, said half of that money will be spent on upgrades that would have to have been performed whether or not pit fabrication responsibilities had been handed to Los Alamos.

About \$100 million will go toward remodeling a wing at Technical Area 55, the lab's plutonium facility, according to the DOE plan.

The remaining \$50 million will be spent on equipment related to

supporting the fabrication work. This pot of money might also be used to redo two wings of another facility, the Chemical and Metallurgical Research building, Trapp said.

Last June, it looked as if all aspects of nuclear weapons production work might be handed to Los Alamos. But even though it appears the lab's role will be limited to plutonium work, the change still promises to be controversial.

Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe organization, said the DOE's plan was a "triumph for the plutonium priesthood at LANL."

Public hearings on the plan are scheduled for March 26 at Los Alamos and April 23 in Santa Fe.

Paul Kane of States News Service contributed to this report.

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LANL'S NUCLEAR WORK TO EXPAND

Richard Parker Journal Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary on Wednesday made it official: She wants Los Alamos National Laboratory to make replacement triggers for nuclear warheads as the rest of the country's weapons complex shrinks.

O'Leary made the announcement -- long anticipated in New Mexico and in arms control circles -- as she unveiled the future shape of the complex that manufactures and maintains the country's nuclear weapons.

The plan involves consolidating the complex to eight sites, from a high in the late 1980s of 11, in direct response to drives toward broader arms control. The Senate passed the START II agreement in January, and the Clinton administration, having adopted a test ban, is pressing other governments to agree to a global Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Energy Department, O'Leary said Wednesday, would help fulfill the test ban "while maintaining an effective, reliable -- but safe -- nuclear deterrent."

Defense spending on nuclear weapons maintenance has fallen from \$2.5 billion in 1985 to \$1.5 billion this year. The new plan projects that annual spending will fall to \$1 billion by 2005. Before the turn of the century, O'Leary said, the department plans to begin disposing of weapons-grade plutonium by burning it in reactors, sealing it in ceramics or burying it deep beneath the earth's surface.

Eight sites around the country will play a greater role in maintaining the nuclear deterrent, and that includes weapons laboratories in New Mexico. The role of weapons laboratories has grown with the ban on below-ground testing in Nevada. Instead, simulations and studies of weapons cores are used to study their reliability.

Los Alamos would be responsible for small-scale production of plutonium pits, the triggers in a warhead.

"It's a small capability for pit manufacturing," said Steve Guidice, an assistant manager of the DOE's Albuquerque Operations Office, who headed the restructuring of the weapons complex. "But it's an essential capability we need to be able to protect."

Department officials emphasized that the triggers -- grapefruit-size plutonium spheres -- are intended as replacement parts for the existing arsenal.

The government will spend \$520 million on defense programs at Los Alamos this year. DOE would begin to move its pit manufacturing to Los Alamos beginning in 1998, adding 260 workers to the 3,200 dedicated to defense work at the lab.

Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said the department's job estimates are inflated. He said pit production should require between 90 and 150 jobs a year depending on the number produced. He said the lab would need 260 workers only in case of a national emergency.

Anti-nuclear activists in Santa Fe decried the department's decision to do production work at the Los

Alamos lab.

"We're literally seeing the lab returning to its roots, and those roots are nuclear weapons programs," said Jay Coghlin of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety. "These decisions are predetermining and fixing LANL's future. It's a future that won't be to the broader benefit of northern New Mexico."

Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said he feared the proposed pit production at Los Alamos could open the door to the production of new nuclear weapons.

Pit production "will certainly increase the capacity for plutonium handling. Therefore, it is likely to carry with it increased waste generation and the potential for accidents," Mello said.

He said it would be the first time since the 1950s that Los Alamos has been involved in manufacturing a key element of nuclear weapons.

Danneskiold said the lab makes about one dozen pits a year for research and development purposes. He said its new role will not mean a substantial increase in what the lab is doing.

While the department considered other sites for making the pits, it concluded that Los Alamos was its best choice because it already has the ability. During the 1980s, the lab manufactured pits during breakdowns at the Rocky Flats, Colo., weapons plant.

Assistant DOE Secretary Victor Reis said the pits at Los Alamos would be dry-machined, avoiding one of the many environmental problems that eventually led to Rocky Flats' closure.

The department estimated Los Alamos would make as many as 50 a year -- far fewer than previous estimates -- to replace aging triggers or those removed from missiles for sampling.

The number of pits is so small that department officials said the Los Alamos project is intended primarily to preserve the U.S. ability to make the triggers if a crisis should arise. They estimated that they would have about five years to launch a larger pit-making enterprise, possibly elsewhere, if necessary.

The reorganization also will lead to the construction at Los Alamos of Atlas, a pulsed-power machine used to measure the initial dynamics of a nuclear explosion. The data would be used in computer simulations of a full blast. Anti-nuclear activists have charged that the United States is, in principle, violating its test-ban right by modeling the effects of nuclear detonations.

No change is expected at Sandia National Laboratories as a result of Wednesday's announcement.

And the department does not plan to store plutonium from old weapons at the Manzano storage area near Kirtland Air Force Base. Manzano was rejected, in part, because of its proximity to Albuquerque.

The department also is weighing the possibility of making high-explosive components for weapons at Los Alamos; they now are made near Amarillo.

The department's plan does not reduce the role of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, as a previous independent panel of experts suggested. The department plan concludes that the test ban means weapons labs will be even more central in ensuring that weapons are reliable.

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LANL'S N-WORK EXPANDS

Richard Parker Journal Washington Bureau

LAB TOLD TO MAKE WARHEAD TRIGGERS

WASHINGTON -- Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary on Wednesday made it official: She wants Los Alamos National Laboratory to make replacement triggers for nuclear warheads as the rest of the country's weapons complex shrinks.

O'Leary made the announcement -- long anticipated in New Mexico and in arms control circles -- as she unveiled the future shape of the complex that manufactures and maintains the country's nuclear weapons.

The plan involves consolidating the complex to eight sites, from a high in the late 1980s of 11, in direct response to drives toward broader arms control. The Senate passed the START II agreement in January, and the Clinton administration, having adopted a test ban, is pressing other governments to agree to a global Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

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Los Alamos takes step back to its roots. Jonathan Weisman.
Science v271.n5254 (March 8, 1996): pp1355(2).

Science

Los Alamos National Laboratory will return to nuclear-weapon components production, as part of A DOE restructuring plan. The three main nuclear research laboratories's budgets will be increased, and Los Alamos will take over plutonium-pit production from the defunct Rocky Flats, CO, plant.

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It has been 42 years since the last batch of components for the U.S. nuclear arsenal rolled off a rudimentary assembly line at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Since then, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has kept the prosaic task of manufacturing separate from the more rarefied realm of weapons research. But last week, Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary unveiled a plan that would end that separation - at least in part - and bring the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) closer to its roots as a maker of nuclear weapons.

The plan, a blueprint for reorganizing nuclear weapons production for the 21st century, would shrink DOE's sprawling nuclear weapons complex - now spread over eight facilities across the United State - without closing any existing plants. Overall, up to 3600 jobs would be eliminated and budgets would drop from \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion by 2005 as recently as 4 years ago, the complex's annual budget stood at \$2.5 billion. The outlook for the weapons research laboratories is brighter. Gone are earlier notions of shifting research from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California, to LANL; instead, all three laboratories - LLNL, LANL, and Sandia National Laboratories - would see modest growth in their defense sectors. For Los Alamos, there's a bonus: inheriting the responsibility for manufacturing plutonium "pits," or fission triggers that are at the heart of hydrogen bombs.

LANL officials downplayed the lab's re-entry into weapons manufacturing as relatively insignificant, even hailing it as synergistic with the research and development mission. "There's a feeling among materials scientists that these two missions can coexist," says Earle Marie Hanson, deputy program director for nuclear materials and reconfiguration technology. But critics outside the laboratory see it as a step away from research by a cash-strapped institution. "It's part and parcel of decline of the lab as scientific institution," says Greg Mello, director of the Los Alamos Study Group, a citizens' watchdog group in northern New Mexico.

The last plutonium pit produced at Los Alamos for the weapons arsenal was completed in 1954, when production was shifted entirely to the Rocky Flats plant, 16 miles northwest of Denver. In 1992, however, DOE shut Rocky Flats down after the Federal Bureau of Investigation found a scandal-riddled plant dangerously contaminated with hazardous and radioactive waste. That left

the United States with no industrial-level capacity to manufacture replacement pits for the nation's aging nuclear stockpile.

LANL's TA-55 facility was the logical place to transfer that function. It was already producing a dozen pits a year, mainly for underground nuclear tests in Nevada. But at first LANL Director Sig Hecker blanched at the proposal, worrying that a weapons production role would crowd out research and scare away talented scientists. That was before the painful downsizing last year, when 1000 LANL employees lost their jobs. Retooling TA-55 for pit manufacturing would bring \$100 million to LANL. Another \$200 million would be used for previously planned refurbishment of TA-55. DOE estimates the task will create 138 jobs during construction and 260 jobs during operation. Now LANL officials sound far less concerned.

"We have no problem whatsoever with stepping up to 20 to 50 [pits] a year," says Hanson. "But we want to make sure it's synergistic with R&D and it doesn't swamp R & D." Any more than 50 would begin to impact on research by appropriating floor space and personnel, said Joe Martz, a plutonium chemist and group leader for weapon component technology.

The laboratory plans to make changes in Rocky Flats, pit manufacturing process, says Tim Neal, LANL's program manager for materials and process technology. In the past, pits were made through a process called "wroughting," in which workers stretched, flattened, and rolled plutonium into hollow spheres, like bakers kneading dough. LANL wants to move toward pouring molten plutonium into molds, a process that would cut down on plutonium shavings and machine contact.

But this kind of production work has never been a great draw for top researchers, warns Ray Kidder, a retired LLNL physicist. If it remains small, it will do no harm, Kidder says, but if it squeezes real research funds out of a constrained budget, it will prove counterproductive. And, with a wary eye on the mess at Rocky Flats, citizens groups are openly cringing at a return to LANL's roots. "I think it's bad news for the people of Los Alamos," said Leroy Moore, a longtime Rocky Flats watchdog and consultant for the Rocky Mountain Peace Center in Boulder, Colorado.

Jonathan Weissman is a science writer for the Oakland Tribune.

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DOE Closes Internet Site

Foes Contend Documents Contradict Weapons Policy

By JOHN FLECK
Journal Staff Writer 3/23/96 P. A1

The Department of Energy has pulled the plug on its public nuclear weapons Internet site after a California newspaper published an embarrassing story based on documents found there.

The documents raise questions about the department's claim that it is no longer working on new nuclear-weapon designs.

After a story appeared Tuesday in the Tri-Valley Herald in Livermore, Calif., the Energy Department shut down access to its nuclear-weapons World Wide Web site.

The site, a collection of computers run by the department, contained a wealth of nuclear-weapons information the DOE made available to the public.

Anyone with access to the Internet could connect to the site, and it was widely used by journalists and others interested in the department's nuclear-weapons program.

Users trying to log in Friday received a message that their computer "does not have permission to connect" to the site, with no other explanation.

The Tri-Valley Herald article quoted undated documents found on one of the site's computers that said the department's Office of Research and Inertial Fusion was studying exotic new nuclear weapons. The work, if going on now, would contradict DOE's contention that it has stopped designing new nuclear weapons.

Anti-nuclear activists contend that the documents are evidence that seems to show the department is secretly

Web Site Contradicts DOE N-Policy

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studying new weapons designs in contradiction of its public statements.

The DOE did not respond Friday to a request for official comment.

But a DOE source who requested anonymity said Friday that the documents were written in 1992, when such weapons-design work was common.

The source said the documents were hastily placed on the Internet as part of the department's "openness" effort to make information public about its long-secretive nuclear-weapons program.

The problem, the source said, was that the documents were not checked before being placed on the Internet.

The site has been shut down indef-

initely while the department reviews other information that is there, the source said.

DOE critics allege that, while the documents are undated, their contents suggest they must be more recent than 1992.

The documents were clearly presented on the Internet as current department policy, said Greg Mello, a frequent DOE critic with the Los Alamos Study Group, a New Mexico anti-nuclear group.

"What is clear," Mello said, "is that the DOE considered these documents relevant and appropriate to explain their research program."

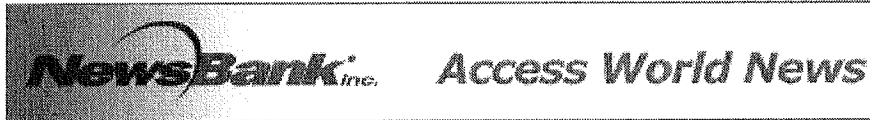
Mello and other activists, reacting incredulously to the department's claim that the documents were from 1992, engaged in a furious search Friday for evidence that would pin down the actual date.

Jackie Cabasso, executive director of the Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, Calif., pointed out that one of the documents bears an almost word-for-word similarity to the department's 1995 budget submission to Congress.

Mello identified a reference to a supercomputer research program that was not started until last year.

The incident raises questions about the reliability of information available on the burgeoning Internet, which increasingly serves as an easy point of contact between people who have information and people trying to get it.

The Internet provides powerful tools that allow users to find information. But the information is frequently without context — in this case, a date on the document.



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: SANTA FE / REGION
Date: April 3, 1996

Under the leadership of Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, Los Alamos National Laboratory is supposedly in an era of greater openness.

Yet this week, experts from around the world are descending on Los Alamos to talk about nuclear weapons -- but the public's not invited.

Nor is the media.

And nor are three activists from the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a Santa Fe-based group that monitors the activities of Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The study group trio -- Greg Mello, Karin Salzman and Cathie Sullivan -- tried to enter the unprecedented meeting at Fuller Lodge on Tuesday but were turned away by two armed security guards.

"Why are foreign nationals allowed to attend this workshop, and not U.S. citizens?" Salzman asked.

The answer, according to a top weapons expert at the laboratory, is not a sinister one.

John Immele, outgoing program director for nuclear weapons technology at the lab, said the meeting is closed so participants will feel freer to speak frankly.

"We have a number of government officials attending -- including officials from other countries -- and we have promised them that everything they say will be off the record," Immele said.

Discussion will be limited to unclassified information, Immele added.

As for the activists, Immele pointed out that the study group and the lab have a history of adversarial relationships -- including an ongoing legal battle over a laboratory weapons testing facility.

Immele said he did not feel confident he could invite the study group and still assure the other participants that everything they said in the meeting would be confidential.

The two-day meeting -- which concludes today -- is part of a series of lab-sponsored workshops called "Securing the Nuclear Future." Two workshops were held last year -- one on the general issue of nuclear danger and the other on the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

A workshop on nuclear energy and nuclear materials is scheduled for this summer.

The workshop this week has attracted the most attention so far because of its subject matter: nuclear weapons.

Participants include scientists and representatives from four of the five nations known to have nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, Britain and France. The other nuclear state, China, did not send a representative.

Other organizations represented at the meeting include the Central Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon, the defense contractor TRW, Harvard University, a California think tank called the Rand Corporation and Chelyabinsk-70, Russia's equivalent of the Los Alamos lab.

Immele said the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a range of possible futures for nuclear weapons, "ranging from nuclear deterrence as we know it to the abolition of nuclear weapons -- the zero option."

That approach has been pushed by one of the groups participating in the conference: the Henry I. Stimson Center.

Immele cited the participation of that organization as evidence that a broad range of views are being represented at the meeting.

Mello, the leader of the study group, disputed that.

"This was a meeting largely composed of nuclear advocates, who have gathered to strategize their own brand

of nuclear security and to perpetuate their careers and their funding," he said.

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Author: Keith Easthouse

Section: SANTA FE / REGION

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Nuclear test at LANL might be delayed

► International experts could inspect the site for the test, which now is scheduled for June 18.

By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

A controversial "subcritical" nuclear test under the Nevada desert scheduled to be conducted June 18 by Los Alamos National Laboratory might be delayed, a Department of Energy spokes-

man said Monday.

Darwin Morgan of the DOE's Nevada Test Site said department officials might delay the test to give international arms control experts a chance to inspect the underground chamber where the test will take place.

He said the test, dubbed "Rebound," could be delayed by as much as two months.

"The point is to assure everybody that this is not a nuclear test," said Morgan, who stressed that a decision to postpone has not been made yet.

Concern has been expressed that the test could scuttle an international test-ban treaty under negotiation among nuclear states in Geneva. The negotiations are

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DARWIN MORGAN
of the DOE's Nevada Test Site

supposed to conclude the same week the Rebound test is scheduled to take place.

The experiments are considered subcritical because although plutonium — the hazardous radioactive metal at the heart of nuclear bombs — would be deformed during the tests, it would not be compressed to the point that it would go "critical" and ignite a sustained nuclear re-

action.

Don McCoy, program manager for weapons physics and evaluation at Los Alamos, said last fall that the purpose of the Rebound experiment is to learn more about the dynamic properties of aging nuclear materials.

Critics have said it might appear to other countries that the test is related to researching and developing new weapons.

Public excluded from LANL meeting

4/4/96
By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

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Judge: DARHT construction may proceed

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND
Assistant Managing Editor

A federal judge has lifted an injunction that had halted construction of the Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test facility since Jan. 26, 1995.

Federal District Judge Edwin Mechem, who officially halted the construction of the Los Alamos National Laboratory facility, said the recently-prepared environmental impact statement (EIS) for DARHT is adequate if imperfect.

Mechem acknowledged that explosive tests would cause environmental damage. However, the legal issue is not the damage, but rather whether the Department of Energy has considered the effects of the damage, he said.

"It is the prerogative of the federal agency, not the court, to weigh the policy imperatives for a project like DARHT, with its anticipated environmental harm," Mechem said.

Two Santa Fe-based activist groups, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and the Los Alamos Study Group (based in Santa Fe), had sued for the injunction. They argued that DARHT needed an EIS and that the EIS should be prepared after a national programmatic EIS and a LANL sitewide EIS.

Mechem, however, said DOE is justified in building DARHT before these other reviews are complete.

"I find that DARHT has independent justification, has an adequate EIS, and will not prejudice future programmatic or sitewide decision-making," Mechem said.

However, Mechem criticized

DOE's EIS record with regard to DARHT.

"I have expressed concern in the past over DOE's good faith in connection with their NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) obligations," Mechem said. "Defendants began construction on DARHT before performing an EIS and then refused to halt construction even when they themselves decided an EIS was necessary. It took a court order to compel defendants to comply with NEPA. Even upon entry of this injunction, I considered 'DOE's promise to consider non-operation of DARHT' 'optimistic.'"

LANL initially argued that DARHT didn't require an EIS because its environmental impacts wouldn't be greater than the existing one-axis facility LANL uses for hydrodynamic tests.

DARHT is designed to take three-dimensional X-ray snapshots of exploding mock nuclear weapons. LANL and DOE officials have said DARHT is a necessary tool to keep aging nuclear weapons safe and reliable.

The explosions would release some radioactive materials such as depleted uranium, but tests involving plutonium would be contained within portable chambers.

In the DARHT EIS, DOE recommended DARHT go ahead as planned, except that all explosive tests gradually would be contained better.

Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said today he wasn't surprised by the decision.

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Wednesday, April 17, 1996

DARHT

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Mello said he had hoped for an independent review of classified evidence DOE introduced.

"While DOE was able to submit an entire box of evidence, and to argue its case in private with the judge under cover of classification, we were confined only to a few dozen pages and offered no opportunity to bring Q-cleared, independent experts before the judge," Mello said.

LANL spokesman Jim Danneskiold said the lab was pleased with the decision.

"DOE and the laboratory put a lot of time and effort into assuring that all of the potential environmental impacts of the project were studied, and we're therefore pleased that the judge agreed that the study had been a complete and accurate assessment of

those impacts," he said.

"DARHT is extremely important to science-based based stockpile stewardship and the administration's policy of pursuing a comprehensive test ban while assuring the safety, security and reliability of the stockpile," Danneskiold said.

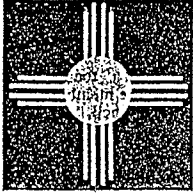
Danneskiold said the estimated cost for the first axis of DARHT has risen from \$82 million to \$106 million. The cost increases were caused by adding the explosion containment and because of the construction delay.

The new total cost for both axes is \$187 million, he said.

Danneskiold added that the X-ray-producing accelerator will be upgraded within its existing design to incorporate the recent scientific improvements.

Danneskiold said construction could restart in several weeks.

The Los Alamos Monitor



THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Judge: Work on DARHT can resume

By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

Almost 15 months after he sent shock waves through the nation's nuclear weapons establishment by ordering a halt to construction of a nuclear testing facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Albuquerque Federal Judge Edwin Mechem has ruled that the construction can resume.

In a 12-page order issued Tuesday, Mechem said the Department of Energy had adequately studied the potential environmental impacts of the \$124 million Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest Facility — the flagship of the agency's effort to replace underground nuclear tests with an array of above-ground testing simulation machines.

Mechem said DARHT could go forward despite the fact the DOE has not completed two related environmental

studies — including one due out next January — that will examine the environmental impacts of all major projects at the lab.

Mechem said the resumption of construction at DARHT qualifies as a legitimate "interim action" as defined by a federal law that requires federal agencies to identify potential environmental damage before proceeding with a project.

He said allowing DARHT to go for-

ward would not "tip the balance" on decisions the agency is expected to make in the near future about weapons-related programs at the lab and other DOE facilities.

At Los Alamos, such decisions will be far more influenced by "existing infrastructure, both in terms of intellectual and technological resources," Mechem said.

Two Santa Fe activist organizations, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

and the Los Alamos Study Group, had argued that allowing DARHT to proceed could prejudice the outcome of the DOE's "sitewide environmental impact statement" on laboratory operations.

The groups, represented by the Western Environmental Law Center, a Taos legal firm, had also contended that DOE should first finish a study of the health and environmental impacts of the

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DARHT

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"stockpile stewardship" program of which DARHT is a part.

DARHT is a giant X-ray machine capable of peering inside nuclear weapons parts precisely when they are subjected to non-nuclear explosive tests. It is intended as a replacement to a 1960s-era testing facility at the lab called PHERMEX.

A 1994 lawsuit filed by the two Santa Fe activist groups against the energy department led to Mechem's order in January 1995 halting construction at DARHT — which was about one-third finished.

The reason for Mechem's order was simple: the DOE started building DARHT before doing an environmental impact statement and then refused to halt construction after it was decided an EIS was necessary.

There is no question DARHT poses a significant threat to the environment. Many of

the explosive tests will be conducted in the open air and could ignite grass fires. In addition to sending flying debris in all directions, DARHT will generate radioactive waste.

Finally, some of the tests will involve plutonium contained in steel vessels. If such vessels were somehow breached, plutonium — the hazardous radioactive metal at the heart of most nuclear bombs — could be released into the environment.

In his ruling, Mechem pointed out that the National Environmental Policy Act does not prevent a federal agency from proceeding with a project that poses a significant risk to the environment.

Instead, the law merely requires that an agency study the risks beforehand.

"So long as environmental damage is honestly regarded, forecasted with high quality science and shared with the public, NEPA is satisfied," Mechem wrote.

"Ultimately, what NEPA seeks to preclude is unanticipated and unjustified environmental harm," Mechem added.

Mechem said the EIS on DARHT would have been inadequate without a classified supplement that discusses details related to the tests involving plutonium. This supplement was reviewed by court staff members who obtained the necessary security clearances.

The activists wanted their own security-cleared experts to look at the classified supplement, but were not allowed to do so.

Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said he had not seen the ruling. "The Department of Energy went through a long and complex process in studying the potential environmental impacts of DARHT," Danneskiold said. "We're pleased that the judge recognized that the process had been done properly."

DARHT work to resume within weeks

4/18/96
By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

Construction of a nuclear weapons test facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory that was halted 15 months ago by a federal judge will resume in several weeks, a lab spokesman said Wednesday.

Jim Danneskiold said there is plenty of money available this year — on the order of \$40 million — to resume building the Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest Facility.

The projected cost of DARHT, which was one-third built when work was halted in January 1995, is \$187 million.

Judge Edwin Mechem lifted the construction ban earlier this week after ruling the Department of Energy had adequately studied the potential impacts of the facility.

Two Santa Fe watchdog groups — Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and the Los Alamos Study Group — had persuaded Mechem to shut DARHT down because the DOE did not do an environmental impact statement before beginning the project.

However, the groups failed to convince Mechem the impact statement was flawed and the ban should remain in place.

Greg Mello of the study group said a decision had not been made on whether to appeal Mechem's ruling.

DARHT is a giant X-ray machine capable of peering inside nuclear weapons parts precisely when they are subjected to non-nuclear explosive tests.

High-Power X-Rays Get Nod

Judge OKs Impact Statement, Lifts Stay

By DOUG McCLELLAN
Journal Staff Writer

Construction could resume within weeks on a \$187 million, high-powered X-ray machine at Los Alamos National Laboratory now that a federal judge has lifted an 18-month stay on the project.

Senior U.S. District Judge Edwin L. Mechem ruled Tuesday that the U.S. Department of Energy complied with environmental mandates and can proceed with the Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test Facility, or DARHT.

Mechem had halted construction in January 1995 at the request of two Santa Fe anti-nuclear groups and had ordered the energy department to write an environmental impact statement. The analysis was finished last year, but the groups contended it wasn't

good enough.

Mechem disagreed. In his ruling, he said he was satisfied it "represents a good faith analysis of DARHT in the spirit" of national environmental laws.

DARHT consists of two giant X-ray machines focused at a single point. Nuclear weapons components would be blown up while the X-ray machines photograph the explosions to determine how the components perform under the intense stress.

Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said construction could resume soon on DARHT, which is about one-third complete. He said the lab has plenty of money already appropriated by Congress to finance construction through October 1997. The first X-ray machine could be finished by about 1999, allowing DARHT to begin operation, with the entire installation completed early in the next decade.

Danneskiold said the lab had spent about \$41.8 million by the

time construction stopped and was appropriated an additional \$40 million by Congress.

A spokesman for one of the anti-nuclear groups said he is disappointed with Mechem's ruling. The Los Alamos Study Group and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety argued that DARHT should not be analyzed by itself but as a group with several other installations planned at the lab.

The groups also objected to a classified supplement to the DARHT environmental analysis, which Mechem ruled was off-limits to them.

That supplement, which Mechem and his staffers were cleared to review, discussed the specific quantities of plutonium that would be used in tests and other details. Mechem rebuffed the anti-nuclear groups' efforts to have their own experts, with appropriate security clearances, review the documents.

"The DOE was able to use its power of classification to shield

itself from external review," said Greg Mello of the study group. "We believe that the department, with DARHT, has begun the construction of a program the totality of which it has not yet analyzed" under federal environmental laws.

But Mechem praised the use of the classified supplement and encouraged the Energy department to use the format when needed while declassifying as much information as possible.

The Energy department says DARHT is a key part of its new mandate of testing the effects of aging on nuclear weapons without conducting underground nuclear explosions. The tests are called "hydrodynamic" because the components act like liquids under the intense heat and pressure of the explosions.

Most tests will take place in the open, but those involving plutonium would be contained within double-walled steel vessels.

OTHER VOICES

Nuclear Mafia Remains Active

BY GREG MELLO

The Cold War is over, right? Nuclear stockpiles in the U.S. and Russia will soon decline to 3,500 weapons each, and further declines are expected. A comprehensive test ban is imminent. The labs' have stopped designing nuclear weapons and are converting to civilian and environmental research. The nuclear weapons budget is dropping, and the labs' weapons work force is shrinking.

Dream on.

Yes, the Cold War is over. But none of the rest is true. And the nuclear mafia that profited from the Cold War protection racket is actually growing, untouched by the budget battles that threaten just about everything else in government. And, with your silent permission, the nuclear gang is moving its operations more and more to a mesa near you.

We can be grateful that older weapons are being dismantled. But disarmament it ain't. Even if START II is ratified in Russia — which is doubtful right now, due in large part to U.S. violations of the 1973 ABM Treaty — the U.S. expects to keep roughly 8,500 nuclear bombs and warheads, about half ready to use and half in "reserve." Without START II, this number will be higher.

What's worse, some senators

(with bomb plants in their states) have recently begun to modernize the arsenal with new kinds of warheads.

A test ban? That's another myth. Far from having stopped their pursuits, the nuclear labs continue to develop new weapon concepts. Like the High-Powered Radio Frequency weapon, designed to use Earth's atmosphere as a powerful radio antenna in order to cripple a nation or an army by knocking out its electrical circuits at one stroke. Will it be deployed? The new Earth-Penetrator will. It's made to break hardened bunkers with a powerful nuclear-explosive shock to the earth.

Declining weapons budgets? Don't we wish! Far from declining, the bomb-builders' budget line is now rising for the second year in a row. Although weapons spending at the labs is less than it was at the peak of Reagan's apocalyptic push toward Armageddon, it is still twice, in constant dollars, what it was in 1975. According to the Brookings Institution, U.S. taxpayers have coughed up some \$4 trillion for nuclear arms.

But these first 50 years are just the beginning, according to the Department of Energy. That agency is about to embark on a multibillion-dollar long-term nuclear spending spree, centered around new "surrogate" testing devices at the labs. These machines

are designed to provide the capability to design and certify new nuclear weapons, test ban or no. Politically, they are part of a pork-barrel payoff to the labs and their powerful protectors in return for support of a test ban.

One of these machines is the redundant and ill-advised DARHT (Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test) facility at Los Alamos. Oinking in at \$187 million, it soon will be pushed from the trough just a few years after it is finally finished by a successor machine costing 340 percent more. DARHT will explode mock warheads — some made of real plutonium, using what everyone hopes will be leakproof steel tanks.

However unlikely it may be, an accidental explosion with plutonium would be catastrophic for New Mexico, with fallout that would drift miles downwind. DOE's own analysis shows that serious radiation doses could be imparted to downwind communities in this scenario, causing fatal cancers and — they forgot to say this part — permanently contaminating many square miles of land. Even a small leak would be very serious.

Given its enormous (and almost eternal) toxicity and its potentially holocaustal role in the center of each nuclear weapon, plutonium has been aptly called "matter as darkness." Nonetheless, Los Alamos has generously offered to be the nation's plu-

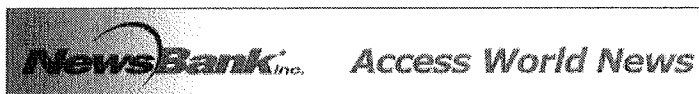
tonium processing capital, taking over the grim and dirty work of making nuclear weapons cores from the now-closed Rocky Flats plant in Colorado. More than \$550 million is about to be invested in upgrading its plutonium capabilities.

In the real world, that kind of money would signal serious long-term job creation. But DOE officials make clear that few or no new jobs are to be expected from this work.

What's going on here? It's what is euphemistically called "science-based stockpile stewardship." DOE's Assistant Secretary Victor Reis explains: "The stewards really are more important than the equipment. ... The purpose of the stockpile stewardship program is in fact to maintain the stewards, and the right type of experiments." Ah yes, of course. In the final analysis, stockpile stewardship is not about scientists maintaining warheads; it's about warheads maintaining scientists.

The future of the nuclear weapons complex, including Los Alamos, is the subject of a DOE hearing on Thursday at the Double-Tree Hotel (formerly the High Mesa Inn), 3347 Cerrillos Road, from 2 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 9:30 p.m. Why not come? And bring the kids. They're the ones who seem to have been left out of DOE's equation.

Greg Mello is director of the Los Alamos Study Group.



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: REAL group fights anti-nuclear approach
Date: April 24, 1996

LOS ALAMOS Members of the Responsible Environmental Action League, or REAL, say their organization's name reflects their message of getting real about nuclear issues.

They formed to counter people they believe are wrongly using required environmental hearings to advance an anti-nuclear view point, said Glenn Lockhart, a founding member of REAL and a retired LANL employee.

Group members believe that is happening as the Department of Energy holds hearings for the Stockpile Stewardship Program to plot the course for much of the nation's future nuclear weapons work, he said. Such hearings are scheduled for 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Double Tree Hotel in Santa Fe.

Because anti-nuclear groups such as the **Los Alamos Study Group** and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety often have been the only ones to testify on issues relating to LANL, REAL founder and attorney Chris Chandler said the impression might be left that theirs is the only opinion held by Northern New Mexicans.

But an anti-nuclear activist questions REAL's motives.

"So far there has been no indication that REAL is anything but a group of laboratory employees and retirees gathered together to advance the economic interest of themselves, the laboratory and the Los Alamos community," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group.

LANL, which has a public relations staff of more than 40 people, can get out its own message without REAL, he said.

REAL does not speak for LANL or the Department of Energy but its members have a right to be heard, said Wally McCorkle, a LANL employee and REAL founder.

"Simply because we work for the lab shouldn't mean we should not be able to speak at public meetings," he said.

Nuclear weapons work is a declining industry, and Los Alamos must protect its ability to get a larger part of that ever-smaller pie if the lab is to survive, Lockhart said.

REAL first surfaced as a visible entity last summer when it criticized U.S. Rep. Bill Richardson for co-sponsoring, along with the Santa Fe City Council, a hearing on the Stockpile Stewardship program when the DOE refused to schedule a hearing in Santa Fe.

The meeting was dominated by peace groups who tried to deny Los Alamos residents a chance to speak, REAL charged. Peace groups responded that Los Alamos residents had been allowed to speak, both in Santa Fe and in a DOE-sponsored hearing in Los Alamos although Chandler said that meeting, too, was dominated by peace groups.

Chandler recently announced her candidacy for Los Alamos County Council in part to advance her REAL work, she said. She also recently presented, in dependent of REAL, a petition bearing 5,623 signatures to New Mexico's congressional delegation asking them to support continuing University of California management of LANL.

REAL, now with about 50 members, is gaining influence, she said.

It succeeded in having Lockhart appointed to the Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board that will advise DOE and LANL on environmental, waste management and other issues.

REAL helped persuade the New Mexico Environment Department to deny Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety the interested-party status it had sought for hearings on the pending relicensing of Interstate Nuclear Services Inc., which launders clothing contaminated with low-level radioactivity from LANL. That status would have put CCNS on equal footing with the laundry and other key players during the hearings, Chandler said.

Simply because we work for the lab shouldn't mean we should not be able to speak at public meetings. WALLY MCCORKLE LANL employee and REAL founder

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Author: Kathleene Parker
Page: B-5
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(Very similar to the Albuquerque Journal North op-ed, published one day earlier.)

Cold War over, yet nuclear weapons pile up

The Cold War is over, right?

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Dream on.

Yes, the Cold War is over. But none of the rest is true. And the nuclear mob that profited from the Cold War protection racket is now actually growing, untouched by the budget battles that threaten just about everything else in government. And, with your silent permission, the nuclear gang is moving its operations more and more to a mesa near you.

We can be grateful that older weapons are being dismantled. But disarmament it ain't. Even if START II is ratified in Russia - which is doubtful right now, due in large part of planned U.S. violations of the 1973 ABM Treaty - the U.S. expects to keep roughly 8,500 nuclear bombs and warheads, about half ready to use and half in "reserve." Without START II, this number will be higher.

What's worse, some senators (with bomb plants in their states) have recently begun to call for more nuclear weapons. Candidate Dole is one of them. He believes it's time to modernize the arsenal with new kinds of warheads. He is far from alone.

A test ban? It is far from accomplished. Negotiations are now at a critical stage, and a treaty is by no means assured. For 40 years, Los Alamos and the other labs have fought a test ban. Behind the scenes, they still fight it.

No new weapons? That's another myth. Far from having stopped their Strangelovian pursuits, the nuclear labs continue to develop new weapon concepts. Like the high-powered radio frequency weapon, designed to use the

Greg Mello

Commentary *4/25/96 New Mexico*

earth's atmosphere as a powerful radio antenna in order to cripple a nation or an army by knocking out its electrical circuits at one stroke. Will it be deployed? The Earth-Penetrator will. It's made to break hardened bunkers with a powerful nuclear-explosive shock to the earth.

Declining weapons budgets? Don't we wish! Far from declining, the bomb-builders' budget line is now rising for the second year in a row. Although weapons spending at the labs is less than it was at the peak of Reagan's apocalyptic push towards Armageddon, it is still twice, in constant dollars, what it was in 1975. According to the Brookings Institution. U.S. taxpayers have coughed up some \$4 trillion dollars for nuclear arms.

But these first 50 years are just the beginning, according to the DOE. That agency is about to embark on a multi-billion dollar long-term nuclear spending spree, centered around new "surrogate" testing devices at the labs. These machines are not necessary to maintain existing weapons. They are designed to provide the capability to design and certify new nuclear weapons, test ban or no. Politically, they are part of pork-barrel payoff to the labs and their powerful protectors in return for support of a test ban.

One of these machines is the redundant and ill-advised DARHT facility at Los Alamos. Oinking at \$124 million, it will soon be pushed from the trough just a few years after it is finally finished by a successor machine costing 340 percent more. DARHT will explode mock warheads - some made of real plutonium, using what everyone hopes will be leakproof steel tanks.

However, unlikely it may be, an accidental explosion with plutonium would

be catastrophic for New Mexico, with fallout that would drift tens of miles downwind. DOE's own analysis shows that serious radiation doses could be imparted to downwind communities in this scenario, causing fatal cancers and - they forgot to say this part - permanently contaminating many tens of square miles of land. Even a small leak would be very serious.

Given its enormous (and almost eternal) toxicity and its potentially holocaustal role in the center of each nuclear weapon, plutonium has been aptly called "matter as darkness." But nonetheless, Los Alamos has generously offered to be the nation's plutonium processing capital, taking over the grim and dirty work of making nuclear weapons cores from the now-closed Rocky Flats plant in Colorado. More than \$550 million is about to be invested in upgrading its plutonium capabilities.

In the real world, that kind of money would signal serious long-term job creation. But DOE officials make clear that few or no new jobs are to be expected from this work.

What's going on here? It's what is euphemistically called "science-based stockpile stewardship?" DOE's Assistant Secretary Victor Reis explains: "The stewards really are more important than the equipment... the purpose of the Stockpile Stewardship program is in fact to maintain the stewards, and the right type of experiments." Ah, yes, of course. In the final analysis, stockpile stewardship is not about scientists maintaining warheads; it's about warheads maintaining scientists.

The future of the nuclear weapons complex, including Los Alamos, is the subject of a DOE hearing today at the Doubletree Hotel (formerly the High Mesa Inn), 3347 Cerrillos Road, at 6 p.m. Why not come? And bring the kids. They're the ones that seem to have been left out of DOE's equation.

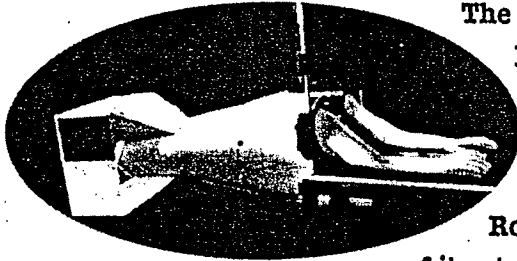
Greg Mello is director of the Los Alamos Study Group.

After this article was written,
the cost of DARHT was updated
to \$187 M.

The original of this was 135% larger written by a local businessman it appeared just before the SS&M PEIS hearings in 2 papers. LANSG honored the author, helped gather sponsors, and served as a financial booster for the ad.

April 24-30, 1996

Do You Know that Los Alamos National Laboratory will soon become the nation's only nuclear weapon plutonium facility?



Glove box for handling plutonium & the first nuclear bomb 'Little Boy'

The US Department of Energy (DOE) is planning to make Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) the nation's only facility for manufacturing plutonium weapons parts—the so-called “pits” that form the grim core of each warhead. This is the work formerly done at the Rocky Flats plant near Denver, forced to close because of its atrocious environmental, health and safety record.

Let Your Voice Be Heard ■ Silence = Indifference

- WHAT:** The Last Public Department of Energy Hearing on the Future of Nuclear Weapons Design, Testing & Production and its Impacts on Los Alamos National Laboratory
- WHEN:** April 25, 1996 2-5 PM • 6-9:30 PM
- WHERE:** The Double Tree Hotel (formerly the High Mesa Inn)
3347 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM
- HOW:** Join As a Community to Protect Our Safety and Quality of Life
- WHY:** Health Risks • Potential Accidents & Contamination • Loss of Tourism • Lowered Real Estate Values • More Nuclear Waste • Loss of Control Over Our Futures

SPEAK OUT FOR:

- Ending new nuclear weapons design and production;
- Eliminating the transport of nuclear materials and waste transport through our communities;
- Stopping nuclear waste dump expansion on the Pajarito Plateau;
- Redirecting LANL's resources toward leadership in civilian science and technologies, including alternative energy, medicine, environmental science, and treaty verification technologies;
- No mock nuclear plutonium explosions at DARHT
- Complete clean up of LANL's contamination of ancestral lands;
- Expanding funds for technologies for radioactive waste management locally and globally;
- Breaking the silence that supports and enables the nuclear circle of violence and intimidation; and
- Exposing the deception perpetuated by the nuclear industry under the umbrella of national security.

JOIN THESE BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS IN PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES!

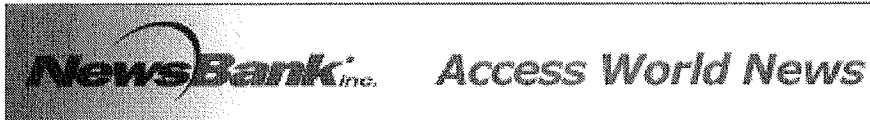
Blue Moon Books & Vintage Video
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Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
Denman & Associates, Inc.
Doodlets
Jade Eastman
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Valerie Jean Fairchild
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The Golden Eye
Judy Herzl & Charles Hoy
Alan Huiner & Elizabeth Rose
Transitions Radio Magazine on KBAC FM
Jett
Kent Galleries/*The Contemporary Craftsman*
Tony Kent Network Marketing
Lucy Lippard

Los Alamos Study Group
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For additional information about this meeting, the issues or to make donations to support this ad, please call:
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety at 986•1973 or The Los Alamos Study Group at 982•7747



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

Title: Aggressive strategy pays off - fire expected to be contained today

Date: May 2, 1996

Duane No Runner, a member of the Blackfeet #1 firefighting crew from Browning, Montana, digs up a hot spot at the Dome Fire Wednesday afternoon. JEMEZ MOUNTAINS The Dome Fire, which has burned more than 16,442 acres in the Dome Wilderness and adjacent portions of Bandelier National Monument, was 70 percent contained Wednesday, according to fire officials.

The officials predicted that the week-old fire, which so far has cost \$3 million to fight, would be 100 percent contained by the end of today.

"Everybody's feeling real good right now," said Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor Al DeFler during a visit to the mountain meadow that has served as a base camp for more than 800 firefighters and about 200 support staff.

Officials started pulling firefighters off the blaze Wednesday morning when it became clear that a daring "burn-out" strategy designed to prevent the fire from moving into a densely wooded canyon had succeeded.

Cathy Schmidlin, a Forest Service spokeswoman, said roughly two-thirds of the fire crews would be demobilized Thursday and that responsibility for the fire would soon be handed back to the Santa Fe National Forest.

Schmidlin estimated it could take two weeks of close monitoring to ensure that the fire is fully extinguished.

On Wednesday morning, air tankers continued to drop reddish fire retardant slurry onto the fire. But those flights, which cost \$5,000 per drop, were deemed unnecessary by the afternoon. Helicopters continued to dump water picked up from Cochiti Lake onto the fire.

While firefighters concentrated on "mop-up" chores Wednesday, such as smothering hot spots, the work was not without its hazards.

Strong mid-afternoon winds sent flames leaping up into the air at one location not far from the base camp. And fire crews everywhere kept their eyes and ears open for the possibility that a gust might topple a tree with burned-out roots.

Larry Humphrey, head of the firefighting effort, said the turning point in the battle against the blaze came on Tuesday when firefighters burned out stands of timber and other vegetation on a two- to three-mile stretch of Obsidian ridge.

By depriving the fire of fuel, the burnout sought to prevent the fire from entering Frijoles Canyon, a densely wooded area whose ruins-rich lower reaches form the heart of Bandelier monument.

An advance into Frijoles would have given the fire new life and brought it one step closer to the northwestern portion of Los Alamos National Laboratory, which contains abandoned buildings contaminated with high explosives.

Humphrey said the operation was assisted by near perfect wind conditions Tuesday that pushed the fire created by the burnout back onto the main fire and into areas that had already been burned over.

Humphrey acknowledged that the burnout was risky, but he said "we had no choice."

"We didn't want it to get into that canyon," Humphrey said.

Humphrey said a mass of cold air that moved into the Jemez region on Sunday and stayed through Monday aided the firefighting effort by slowing the fire's progress. Cooler air temperatures reduce the combustibility of wood.

Humphrey said the Dome Fire was "much easier" to fight than other fires he's done battle with.

One reason Humphrey pointed to was the availability of a good network of Forest Service roads in the vicinity of the fire, which made it relatively easy to transport fire crews.

Another was the fact that the fire broke out early in the firefighting season. "Our crews were fresh," Humphrey said.

The turnabout in the battle against the Dome Fire came quickly. Just a day or two ago, officials were predicting that the blaze wouldn't be contained until May 5 or 6.

The speed with which firefighters gained the upper hand almost matched the speed with which the fire raced out of control last Friday, when it grew from 120 acres to 3,000 acres in 24 hours.

The blowup, a classic "crown fire" in which flames raced from tree-top to tree-top, forced some firefighters to take shelter in emergency fireproof tents as the blaze ran directly over them.

The blow-up also sent a towering cloud of dark brown smoke over Santa Fe and a stab of cold fear into surrounding residents.

A major concern was whether the fire would advance into Los Alamos lab and ignite the lab's sizeable stores of radioactive and chemical materials.

Lab officials assured the public that even if the fire did move into the 43-square-mile lab, nuclear and other materials would be well protected. Nonetheless, some Santa Feans considered the possibility of leaving the area until the fire had been put out.

Greg Mello of the **Los Alamos Study Group**, an Santa Fe anti-nuclear organization, said his organization received more than a dozen calls from fearful residents who wondered if they should evacuate.

The Santa Fe forest on Wednesday extended restrictions designed to reduce the fire risk to the use of chainsaws within the 1.6-million acre forest. Last week, the forest said campfires would only be permitted in designated campgrounds and outdoor smoking was prohibited.

The Dome Fire started from a campfire that apparently was not extinguished properly.

Bert Hart of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management said it was important not only to douse a fire but stir it up and then douse it again to make sure that all embers have been covered with water.

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Author: KEITH EASTHOUSE, photos by Clyde Mueller

Page: A1

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LANL Mum on Plan To Detonate Plutonium

5/28/96

Foes fret

The small chance of a plutonium accident concerns activists **A2**

BY JOHN FLECK
Journal Staff Writer

Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Department of Energy have draped a veil of secrecy around plans to detonate plutonium at Los Alamos.

Behind the veil is the question of whether the department and the laboratory plan to build and detonate full-scale replicas of nuclear weapons, down to the radioactive plutonium at their cores.

The department and the lab acknowledge that they plan to use explosives to detonate plutonium inside steel vessels. The purpose, they say,

is to study how the plutonium behaves at high temperatures and pressures.

The DOE also acknowledges plans to build mock bombs with uranium and other metals substituting for the plutonium.

But the DOE refuses to say whether those two ideas will be combined — tests using a full-scale plutonium mockup of a nuclear weapon.

Arms control activists believe the agency is planning plutonium mock weapons tests, which they say would have serious arms control implications.

By using a rare type of plutonium, lab scientists could avoid a nuclear blast while getting

extremely accurate data on the early stages of a bomb's detonation, physicists say.

The tests could be used not only to study the existing U.S. arsenal but also to design new weapons, experts say.

Such tests would violate the spirit of a nuclear test ban being negotiated in Geneva because the purpose of the ban would be to halt the design of new weapons, said Christopher Paine, an arms control expert with the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C.

Energy Department documents don't answer

See **LANL** on **PAGE A2**

LANL Won't Say Much About Plan to Detonate Plutonium

from PAGE A1

the question of whether mock weapon tests with plutonium are planned, and the department hasn't complied yet with a Freedom of Information Act request the Journal filed 17 months ago seeking documents that would answer the question.

Asked directly whether such tests are planned, a laboratory spokesman wouldn't answer.

The reason for the secrecy is that the DOE's Office of Nonproliferation has blocked efforts to declassify information about the tests, said Bryan Siebert, head of the DOE's office of classification.

That allows the DOE to avoid having a public discussion of such questions, said Steve Aftergood, an analyst of government secrecy policies with the Federation of American Scientists, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

■ ■ ■

It is no secret that Los Alamos wants to blow up some plutonium, the radioactive metal at the heart of nuclear weapons.

In documents made public over the past year, laboratory officials acknowledge plans to conduct explosive tests with plutonium to better understand how it behaves under high temperatures and pressures during the first millionth of a second of a nuclear blast.

But it's unclear whether they plan to conduct basic science experiments with it, slamming arbitrarily shaped pieces of plutonium with high explosives to see what happens, or whether they plan to assemble it into a simulated nuclear weapon.

The plutonium tests would be conducted at Los Alamos' Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test Facility — DARHT.

The partially built DARHT plays a major part in the DOE's plans to replace underground nuclear blast tests with non-nuclear experiments. Officials say the program's purpose is to maintain the safety and reliability of existing U.S. weapons.

DARHT's construction was halted in January 1995 when anti-nuclear activists sued, but U.S. District Judge E.L. Mechem issued an order recently allowing construction to

Slight Chance of Big Mishap Worries Critics

By JOHN FLECK
Journal Staff Writer

The chances of a plutonium-scattering accident from explosive tests at Los Alamos National Laboratory are small, but the risks, if one happens, are large, supporters and critics of DARHT agree.

"An accident is very unlikely, but an accident would be very, very bad," said Santa Fe activist Greg Mello, a member of the Los Alamos Study Group and one of DARHT's most vocal critics.

The DOE contends, in a detailed environmental study on the explosive tests, that the chances of a plutonium-releasing accident are extremely small — once every thousand to million years of normal operations.

Plutonium experiments, in which the dangerous metal would be detonated with high explosives to study it, would be conducted within double-walled steel containment vessels, according to plans being formulated by Los Alamos National Laboratory and

the Department of Energy.

The chances of one of those containment vessels being breached is a once-in-a-million years possibility, according to the DOE's analysis.

A more serious accident, in which a plutonium test device accidentally went off before it was placed inside its containment vessel, is likely to happen somewhere between once in a thousand years and once in a million years, according to the DOE study.

Critics disagree with those estimates.

"I believe that these accidents are unlikely, but not that unlikely," Mello said.

But both sides agree that an accident, if it happened, would be serious.

The most serious accident, with a plutonium device going off outside its containment vessel, would cause an estimated 5 to 12 cancer deaths in the downwind population, a calculation based on a computer simulation of such variables as wind speed and direction, according to the DOE's study.

resume.

DARHT would take high-resolution X-rays of an explosive blast slamming into plutonium or other metals, simulating the plutonium's behavior during the first stages of a nuclear blast.

In a nuclear weapon, a sphere of plutonium is surrounded by high explosives. When detonated, the explosives rapidly compress the plutonium, liquefying and squeezing it to the high density needed to begin a nuclear chain reaction. That reaction releases the bomb's tremendous explosive energy in an instant.

At DARHT, scientists plan to substitute materials that can be squeezed without setting off a nuclear chain reaction, allowing them to study the final instants before the nuclear explosion would begin in a real bomb.

Critics believe those plans include a rare type of plutonium being produced in small quantities at the Energy Department's Savannah River factory in South Carolina.

Plans for the South Carolina plutonium are classified, but independent scientists say the material would be perfect for such tests because it wouldn't undergo the

same nuclear chain reaction as weapons-grade plutonium.

Weapons-grade plutonium is made primarily of plutonium-239. The number identifies the element's atomic weight.

The plutonium being produced in South Carolina, plutonium-242, has the same physical and chemical properties as weapons-grade plutonium. But it takes 10 times as much plutonium-242 to start a nuclear chain reaction, according to physicist Tom Cochran, a nuclear weapons expert at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

That means a mock nuclear weapon made of plutonium-242 instead of weapons-grade plutonium would behave like the real thing up to the time the bomb's nuclear chain reaction begins.

"You could exactly duplicate the weapon essentially in all respects," Cochran said.

Pictures taken during that time would thus give scientists an accurate picture of the weapons' behavior.

DOE and laboratory officials won't comment on whether they plan to do tests with plutonium-242, or whether the plutonium will be

While not commenting directly on the plutonium tests, Siebert said there is a conflict within the DOE regarding whether information about "the material being used in DARHT can be declassified."

Officials in the nuclear weapons program and Siebert's office support declassifying it, while nonproliferation program officials are opposed.

Classification rules, Siebert acknowledged, have left "a roadblock" in the way of a public discussion of the question.

"I can't confirm or deny what's going to be used in the DARHT project nor whether or not Savannah River's involved in a project to support the DARHT facility, and that's because the material involved is still classified," Siebert said.

Details about the plutonium tests were included in a classified appendix to the DOE's environmental study on DARHT. Mechem, in his recent ruling, said that environmental laws didn't require the information to be revealed to the public.

A multi-volume DOE environmental study of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex released in February also segregates all informa-

tion about "the purpose of and need for the plutonium-242" in a classified appendix.

According to Princeton University physicist Frank von Hippel, there is no other obvious use for plutonium-242 except conducting tests of full-scale weapon configurations without inducing a nuclear blast.

The secrecy surrounding plutonium-242 puzzles von Hippel, a prominent member of the arms control community, because the plutonium's usefulness as a surrogate weapons material is common knowledge among nuclear scientists.

"They've been very reticent about talking about (plutonium-242) although everybody seems to know about it," he said. "I don't know what's so secret about that. You'd have to be brain dead" not to figure out plutonium-242's usefulness for weapons simulations.

The real issue, said Paine, is the role plutonium-242 tests might play in skirting the intent of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Public acknowledgement of the tests would make the United States look bad while it is arguing in favor of a total ban on even modest tests with nuclear yields, Paine said.

Publication: Jnl Legacy 1995 to July 2005; Date: May 28, 1996; Section: Final<; Page: 5



Date--05/28/1996 Edition--Final Page--A2

SLIGHT CHANCE OF BIG MISHAP WORRIES CRITICS

John Fleck Journal Staff Writer

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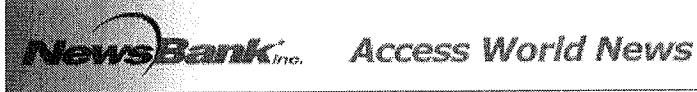
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Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

Title: briefs

Date: June 1, 1996

Firefighter is burned battling blaze

SAPELLO, N.M. One firefighter suffered first- and second-degree burns while battling a 75-acre blaze that was sparked by lightning on private range in San Miguel County, the state Division of Forestry reported.

The Tusas Fire was burning about 15 miles north of Las Vegas, N.M., division spokeswoman Terry Wildermuth said. The fire, reported about 11:30 a.m. Friday, was 75 percent contained Friday evening, she said.

About 70 people battled the fire, including three crews totaling 60 people, a smoke-jumping crew of six people, an air tanker and three water-dropping helicopters. Several fire engines also were on scene.

Crews were expected to work through the night, Wildermuth said.

The flames were moving down from a ridge in piñon, juniper, oak, brush and some ponderosa pine, heading northward toward open grasslands. Wildermuth said because the fire was descending a slope, it advanced slower than it would have otherwise.

The injured firefighter, from Montana, was burned over 6 percent of his body. Wildermuth said he was treated initially at Las Vegas Regional Medical Center and later transferred to an Albuquerque hospital.

"He had some minor burns," she said. "He's doing OK."

Reinstatement of foreman expected

LAS VEGAS, N.M. County Commissioner Eloy Gonzales said he expects the San Miguel County Commission to reinstate a road foreman who was acquitted this week of charges of misusing county property and personnel.

A jury on Thursday acquitted Michael Varela, 47, of Pecos of four felony counts.

A criminal complaint filed last year had charged Varela with using his supervisory position to order a county equipment operator to work on a private road near Pecos that leads to Varela's father-in-law's ranch.

Three of the charges involved misapplication of funds for allegedly having equipment operator Rudy Ortega do the work while on the county payroll. The fourth count against Varela alleged misuse of county property by having Ortega place a county-owned culvert over a ditch on private land.

The case was prosecuted by the state Attorney General's Office.

Expelled student sues over grading

ALBUQUERQUE A medical student who was expelled by The University of New Mexico filed suit Friday, alleging UNM violated its own grading policy and thus broke its contract with him.

Kevin McGuinness contends that although he passed his biochemistry course, UNM medical school wrongfully required him to take a make-up exam, which he refused. The lawsuit says McGuinness' original 70.4 percent score was a passing grade. And when he subsequently received a "marginal" grade in cardiovascular pulmonary studies, McGuinness was expelled, the lawsuit says.

McGuinness contends he was expelled not for his grades but because he told his biochemistry professor that he suffers from a disability.

McGuinness said he suffers from a psychological disability that causes him to freeze up during tests involving math or chemistry.

Reached Friday night by The Associated Press, biochemistry Professor Phillip Reyes declined to comment. University general counsel Nick Estes did not return calls seeking comment.

"We haven't had an opportunity to review the suit and talk with our attorneys about it, so we really couldn't comment on it at this point," said Gail Sutton, spokeswoman for the medical school.

A big rise in nursing home residents

ALBUQUERQUE New Mexico was No. 1 in the nation in the percentage increase in the number of people living in nursing homes between 1980 and 1990, a new U.S. Census Bureau report says.

Although the number of nursing home residents increased only 3,346 in those years, it reflected a 145.5 percent increase in New Mexico, the bureau said.

Florida had a 126.4 percent increase for No. 2, but in Florida the actual increase was 41,035, it said.

The 1990 census showed 5,645 people living in New Mexico nursing homes. That number has since grown to some 8,000 living in the state's 87 licensed homes, about half of them in Albuquerque.

Linda Sechovec, executive director of the New Mexico Health Care Association, attributes the 10-year increase to a surge in nursing home construction in the early to mid-1980s.

"I think before that the population number was quite small, so the increase looks quite large," Sechovec said. Her group is an industry trade association.

Nationally, New Mexico ranks 44th in the number of nursing home beds per 1,000 people, she said.

Groups' letter criticizes DOE plans

WASHINGTON Department of Energy plans for weapons experiments at Los Alamos National Lab violate federal environmental laws, a coalition of anti-nuclear and environmental groups said Friday in a letter to Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary.

The letter said the department's environmental impact statement for the Stockpile Stewardship Program was "flawed" and in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The signers of the letter, who include Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and the **Los Alamos Study Group**, said the agency "failed to analyze the lion's share of the projects that constitute the program and fail(ed) to discuss the full spectrum of reasonable alternatives," as required by NEPA.

The department should put the Stockpile Stewardship Program on hold until a new environmental analysis is made, the letter said.

Department of Energy officials were unavailable for comment Friday afternoon.

Court upholds law for incompetents

The state Supreme Court on Friday upheld the constitutionality of a New Mexico law governing the confinement of criminal defendants found mentally incompetent to stand trial.

In a unanimous decision, the court said the law didn't violate equal protection or due process rights of people charged with crimes.

The law spells out procedures and deadlines for courts to follow in determining whether a criminal defendant is mentally competent to stand trial. The law provides for treatment and confinement of those defendants found incompetent to stand trial.

The court's ruling involved appeals of five people charged with crimes ranging from first-degree murder to armed robbery and rape.

The defendants were committed to the Las Vegas Medical Center's forensic treatment unit, the first in 1989. One was released in 1995, and another was transferred to a facility in Colorado. The others remain in the state mental hospital.

Colorado forests, BLM ban open fires

The San Juan-Rio Grande National Forests and the Bureau of Land Management San Juan Resource Area have issued a ban on all open fires.

All campfires, charcoal grills, wood-burning stoves and open fires of any kind are banned on National Forest and BLM lands in southern and southwestern Colorado.

The only exceptions are gas stoves and lanterns or grills that use pressurized liquid or gas with a regulated flame. Other fire restrictions already in place will remain the same.

The penalty is up to \$5,000 and six months in jail for fire restriction violations. Call 852-5941 for more information.

Feeding service to start at pueblo

A summer feeding service program will begin Monday at Santo Domingo Pueblo.

Breakfast and lunch will be served at the Santo Domingo Senior Citizens Center at the pueblo. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

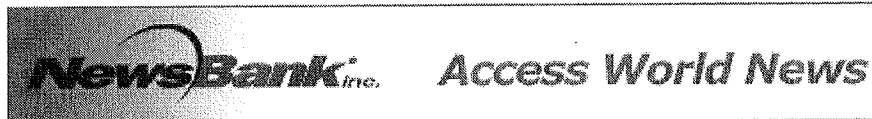
The meals are open to children, the elderly and the disabled.

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Author: Staff and wire reports

Page: B3

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Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

Title: LANL test

Date: June 13, 1996

might be

The U.S. Department of Energy might postpone its first scheduled "subcritical experiment" to be conducted by Los Alamos National Laboratory at the Nevada Test Site next Tuesday, a DOE spokesman said.

The subcritical test called "Rebound" was designed by Los Alamos scientists in support of the agency's "stockpile stewardship" program, an effort to ensure the country's aging nuclear arsenal remains safe and reliable.

"We are anticipating that we will probably make an announcement fairly soon about a postponement," DOE Nevada Test Site spokesman Greg Cook said Wednesday. "We haven't done it yet."

DOE announced last October that it would conduct the first subcritical test in which plutonium is subjected to the impact of a non-nuclear explosion 980 feet under the desert.

The experiments are "subcritical" because the plutonium is not compressed to the point that it would ignite a sustained nuclear reaction.

At least half a dozen anti-nuclear groups have threatened protests worldwide if the tests are conducted, charging the tests would undermine confidence in the comprehensive test-ban treaty that is being negotiated by the United States, Russia and other nuclear states at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

But Cook said if the tests are postponed, it would not be done because of the protests.

The DOE, he said, might postpone its first test to explore other alternatives which range from implementing subcritical tests to halting tests altogether except for environmental cleanup.

"We want to make sure we give the process its full due," said Cook, noting that the evaluations should be completed later this summer, if the test is postponed. "That is our current concern."

Greg Mello, spokesman for **Los Alamos Study Group**, said it is among anti-nuclear groups worldwide that plan to protest if the tests are not postponed. Some of the groups are asking the DOE to provide an environmental analysis of the tests before they are conducted.

"The disarmament community is poised to take whatever legal action if the department doesn't provide that environmental analysis," Mello said. "They know they're vulnerable."

Cook said the DOE held informal discussions with some of the nations prior to entering into comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations.

"They did not feel that these experiments would present a problem," he said. "We still feel that these experiments do not present a problem. These are true zero-yield sub-critical experiments."

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Author: Monica Soto

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COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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Study Group on Consolidation, Downsizing and Conversion in the U.S. Military Industrial Base

Tenth Session
Friday, June 14, 1996
New York Academy of Sciences

Richard Ravitch
Ravitch, Rice and Co.
Chair

“THE FUTURE OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS LABS”
in a Roundtable Discussion with

Richard Garwin
IBM

Greg Mello
Los Alamos Study Group

and
William Spencer
Sematech

Ann Markusen
Council on Foreign Relations
Study Group Director

Nomi Colton-Max
Council on Foreign Relations
Rapporteur

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Bénédicte Callan	Council on Foreign Relations
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Gary Ferdman	Business Executives for National Security
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David Gold	United Nations
James Gower	Sandia National Laboratories
Leigh Gusts	Council on Foreign Relations
William Hartung	World Policy Institute
Kenneth Keller	Council on Foreign Relations
Rodney Nichols	New York Academy of Science
Carol O'Cleireacain	The Brookings Institution
Michael Oden	Rutgers University
James Raffel	Rutgers University
Susan Raymond	Council on Foreign Relations
Michael Renner	Worldwatch Institute
Ken Rind	Oxford Venture Corporation
Harvey Sapolsky	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
James Shinn	Council on Foreign Relations
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Alice Slater	Economists Allied for Arms Reduction

GROUNDWORK

A Christian Social Justice Publication

Volume 20/Number 7

June 25, 1996

Stockpile Stewardship

By Greg Mello

The Cold War is over, right?



Nuclear stockpiles in the U.S. and Russia will soon decline to 3,500 weapons each, and further declines are expected. A comprehensive test ban is imminent. The labs have stopped designing nuclear weapons and are converting to civilian and environmental research. The nuclear weapons budget is dropping, and the labs' weapons workforce is shrinking.

Dream On!

Yes, the Cold War is over. But none of the rest is true. And the nuclear mob that profited from the Cold War protection racket is now actually growing, untouched by the budget battles that threaten just about everything else in government.

We can be grateful that older weapons are being dismantled. But disarmament it ain't. Even if START II is ratified in Russia—which is doubtful right now, due in large part to planned U.S. violations the 1973 ABM Treaty—the U.S. expects to keep roughly 8,500 nuclear bombs and warheads about half ready to use and half in "reserve." Without START II, this number will be higher.

What's worse, some senators (with bomb plants in their states) have recently begun to call for more nuclear weapons. Candidate Dole is one of them. He believes it's time to modernize

the arsenal with new kinds of warheads. He is far from alone.

A test ban? It is far from accomplished. Negotiations are now at a critical stage, and a treaty is by no means assured. For 40 years, Los Alamos and the other labs have fought a test ban. Behind the scenes they still fight it.

No new weapons? That's another myth. Far from having stopped their Strangelovian pursuits, the nuclear labs continue to develop new weapon concepts. Like the high-powered radio frequency weapon, designed to use the earth's atmosphere as a powerful radio antenna in order to cripple a nation or an army by knocking out its electrical circuits in one stroke. Will it be deployed? The Earth-Penetrator will. It's made to break hardened bunkers with a powerful nuclear-explosive shock to the earth.

Declining weapons budgets? Don't we wish! Far from declining, the bomb-builders budget line is now rising for the second year in a row. Although weapons spending at the labs is less than it was at the peak of Reagan's apocalyptic push towards Armageddon, it is still twice, in constant dollars, what it was in 1975. According to the Brookings Institution, U.S. taxpayers have coughed up some \$4 trillion dollars for nuclear arms.

But these first 50 years are just the beginning according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

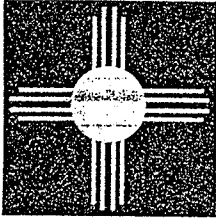
That agency is about to embark on a multi-billion dollar long-term nuclear spending spree, centered around new "surrogate" testing devices at the labs. These machines are not necessary to maintain existing weapons. They are designed to provide the capability to design and certify new nuclear weapons, test ban or no. Politically, they are part of pork-barrel payoffs to the labs and their powerful protectors in return for support of a test ban.

One of these machines is the redundant and ill-advised DARHT (Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest) facility at Los Alamos. Oinking at \$124 million, it will soon be pushed from the trough just a few years after it is finally finished by a successor machine costing 340 percent more. DARHT will explode mock warheads—some made of real plutonium, using what everyone hopes will be leakproof steel tanks.

What's going on here? It's what is euphemistically called "science-based stockpile stewardship." DOE's Assistant Secretary Victor Reis explains: "The stewards really are more important than the equipment... the purpose of the Stockpile Stewardship program is in fact to maintain the stewards, and the right type of experiments." Ah, yes, of course. In the final analysis, stockpile stewardship is not about scientists maintaining warheads; it's about warheads maintaining scientist. ♦

Greg Mello is director of the Los Alamos Study Group in Los Alamos, New Mexico. This article is reprinted, with permission, from Desert Voices, Spring 1996.





THE SANTA FE
NEW MEXICAN

Radioactive mishaps rising at LANL

By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

Mishaps in which workers or equipment have been contaminated with radioactive substances are on the rise at Los Alamos National Laboratory, according to a laboratory report obtained by *The New Mexican*.

From 1993 to 1995, the number of documented incidents of radioactive contamination across the laboratory rose 22 percent, a July 12 study called a "Summary of Radiological Incident Reports" says.

Additionally, the number of reports of

Additionally, the number of reports of contaminations at the lab's plutonium facility jumped 75 percent between 1993 and 1995, the report says.

contaminations at the lab's plutonium facility — Technical Area 55 — jumped 75 percent between 1993 and 1995, from 139 to 244, the report says.

A second laboratory report says the total amount of radiation that the entire laboratory work force was exposed to

in 1995 was higher than in any other year this decade save 1990.

The 1995 "collective dose" was 43 percent greater than the target level for 1995 to which the lab committed itself when the existing management contract with the University of Califor-

nia was drawn up earlier this decade, according to a 29-page annual report put out by the lab's "dose optimization team."

Lab officials say the rise in radiation exposure and radioactive mishaps since 1993 has one primary cause: the Cassini project, an ongoing effort to build radioactive heat sources for deep space probes used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The space probes are fueled by an isotope of plutonium that is particularly difficult to handle: Plutonium-238, which is many times more radioactive than the better known Plutonium-239

used in nuclear bombs.

Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said the Cassini project has peaked and that therefore it is likely that contamination incidents at the lab should decrease in the near future.

A secondary factor in the increased contamination rates could be improved monitoring of radiation incidents at the lab and the lowering of the Energy Department's threshold for which some types of radioactive contamination incidents must be reported.

"In a sense, I'm happy to see (the

Please see LANL, Page A-4

LANL

Continued from Page A-1

increases) because it indicates we're doing a better job of tracking and reporting" incidents, said Joseph Graf, an official with the lab's Environmental, Safety and Health Division.

The two reports on radiological contamination come at a time of heightened concern about safety practices at the lab. Four fatal or near fatal accidents in the past 19 months contributed to lab director Sig Hecker's decision two weeks ago to temporarily halt all laboratory operations so that management and employees could review safety procedures.

That suspension of work, which for the most part has been lifted, came on the heels of a Department of Energy study that castigated laboratory management for "an inability to learn from previous incidents to prevent their recurrence." The 156-page DOE study resulted from a DOE investigation of an electrical accident in January that left a laboratory worker in a coma.

Hecker, at a news conference announcing the work suspension, pointed out that the four accidents occurred in work projects that did not involve radioactive materials. Both Hecker and Bruce Matthews, director of the Nuclear Materials Technology Division, have said over the past several months that while the lab needs to improve in the field of industrial safety, its safety procedures at facilities that handle nuclear materials are excellent.

Not everyone has been in agreement about that.

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, a government agency that performs technical oversight of DOE nuclear weapons facilities, said in 1994 that the radiation protection program at Technical Area 55 was only "marginally satisfactory and in need of improvement."

Danneskiold said the board gave TA-55 a much better rating last year.

Graf said the upward trend is driven primarily by two types of contamination: area contaminations and contamination of workers' clothing.

Area contaminations include spills of radioactive materials. At TA-55, area contaminations more than doubled between 1993 and 1995 — from 45 to 109 incidents.

Additionally, contamination of workers' protective clothing at TA-55 jumped 76 percent between 1993 and 1995 — from 98 incidents to 173 incidents.

Graf said other types of radioactive contamination have been decreasing.

He noted that contamination of workers' nasal passages with plutonium — a serious situation since uptake in the nostrils could lead to the deposition of

plutonium in the lungs, where it could be deadly — dropped from 11 incidents in 1993 to eight incidents last year.

There were six such incidents during the first six months of this year, however, a rate slightly ahead of the 1993 rate.

Graf also pointed out that skin contaminations at the lab dropped from 51 in 1994 to 40 in 1995.

Once again, however, the rate appears to be higher in 1996.

Over the first six months of this year, there were 29 skin contamination incidents. If that rate is maintained, it would result in more contaminations in 1996 than in 1994.

While the total number of documented contamination incidents over the first six months of this year is lagging significantly behind last year's rate, the number of more serious — but not necessarily dangerous — contamination incidents at TA-55 appears to be on the rise in 1996.

Through June 30 at TA-55, there were 27 such incidents — described in documents called occurrence reports. That's more than took place in all of 1994 at TA-55 and is only seven less than the 34 occurrence reports issued due to mishaps at TA-55 in 1993 and 1995.

A Santa Fe activist agreed that the main reason for the increases probably is the handling of plutonium-238 necessitated by the Cassini project.

But he said a more fundamental problem is that plutonium — no matter what the isotope — is an inherently dangerous substance to work with.

"There is every indication that increased work with plutonium will cause increases in worker exposures and an increased danger of more widespread accidents," Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said.

While the Cassini project may be fading, the lab will take on increased plutonium responsibilities in coming years. The Department of Energy's new "stockpile stewardship" program calls upon the lab to build 20 to 80 plutonium pits per year beginning early next century.

Plutonium pits, grapefruit-size metal spheres, are found at the heart of nuclear bombs.

Pit manufacturing at the DOE's Rocky Flats plant near Denver led to widespread contamination of facilities, equipment, workers and the environment. Activists like Mello have raised concerns that production work at LANL will lead to similar problems. Laboratory officials dismiss that claim, saying that the scale of production planned at Los Alamos pales in comparison to the production levels at Rocky Flats — which were on the order of 1,000 pits per year during the Cold War era.

Paper: The Denver Post
Title: Lab contamination rises Alamos cites NASA project
Author: The Associated Press
Date: July 30, 1996
Section: Denver & The West
Page: B-02

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. - Los Alamos National Laboratory reports that contamination of workers or equipment by radioactive substances rose between 1993 and 1995.

Lab officials say the increase has one primary cause: the Cassini project, an effort to build radioactive heat sources for NASA's deep space probes. The probes are fueled by an isotope of plutonium that is particularly difficult to handle and is many times more radioactive than the isotope used in nuclear bombs.

However, the Cassini project has peaked, and it is expected that contamination incidents will decrease soon, said lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold.

A Santa Fe activist acknowledged the increases probably are due to the Cassini project. But Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said a more fundamental problem is that plutonium is inherently dangerous to work with.

"There is every indication that increased work with plutonium will cause increases in worker exposures and an increased danger of more widespread accidents," he said.

Lab officials also said contamination rates could be higher because of improved monitoring of radiation incidents and a lowering of the Energy Department's threshold for reporting some contamination incidents.

"In a sense, I'm happy to see (the increases) because it indicates we're doing a better job of tracking and reporting" incidents, said Joseph Graf of the lab's environmental, safety and health division.

The number of documented incidents of radioactive contamination across the laboratory rose 22 percent, according to a July 12 study obtained by The New Mexican in Santa Fe.

The report also said the number of reports of contaminations at the lab's plutonium facility jumped 75 percent between 1993 and 1995, from 139 to 244, the newspaper said.

A second laboratory report said the total amount of radiation the entire laboratory work force was exposed to in 1995 was the highest since 1990.

The 1995 "collective dose" was 43 percent greater than the target level the lab committed itself to when a contract was drawn up earlier this decade for the University of California to manage the lab, said a 29-page annual report.

Graf said the increase was due primarily to two types of contamination: area contaminations and contamination of workers' clothing.

Other types of radioactive contamination have been decreasing, he said. Contamination of workers' nasal passages with plutonium - a serious situation because that could disperse plutonium into the lungs - dropped from 11 incidents in 1993 to eight incidents last year, he said.

Six such incidents occurred during the first six months of this year, a rate slightly ahead of the 1993 rate.

Author: The Associated Press
Section: Denver & The West
Page: B-02

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Publication: Jnl Legacy 1995 to July 2005; Date: Jul 30, 1996; Section: Journal North<; Page: 55



Date--07/30/1996 Edition--Journal North Page-- 4

LANL REPORTS CONTAMINATION RISE

The Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS -- Radioactive contamination of Los Alamos National Laboratory workers or equipment rose between 1993 and 1995, and lab officials say it's largely due to work on one project.

Lab officials said the Cassini project is an effort to build radioactive heat sources for NASA's deep space probes -- which are fueled by an isotope of plutonium that is particularly difficult to handle and is many times more radioactive than the isotope used in nuclear bombs.

However, lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said the Cassini project has peaked, and it's likely that contamination incidents will decrease soon.

Santa Fe activist Greg Mello agreed that the increases are probably due to the Cassini project. But Mello, of the Los Alamos Study Group, said that a more fundamental problem is that plutonium is inherently dangerous to work with.

"There is every indication that increased work with plutonium will cause increases in worker exposures and an increased danger of more widespread accidents," Mello said.

Lab officials said that contamination rates could also be higher because of improved monitoring of radiation incidents and a lowering of the Energy Department's threshold for reporting some contamination incidents.

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The report, obtained by The New Mexican in Santa Fe, also said the number of reports of contaminations at the lab's plutonium facility jumped 75 percent between 1993 and 1995, from 139 to 244, the newspaper said.

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Graf also said that skin contaminations dropped from 51 in 1994 to 40 in 1995. There were 29 skin contaminations in the first six months of this year.

LANL won't build waste facilities

8/7/96

By KEITH EASTHOUSE
The New Mexican

The cancellation of plans to build several major waste disposal and treatment facilities at Los Alamos National Laboratory will save almost \$600 million over the next several years, according to laboratory estimates.

Canceled projects will save almost \$600 million, according to lab estimates.

The canceled projects include a \$140 million plant to treat radioactive liquid, an \$80 million dump for radioactive and chemical waste and a \$70 million facility to analyze the contents of waste drums bound for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.

The decision to not build the facilities is primarily a result of financial necessity.

As the Republican-controlled Congress has shifted money to nuclear weapons work over the past two years, the lab's waste management budget has fallen 34 percent — from \$94 million to \$62 million.

Lab officials say the impact of the shrinking waste management budget has been compensated for by recent technological improvements in waste analysis and treatment.

These improvements have made it possible to

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manage the lab's sizable stores of radioactive and chemical wastes more cheaply and quickly than had been thought possible a few years ago.

The most striking example is the plutonium-contaminated waste stored at the lab's Area G that is supposed to end up at WIPP.

Originally, the lab estimated it would take 37 years to analyze this waste, which is expected to fill about 42,500 drums. Such analysis is a necessary first step before the waste can be shipped to WIPP.

Stan Kosiewicz, a waste management official, said Thursday the lab now believes the job can be completed in fewer than nine years. The expected savings in operating expenses is \$270 million, he added.

"Some huge changes have been happening" that has made new approaches to waste management possible, Kosiewicz said.

The lab was going to build the \$70 million Transuranic Waste Characterization Facility to handle the WIPP waste. Now, according to Kosiewicz, the lab is planning to use "mobile systems" that will perform the same tasks that would have been done at the facility.

Such jobs include determining how much plutonium is in the drums, installing vents to expel

Lab expects to ship 2,500 drums of waste to WIPP

Los Alamos National Laboratory expects to have 2,500 drums of plutonium-contaminated waste ready to ship to WIPP by the scheduled opening date of April 1998, a lab official said Thursday.

Stan Kosiewicz of the lab's waste management program said a smaller number of drums would be ready by Nov. 30, 1997 — the opening date favored by Congress.

At least some of the waste, which must be formally certified by the Department of Energy before it can be transported, presumably would be trucked down St. Francis

Drive on its way to WIPP, 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad.

There are two reasons shipments of plutonium-contaminated waste could be moving through Santa Fe in less than two years. One is that the lab has readied its WIPP waste faster than anyone anticipated. The other is that the Santa Fe Bypass, which was supposed to divert WIPP shipments from Los Alamos along a 13-mile route west of the city, is only one-third complete.

Keith Easthouse

hydrogen and reduce the fire hazard within the drums, and using mobile "glove boxes" so workers can open up the drums and peer inside.

The lab has adopted cheaper approaches in other areas of waste management work:

- Shipping waste to disposal and treatment sites run by the private sector and located out of state instead of building such facilities at the lab.

- Upgrading the lab's 33-year-

old liquid radioactive waste treatment plant rather than building a new facility.

The switch to a less expensive, more streamlined approach to waste management was praised by a frequent critic of the lab.

"It shows how much of the environment and how much money can be saved when the lab is forced to do so."

GREG MELLO
Los Alamos Study Group

"It's a good thing," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe watchdog organization.

"It shows how much of the environment and how much money can be saved when the lab is forced to do so."

Public Gets Peek At LANL Agenda

▪ 'Global Nuclear Vision Project' in works to chart lab's post-Cold War role

8/29/76

BY IAN HOFFMAN
For the Journal

LOS ALAMOS — Los Alamos National Laboratory is looking for that "vision thing."

After a year of holding closed workshops for nuclear policy wonks, scientists and the military, lab officials on Wednesday let the public glimpse its quest to map the future of nuclear technology.

And a glimpse it was. One critic of the brief seminar termed it "an hour and 35 minutes of marvelous generality."

But when the "Global Nuclear

Vision Project" is finished next year, LANL officials aim to form a new blueprint for lab nuclear research in the post-Cold War world.

Experts have delved into such issues as managing the world's nuclear stockpiles, nuclear terrorism and plutonium smuggling from the former Soviet Union, according to Richard Wagner, head of the project.

Lab officials said LANL's expertise in weapons, nonproliferation policies, nuclear power and nuclear materials made it a natural to hold such conferences.

"We're the place where it all started, so we're the logical place for all this rethinking to take place," said lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold.

"And we're doing it because

See **PUBLIC** on **PAGE 3**

Public Gets Peek At LANL Agenda

from **PAGE 1**

nobody else has stepped up to the task," said Thomas Scheber, an official with the lab's nuclear weapons technology program.

"We have not really seen any rigorous analysis of how the world might change and whether it really would be a safer place," he said.

For now, planning for the nuclear future has a narrower focus: how to curb nuclear dangers, such as arms escalation and environmental contamination.

The experts have talked of as-yet undeveloped technologies for checking whether nuclear weapons work without being able to detonate them, of the likelihood of huge demand for nuclear power in Southeast Asia and of global warming swaying public opinion away from reliance on fossil fuels.

Instead of a U.S.-Soviet standoff, experts concluded, the new global power balance could evolve into a more or less stable collection of nations with several guarantees on security, built in part on the technology to track and possibly control nuclear-weapons stockpiles.

In 1946, a handful of U.S. physicists and politicians floated the idea of handing the secrets of nuclear technology over to international control. Its power was too promising to be hoarded by a chosen few nations, they believed.

The idea died en route to the United Nations — and it probably should have, according to Wagner.

"In retrospect, that seems naive in the chaotic world of that time. But in the last few years, that's been what's started to happen," Wagner said.

Experts at the closed workshops talked of creating a worldwide network of secure storage sites for spent fuel from nuclear power plants and excess weapons plutoni-

um.

But they acknowledged nuclear nations are not about to yield their bombs and missiles to an international authority, at least not yet, Scheber said.

"We found that the other nuclear-weapons declared states probably have some legitimate security concerns for which nuclear weapons fill a role. And they would be reluctant to give them up," Scheber said, unless an organization such as the United Nations was strong enough to settle territorial conflicts.

Nuclear nonproliferation activists find the workshops suspect, especially because the lab closed the talks to the public. Lab officials said they wanted invitees to speak openly — as Scheber put it, "outside of the foreign policy propaganda they put out."

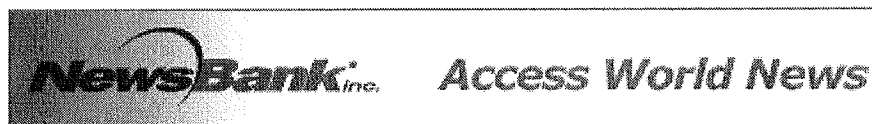
But Cathie Sullivan of the Los Alamos Study Group, a pro-disarmament group in Santa Fe, said the lab's process of planning for its future should be open to the public.

The lab is planning a public forum on Oct. 9, plus at least two more closed workshops before summarizing its findings.

"My feeling is that the lab is essentially trying to secure more life. They would like to be here in 50 years commanding a budget similar to what they command now," Sullivan said.

True enough, said lab officials. LANL needs a view of the nuclear future to stay relevant and to sense the right balance between the risks and benefits of nuclear technology, they said.

"The risks and dangers can never be gone," Wagner said. "It may be latent. It may not be immediate, but it's always going to be there ... And managing the balance means always having nuclear activities going on. That means we will always have the labs."



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

Title: Nations must manage weapons together, LANL analysts say

Date: August 29, 1996

If the main danger during the Cold War was a massive nuclear exchange between the two superpowers, the primary danger in the post-Cold War world is instability and unpredictability, three analysts from Los Alamos National Laboratory said Wednesday.

Greater international cooperation appears to be the best way to manage the situation, the analysts said.

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"We need to build a system that can adapt to changes in geo-political conditions so that nuclear weapons don't contribute to a heightening of tensions," said Richard Wagner.

"And if tensions do go up," Wagner added, it is important to ensure that international arrangements are strong enough to prevent tensions from getting out of control.

Wagner, Ed Arthur and Tom Scheber are heading up the lab's Global Nuclear Vision Project, an ongoing effort to achieve some sort of consensus about how nuclear weapons, nuclear materials and nuclear energy should be managed over the next 50 years.

So far, the project has included three lab-sponsored workshops that have involved a variety of organizations and people, ranging from the Central Intelligence Agency to Russian nuclear weapons experts.

The workshops have been closed to the public so that participants would be "free to speak frankly," as one lab official put it a few months ago.

That policy provoked a protest in April from the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a Santa Fe organization.

On Wednesday, the lab provided the public with a general description of the issues that have been discussed at the workshops. The event attracted about 100 people.

The speakers made it clear that opinions have varied widely and that there is a great deal of uncertainty about what the future will bring. But they said there has been general agreement that increasing international cooperation is key.

"Transparency," the exchange of information between countries about their nuclear weapons and nuclear materials "is critical," Wagner said.

"There should be no surprises" that could either create or exacerbate tensions, Wagner said.

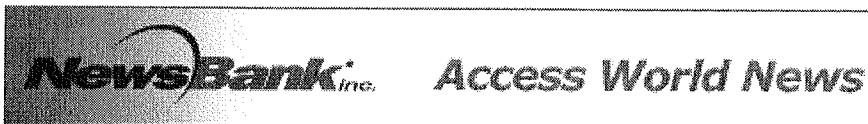
Wagner, Arthur and Scheber pointed out that international cooperation is far greater today than it was in the confrontational Cold War era. But they said it would still be "a very big step," as one of them put it, to place all nuclear weapons under the control of an international body.

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Author: Keith Easthouse

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Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: Nuclear expert Arkin to speak at college
Date: September 14, 1996

He says some anti-nuclear arguments are self-defeating

In raising the specter of nuclear terrorism and other issues to make the case against nuclear weapons, anti-nuclear activists are unwittingly playing into the hands of weapons advocates, an independent expert says.

William M. Arkin, who has authored or co-authored a half-dozen books on nuclear weapons, said claims that the world is in bad shape and that the remedy is disarmament unintentionally help weapons advocates make the case for the deterrent value of nuclear weapons.

"Somehow the left, the anti-nukes, think that highlighting Saddam Hussein and loose nukes and nuke terrorism is the means by which one shocks people into believing the disarmament process needs to be accelerated," Arkin, a Vermont resident, said in a recent telephone interview.

"But in reality, it merely serves as a fund-raising tool for the pro-nuclear types," Arkin added.

Arkin will speak about things nuclear at 10 a.m. today at The College of Santa Fe. The talk is sponsored by the Santa Fe Council on International Relations. The entrance fee is \$6 for council members and \$8 for nonmembers.

Arkin is widely regarded as one of the best informed nongovernment observers of issues connected to nuclear weapons strategy, policy and development.

Earlier in the decade, Arkin uncovered an effort by Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a new generation of low-yield nuclear weapons called "micronukes." The weapons have since been banned by Congress.

Arkin said the world is clearly a safer place now than it was during the Cold War. But he said you wouldn't know it from talking to either the pro- or anti-nuclear crowds.

"It is factually and politically absurd to argue that the nuclear situation is worse today than in the past 40 years. It shows a lack of clarity and a reliance on crisis atmosphere that I don't buy," Arkin said.

Both anti-nuclear and pro-nuclear groups seek to portray the post-Cold War world in Cold War terms or some variation thereof because it is in their best interests to do so.

Activists believe they need to convince potential funders of the urgency of their work. Meantime, weapons advocates also need to portray a dangerous world situation to justify why weapons are needed.

"The unintentional result is that everybody goes home in a limousine. Nobody is consistently and coherently arguing that the nuclear problem isn't so bad," Arkin said.

"If you look back 10 years (and compare that world with today's), I think it puts things in a more accurate perspective," Arkin added.

Greg Mello of the **Los Alamos Study Group**, a Santa Fe-based watchdog group, agreed that the nuclear danger is less than it was.

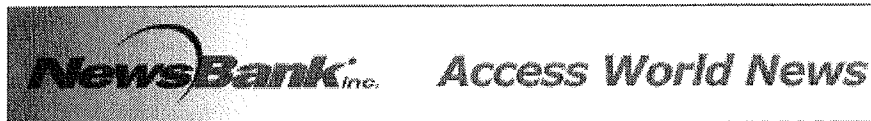
But he said his group hasn't cried wolf on that or other nuclear weapons-related issues. In fact, Mello said he has consistently argued that Los Alamos lab and the Department of Energy have exaggerated the dangers posed by the country's aging nuclear arsenal.

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Author: Keith Easthouse

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Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: Hecker's tenure marked by Cold War, employee changes
Date: September 19, 1996

When Sig Hecker first stepped on American soil, he was a 13-year-old European immigrant who didn't know a lick of English.

"I never expected to be in this position," Hecker said, referring to the job he has held since 1986 as director of Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Hecker announced Wednesday that he will leave the director's job effective Oct. 1, 1997.

Starting out as a research student 31 years ago, Hecker steadily worked his way up the ranks until he grasped the nuclear weapons facility's most powerful post. Along the way he established himself as one of the country's foremost experts on plutonium, the radioactive metal used in nuclear bombs.

Hecker's tenure as director was marked by dramatic changes, including the end of the Cold War and the termination of underground testing of nuclear weapons. He played a key role in establishing a new mission for the government's defense laboratories: "stockpile stewardship," a multi-billion effort to keep the country's aging nuclear arsenal performance-ready and accident-proof.

He was also instrumental in working with Russian nuclear weapons scientists to improve the ability of America's former adversary to prevent its stores of nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands.

Hecker also managed to prevent the shutdown and mothballing of a particle accelerator that today is one of the lab's premier research tools.

Additionally, cooperative efforts between the laboratory and private industry were initiated and have grown during Hecker's tenure. And the laboratory, like other DOE facilities, began in the early 1990s cleaning up decades of contamination left over from weapons work.

On the downside, a major fusion energy research effort in the late 1980s failed. And a layoff of about 800 workers last fall created tremendous controversy and might have played a role in Hecker's decision to leave.

There also have been conflicts with Santa Fe activist groups. For example, the **Los Alamos Study Group** and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety managed to halt construction of a weapons testing facility for a year while the Energy Department studied potential environmental impacts.

And an employee who said he was harassed by lab management after he raised concerns about the way the lab was monitoring its radioactive air emissions won a \$150,000 settlement in a federal Labor Department case.

"I thrive on challenges," Hecker said Wednesday, "and it's been a challenge."

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Author: KEITH EASTHOUSE

Page: A3

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Publication: Jnl Legacy 1995 to July 2005; Date: Sep 24, 1996; Section: Journal North; Page: 58



Edition--Journal North Date--09/24/1996 Page-- 5

Events To Mark U.N. Support of Test Ban Pact

Journal Staff Report

Bells are expected to toll at St. Francis Cathedral today around noon to celebrate endorsement of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the United Nations.

A gathering from noon to about 2 p.m. on the Santa Fe Plaza has been organized by Greenpeace, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Peace Action, Los Alamos Study Group, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and other organizations.

Peggy Prince, who is working on the event for Greenpeace, said local Tibetans, Zen Buddhists and representatives from the Temple Beth Shalom will attend, along with former Gov. Toney Anaya.

St. Francis' bells will ring 51 times to represent the 51 years of nuclear-weapons testing that has occurred since the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, at the end of World War II, Prince said.

About 2 p.m., she said, a caravan will be formed, and it will head to Los Alamos National Laboratory.

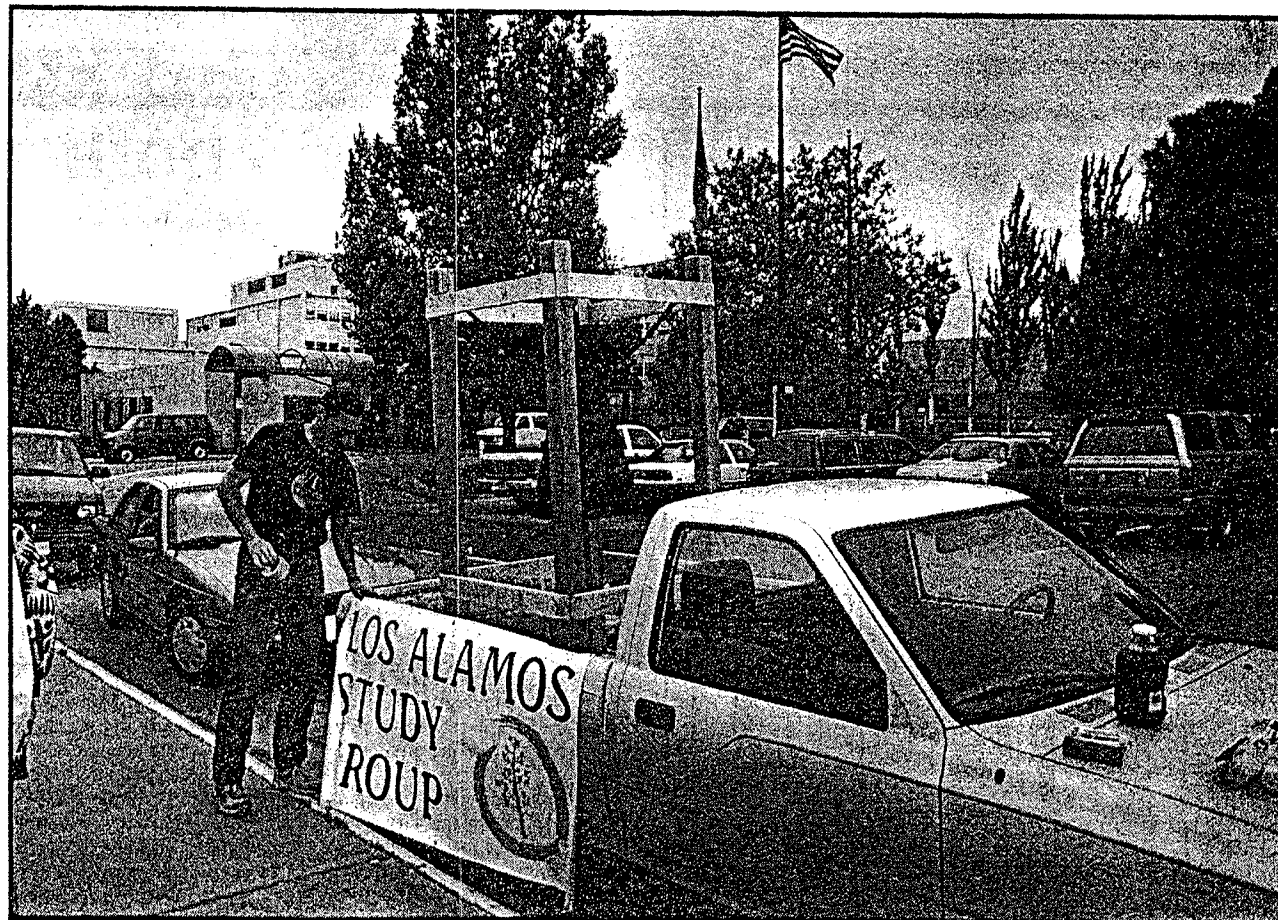
At the lab, organizers plan to bang the frame of a rusted rocket engine.

The treaty was endorsed by the United Nations and now must be ratified by each member nation, said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group.

Mello said he talked with lab security Monday to get permission to share cake with lab employees in front of the Oppenheimer Study Center about 3:30 p.m. in honor of the United Nation's endorsement of the treaty.

James Rickman, a spokesman with the lab, said the organizers talked with the lab's security, but as of Monday afternoon security hadn't been approved.

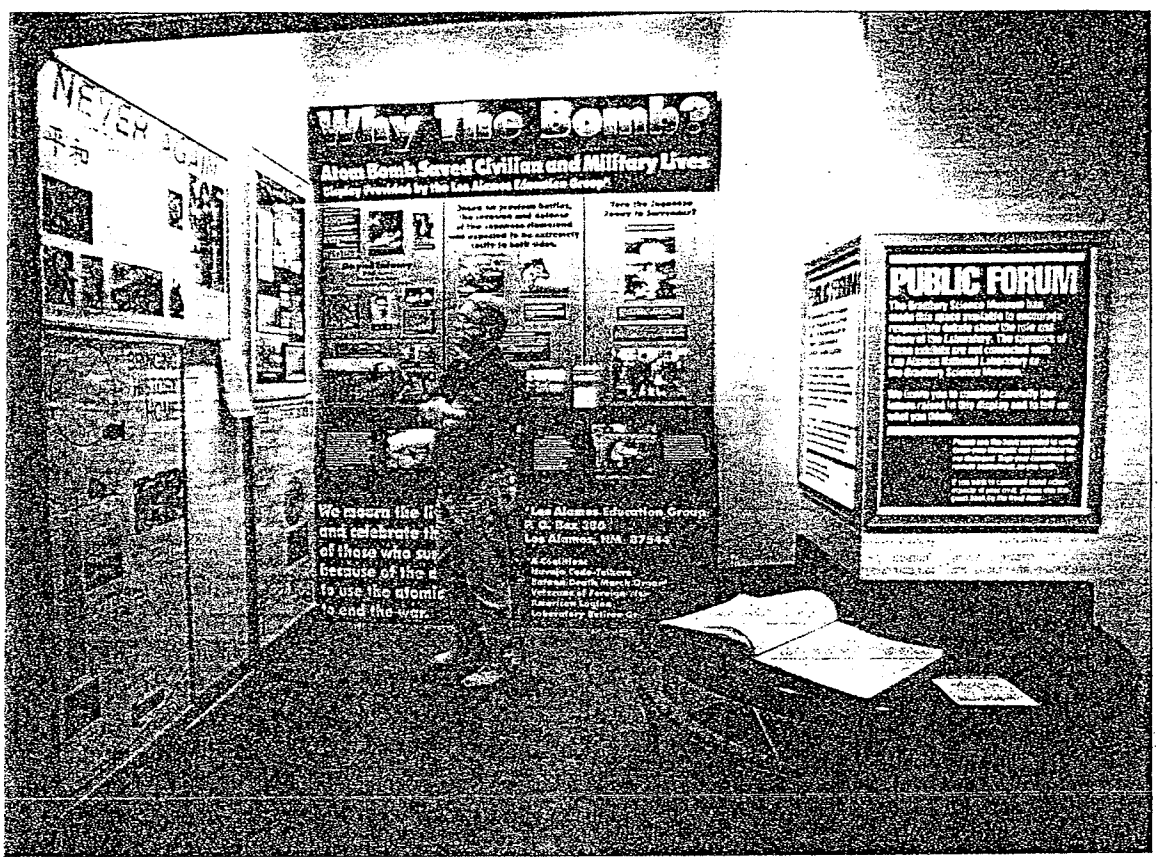
Mello said the lab has allowed peace groups to hand out pamphlets on its grounds without permission, and he said he is optimistic lab security will allow the celebration.

Marking the Day

AL CABRAL/Monitor

Greg Mello of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group pins a sign to a pickup Tuesday in front of the J. Robert Oppenheimer Study Center. Mello and others carried a remnant of a rocket to the lab to celebrate the signing of the Com

prehensive Test Ban Treaty. The activists struck the rocket part like a bell 51 times, once for each year since the first nuclear test.



Clyde Hunter/The New Mexican

The Los Alamos Study Group shares equal space with the Los Alamos Education Group in the Public Forum display in the Los Alamos Bradbury Museum. The study group is concerned that the museum will open access to the display to other groups via a lottery. Chemist Terry Slager looks at the display Monday afternoon.

Groups battle over nuclear displays

By KATHLEENE PARKER
For The New Mexican

LOS ALAMOS — A Santa Fe peace group is threatening a lawsuit if Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum further restricts their access to museum space.

At issue is a proposed lottery through which groups would compete for museum space — now used in part by the Los Alamos Study Group — and whether LANL will be able to use taxpayer funds to promote without any form of rebuttal its own pro-nuclear viewpoint in the museum, said Greg Meilo, director of the

study group. "The lottery idea is a lot like holding a lottery to determine who has the right of freedom of speech," Meilo said. "Their whole purpose is to stifle public debate."

The lab will welcome a suit if it is needed to clarify issues surrounding use of museum space — visited by over 100,000 people a year — and resolve an ongoing controversy that is probably unique in the world, said Bradbury director, John Rhoades.

The lab's intent with the lottery simply is to give more groups a chance at the museum's limited space, he said. Under the lottery, a pro-nuclear group may also lose space, he said. The area in question

will continue to be divided between pro- and anti-nuclear views, he said.

The controversy — that many have compared with that at the Smithsonian Institute in 1995 — began in June 1995 and repeatedly broke into the national spotlight prior to the Aug. 5, 1995, 30th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The study group was first allowed space in the Bradbury Science Museum in 1993 after California courts ruled in favor of San Francisco Bay-area activists who argued for space to balance what they saw as pro-nuclear-only displays at a Lawrence Livermore National

Laboratory museum.

But in June 1995, veterans and former Manhattan Project workers, angered over the study group's exhibit critical of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and featuring graphic photos of the bomb's aftermath, demanded space for a display of their own to show Japanese atrocities during the war.

Congressman Bill Richardson and the American Civil Liberties Union wrote letters supporting the study group's display, but just prior to the anniversary, the museum ordered the study group to give half its space to the education group.

Study Group protests wall policy

Monitor Staff Report

The Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe-based anti-nuclear organization, objects to a protocol on how the lab will govern use of the "Public Forum Wall" at Bradbury Science Museum.

In a news release, the Study Group said LANL has impaired the public debate the Study Group exhibit fostered.

The Study Group objects to the lab's approach to splitting the space between the Study Group exhibit and a contrary exhibit by the Los Alamos Education Group, an organization of LANL employees, retirees and World War II veterans.

The Study Group objects to a lottery system that would determine which exhibit gets most of the wall. In addition, the Study Group says the Education Group's exhibit "is entirely supportive of the lab's past and present mission."

"The Study Group feels the space is theirs exclusively in perpetuity. The lab believes that is not the case," said Museum Director John Rhoades.

10-1-96
L.A. Monitor

Editorial Notebook

America's Atomic History

LOS ALAMOS, N.M.

Even today, with the threat of a nuclear Armageddon receding and America's bomb-making curtailed, an eerie sense of destructive power haunts this high mesa where the elemental forces of the atom were first unleashed by man. It has been more than half a century since Gen. Leslie Groves and the physicist Robert Oppenheimer created a secret city here to design and build an atomic bomb. Most of the early laboratories and buildings are gone, but the plateau is now filled with the "Tech Areas" and other installations of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, successor to the Manhattan Project as the epicenter of American nuclear bomb research.

Los Alamos is a sobering place. The murmur of history is inescapable. This is the spot where mankind developed the means of its own annihilation. It ought to be a place for contemplation of the myriad moral, political and scientific challenges that flowed from that event and still shape the world.

That hope has brought me to the museum here twice this decade with my children, seeking some sense of a time and enterprise that altered the planet. On both occasions the disappointment has been keen. Instead of leading visitors through an examination of the implications of the development of the atomic bomb, the museum offers a virtually uncritical tribute to the blessings of nuclear energy and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

The Bradbury Science Museum, which is operated by the Los Alamos National Laboratory, itself a component of the Energy Department, has made one concession to open inquiry since our first visit in 1991. In response to pressure from the Los Alamos Study Group, a coalition of scientists and citizens troubled by the one-dimensional presentation, the museum in 1993 turned over a small area of wall space for an exhibit on the destructive force of nuclear weapons and radiation.

Los Alamos Tells Half the Story

ings. This change was demanded by another organization, the Los Alamos Education Group, which wanted to remind visitors that the attacks were provoked by Japanese aggression and ended the war without the need for a costly American invasion of Japan.

From the vehement statements in both exhibits, and the intense conversations going on among museum visitors, it was clear Los Alamos is being buffeted by the same passions that stirred Washington last year on the 50th anniversary of the Hiroshima attack. The Smithsonian Institution canceled plans for an ambitious exhibition after veterans groups complained that it would have maligned the use of the bomb and minimized the dangers of an American invasion of Japan.

The troubling issue is not that citizens want to be heard. They should be. Nor are there simple answers in this debate about historical emphasis. Reasonable people can disagree about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the virtues of the nuclear age. What was troubling to me at Los Alamos was that a public institution that is the custodian of this history has shaped it to fit its needs and self-perpetuating myths.

The museum at ground zero in Hiroshima is no less slanted in its own way than the one in Los Alamos. In Hiroshima, every exhibit is devoted to the destruction of the city, without a single mention of how the Pacific war began or why Japan might have been targeted for a nuclear attack.

The business of museums should be education, not indoctrination. That is especially true for publicly financed institutions. The Energy Department and the Los Alamos National Laboratory owe more than a nuclear sales pitch to Americans who journey to this remote and solemn spot.

PHILIP TAUBMAN

8/4/96 New York Times p. E-14

Paper: The Dallas Morning News
Title: Battle grows over atomic-bomb history - Groups with differing nuclear views vie for control of NM museum's wall space
Author: Lawrence Spohn
Date: October 12, 1996
Section: TEXAS & SOUTHWEST
Page: 50A

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - The "War of the Wall" in Los Alamos is escalating, and the sides have stopped talking.

The battleground: the indoor walls of the downtown Bradbury Science Museum, which depict the scientific history of Los Alamos National Laboratory including the design, construction and detonation of the first atomic bomb. The latest skirmish: a new policy that anti-nuclear museum critic Greg Mello says is intended "to diminish meaningful debate;" the museum says the policy is aimed at fostering dialogue.

The policy will give wall space previously reserved for alternative exhibits to a variety of groups.

The conflict is over who will control what goes up in that space, which could include exhibits that criticize or salute the lab, or even rebuttal exhibits that criticize lab critics.

The combatants:

* The museum and its lab-paid staff, who claim neutrality but who have been accused by opponents of collaborating with the enemy.

"I'm seen as some sort of lefty in Los Alamos and some kind of Nazi in Santa Fe," said museum director John Rhoades.

* The Santa Fe-based **Los Alamos Study Group**, Mr. Mello's anti-nuclear organization, whose mission is to get the nuclear-weapons lab to abandon its ways in favor of peaceful science and research.

In 1993, the group demanded and got a wall to exhibit its alternative views. These include examples of the lab's environmental-contamination problems and the horrors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

* The Los Alamos Education Group, made up of lab retirees and military veterans. They see the lab as a counterpunch to evil, a heroic protector of democracy.

The Los Alamos Education Group demanded and got half the anti-nuclear wall last summer. The group used its space to show the pre-atomic history of Japan; the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor; the Bataan Death March, in which many New Mexicans died or otherwise suffered; and the "Rape of Nanking" by Japanese soldiers.

The war over the wall mirrors a fight in the summer of 1995 over the Smithsonian Institution's planned exhibit on the atomic bombings of Japan. That conflict was resolved by eliminating the exhibit and displaying only part of the fuselage of the Enola Gay, the aircraft that dropped the first bomb.

At the Bradbury, however, Mr. Rhoades won a truce last summer by splitting the wall space between the groups. That arrangement collapsed when Mr. Rhoades attempted to ensure space for other groups.

Efforts to talk it out have broken off. The museum and lab have consulted lawyers. And the anti-nuclear group is talking about taking the matter to the lab's manager, the University of California, or to its owner, the Department of Energy, or even to the courts.

The anti-nuclear group is "fighting to regain the exhibit space," says a recent news release. It says the issue is whether the lab "will be able to use taxpayer funds to promote, without noticeable rebuttal, its unabashedly pro-nuclear weapons narrative at the Bradbury."

The group complains that the museum, which gets about 100,000 visitors a year, is squeezing it out by now turning the alternative wall into a "Public Forum Wall."

It charges that the museum is adopting a "referee role . . . and safely diverting the thrust of dissent."

"Absolutely not true," Mr. Rhoades said.

Under the museum's emerging "Forum Wall" policy, a variety of rotating exhibits will be able to have alternative space, he said.

Mr. Mello, however, insists that there are "no competing claims for anti-nuclear space" and that the policy is designed to "impair dissent."

Mr. Rhoades is developing the formal policy, still in draft form, that will accommodate other groups and in the process actually add 50 percent more space to the wall.

He said that it restores the size of the original alternative space "almost to the inch."

He acknowledged that the alternative space could be subject to a lottery, depending on how many other groups want to exhibit material relevant to the museum's exhibits.

The exhibits would be rotated periodically, something he suspects is threatening to the anti-nuclear group.

"I think what they want is an exclusive lock on the wall," he said.

If no other groups come forward, he said, "the anti-nuclear peace group from Santa Fe and the retiree-veteran group from Los Alamos" will continue to have their shares of the wall.

Author: Lawrence Spohn
Section: TEXAS & SOUTHWEST
Page: 50A

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City: DOE must pay for road to carry waste

By BEN NEARY
The New Mexican

10/31/86

The U.S. Department of Energy should help pay for the Santa Fe Relief Route before it starts sending trucks loaded with radioactive waste down St. Francis Drive on their way to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, city councilors told a department representative Wednesday.

Councilor Frank Montañó told DOE representative Corey Cruz that he hopes the federal agency will dig deep to find the money necessary for the city to complete construction of the Relief Route, a highway around the city's northwest side.

Time will tell whether the city can get the route completed before the opening of WIPP — a long-term, underground storage area for hazardous waste near Carlsbad.

"To run through St. Francis Drive is totally unacceptable to

a lot of citizens in this community," Mayor Debbie Jaramillo told Cruz, project manager on a sweeping environmental study the DOE is preparing on the future of Los Alamos National Laboratory.

It already costs about \$30 million to complete the southern third of the route. State officials estimate it will take more than \$50 million to finish the job and have said the federal government is willing to put up about \$30 million.

The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department still is working to acquire property for the northern end of the route.

Cruz told Montañó and other councilors that money for the route is outside his role in preparing the environmental study.

Frank DiLuzio, fire chief and acting city manager, said that

Please see ROAD, Page A-3.

ROAD

Continued from Page A-1

completion of the relief route around the northwest corner of the city is at least a few years away. If the WIPP shipments start before the route is completed, they would run down St. Francis Drive.

It's possible, lab officials have said, that radioactive waste from Los Alamos could be shipped to WIPP — a long-term storage place for radioactive material — as soon as late next year. However, others say the opening of the controversial storage site will be tied up in litigation.

As recently as this August, officials at the Los Alamos lab said they intend to have 2,500 barrels of plutonium-contaminated waste ready to ship to WIPP by early 1998. However, the laboratory will have to compete with other federal facilities eager to move their own waste to WIPP and shipments from Los Alamos could be delayed.

"What we're saying is that the shipments will go through Santa Fe; that's our baseline assumption," Cruz said.

Cruz said one purpose of the study, a draft of which could be completed by next spring, will be to evaluate the impacts of the shipments as well as consider how to mitigate any effects.

Beyond looking at shipment of material to WIPP, Cruz said the study will consider all aspects of waste operations at Los Alamos.

During a recess, Cruz said the DOE considers it very important to find another location to manufacture plutonium pits — lumps of radioactive metal that serve as the heart of nuclear weapons. He said the DOE would prefer to build its new pit-production center at Los Alamos, but said it might be built elsewhere.

Massive contamination and other concerns have forced the DOE to look for an alternative to its pit-production center at Rocky Flats in Colorado.

The federal government often moves radioactive material through Santa Fe toward Los Alamos in commercial trucks without telling anyone, Cruz said.

Councilor Peso Chavez said he believes the DOE should inform the city's emergency personnel

that it is shipping material so crews are ready to respond if necessary. He said the department has ignored past requests for notification.

DiLuzio said the DOE and Westinghouse, the department's contractor on the WIPP project, have held training sessions in Santa Fe and said he believes city emergency workers are ready to respond if an emergency occurs.

Greg Mello, a Santa Fe resident who has monitored lab activities for years, said after Wednesday's meeting that he believes the prospect of seeing Los Alamos become a plutonium production center raises greater concerns than transportation issues.

Mello said building the plutonium pits at Los Alamos would mean explosives would be used together with the radioactive metal in sealed conditions. "That should be the subject of outcry from the council, because any accident could gravely impact this community," he said.

Paper: Knoxville News-Sentinel, The (TN)
Title: N.M. CONGRESSMAN EYED AS O'LEARY SUCCESSOR
Author: KAREN MACPHERSON AND LARRY SPOHN SCRIPPS HOWARD
NEWSERVICE
Date: November 8, 1996
Section: A Section
Page: A1

A New Mexico congressman is among those being considered as the next U.S. energy secretary to replace Hazel O'Leary, who is expected to resign soon.

Rep. Bill Richardson, a Santa Fe Democrat who is half Hispanic and a friend of President Clinton, won his eighth two-year term Tuesday. He has not commented on whether he would accept the post if it is offered to him. O'Leary has been praised for persuading Clinton to end testing of nuclear weapons and for focusing attention on government-sponsored human radiation experiments during the Cold War years.

But she has also been embarrassed by controversies over what appeared to be lavish spending during her foreign trade missions.

The Department of Energy has three major installations plants in Oak Ridge, employing about 15,000 people.

Richardson, who's been widely rumored for weeks to be O'Leary's successor, is viewed warily by some community leaders in Oak Ridge. They privately have expressed concerns that his appointment might renew attempts by DOE to relocate the work now done at the Y-12 Plant to Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Richardson, who has become known for his unofficial diplomatic forays to places like Haiti, Burma and North Korea, probably would prefer the job of secretary of state. But others are more likely candidates for that spot.

The Associated Press is reporting Richardson as the front-runner for the DOE job. Other prospects are retiring Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., EPA Director Carol Browner, and Energy Undersecretary Tim Wirth.

Richardson's Hispanic heritage is particularly attractive to the administration because the top minorities in Clinton's current Cabinet reportedly will be leaving: O'Leary, who is black, and U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Pena, and U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros, both Hispanics.

Political experts say Richardson's real political goal is winning the 1998 New Mexico gubernatorial race. Becoming energy secretary, they say, would give him lots of national exposure, more than he'll get if he remains in the Republican-dominated House.

"As secretary of energy, he can also visit us in New Mexico frequently while tending to business and take credit for keeping the labs going," said University of New Mexico political scientist Gilbert St. Clair.

Said UNM political scientist F. Chris Garcia: "If the Democrats had been able to take over the House, then obviously Richardson would want to stay there." GOP control of Congress "really increases the attractiveness of a Cabinet position" for Richardson, Garcia said.

Some DOE critics, who would prefer that O'Leary stay on, say he isn't well-suited to the DOE post.

"I think he'd be bored, frankly," said Greg Mello of the **Los Alamos Study Group**, an anti-nuclear organization in Santa Fe. "He would be better, though, than some more technically qualified insiders, such as John Deutch at the CIA, who are products of the Cold War.

"They're more likely to blow up the bridge (to the 21st century)," laughed Mello, referring to Clinton's campaign slogan.

Mello suggested that Richardson also may be much more valuable to New Mexico, the labs and Clinton as a representative than a secretary.

"I think losing him would be disastrous because Bill is a consummate legislator," Mello said. Despite Republican control of the House, Richardson remains "in a very good position to help New Mexico."

While two of DOE's most important laboratories are located in New Mexico, Richardson generally has taken a passive role with regard to them, at least compared with the rest of the state's congressional delegation, Mello pointed out.

Los Alamos National Laboratory, in Richardson's northern New Mexico district, is the nation's premier nuclear weapons design and testing lab. Its sibling, Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, has primary responsibility for the engineering, reliability and safety of nuclear warheads.

Richardson "couldn't be involved very much in the lab's defense programs without alienating a big part of his constituency," Mello said, referring to Santa Fe environmentalists.

New Mexico has several other DOE facilities, most importantly the Albuquerque Operations Office on Kirtland Air Force Base. It has lead responsibility for managing most of the nation's nuclear weapons complex, including Los Alamos, Sandia and the Pantex nuclear weapons plant in Amarillo, Texas.

Richardson's "closeness" to the labs and their economic importance to New Mexico "might be bad in terms of cleaning (DOE) up, and he might not be so willing to do it," said Bill Payne, a computer scientist and "whistle-blower" who lost his Sandia job when he refused to do what he said was illegal tampering with code technology.

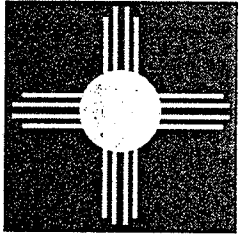
Payne said if Richardson does get the post, he hopes he will advance O'Leary's whistle-blower reforms to protect employees who paid a price for exposing wrongdoing within DOE or the labs.

Author: KAREN MACPHERSON AND LARRY SPOHN SCRIPPS HOWARD
NEWSERVICE

Section: A Section

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THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Richardson rejects talk of Cabinet job

► *While some say he's up for Energy or Commerce posts, lawmaker says his ambition rests here*

New Mexican wire services

WASHINGTON — Amid reports Thursday that Rep. Bill Richardson is in line to replace Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, the Santa Fe

Democrat said the idea that he will join President Clinton's Cabinet is simply "speculation."

With O'Leary's resignation all but official, several national news organizations described Richardson as the front-runner to head the troubled Energy Department for Clinton's second term.

The Associated Press, however,



Bill Richardson

■ **Clinton says he'll consider Republicans for Cabinet and White House posts. Page B-5**

reported Thursday that Richardson would like to be commerce secretary.

Richardson disputed that idea also. "I'm very happy in my present job serving New Mexico's 3rd district," he said in a statement.

Richardson said essentially the same thing on election night when asked about the Energy post.

In an August interview, Richard-

Please see **RICHARDSON**, Page A-2

Successors-in-waiting: Serna, Jaramillo

By **MARK OSWALD**
The New Mexican

Ready for another election soon?

It could happen in Northern New Mexico if Congressman Bill Richardson of Santa Fe accepts a position in President Clinton's Cabinet.

If Richardson, who won re-election to an eighth term Tuesday, resigns from his congressional seat, state law would

require Gov. Gary Johnson to call a special election to choose a replacement. The election would have to be held between 84 and 91 days after the congressional seat becomes vacant.

There is no shortage of potential candidates. Several fellow Democrats acknowledged Thursday that they would be interested in the U.S. House seat.

"I haven't made it a secret that if the

Please see **WAITING**, Page A-2

RICHARDSON

Continued from Page A-1

son said his interest in being head of either the Departments of Energy or Interior had waned since 1992, when Clinton briefly considered, then passed him over for Interior secretary.

"I think I have other options now," he said in August. Among those is a possible run for governor of New Mexico in 1998.

Richardson's White House ties helped fuel Washington's post-election rumor mill.

One Capitol Hill staffer on energy issues who asked not to be named said Thursday that he "wouldn't be surprised" if Richardson were among the finalists for the Energy Department position.

George Burmeister, a lobbyist for the National Association of State Energy Officials, said he heard Richardson's name floated at an election night party in Washington. "People said: 'Of course you've heard about the Richardson possibility,' though actually at that point I hadn't."

While a New Mexican might not end up in the job, the choice of a new energy secretary is an important one for the state. Whoever is chosen will have a full plate of issues affecting New Mexico — including the \$1.8 billion project to bury plutonium-contaminated waste near Carlsbad and to conduct "virtual" computer tests on nuclear weapons at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The Associated Press reported Thursday that other possibilities include retiring Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., Environmental Protection Agency Director Carol Browner, and Tim Wirth of Colorado, undersecretary of state for global affairs.

Others reportedly on the administration's "short list" are Deputy

Secretary of Energy Charles Curtis — who holds the No. 2 position at DOE — and DOE Undersecretary Thomas Grumbly.

CIA Director John Deutch and Department of Commerce Undersecretary of Technology Mary Good also are mentioned by congressional staffers as possible candidates.

Sources agreed that whoever takes on the job will inherit tough issues — among them is how to clean up the radioactive contamination left over from the Cold War — a task DOE estimates will cost \$227 billion.

The new secretary also will have to defend the department from Republican proposals to abolish it. And the successor will have to overcome the public relations problems associated with O'Leary — including her penchant for overseas travel, which led GOP campaign officials to create a glossy gimmick brochure advertising the "Hazel O'Leary Travel Club."

"(The job) is a minefield," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Group, an anti-nuclear organization that has been critical of DOE. "(The secretary) spends a lot of time just avoiding doing something wrong."

In Mello's view, O'Leary was singled out for criticism in part because she took a strong stand against underground nuclear testing. "She was her own person," he said.

Mello recommended that Richardson — who is known more for his political savvy than his managerial experience — hold onto his current job. "I'd rather have him as my congressman than as my energy secretary," he said.

Curtis, deputy secretary under O'Leary and a frequently mentioned contender for her job, is

well respected by both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill. A former head of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Curtis is described as a low-key consensus builder. He has been credited for his efforts to reform management practices at the labs.

Richardson's most publicized work in recent years has been international negotiations. This year he helped win the release of a Texas woman from a Bangladesh prison. He also has negotiated in Burma and Haiti, and in 1994 he won the release of a U.S. pilot whose helicopter was shot down after straying across the North Korean border.

Much of his domestic work has been intertwined with the Energy Department because the DOE has played an intrinsic role in New Mexico's economy since Robert Oppenheimer brought atomic researchers to Los Alamos more than 50 years ago.

Last year, DOE spending in New Mexico matched the entire state's budget — \$3 billion. And DOE officials say every \$100 they spend here generates \$225 of additional economic activity.

Jim Danneskiold, a spokesman for Los Alamos National Laboratory, said it is inappropriate to speculate about any replacement of O'Leary. Danneskiold did say, however, that Richardson is "intimately familiar" with scientific issues at the lab and with the surrounding community.

The commerce job, which Richardson is said to prefer, is being vacated by Secretary Mickey Kantor. Besides Richardson, names mentioned Thursday for that post were Clinton's friend Mack McLarty; Laura Tyson, head of the National Economic Council; and Clinton fund-raiser Terry McAuliffe.



The Knoxville News-Sentinel

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NOVEMBER 8, 1996

50 Cents

FINAL EDITION

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Christopher out; shuffle begins

Foreign policy team to be revamped

By Lisa Hoffman

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — President Clinton accepted Secretary of State Warren Christopher's resignation Thursday, setting in motion a Cabinet shuffle that will create an entirely new foreign policy team.

Christopher, a lawyer who traveled the globe more than other previous secretaries, said he will step down as soon as a successor is selected.

"Being secretary of state is to take part in history's relay race

... I've done so with the sure sense that we've begun to shape American foreign policy for the 21st century," said Christopher, who organized Clinton's transition to the White House in 1993 and who grew to be a personal friend of the president.

Clinton praised Christopher, 71, for his diplomatic efforts to negotiate peace in the Middle East, Bosnia and Haiti.

"The cause of peace and freedom and decency has never had a more tireless or tenacious advocate," Clinton said.

The White House ceremony

took place as word surfaced that Transportation Secretary Federico Pena is close to formally submitting his resignation, as well.

Pena is credited with cutting 11,000 department jobs but faced criticism when he defended ValuJet's safety record after a May 11 crash in Florida only to have to ground the cheap-fare airline a month later.

Among those touted as successors are former Colorado Gov. Roy Romer and Rodney Slater,

Please see CABINET, page A18

N.M. congressman eyed as O'Leary successor

By Karen MacPherson and Larry Spohn

Scripps Howard News Service

A New Mexico congressman is among those being considered as the next U.S. energy secretary to replace Hazel O'Leary, who is expected to resign soon.

Rep. Bill Richardson, a

Santa Fe Democrat who is half Hispanic and a friend of President Clinton, won his eighth two-year term Tuesday. He has not commented on whether he would accept the post if it is offered to him.

O'Leary has been praised for persuading Clinton to end

Please see DOE, page A14

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DOE

Continued from page A1

testing of nuclear weapons and for focusing attention on government-sponsored human radiation experiments during the Cold War years.

But she has also been embarrassed by controversies over what appeared to be lavish spending during her foreign trade missions.

The Department of Energy has three major installations plants in Oak Ridge, employing about 15,000 people.

Richardson, who's been widely rumored for weeks to be O'Leary's successor, is viewed warily by some community leaders in Oak Ridge. They privately have expressed concerns that his appointment might renew attempts by DOE to relocate the work now done at the Y-12 Plant to Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Richardson, who has become known for his unofficial diplomatic forays to places like Haiti, Burma and North Korea, probably would prefer the job of secretary of state. But others are more likely candidates for that spot.

The Associated Press is reporting Richardson as the front-run-

ner for the DOE job. Other prospects are retiring Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., EPA Director Carol Browner, and Energy Undersecretary Tim Wirth.

Richardson's Hispanic heritage is particularly attractive to the administration because the top minorities in Clinton's current Cabinet reportedly will be leaving: O'Leary, who is black, and U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Pena, and U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros, both Hispanics.

Political experts say Richardson's real political goal is winning the 1998 New Mexico gubernatorial race. Becoming energy secretary, they say, would give him lots of national exposure, more than he'll get if he remains in the Republican-dominated House.

"As secretary of energy, he can also visit us in New Mexico frequently while tending to business and take credit for keeping the labs going," said University of New Mexico political scientist Gilbert St. Clair.

Said UNM political scientist F. Chris Garcia: "If the Democrats had been able to take over the House, then obviously Richardson would want to stay there." GOP control of Congress "really increases the attractiveness of a Cabinet position" for Richardson, Garcia said.

Some DOE critics, who would prefer that O'Leary stay on, say he isn't well-suited to the DOE post.

"I think he'd be bored, frankly," said Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, an anti-nuclear organization in Santa Fe. "He would be better, though, than some more technically qualified insiders, such as John Deutch at the CIA, who are products of the Cold War.

"They're more likely to blow up the bridge (to the 21st century)," laughed Mello, referring to Clinton's campaign slogan.

Mello suggested that Richardson also may be much more valuable to New Mexico, the labs and Clinton as a representative than a secretary.

"I think losing him would be disastrous because Bill is a consummate legislator," Mello said. Despite Republican control of the House, Richardson remains "in a very good position to help New Mexico."

While two of DOE's most important laboratories are located in New Mexico, Richardson generally has taken a passive role with regard to them, at least compared with the rest of the state's congressional delegation, Mello pointed out.

Los Alamos National Laboratory, in Richardson's northern New Mexico district, is the nation's premier nuclear weapons

design and testing lab. Its sibling, Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, has primary responsibility for the engineering, reliability and safety of nuclear warheads.

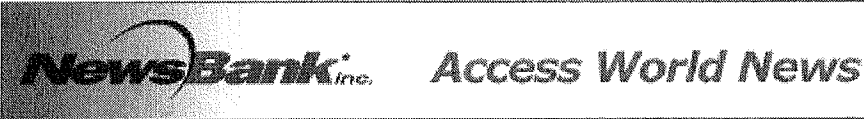
Richardson "couldn't be involved very much in the lab's defense programs without alienating a big part of his constituency," Mello said, referring to Santa Fe environmentalists.

New Mexico has several other DOE facilities, most importantly the Albuquerque Operations Office on Kirtland Air Force Base. It has lead responsibility for managing most of the nation's nuclear weapons complex, including Los Alamos, Sandia and the Pantex nuclear weapons plant in Amarillo, Texas.

Richardson's "closeness" to the labs and their economic importance to New Mexico "might be bad in terms of cleaning (DOE) up, and he might not be so willing to do it," said Bill Payne, a computer scientist and "whistle-blower" who lost his Sandia job when he refused to do what he said was illegal tampering with code technology.

Payne said if Richardson does get the post, he hopes he will advance O'Leary's whistle-blower reforms to protect employees who paid a price for exposing wrongdoing within DOE or the labs.

Karen MacPherson and Larry Spohn write for The Albuquerque Tribune.



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)

Title: Weapons

Date: November 13, 1996

testing

The Department of Energy is planning to spend \$40 billion over the next 10 years to ensure that the country's nuclear weapons arsenal does not deteriorate, top official Vic Reis said Tuesday.

A portion of that money on the order of several billion will go toward Los Alamos National Laboratory, slated to play a key role in the Energy Department's new "stockpile stewardship and management" program.

The program involves monitoring the existing nuclear arsenal and making upgrades when necessary. President Clinton's decision to halt production of new weapons and ban all nuclear testing forced the DOE to adopt this approach.

A more than 2,000-page plan outlining the program was released in its final form by the Energy Department on Tuesday. It was immediately criticized by nuclear watchdog groups in Santa Fe and elsewhere as unnecessarily large, redundant and expensive.

"DOE has failed to give the American public the comprehensive analysis of the reasonable alternatives to its programs required both by statute and the realities of the end of the Cold War," said a statement by the Military Production Network, a Washington D.C. organization.

The statement said many of the new programs planned for Los Alamos are being duplicated at other DOE weapons centers, such as Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

Several groups, including Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and the **Los Alamos Study group**, both based in Santa Fe, and national organizations like Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Natural Resources Defense Council, said Tuesday they would file a lawsuit before the year is out to stop the stewardship program.

In a teleconference interview with the media, Reis said that in the event of a lawsuit from watchdog groups, "we believe we're in a very strong position."

As for the cost of the program, Reis said that while \$4 billion a year for 10 years might seem high, it is actually less than Cold War spending levels.

Part of the money will be spent on an array of new testing facilities to take the place of underground tests, considered the best way to try out new weapons designs and gather detailed data on what happens in a nuclear weapons explosion.

The new facilities include a \$48 million weapons testing facility at Los Alamos called Atlas. Atlas will supplement the laboratory's \$187 million Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrotest facility better known as DARHT currently under construction.

As outlined in a draft version of the plan released by the DOE in February, the lab will assume responsibility for work that used to be performed at the Rocky Flats plant near Denver: building plutonium cores, or "pits," for weapons in the nuclear arsenal.

The DOE plans to pump \$300 million into facility upgrades at LANL from 1998 to 2005 to ready the lab for the pit production work.

According to the DOE's plan, called a final environmental impact statement, the lab will be called on to build 20 to 80 plutonium pits per year as it replaces aging components in existing weapons.

Depending on how many pits the lab builds each year, the work will create 90 to 260 new jobs, according to lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold.

Local activists have contended that the Energy Department is turning Los Alamos into another Rocky Flats, which has been shut down since 1989 because of environmental contamination and worker safety problems.

DOE and lab officials say the pit production work at LANL will be on a much smaller scale than at Rocky Flats, where more than a 1,000 pits per year were built during the Cold War.

Part of the stewardship program will involve shipping an isotope of plutonium called plutonium-242 from the DOE's Savannah River plant in South Carolina to Los Alamos.

Steve Guidice of the DOE's Albuquerque office, declined to specify how much will be shipped, evidently because such information is classified. He would only say ``it's a very small amount."

Guidice also declined to say what the material would be used for once it arrives at Los Alamos.

Arms control activists believe the agency is planning on using plutonium-242 in mock weapons tests. Such tests would violate the spirit of the comprehensive test ban signed by Clinton in September, activists say.

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Author: Keith Easthouse

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DOE Report Confirms LANL To Make Pits

Ian Hoffman Journal Staff Writer

Scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory gladly ceded the lab's mantle as the nation's nuclear-weapons factory 42 years ago.

Now a key element of that role is coming back to the birthplace of the bomb for as long as the federal government foresees.

A report issued Tuesday affirmed the U.S. Department of Energy's choice of Los Alamos as the nation's only site for making plutonium pits for the U.S. stockpile.

The DOE report also recommended LANL as home to a \$43 million machine, called Atlas, that nearly recreates the pressures and temperatures within an exploding nuclear weapon to study mock-ups of bomb components.

Making the grapefruit-sized pits at Los Alamos for 25 years will cost \$1.9 billion. Anti-nuclear activists argue it also could undermine international gains in arms reduction.

Weapons scientists have differed over whether pits in the stockpile need to be replaced. Proponents suggest that decay of the old pits will cause a buildup of hydrogen and highly radioactive americium.

"They like to create this doomsday scenario of 'What if it all turned into peanut butter?' But there's no evidence it's happening," said Dr. Dan Kerlinsky of Albuquerque, a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility and a former member of a government panel that studied the DOE weapons complex.

"The main problem with the (study) is they're trying to hold in place a static notion of what the nuclear world is right now, rather than what it's going to become over the next 10 or 20 years," Kerlinsky said.

Locally, some wonder about the impact on the region's quality of life. Until 1989, the DOE made pits at Rocky Flats; it was closed in 1992 due to safety problems and massive contamination.

"We don't want what happened at Rocky Flats to happen at Los Alamos," said H.L. Daneman, a retired engineer in Santa Fe. Daneman said he worries about accidents or terrorist attacks at Los Alamos.

"Nobody wants to live by Love Canal or Three Mile Island. I would not like to see the communities around Los Alamos become stigmatized," he said.

Lab officials point out that Los Alamos always has produced plutonium pits -- for explosive tests and for predicting the effects of aging on nuclear weapons. Now, it will produce pits primarily for warheads in submarine-launched Trident missiles and in the land-based Minuteman III missile.

Under the new program, lab officials predict they will make 20 or fewer pits a year, starting in 2003 or 2004. The lab is spending at least \$115 million on renovating Technical Area 55, its plutonium facility, to handle production of up to 50 pits a year working single shifts, or 80 pits a year if technicians work around the clock.

The Atlas facility requires about 15 workers. To make 20 pits a year, the lab will need to hire 90 workers, including 40 to make the pits in glove boxes and 50 for such supporting jobs as security and radiation control, said Jim Danneskiold, a lab spokesman.

If the lab makes 50 pits a year, it will need about 155 new workers, he said.

The new program bears no comparison with Rocky Flats, where thousands of pits were produced each year, Danneskiold said.

"There were some things that were done at Rocky Flats that were just unacceptable," Danneskiold said.

The lab is developing new processes to cut down on radioactive waste and radiation exposure for workers, such as casting the pits and cleaning them without using hazardous solvents, Danneskiold said.

The Atlas facility would use an energy burst equal for an instant to the world's electrical output to compress foils and metals as large as 4 inches into the size of a checker.

Atlas, slated to start operating by 1999, is among a slew of tools that nuclear scientists say they need to see what happens within an aging nuclear weapon since they no longer can use explosive tests. Anti-nuclear activists contend that such multimillion dollar machines amount to no more than "nuclear welfare" to succor the weapons scientists whose heyday ended with the Cold War.

"The reason the labs have all this money thrown at them for dozens of duplicative new facilities is that they're cooperating in obtaining a comprehensive test ban," said Greg Mello, head of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group. "This is a political deal. It has nothing to do with science and everything to do with a political payoff."

Mello's group is among some 40 environmental organizations that have vowed to sue to stop the stockpile stewardship and management program. They are expected to argue that the DOE failed to consider other plans seriously, especially ones that envision further arms reductions.

Steve Guidice, a DOE manager working on the stockpile stewardship and management program, said the department focused on plans that fit U.S. national security policy and were technologically feasible.

"People can suggest a lot of things, but if they're out of context with those two things, they're not really applicable. Denuclearization, for example, is not a reasonable alternative," Guidice said during a teleconference Tuesday with reporters.

The DOE believes that the program will enable it to certify to the president that the weapons stockpile is reliable, said Vic Reis, the department's assistant secretary for defense programs.

"We think we can do the job. But we can return to testing if need be and return to production if need be," Reis said.



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Suit Seeks Release of LANL Forecast

Journal Staff Report

The U.S. Department of Energy has blocked release of public information about work at Los Alamos National Laboratory to forecast the future of nuclear weapons and power, an antinuclear group charged in a suit filed Thursday.

The Los Alamos Study Group filed the suit after three months of futile attempts to get briefings, slides and videotapes of meetings held as part of the lab's Global Nuclear Futures Project.

The Santa Fe-based study group, led by Greg Mello, focuses on the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is seeking briefing materials and videotapes of presenters at lab workshops on nuclear weapons and stockpile stewardship held in August and November 1995 and early last April.

The meetings were attended by nuclear scientists and military leaders from Russia, France, the United States and other nations, as well as U.S. civilian specialists in nuclear policy and international security.

The lab closed the meetings to the public, saying it had promised confidentiality to invitees so they might speak more freely.

Lab officials declined to comment on the suit, saying they had not seen it. The group filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Albuquerque.

Richard Mietz, an attorney for the Los Alamos Study Group, said the lab resisted the DOE's attempts to get the records for weeks.

Until recently, Mietz said, lab officials "were still up there trying to determine if they're going to give the government its own records."

A week ago, the lab handed the information to the DOE, which sent it to its Washington offices for classification review, Mietz said.

"We just think this is a perfect example of them shielding nonclassified information from people if they don't like who's looking," Mietz said. "It's especially interesting in that what they're discussing up there is who is going to get to control the stockpile -- who gets to share in the nuclear arsenal and who gets shut out -- some really very interesting issues."

Museum Allows Counterpoint

Wall for Alternate Views Set Aside Among LANL Exhibits

The Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS — The Bradbury Science Museum at Los Alamos National Laboratory now has walls to counter official museum exhibits or counter the counter-exhibits.

The museum on Thursday released a new policy that will let people display alternative views for at least six months on a 150-square-foot public forum wall.

The policy also will let others use an adjacent 75-square-foot space to counter what's on the public forum wall.

The public forum wall came about in 1991 when a Santa Fe-based peace group, the Los Alamos Study Group, asked for space in the Bradbury Science Museum to present views against further development of nuclear weapons. Los

Alamos lab, which was formed during World War II, developed the world's first atomic bombs.

John Rhoades, director of the museum, said the new policy is aimed at providing space for an exchange of ideas about critical issues involving the lab.

The policy, which goes into effect in January, calls for the wall to be open to any individual, group or organization for exhibits that relate to an official museum exhibit.

Guidelines say exhibits cannot contain any material that could be offensive to visitors, particularly to children. Exhibits also must be of professional quality and not contain any material that is pornographic, defamatory or excessively violent or that subjects individuals or groups to ridicule based on age, sex,

religion, national origin or political beliefs.

The museum staff will review proposed exhibits to make sure they are free of offensive materials, are of professional quality and don't duplicate other proposed displays. However, the lab said the staff won't pass judgment on an exhibit's content.

The current wall became the focus of controversy last year when a coalition of veterans and others, organized as the Los Alamos Education Group, objected to the Study Group's exhibit.

The veterans contended the Study Group's exhibit portrayed the Japanese as innocent victims of World War II, and they asked the museum for space to present their views of Japanese imperialism and

its consequences.

The museum staff, faced with the approaching 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, split the public space evenly between the two groups until the museum could develop a formal policy.

"The issues raised by World War II continue to stir strong passions among visitors, and we at the museum wanted to provide a place for discussion and thought about this issues," Rhoades said.

"World War II provides a reference point for us to think and talk about critical contemporary and future issues concerning the nation's security, what constitutes sufficient defense and ultimately, what the role of Los Alamos National Laboratory is and should be in today's world," he said.



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
Title: Museum adopts policy on exhibits of opposing views
Date: November 22, 1996

Officials at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum announced a policy Thursday allowing public displays that run contrary to other museum exhibits.

The new policy, which takes effect in January, allows any individual or group to request access to a 150-square-foot wall, and limits displays that relate to official museum exhibits. Museum staff members will review proposed exhibits to make sure they do not include material that is "pornographic, defamatory or excessively violent," but they will not judge a display on its content.

A six-month time limit will apply to any outside display, unless no one else is interested in using the space. The museum will use a lottery to determine who gets access if more than one group applies. A smaller, adjacent space also will be available for an opposing point of view.

The 150-square-foot Public Forum Wall at the museum has been an object of contention between a Santa Fe peace group and pro-veteran group.

The anti-nuclear group in 1991 was granted permission to use the space to present views against development of nuclear weapons.

But in June 1995 as the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of World War II approached a group of veterans angered that the display critical of the bombing demanded space for a display offering their view on Japanese imperialism.

The museum then split the wall evenly between the two groups until the formal policy was developed.

Greg Mello, the director of the anti-nuclear group, said in October he would consider a lawsuit over the use of the lottery system, claiming it stifled their freedom of speech. He claimed the museum was trying to push them out. He could not be reached Thursday.

Museum director John Rhoades said the policy took into consideration input from several community groups.

"We believe it is a fair representation of the groups' viewpoints," he said. "World War II provides a reference point for us to think and talk about critical contemporary and future issues concerning the nation's security, what constitutes sufficient defense and ultimately, what the role of Los Alamos National Laboratory is and should be in today's world."

The museum originally explained research projects to official visitors and in 1964 began to gear its exhibits to the general public.

The museum is named after Norris E. Bradbury, the second director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, who served from 1945 until 1970.

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Author: Bruno J. Navarro

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Albq Tribune 12/9/96

Sandia grabs fusion spotlight

The New Mexico lab's recent tests on its pulse-power particle accelerator have put a more expensive approach in question.

By Lawrence Spohn
TRIBUNE REPORTER

Sandia National Laboratories has performed some highly successful fusion-energy experiments this fall that could mean trouble for a sister lab's proposed \$1.1 billion fusion machine.

Recent results achieved on a Sandia pulse-power machine were announced last week and caused ripples in the scientific and government communities.

The results are prompting questions about a possible cheaper alternative at Sandia to the Department of Energy's National Ignition Facility.

Although no figures were available, the technology in Sandia's pulse-power machine is said to be cheaper than what is planned for the National Ignition Facility.

The National Ignition Facility is the billion-dollar project designed to simulate the blast of nuclear bombs. It is at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, east of San Francisco.

It is the most expensive and controversial machine among several around the country that nuclear weapons scientists say they need to continue studying weapon physics without blowing up the real thing.

Opponents say it threatens international nuclear non-proliferation and test-ban treaties.

The Livermore and Sandia research are part of DOE's military fusion program. Los Alamos National Laboratory is the other major lab in the program. The scientists' tools are massive lasers that fill entire buildings.

FUSION from A1

Livermore has dominated the program with a glass laser called Nova.

But Sandia scientists, flush from setting world records for X-ray power and energy (two building blocks for fusion), said this week they are preparing to tackle the third building block — extremely high temperatures.

And they hope to conduct fusion experiments at the Albuquerque lab late next year, at the same time they will propose the Sandia alternative to DOE and then Congress.

Don Cook, director of Sandia's pulse-power program, which includes fusion research, said the lab will conduct temperature experiments this spring.

The objective: Demonstrate that the Sandia pulse-power machine can approach the 2 million degree temperatures required for fusion — and for the National Ignition Facility.

Leaders of several anti-nuclear and environmental groups last week said Sandia's work could justify halting the National Ignition Facility pending a review in the taxpayers' interest.

Mike Campbell, director of Livermore's military fusion program, commended his colleagues at Sandia.

"These are very nice results, and I mean that genuinely," he said. "They are good for the overall program, in which pulse power (technology) is complimentary to lasers."

But he said Sandia's success could mean dark clouds for Livermore.

"I hope it doesn't, but I can see now that's what's going to happen, and that we may have to defend NIF all over again," said Campbell.

The National Ignition Facility was approved last year, but it took five years of scientific evaluations and a last-minute review by Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary.

She had NIF opponents anticipating that the project might be dead on arrival. Instead, she approved it.

Last month the facility was identified as the flagship in DOE's new weapons research program for ensuring aging warheads are safe and reliable.

The facility is to begin construction next year. Full operation is set for 2002.

Campbell said he hopes the nation's three nuclear weapons laboratories will "stand together" if the National Ignition Facility debate resumes.

Campbell said he fears that "simplistic arguments" now will be made to Congress and DOE that Sandia can build a "cheap NIF."

"Clearly that's politically sensitive," said Sandia physicist Rick Spielman.

He declined to speculate that Sandia's technology could be advanced as a cheaper NIF substitute, but he and

Cook acknowledged that Sandia is closing in on most NIF criteria.

Spielman stressed that Sandia's objective "never has been" duplicating NIF, in which fusion fuel is to burn briefly one laser shot at a time.

Rather, he said, Sandia's objective is to achieving the big prize, called "high gain," which is sustained and constant burning of hydrogen fuel.

Such fusion technology, which most scientists say Livermore's programs can never attain, could be used to drive electric power plants and make existing coal-fired and nuclear power plants obsolete.

Cook is the first to acknowledge that scientists "still have a fair distance to go."

After 50 years of promising research, most scientists say that, short of a dramatic breakthrough, perfecting fusion power plants is probably still decades away.

Sandia's path to that dream is a particle-beam accelerator called the X-1. It is still in the concept stage. It is a much bigger successor to another Sandia particle-beam accelerator called the PBFA-Z, the one that set all the records and caused a stir.

Cook, Spielman's boss, said Sandia plans to seek DOE approval and funds next year for an X-1 design study that would include construction cost estimates.

Past Sandia estimates for a pulse-power version of NIF have been less than half NIF's cost.

Like Spielman, Cook cautioned that whether X-1 is perceived as a cheap alternative to NIF is a "political issue" and is entirely up to DOE and Congress.

They said Sandia's aim is not to replace NIF but to demonstrate the potential value of using the new approach to generate X-rays and fusion energy.

Spielman said that at the least, the recent Sandia experiments should ensure the lab remains "a player at the table," not to mention assuring its \$25 million annual fusion budget.

In the recent PBFA-Z experiments, Sandia unexpectedly set records for:

- A power pulse of 160 trillion watts. That's roughly 30 times the combined output of all the world's electric power plants, but only for 10 billionths of a second.

- An energy burst of 1.8 megajoules, far more than the best performance of Livermore's Nova and more than would be required of NIF.

"The mood here is wildly enthusiastic because we have shown that we can do exciting experiments today, not five years from now," said Spielman, with a reference to NIF.

What was remarkable to many fusion scientists is that Sandia exceeded

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■ Scientists' 50-year quest for fusion.
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milestones in the first two months of what was to be a yearlong experimental campaign using PBFA-Z.

A Sandia news release, had to be rewritten several times as PBFA-Z crushed its own records and dwarfed those established by Livermore's Nova.

And Sandia did it all less than a year after some experts had suggested that DOE should cancel Sandia's pulse program on its PBFA-II. That's the predecessor to PBFA-Z.

Among the critics was Los Alamos' military fusion leader Melissa Cray. She argued, during a review of the Sandia program in Albuquerque about a year ago, that Sandia had failed to achieve its own scientific goals and its promises to DOE.

Several years ago, DOE had pulled the plug on Los Alamos' Aurora fusion

laser for similar reasons; but, last fall, DOE plugged Sandia's PBFA-II back into the wall. DOE decided that despite the lab's failures, its work still had potential.

It authorized the lab to spend \$13 million to modify the \$48 million PBFA-II and turn it into the PBFA-Z.

"This is great work, quite an achievement and in a short period of time," Cray acknowledged last week.

But, she added, "I don't think they can get to the same places NIF can."

Leaders of several environmental and anti-nuclear groups in New Mexico and California, which oppose NIF, think otherwise.

They said Sandia's success offers an opportunity to demand a new scientific review of NIF.

They see Sandia's quick success as more evidence of the unnecessary ex-

pansion and costly duplication in post-Cold War nuclear weapons research.

"I'd like to see the NIF taken out, period," said Jackie Cabasso, executive director of the Western States Legal Foundation in California.

"That would be one hell of a victory," she said. "Livermore would have a much harder time justifying its existence without NIF."

She said her organization certainly will use Sandia's success to challenge the National Ignition Facility, because if a much cheaper machine can do the job, the country shouldn't be saddled with NIF.

Physicist Greg Mello of the anti-nuclear Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe called Sandia's experiments "a pretty interesting development."

"In our view, none of these facilities is needed or have any bearing on main-

taining the existing (nuclear weapons) stockpile," he said.

He argued that they are excuses for the labs to advance nuclear weapon designs.

"But all things being equal," he said, "the cheaper they are, the better; the fewer there are, the better; and the fewer laboratories in operation, the better."

Marylle Kelley, president of a group that opposes NIF and Livermore, said, "Most people don't realize, despite the front put up by DOE and the labs, that NIF is very controversial scientifically, not just politically.

"It has a number of problems, and the fact that there are other less costly routes just adds to the need for Congress and the scientific community to take another look at it.

"And certainly," she said, "for the taxpayers to be raising questions."

SANTA FE

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1996

SECTION B

U.S. going ahead with nuclear tests

By **KEITH EASTHOUSE**
The New Mexican

The U.S. Department of Energy has decided to go ahead with a controversial weapons-related test that will be conducted at the agency's Nevada Test Site by Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The date of the test, called "Rebound," will be set early next year, according to Derek Scammell, an Energy Department spokesman based in Las Vegas, Nev.

A similar test planned by LANL's sister weapons laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, also

got the green light, Scammell said.

Two further tests, one by Los Alamos and one by Livermore, eventually will take place at the site where full-bore nuclear devices used to be detonated under the desert.

The decision, announced Monday in a document related to a sweeping review of the test site's environmental impacts, was greeted with anger by nuclear watchdog groups.

The groups say the tests, in which a nuclear material — plutonium — is subjected to the impact of a non-nuclear explosion, violates the spirit of a test ban treaty.

"The experiments undermine the goal of implementing the recently signed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," Physicians for Social Responsibility said in a statement.

Energy Department officials say the tests are intended to support the DOE's "stockpile stewardship" program, an effort to ensure the country's aging nuclear arsenal remains safe and reliable.

But activists, including Greg Mello of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group, see another motive.

"The real reason the department is planning these tests is to provide data needed to redesign weapons in the stock-

pile," Mello said.

The Rebound test was initially scheduled to take place this past June. Because of criticism, the DOE decided in April to back off and review the matter.

The experiments are "subcritical" because plutonium is not compressed to the point that it would ignite a sustained nuclear reaction. The tests are slated to take place 980 feet underground.

In response to criticism that any kind of underground test involving nuclear materials poses a threat to the test ban treaty, Scammell said it is possible that representatives from other nuclear countries will be allowed to observe the experiments.



Raiders Defeat
Chiefs To Stay
In Playoff Hunt

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ALBUQUERQUE
JOURNAL

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TUESDAY
December 10, 1996

North
EDITION

Farmington Keeps Mesa

Airline Moves Training Center to Dallas-Fort Worth



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ACCESS
Lab Goes On Line

Employees at Los Alamos National Lab can keep up with in-house news over Web site.

PAGE B 1

DOE Plans To Bury, Burn Excess Plutonium

BY IAN HOFFMAN
Journal Staff Writer

The U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday it will dispose of an estimated 55 tons of unneeded weapons plutonium by encasing some in glass for burial but turning most into nuclear reactor fuel.

"Whether we burn it or put it in glass, the outcome is the same: For the first time in

history we're destroying and not creating plutonium," Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said Monday in a news conference from Washington, D.C.

Splitting the disposal of excess plutonium between burying it and burning it to produce energy will cost about \$2.3 billion, O'Leary said.

The disposal plan, which aims to make

surplus weapons plutonium virtually unusable for weapons, goes into motion in 2003. The DOE has plenty of questions to answer before then.

It still must choose the three to five reactors necessary for burning plutonium-based fuel. And it must decide whether to make into pits or the cores of thermonuclear weapons in the event of war.

For now, the DOE expects to store the canisters where they're filled, at its Savannah River Site, near Aiken, S.C.

In a separate part of the decision, Los Alamos National Laboratory was chosen to store another class of plutonium known as strategic reserve, which quickly can be made into pits or the cores of thermonuclear weapons in the event of war.

The vast majority of strategic reserve plutonium, however, will be stored at the DOE's Pantex plant in Amarillo, where weapons no longer needed in the stockpile are taken apart, department officials said.

The DOE revealed in 1994 that Los Alamos stored nearly 3 tons of weapons-grade plutonium at that time. A little more than

See DOE on PAGE 3

DOE Plans To Bury, Burn Excess Plutonium

from PAGE 1

half is part of 55 tons nationwide that is not expected to be needed for nuclear weapons.

To store such plutonium and other weapons materials, Los Alamos is preparing to fix a never-used nuclear-materials storage facility at a cost of \$45 million. Fatal design flaws prevented the building from opening. Engineers and architects are to begin on a new design in 1998, and the building is supposed to be finished in 2001.

Nuclear activists worried Monday that the announcement of LANL as a strategic reserve storage site might drive an expansion of the storage building.

"We went through the entire Cold War without needing it. Why do we need it now?" asked Greg Mello, head of the Santa Fe-based Los

Alamos Study Group.

Likewise, the decision to burn surplus weapons plutonium in civilian reactors drew fire from activists. They contend other nations will view the move as dissolving the historical separation between the U.S. weapons complex and the U.S. nuclear power industry.

U.S. arms-control experts are split on the issue. A month ago, John Holm, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, denounced the use of plutonium in civilian reactors. But he endorsed the idea Monday.

"This is real disarmament," Holm said. "My view is it's entirely responsible and proper to pursue both of these options and avoid putting all our effort into one."

The nuclear-power industry

favors the move for two reasons. The decision endorses the use of plutonium in civilian reactors, a policy the industry has long sought. As part of the plan, the DOE would pay at least \$300 million to power companies that take the fuel.

Eighteen electric utilities with more than three dozen reactors — including the Palo Verde Generating Station, which is partly owned by the Public Service Company of New Mexico — have expressed interest in accepting the fuel for disposal, O'Leary said.

No American commercial reactor currently uses plutonium-based fuel, known as mixed-oxide or MOX fuel. The fuel was abandoned in 1977 in the United States as part of a policy of not mixing military and civilian nuclear programs, although MOX is used in some European

reactors. Also, the production of MOX fuel and depleted uranium oxides will require industry contractors to build roughly \$1 billion in new factories.

The factories probably will draw partly on European expertise in making mixed-oxide fuel but also on Los Alamos experiments on turning plutonium pits, which contain gallium, into nearly pure plutonium oxide. The lab produced the first mixed-oxide fuel pellet from the pit of a nuclear weapon in June 1995.

Environmentalists criticized the DOE's decision to burn some plutonium as mixed-oxide fuel as a form of welfare to the beleaguered nuclear-power industry.

"This is a decision about the energy basis of our civilization and who will profit," Mello said.



Edition--Final Date--12/10/1996 Page--A1

DOE To Discard Excess Plutonium

Ian Hoffman Journal Northern Bureau

Burying, Burning To Cost \$2.3 Billion

SANTA FE -- The U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday it will dispose of an estimated 55 tons of unneeded weapons plutonium by encasing some in glass for burial but turning most into nuclear reactor fuel.

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The disposal plan, which aims to make surplus weapons plutonium virtually unusable for weapons, goes into motion in 2003. The DOE has plenty of questions to answer before then.

It still must choose the three to five reactors necessary for burning plutonium-based fuel. And it must decide whether to bury canisters of glass-encased plutonium at Yucca Mountain in Nevada or elsewhere. For now, the DOE expects to store the canisters where they're filled, at its Savannah River Site, near Aiken, S.C.

In a separate part of the decision, Los Alamos National Laboratory was chosen to store another class of plutonium known as strategic reserve, which quickly can be made into pits or the cores of thermonuclear weapons in the event of war.

The vast majority of strategic reserve plutonium, however, will be stored at the DOE's Pantex plant in Amarillo, where weapons no longer needed in the stockpile are taken apart, department officials said.

The DOE revealed in 1994 that Los Alamos stored nearly 3 tons of weapons-grade plutonium at that time. A little more than half is part of 55 tons nationwide that is not expected to be needed for nuclear weapons.

To store such plutonium and other weapons materials, Los Alamos is preparing to fix a never-used nuclear-materials storage facility at a cost of \$45 million. Fatal design flaws prevented the building from opening. Engineers and architects are to begin on a new design in 1998, and the building is supposed to be finished in 2001.

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Environmentalists criticized the DOE's decision to burn some plutonium as mixed-oxide fuel as a form of welfare to the beleaguered nuclear-power industry.

"This is a decision about the energy basis of our civilization and who will profit," Mello said. Note: Fact box on plutonium, with illustrations.

Labs: Nuclear tests are vital to U.S. security

By Lawrence Spohn
TRIBUNE REPORTER

New Mexico and California anti-nuclear groups are challenging the nation's nuclear-weapons labs to justify "subcritical" nuclear tests slated to begin next year.

Los Alamos National Laboratory is already prepared to conduct the first of what the groups say are unnecessary and politically dangerous experiments that are really aimed at advancing nuclear weapons design.

Lab and government officials insist the tests are vital to national security.

"Prove it," says Greg Mello, a spokesman for the Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe.

This week, he and the lab watchdog group joined other activists nationally in criticizing the Department of Energy's decision to conduct the tests and calling for independent expert reviews.

Mello contends DOE has failed to demonstrate its claim that the tests are needed to guarantee that the nation's nuclear arsenal is robust and safe.

"Actually, we need two expert panels," he said. "A scientific panel is needed to assess the utility or scientific necessity for these tests.

"The other would look at and assess the international impacts on non-proliferation, the test ban and

Please see **TESTING/A5**

Wednesday, December 11, 1996

THE ALBUQUERQUE

TESTING *from A1*

arms-control issues," he said.

Los Alamos Lab, one of the country's three nuclear-weapons labs, is planning to conduct the first test, dubbed "Rebound," early next year at the Nevada Test Site.

After four years of no weapons testing and with the recently negotiated Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty yet to be put into place, Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary said Monday that the new tests are legal internationally because they will not violate the treaty's "zero nuclear yield" threshold.

They will be conducted instead of the "low-yield" tests, or mini-bombs, that weapons scientists had advocated in the test-ban environment to support the mission of nuclear stockpile stewardship and management.

O'Leary deferred setting a date for the first test until next month. But Los Alamos Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold said Tuesday that the lab is ready and that Rebound could be detonated as soon as February.

The test is to be conducted 962 feet beneath the nuclear-cratered desert of

the Nevada Test Site, where hundreds of warheads have been detonated.

The test will be at the new U1a Complex, which consists of several shafts for placing experimental data collectors near the bomb.

Subcritical tests are triggered by conventional chemical explosives and do not produce a nuclear explosion, or yield, in the military sense, Danneskiold said.

They will, however, involve small amounts of radioactive plutonium and uranium, which are the core explosive components of nuclear bombs.

In the tests, Los Alamos scientists will slam "explosively driven flyer plates" into small quantities of plutonium to generate intense atmospheric pressures on the target nuclear material.

The test will be assessed by the nation's two other nuclear-weapons labs, Sandia National Labs in Albuquerque and Livermore National Laboratory in California.

Livermore is planning to conduct at least two of its own tests, presumably after Los Alamos conducts a second test, called "HOLOG," later next year.

Los Alamos and DOE say the subcritical tests "are essential for assessing nuclear-weapons performance, reliability and safety" — for example, to evaluate how nuclear-weapons components age.

But Mello contends they aim to provide "data wanted or needed to redesign the weapons in the stockpile."

The tests would cost about \$20 million a pop, he estimated, and are also being used to justify keeping the Test Site at an artificial state of readiness at a cost of some \$270 million per year.

Danneskiold said he was not sure how much the tests would cost, but said they are part of a comprehensive national-stockpile program. Los Alamos has been preparing for Rebound throughout this year.

It was originally scheduled to be conducted in June, but was delayed by DOE pending its own assessment.

Mello was among critics on both coasts who warned this week that the tests threaten a fragile international commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and the test ban.

"The high international political and non-proliferation costs of the experiments far outweigh their dubious

TRUEN TRIBUNE

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technical utility," Livermore activist Marylia Kelly said.

"We call for the immediate cancellation of these experiments," said Kelley, president of Tri-Valley Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment.

She said the underground tests will strain the language of the test-ban treaty, which prohibits "any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion," and will "severely complicate the ability of the U.S. and other states to verify" that no nation violates the treaty.

In Washington, D.C., Daryl Kimball,

director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, blasted DOE and the labs.

"There is no evidence to date to suggest that potential problems, such as plutonium aging, have degraded the performance of the weapon designs in the active U.S. arsenal," he said.

"The DOE has failed to conduct an independent, public technical review of the need for these activities," he said, predicting the tests will complicate the ratification of the test-ban treaty by 44 named nuclear-weapons-capable nations.

He suggested the tests were post-

poned earlier this year because of the sensitive negotiations in Geneva for the test-ban treaty.

DOE contends that the amount of nuclear material used and the 50 to 500 pounds of high-explosive charge are insufficient to produce a self-sustaining nuclear reaction.

But Kimball says it will be "very difficult for independent observers or nations to verify" that and will inevitably lead to suspicions that the United States is continuing a program of "qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons."

Paper: Valley Times (Pleasanton, CA)

Title: LIVERMORE LAB NEEDS \$350 MILLION FOR MACHINE TO GO WITH SUPERLASER

Author: PETER WEISS

Date: December 13, 1996

Section: news

Page: A03

LIVERMORE A \$350 million pulse-power machine that will simulate nuclear weapons blasts is needed in addition to the billion-dollar-plus superlaser planned for Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, according to the director of Sandia National Laboratories.

Published reports have suggested that a proposed pulse-power machine, called X-1, could potentially serve as a cheap replacement for the yet-to-be-built laser known as the National Ignition Facility, or NIF. Paul Robinson, Sandia's director, said Wednesday that was wrong.

"I felt it might be useful to comment on a theme which I think far too many people jump to: Gee, let's make a contest out of this and pit the NIF against the X-1.' I think there's no way you could do that because of the different approaches and relative time scales at which they're going," he said.

Sandia's pulse-power machines unload stored electrical energy into a ring of metal wires. That energy is vaporized and imploded, creating a dense plasma of electrically charged metal atoms which in turn release X-rays.

This fall, a newly upgraded machine known as the Particle Beam Fusion Accelerator Z-Pinch version, or PBFA-Z broke records for power and energy output.

Given the surprising speed with which the records were achieved, Sandia is preparing to ask the Department of Energy and Congress for funds to design and build a next generation beyond PBFA-Z that would be the X-1.

Robinson said Sandia hopes to begin a "conceptual design" in 1998-1999 and switch the machine on by 2006.

Sandia will propose that the machine, which Robinson estimated would occupy a building about two-thirds the size of a football field, be built at the Nevada Test Site.

The Livermore superlaser, on the other hand, would consist of 192 powerful beams stacked inside a building the size of a stadium that would blast a tiny pellet of hydrogen fuel into a thermonuclear explosion a miniature hydrogen bomb in billionths of a second.

Foes of continued nuclear weapons research said they question the need for either machine.

In fact, they are trying to convince the government to abandon most of its 10-year, \$4-billion-per-year nuclear weapons research program known as "stockpile stewardship," which includes the superlaser and a suite of other new facilities.

They also doubt that nuclear weapons scientists need more than one type of machine capable of compressing matter to enormous densities and temperatures.

Marylia Kelley, president of Livermore-based Tri-Valley Citizens Against A Radioactive Environment, argued that duplication in the program is obvious.

"The labs are acting like kids in a candy store, where they walk in and say I want it all. It's up to the taxpayers and Congress to tell them they can't have it all," she said.

Greg Mello, executive director of Santa Fe, N.M.-based watchdog the **Los Alamos Study Group**, suspects the government of growing projects as a way to keep more nuclear weapons experts busy.

"We're running into a situation where the weapons are maintaining the people rather than the people maintaining the weapons," he said.

But Robinson insisted the pulse-power machine and the superlaser should both be built because each focuses on a different realm of physics.

"The lasers have done very impressive work in producing high temperatures Pulse power has much higher energy but lower temperatures," he said.

He argued that weapons scientists charged with keeping the arsenal safe and reliable need a variety of machines to look at the variety of conditions of density, temperature and time involved in nuclear blasts, now that full-scale tests have ended.

The PBFA-Z successes have caused Sandia to abandon proposals for a much bigger pulse-power machine than X-1, which was to be called Jupiter.

The lab has realized it can achieve Jupiter-size energy and power in a smaller facility.

That means both X-1 and the superlaser could be built without increasing the nuclear weapons budget because Jupiter's demise frees up the funding for X-1 beginning around 2001, Robinson said.

Author: PETER WEISS

Section: news

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Museum Space Lottery Protested

Journal Staff Report

An anti-nuclear proliferation group protested Tuesday against the Bradbury Science Museum's use of a lottery to allot museum space used for public exhibits.

Greg Mello, president of the Los Alamos Study Group, says it is considering a suit alleging the lottery is a form of censorship that violates its free-speech rights.

Since 1993, the group has mounted exhibits at the museum that dissent from the pro-nuclear weapons views of Los Alamos National Laboratory, the museum operator.

Museum director John Rhoades, acting on advice from a lab lawyer, said he viewed the study group's objections as a withdrawal from the lottery. He promptly awarded all of the space that would have been available through the lottery to the only other contender, the Los Alamos Education Group, made up of war veterans and lab retirees. Its current exhibit supports the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The education group will have the space for six months, starting late next month.

Rhoades boasts of the museum's role as forum for debate over nuclear weapons and this nation's solitary use of them for military purposes. He is not troubled, he said, by the gradual shrinkage of space for the only anti-nuclear group interested in exhibiting there.

The laboratory came up with the lottery as a method of awarding a limited amount of public exhibit space, without judging its ideological content.

"I think the question is whether one group has an exclusive lock on that piece of museum real estate. What the laboratory is saying is that they do not. It should be available to anyone who requests it," he said.

The study group contends the museum has enough unused exhibit space to feature both exhibits. Its own exhibits have depicted the destruction and health effects of the atomic bombing in Japan, as well as the environmental and cultural impacts of the nuclear arms race.

"The issue is more than simply space. It's the idea that free speech can be governed by a lottery conducted by a government contractor," Mello said. "It's a concept of free speech that you might expect coming out of a nuclear-weapons laboratory where free speech is more likely to be punished than preserved."

The museum's lottery policy does set aside a third of the public space for rebuttal of whatever exhibit is in the other two thirds.

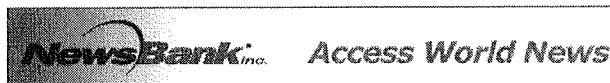
The Los Alamos Education Group plans to replace its exhibit with a new one promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology, such as production of nuclear power, medical isotopes and irradiated foods.

"It's none of that sensational stuff," said Steve Stoddard, a former Army captain and a lab retiree who served 12 years as a state senator.

It's also not a debate Los Alamos Study Group wants.

"That's not what we're interested in. I think the public is done a great disservice by the shifting of the critique from the laboratory to an essentially powerless citizens group," said Mello.

"It essentially neuters dissent and preserves the role of the laboratory as an authoritative arbiter, above and beyond dissent."



Paper: Santa Fe New Mexican, The (NM)
 Title: BRIEFS
 Date: December 18, 1996

Administrators asked

to substitute

To make up for a recent shortage of substitutes in Santa Fe Public Schools, Superintendent Lee Vargas on Tuesday asked all district administrators to substitute in at least one class before next week's Christmas break, as well as in another during the second half of the school year.

Vargas took the order seriously. On Tuesday the superintendent left the office and substituted in a class at Santa Fe High School.

Mike Nuanes, the district's personnel director, said the district always sees a shortage of subs immediately before and after holidays.

Nuanes said district teachers are permitted to choose their subs from a list of about 200 names, but that usually fewer than 100 are available on any given day.

He said schools end up splitting classes between teachers or having support staff teach a class.

On Tuesday, Nuanes said, 117 teachers either called in sick or took the day off, resulting in a shortage of about 15 positions.

Auditor running for

school board slot

Daniel Alvarez, a financial auditor for the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, has officially declared his candidacy for the position of Espanola School Board District 2.

If elected, he said he will be actively involved in the District's Accountability Reporting process, identifying deficiencies and correcting them.

Alvarez is the co-chairperson of the Espanola Public School District's Gifted Program's Advisory Council, a Boy Scout leader, a member of the American Legion Post 17 and a captain in the Army National Guard.

Museum to switch

exhibit material

LOS ALAMOS A Santa Fe peace group's exhibit at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum will be replaced by one belonging to a pro-nuclear group.

LANL announced the decision Tuesday, after the **Los Alamos Study Group** refused to participate in a new lottery system recently drafted by the lab to determine who gets use of the space on a rotating six-month basis.

The exhibit space was automatically awarded to the Los Alamos Education Group, the only participant in the lottery. That pro-nuclear group in 1995 demanded and was given half the space being used by the peace group to counter their anti-nuclear display commemorating the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan.

In a recent letter to museum director John Rhoades, Greg Mello of the Study Group wrote that his organization objected to the lottery because it would deprive the group of freedom of speech and, at least periodically, of its right to provide a dissenting perspective from the pro-nuclear policies promoted by the museum.

The Study Group is considering legal action against the museum, spokeswoman Cathy Sullivan said.

Hotel needs food

box donations

The Doubletree Hotel is seeking nonperishable food donations from businesses, restaurants and hotels in an effort to reach out to local families in need.

The holiday food drive, which began Dec. 9, has received about 12 responses from businesses so far, said hotel sales manager Dana Isaacs, adding that only one of them has actually brought in canned goods. The others have merely confirmed that they plan to participate, she said.

Including donations from Doubletree employees, the hotel has accumulated about three or four boxes of food, Isaacs said.

Contributions can be delivered to the hotel lobby, 3347 Cerrillos Road, at any time, or a volunteer can pick up the food. For more information, or to schedule a pick-up time, call Dana at 473-2800, Ext. 452.

DOE schedules

WIPP hearings

CARLSBAD The Department of Energy said Tuesday it will hold public hearings next month in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Carlsbad to receive public comment on the disposal phase supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

The hearings in Albuquerque are scheduled for Jan. 6-7, followed by three days of hearings in Santa Fe from Jan. 8-10. The hearing in Carlsbad will be held on Jan. 13.

The draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement updates information contained in the first WIPP supplemental Environmental Impact statement completed in 1990 and the original 1980 WIPP Environmental Impact Statement.

WIPP is an Energy Department project designed to bury plutonium-contaminated waste from the nation's defense industry 2,150 feet underground in ancient salt beds southeast of Carlsbad. The repository could open as early as late next year, pending EPA approval.

Staff and wire reports

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Lab's Future Faces Uneasy Ties to North N.M.

Ian Hoffman Journal Staff Writer

1996 The Year In Review

* Los Alamos National Laboratory's plans for survival have brought it to a preoccupation with the past

Los Alamos National Laboratory's strategy for post-Cold War survival has brought it to a future preoccupied with the past, and to confrontation over its uneasy relations with northern New Mexico.

This year -- when nearly all nuclear nations agreed to end weapons testing -- the lab shifted closer to the days of the 1940s and '50s when it alone shaved plutonium into the grapefruit-size heart of thermonuclear weapons. And it secured a future as caretaker of an aging weapons stockpile, never to be tested again yet expected to endure as long as the nation justifies it.

Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold calls the shift an "implosion back to a smaller core."

Having sold the defense establishment and Congress on this new, expensive mission, the lab saw its defense funding rebound, and lab director Sig Hecker saw an opening to announce his intent to step down next October.

It also was a year when the lab struggled as never before to reverse erosion of its esteem among northern New Mexicans, particularly after the layoffs of nearly 950 lab and contract workers in November 1995.

Lab managers met one aim: They cut research costs by increasing the ratio of scientists and engineers to the workers who support them.

Still, it unleashed long-simmering discontent that's unlikely to subside in 1997.

Ninety-six laid-off workers will argue in an Albuquerque court this spring that the layoffs were improperly conducted. Among revelations damaging to the lab so far: lab managers, on orders from lab attorneys, shredded much of the documentation used to choose laid-off workers.

More recently, a federal labor agency concluded the lab's layoff selections discriminated against Hispanic workers -- a charge the laboratory has vowed to fight, saying in part that investigators relied on deeply flawed statistical analyses.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary then suggested the lab not waste time and money defending against the accusation.

Beyond rekindling charges of racial bias, the layoffs fed nearly 200 disgruntled workers into the community of lab critics. By October, lab lawyers had little trouble convincing a judge that Los Alamos could not receive a fair trial in north-central New Mexico.

"The RIF (reduction in force) was just a culmination of inequity and unfairness that people have felt for generations," said Chuck Montano, a lab auditor and leader of a 300-member employee- and RIFee-advocacy group, Citizens for LANL Employee Rights.

CLER's roots lay in the conviction among members of the lab's Hispanic Roundtable that lab managers passed over minorities for promotions and hiring.

With the layoffs, CLER's ranks quadrupled virtually overnight.

"The timing couldn't have been worse for them and couldn't have been better for people like me, people who want to see change," Montano said. "The RIF situation confirmed what we'd been saying since 1994. The laboratory, quite frankly, gave me an issue I could develop further. They gave me ammunition and credibility."

Fuel for critics seemed endless this year.

A 24-year-old graduate student working on a microwave oven at the lab received an electrical shock severe enough to dislocate his shoulders. Hecker was so shaken by visiting the student in the hospital that he stopped lab operations for the first time in its history so that workers labwide could review safety rules.

Investigators with the U.S. Department of Energy started their own labwide review. They concluded three months later that Los Alamos' safety culture was unacceptable for a government weapons laboratory.

Luck, it appears, as much as Hecker's new dictum of "Safety First!" saved the lab from a fatality in 1996.

A draft of the DOE report had been in circulation at the lab for more than a month when an unattended experiment on classified materials exploded within a lab oven at the Chemistry and Metallurgical Research Building. The explosion did not release radiation but sprayed shrapnel throughout a lab room, started small fires and destroyed two ovens, lights and other lab equipment. Had anyone been in the room, the prospects for death or serious injury would have been strong, a DOE safety official said.

The lab's chronic problems -- safety deficiencies, perceptions of ethnic discrimination, fragile relations with neighboring towns and pueblos -- were spilled into the open by the layoffs and became political causes for Democrats who had few votes to lose in conservative Los Alamos County.

The lab lost its mantle as an aloof and unassailable sanctum, veiled in the dual mystique of science and national security. And the lab's manager, the University of California, became an easy target.

So its contract renewal with the DOE, a casual bureaucratic exercise for more than 50 years, became a struggle. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., and Democratic leaders in the state Legislature pressed O'Leary to put the contract up for competitive bid. She declined, saying that only UC could manage Los Alamos without interrupting its work.

The university placated DOE and the congressional delegation with promises of stronger relations and more economic development in northern New Mexico. So began a flood of donations and scholarships for nearby pueblos and colleges, plus press conferences to promote the job benefits of stockpile management. The lab's new director of institutional development, Tom Garcia, talked of revamping lab contracts to direct more of the lab's economic largess to New Mexico.

Fresh from the layoffs, LANL recast itself a virtual job factory -- counting on \$800 million of new experimental machines, nuclear-material storage and handling facilities, high-speed computers and lab renovations over the next 10 years, Garcia told Rotarians and county commissioners across northern New Mexico.

Its contractors would need offices, architects, cement mixers, fax machines, crane operators, physicists. The list seemed limitless.

Fluor Daniel Corp. won negotiating rights to one of the first contracts, for designing the new facilities, at least partly because the engineering giant promised a local office in Espanola's new business incubator, itself built largely with a DOE grant.

"The coffers have been opened in a way that they haven't been before," said Greg Mello, head of a Santa Fe-based anti-nuclear group.

"The laboratory is engaged in an unprecedented campaign to win hearts and minds in the colony. And primarily the reason is the importance of smoothing things out after the RIF and in general for smoothing things out for stockpile stewardship and (plutonium) pit production," Mello said.

Activists deride stockpile stewardship -- funded at \$20 billion over four years -- as a buyoff for the lab's accession to a test ban or, more derogatorily, as "welfare for weapons scientists."

Lab and DOE officials readily acknowledge the term has a grain of truth: One premise for the program is retaining the scientific minds necessary to rebuild the diminishing stockpile and start testing again in event of heightened international tensions.

"The joke is, you can't just leave them behind glass and hang a sign on them that says, 'Break in case of nuclear war,' " said the lab's Danneskiold.

But the question persists: Can Los Alamos and the other key centers for weapons research, Sandia and Lawrence Livermore national laboratories, lure the best and brightest to work in a field that to most appearances is in decline, if not near a dead end?

Mello contends not and points to a favorite target, the Dual-Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Testing Facility, where scientists will explode weapons parts and peer into the explosions with intersecting X-ray beams.

"No one cares about hydrodynamic instabilities but the weapons program," Mello said. "It's really boring."

Danneskiold maintains the intellectual draw is still strong. The lab's weapons work demands broad expertise in geology, atmospheric science, materials science, high-energy physics, health, astrophysics and other disciplines.

"There has to be this huge base of basic science that holds up this relatively small core of nuclear-weapons science," he said.

"It's all extremely difficult, and the nature of science and engineering is such that the most challenging problems are the most attractive. Nobody wants to do easy science."

PHOTO: b/w

HECKER: Halted operation to scan safety rules