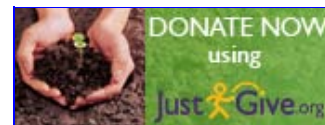


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BULLETIN #94



HISTORICAL SURGE IN WEAPONS SPENDING DOES NOT DISARMAMENT MAKE AND OTHER NEWS

May 12, 2010

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

There have been so many things happening since our last communication with you that I really do not know where to start. We keep hearing about Obama's disarmament plans, especially since his speech in Prague in April 2009. However, what many of you might not realize is that Obama really didn't promise disarmament then and never has. He just spoke of his commitment "to seek . . . a world without nuclear weapons," while at the same time maintaining "a safe, secure, and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies."

Well, I can say that he is sincerely living up to his commitment to maintain the arsenal. On February 1st the Obama administration released its fiscal year 2011 budget request containing the largest spending surge for the nuclear weapons complex, and also the military, since the early 1940's. This isn't the way you "seek" a world without nuclear weapons. Obama was right when he said that it might not happen in his lifetime. It definitely won't at this rate.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was debated and shelved. And from the Study Group's perspective this was a good outcome. Early in the debate it was obvious that the concessions demanded by the Senate were going to be piled heavy and high. As Greg Mello said in an email earlier this year, "Active or passive support [by non-governmental organizations in this case] of U.S. ratification of the test ban means active or passive political support (respectively) for enhancement of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, infrastructure, and budget. In other words, *in the U.S. today, support for CTBT ratification means supporting the opposite of nuclear disarmament.*"

On April 7th the Obama administration released the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) which describes a continuous modernization of warheads, bombs and delivery systems, mentions three successive warhead programs, the W76-1 LEP, B61-12 LEP and the W78 or W78/W88 replacement warhead. The NPR also specifically endorses the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Nuclear Facility (CMRR-NF) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the construction of the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) at the Y-12 plant in Tennessee. Both the CMRR and the UPF are multi-billion dollar projects, with the CMRR currently at \$4.2 billion and aimed at enhancing LANL's capacity to manufacture new plutonium warhead cores ("pits").

Then the next day, April 8th, President Obama and Russian President Medvedev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). It now will be sent to the Senate to begin the ratification process. However, as Greg correctly predicted in early January of this year, "the START treaty will not be ratified without, at a minimum, a big suite of hawkish giveaways: a) programs to gradually ease new warheads into the stockpile under a variety of shifting euphemisms, bit by bit, with regular appropriations as well as **mid-year reprogramming requests**; b) **huge new budget-breaking infrastructure commitments**; and hence c) a **big surge in new nuclear weapons funding**; and quite likely d) some institutional measures to ensure the permanence of funding to the extent possible."

Most of these predictions Greg mentioned have already come true, one just a few days ago. On May 5th the National Nuclear Security

Administration (NNSA) released its reprogramming request. From the [Study Group's press remarks of May 7th](#) – this request “primarily seeks funds to increase the pace of planned refurbishment and upgrades to a family of air-dropped nuclear bombs collectively called the 'B61.' Significantly, this request asks congressional permission to modify the nuclear explosive within the bomb. If granted, this would be the first such permission granted by Congress since the end of nuclear testing in 1992, unless there have been secret modifications we don't know about.”

And now during the month of May states from all over the world are gathering at the United Nations in New York to discuss the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in a review conference.

As Study Group board member [Darwin BondGraham recently stated on his blog](#), “The NPT, but especially the CTBT and New START are not about disarmament. In this geopolitical context they are entirely about the kind of politics that is merely the extension of war by other means. They are ways of stabilizing the balance of powers, but also enforcing the unjust dissemblance of superpowers. Might may not make right, but it does make a mean treaty.

“The NPT has been used for two decades now to browbeat any nation that would dare develop nuclear weapons. Indeed, it was under this treaty's long shadow that the United States justified and launched its 2003 invasion and running occupation of Iraq. The NPT is being used with incredible effectiveness by the United States to beat the drums of war against Iran and call for increasingly grisly forms of sanctions against the isolated and impoverished state of North Korea.”

I am emphasizing each of these treaties and agreements because I want you to realize that the disarmament talk so far is just that – talk. The Study Group wants *real* disarmament. The kind that requires actual *cuts* in the nuclear weapons budget and not increases higher than any since the mid-1940s. For instance, Congress should cut the now \$4.7 billion program of replacement and expansion of the Los Alamos plutonium facilities. The first new building has already been built, the CMRR radiological laboratory, utility, and office building (RLUOB) and lacks only completing the installation of equipment. The CMRR-NF, or realistically – the plutonium pit production facility, is in the design phase. LANL has plans to begin the vast 125' deep excavation, supposedly necessary for the CMRR-NF foundation, into the mesa at Technical Area (TA)–55 sometime this fall or winter. A process that will take approximately 2 years. In constant dollars, the CMRR-NF if approved will cost at least eight times as much as any government project ever built or planned in New Mexico, except the interstate highways.

The magnitude of the cost and size of the CMRR is beyond comprehension, especially as to why something of this enormity should even be discussed when our planet and its species are dying at a shockingly rapid pace. A more responsible funding stream would be to put these billions toward renewable energy construction as rapidly as possible. If our government were to responsibly contemplate the future of our country they would understand that these scarce funds are being wasted on nuclear weapons. These weapons quite literally endanger the security of our country. They do not *deter*. As the Study Group stated in its [“primer” on the CMRR published in December 2009](#), “It hardly needs to be said that spending scarce funds to provide the capacity to “churn” the stockpile may not create the enhanced awe and fear that was sought by the neoconservative NPR authors. Might not such choices instead engender other, and far less deferential, judgments of this country? Alternatively, should enhanced awe and fear be created in those foreign eyes as planned, would that outcome really be in U.S. security interest? Usually those who fear acquire or enhance their own *deterrent*.” [emphasis added]

Unfortunately, the next paragraph in that primer spoke of a hope that the Obama administration would implement a different nuclear posture than the Bush administration. As we have seen in the NPR released in April, just the opposite has come to pass. The Obama administration has gone above and beyond the G.W. Bush administration by requesting this historically huge *surge* in nuclear weapons spending, in infrastructure as well as building more bombs.

To study this situation closer you can visit the Study Group's [new CMRR web page](#) where we have organized most of the pertinent information mentioned above into a dedicated web page.

Whenever promises are made to reduce nuclear weapons, there are inherent dangers in the political process, as entrenched interests demand assurances and compensation for their threatened privileges, just like the examples above. Greg's article for the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (Feb. 4, 2010), called this phenomenon, [“The Obama disarmament paradox.”](#) A debate ensued following that article that was published and hosted by the [Project on Defense Alternatives](#). The media interest in the investigative analysis of the Study Group has continued to increase. There are many articles and papers that have been requested and are waiting to be written and many have already been written. Visit our recently upgraded and reorganized [home page](#) on our website to see the most current articles from Greg Mello and Study Group board members Darwin BondGraham and Willem Malten. Others will be published in the coming weeks.

Greg was in Washington, DC last week and very busy with many meetings and discussions about all of the above issues, then headed to New York for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference. This past Monday he presented a panel discussion along with Willem Malten and Francine Lindberg, a Study Group friend from Taos. Watch our website in the coming weeks for articles and papers that will be published on all of these issues.

And for a couple of important announcements, Roger Snodgrass, former editor of the *Los Alamos Monitor*, is now a part-time Study Group staff member. He has been reporting on LANL for the last decade, so he has a rare expertise that we believe will be especially valuable right now.

Also, Darwin BondGraham is here from California having just completed his doctorate in sociology to work with the Study Group here in Albuquerque for a while.

The Study Group is very fortunate to have these valuable associates working closely with us here in the office, as well as many others that have stepped up to volunteer their expertise out in the field! We are very proud of our Study Group "team!"

Now I would like to take this opportunity to ask you – [Will you join us and work on these issues?](#) There are several ways that you could "contribute" toward our work:

- Become a sustaining donor to the Study Group and pledge a certain amount of money each month or quarter to be deducted from your checking account, charged to your credit card, or mail a check to the office (2901 Summit Place NE, ABQ, NM, 87106). Just call (505-265-1200) or email me ([Trish](#)) and I will set that up for you. You can also give a one-time, or set up your sustaining (recurring) donation on a [secure website through JustGive](#).
- Invite someone from our inner circle of staff and experts to come and speak to your organization or group. For instance, one of our Study Group friends invited Greg to speak to a group at the Unitarian Church here in Albuquerque at the corner of Carlisle and Comanche on Sunday, May 16th, 9:30-10:30am. Come and listen if you can! Topics are varied that we can speak to, many in addition to nuclear weapons policy. Such as: climate change, fossil fuel depletion, renewable energy, and the economy in New Mexico for example.
- I am not going to encourage you to write letters to your Congressional representatives and senators. We believe it is a waste of your time. However, what can take the place of that is speaking to them in person, or in telephone town halls. Such as the telephone town hall meeting that is being held this evening by Senator Jeff Bingaman in which he is said to be discussing "our historic victory on health insurance reform and the current work on Wall Street reform -- and he'll take questions from callers." I hope that some of you are calling in to participate and tell him what you think about "our historic victory" and Wall Street.

And meeting with them in person is even better. If you have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with any of your Congressional representatives (not staff) in person please take that opportunity and drive home to them your opposition to the enormity of nuclear weapons spending that should be zeroed out and redirected toward renewable energy construction and jobs for New Mexico!

- Letters and articles that [are a good use](#) of your time are the ones written to the editors of newspapers, magazines, blogs, and other outlets. Visibility is the key here. And you can reach a vast amount of constituents like yourself when you publish your letters or articles in these venues.

[To close, I want to reiterate how very important your contributions of all types are to the future success of the Study Group. Please consider how you can become more involved with our work.](#)

The following poem was submitted recently by John Otter, another Study Group friend.

In solidarity,

Trish Williams-Mello

*There's no more hip-hip-hooray
For the good ole U.S. of A
'Cause corporations' foolhardy speculation
Caused financial collapse in our nation
For which citizens are made to pay.*

*It's just one of those things
Like used to be done by kings
'cept now it's corporations that rule.
The government has become their tool
While citizens wait in the wings.*

--John Otter, February 2010

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