



Senators and Rep. Lujan double down on pits; new tax law makes 2017 better year for donations for some

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December 26, 2017

Dear friends --

[Thank you so much for your support -- of every kind -- this year.](#) We hope you have had (or are having!) a wonderful holiday season.

Our Nobel Peace Prize meetings in Santa Fe and Albuquerque were excellent. We saw old friends, made new friends, and were surprised by visitors from far away.

In our [previous letter](#) we wrote to you about plutonium "pit" production (again). I am afraid you will hear a lot more about this from us before, God willing, we send the new bomb factory back to the waste basket beneath the proverbial drawing board.

I (Greg) will be going back to Washington in about 10 days, to meet face-to-face with some of the actors involved in this drama.

Pits are the cores of what are essentially Nagasaki-type atomic bombs. The issues are *whether, where, how big, and when* to set up an *industrial production line* for more of them. These are just the *detonators* for today's huge thermonuclear explosives, just one of which would blast and burn a large city -- and bring the further doom of nuclear winter if used in any quantity.

The first pit was detonated near Alamogordo. The second blew up over Nagasaki, where it ultimately killed roughly 70,000 people (or more). The third pit, the "[Demon Core](#)," killed two scientists here in criticality accidents ([clip](#) from the excellent "Fat Man, Little Boy") before being melted down and re-cast.

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is the only place capable -- in theory -- of making pits right now, and LANL wants to be the place to make a lot more of them.

We have a Bulletin partly written on the latest developments but have prioritized working with newspapers and Congress. Stay tuned; most of the detailed update needs to go into that. Meanwhile you may want to read:

- [NM senators, rep push back at LANL skeptics](#), *Albuquerque Journal*, Dec 26, 2017; [Mello comment](#)
- [Heinrich, Udall, Luján: Plutonium pits report 'inherently flawed'](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Dec 20, 2017 (same story on Christmas Eve in [Taos News](#))
- [NNSA Looking At Pit Plant in S.C. as Congress Pumps Plutonium Funds to N.M.](#), *Nuclear Security & Deterrence Monitor*, Dec 8, 2017.

On another subject, [the new tax law will take effect in a few days](#). The standard deduction will rise dramatically for 2018 and afterward. [For some people, it is better to make a charitable contribution now, in 2017.](#)

Here again is [our year-end appeal](#). We set great store on peer-to-peer fundraising, so feel free to pass on that letter or to otherwise reach out on behalf of our work. This year was a thin one for us; hopefully 2018 will be better.

Our own organization aside, please recognize that we are really in an emergency period on this planet. There is much more to say about this but I will save it for the Bulletin. Meanwhile you may enjoy these notes (or find them useful), from articles last week:

The threat of war, the immanence of climate change, the burial of the planet in garbage, the sixth great extinction all produce at most a shrug. Journalism junkies natter on about Trump, long for Obama, and argue about whether Trump is worse than Bush. Climate scientists give talks, hold conferences, and bemoan the lack of any meaningful action. Trump edges towards Armageddon and people think about lunch. Everyone looks elsewhere for somebody to do something. The entire population has lost the ability to act. Meanwhile, human extinction approaches like a fire fanned by the Santa Ana winds. ("[Simone Weil, Marx and Revolution](#)," Michael Doliner, 12/21/17)

To prevent widespread misery and catastrophic biodiversity loss, humanity must practice a more environmentally sustainable alternative to business as usual....Soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory, and time is running out. We must recognize, in our day-to-day lives and in our governing institutions, that Earth with all its life is our only home. ("[World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice](#)," William Ripple et. al. and [15,364 scientists from 184 countries](#), *BioScience* 67:12, 1 December 2017, pp 1026–1028)

...Saint Isaac of Syria wrote: "An elder was once asked, 'What is a compassionate heart?' He replied: 'It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons and for all that exists.'" ("The Ecology of Prayer," Fred Bahnsen, *Orion*, December 2017)

Many ask, what can I do?

First, [make up your mind to get involved!](#) *How* and *where* are secondary decisions. As one of our board members said last week regarding the historic upheaval we are living in, "If you want to be on this planet, you had better participate!"

Here are some suggestions. They may or may not be for you. Everybody is different; everybody has got unique gifts and vantage points. "There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground" (Rumi).

- Write letters to editors castigating our senators and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan for their support for pit production. Reach out personally to their supporters and start the discussions we need. If you love this state, or this planet, it is time to end the "business as usual" approach to so many issues. And that, dear friends, is who they are. Something has to give, and it will. But what?
- Ask us to speak to your church or organization. It's amazing to us that this does not happen more. History is being made daily; we do keep up fairly well. Here for example is a recent radio panel discussion on the Administration's new national security policy: ("[Trump Announces New Cold War](#), *Sputnik News*, Loud & Clear, Dec 18, 2017).
- Write us and say you want to be involved. Then, if five or ten people say "Yes, we are interested!" more possibilities arise!
- As we said last time, one of the strange dynamics we face here at the Study Group is that we can draw in -- at least via Skype, because we care about the climate -- stellar national and international figures for events, but we can't do that unless there is sufficient interest! Is Doliner right in the quote above, when he says "Everyone looks elsewhere for somebody to do something. The entire population has lost the ability to act." We need to be the exceptions! The sparks!

Of course funding is limiting for us, but faith and networking and good will are more important than money.

Godspeed in your own projects, and see you in the New Year!

Best wishes,

Greg and Trish



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Nobel get-togethers Sunday; industrial transformation of LANL; fundraising reminder

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December 7, 2017

Dear friends --

Thank you so much for your support -- of every kind. We hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

Reminder: Nobel Peace Prize get-togethers, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, Sunday December 10, 3:15 and 6:30 pm respectively

This coming Sunday, December 10th, at 3:15 pm at The Commons, 2300 W Alameda St ([map](#)) in Santa Fe, the Study Group is sponsoring a get-together to celebrate the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony that is taking place in Oslo, Norway earlier that day. We will serve light refreshments.

As you know, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN), of which the Los Alamos Study Group has been one of the most active US partner organizations.

On Sunday we can answer questions about the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW) as well as socialize (important!). We can answer questions about other breaking issues if there is time, especially the ongoing efforts to industrialize plutonium programs at LANL.

There won't be quite enough time, so most of all we want to discuss further plans with you.

[At 6:30 pm, we will have another get-together in Albuquerque here at the World Headquarters, 2901 Summit Place NE \(map\)](#). Again, we will serve light refreshments. Please come!

The Ban Treaty is really fairly wonderful. It has tools we can use. As a piece of paper it is just that, of course. It lives in us and in others. We here in New Mexico are going to have to be part of the leadership team on this, but we will need help.

All hands on deck: plutonium pit production at LANL: \$4.9 to \$10.5 billion in industrial construction planned (See: [Bulletin 238: Normative plutonium policies as we see them – a quick sketch](#) and [Summary, NNSA pit production Analysis of Alternatives](#).)

Will all Democrats, or just our senators and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, send "it all" here? (So far, Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham has managed to avoid jumping onto the plutonium bandwagon. *It would be good to [thank her](#).*)

The senators and Rep. Lujan issued a joint statement which read in part, "Los Alamos is the only option [for pit production] to meet cost and schedule requirements [sic -- according to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) it is the least likely to do so]. We would be deeply skeptical of any alternative that contradicts that independent assessment, and we will fight [to get this production mission]."

As a former LANL scientist put it: "It's the money, honey."

Money for a very few in Los Alamos and its bedroom communities, for contractors and suppliers in other states, for the temporary nuclear-certified construction workers who would come here, and for these elected officials, who not only rake in campaign contributions from the labs but also get another two or six years of political "non-aggression" from these politically-active labs and their many friends. As much as campaign cash, it's a protection racket.

NNSA says in its report that it will spend more than \$3 billion upgrading pit manufacturing at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to achieve a 30 pit per year manufacturing capacity, regardless of its decision about a larger manufacturing capacity.

Think about this, and get mad. Three billion dollars for factory upgrades (plus annual operating expenses, in the \$200 million range) to gratuitously make parts for a new kind of weapon of mass destruction that even the military "customers" don't want (the Navy), or are cool to (the Air Force). These are world-ending weapons, make no mistake, which could never be used (that is, exploded -- they are used every day in the same way pointing a gun at someone is using a gun) under international law.

They want to spend more than \$3 billion to do all this in New Mexico, with all the problems we face? Where is the shame?

This level of federal funding, were it put into renewable energy and energy efficiency tax credits in New Mexico, would stimulate many billions more in investment -- our spending and our ownership, if rightly arranged -- and bring to our communities tens of thousands of new jobs, careers, skills, and pride -- individual and community pride. If crafted right, the result would be more resilient communities, with essentially no electric bills.

This is not a faraway dream. It is what we give up by letting our elected officials sell us out. What we give up by giving up.

Not to put too fine a point on the matter, without this transformation, New Mexico will spiral right on down, with no bottom in sight.

Make no mistake, these hypermilitaristic priorities will, if continued, automatically prevent appropriate and sufficient investments in renewable energy, sustainable transportation, education, and protection of our most vulnerable citizens and most vulnerable species. They will destroy the United States, in other words. They will kill millions of people, without a single nuclear detonation or a single atom of nuclear pollution. The sooner we let go of Empire, and re-shape national security dramatically, the more survivors there will be.

There are a lot of people who think New Mexico is an excellent place to put a plutonium pit factory -- and a national "Consolidated Storage Center" for nuclear waste as well. That's on the table too, and it may well be connected. Right now, they are in the same appropriations bill. Politicos would never in a million years think about putting a pit factory in the Bay Area, or a nuclear waste parking lot anywhere near so many congressional districts and electoral college votes.

For many people, putting nuclear missions -- weapons and waste; they go together -- in New Mexico is the "lesser of two evils." Democrats couldn't kill Obama's new weapons programs when it was easy to do. Now factories are needed to build them.

Write to the "Mistaken Three," but do it in the newspapers where others can see, and where The Three know that others see. And thank Rep. Grisham if you want.

Reminder: fundraising

Thank you for your support! We are working with considerable traction these days. Our ambitions are high because they have to be -- for the kids, for the animals, and as Pope Francis reminds us, for ourselves.

We urge you to step up as well in your own way. Everyone has unique gifts. We are really in an emergency period, a bottleneck for humanity and other species. That's "Reality 101" now.

Here is our appeal, with as much information as we could put on two sides of a letter.

If you have thoughts for us, potential major donors we should write or visit, or people it might be important to hear us out, please let us know. For your own friends, it is usually best to contact them yourself on behalf of this organization.

Finally, if you can't come on Sunday there will other occasions. One of the strange dynamics we face here at the Study Group is that we can draw in a stellar crowd -- an "A list" -- of national and international figures to discussions, but we can't do that unless there is sufficient interest. This "Catch-22" has something to do with our colonial mentality here in New Mexico.

Best wishes,

Greg and Trish

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December 6, 2017

Dear Taos friends --

Many of you likely received this email. We hope you will attend and give the Congressman a piece of your mind about his efforts to build a much bigger plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory at LANL.

This is a fight we can win, if we try. As we said yesterday, we don't need this investment anywhere. See [Bulletin 238: Normative plutonium policies as we see them – a quick sketch](#).

Congressman Lujan recently wrote, in a joint statement with senators Heinrich and Udall, that he "strongly support[s] Los Alamos National Laboratory's role as the nation's Center of Excellence for Plutonium Research [sic]." ("Research" is not in question. Why the lie?)

They go on to say:

We have had concerns that the evaluation process undertaken by NNSA that led to this report was deeply flawed from the start. The Pentagon's independent cost accountability office conducted this same [sic] assessment in 2013 and concluded that **Los Alamos is the only option to meet cost and schedule requirements. We would be deeply skeptical of any alternative that contradicts that independent assessment, and we will fight** for full justification required by the most recent NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] that will be signed into law any day now.

One former LANL scientist explained this in simpler terms in an email: "It's the money, honey."

We don't think Congressman Lujan knows very much about this subject. We do not believe it was necessary for him to make this statement about a 400-page report he has almost certainly not read.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) says in its report that it will spend more than \$3 billion upgrading the plutonium pit manufacturing capabilities at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to achieve a 30 pit per year manufacturing capacity, regardless of the final decision about a larger capacity. (We do not think this is necessary.)

Nuclear policy matters aside, we think that there are much better uses for \$3 billion in federal dollars in New Mexico. For example, we believe investment credits in energy retrofits and renewable energy for homes, businesses, and neighborhoods have the potential to multiply each federal dollar four or five times with private investments, which would give the New Mexico economy a far larger boost. These far larger sums would go to far more people, rather than be dumped into one of the richest counties in the US. Skills, careers, businesses would be built. What about education? What about Medicaid? And so on.

Our delegation wants an *additional* \$1.9 to \$7.5 billion in plutonium investment -- \$4.9 billion to \$10.5 billion total. This won't come free, you can be sure of that.

OK, that's enough for now. New Mexico is poor in part because its leaders cannot get their heads out of the labs. It's Stockholm Syndrome -- the battered state syndrome. We have to change it.

Best wishes,

Greg and Trish



TAOS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

You're Invited!

**Coffee with Rep. Ben Ray Lujan
Dec. 9th @ 2:30pm**



Join our congressman this Saturday afternoon for coffee and a conversation.

Taos County Democratic Party, PO Box 3571, Taos, NM 87529

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Talk and discussion this Friday night; future discussions

Dear friends,

On Friday evening, Nov. 10, at 7 pm, I will speak at a meeting of the [Party for Socialism and Liberation](#) (PSL) here in Albuquerque at 2626 Garfield Ave SE.

The Facebook page for the event, where you can let the organizers know you might be coming so they can plan accordingly, is [here](#).

PSL has titled the talk "The Fight for Denuclearization in the Trump Era," which is fair enough. I will provide an overview of nuclear weapons policy struggles since the end of the Cold War and an assessment of where are today and how we might most effectively press forward on nuclear disarmament -- even (*especially*) in New Mexico. Of particular interest will be the deep linkages between nuclear disarmament and other issues we face in the state, and the country as a whole.

There will be plenty of time for discussion. Light snacks and beverages will be provided by PSL.

After my talk there will also be a discussion about U.S. - Iran relations. PSL: "What is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal? Why was it signed? Why is it so despised by the U.S. and Israel? What is the driving force behind nations around the world desiring to build their own nuclear arsenals? These are some of the questions that will be addressed by speakers during the forum."

On another subject, ten days ago I returned from a week in Washington, where I met with a range of congressional and administration staff to discuss current nuclear weapons issues and decisions. It was a very productive week, and there is much to do in the way of followup. Some of you may be interested helping with that, or with other work we have here. As a wise person once said, "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few." That describes very well the situation in nuclear disarmament today -- and, thinking for a moment more, related fields as well. It is indeed, as even the staid Congressional Budget Office said last week, a "pivotal time" in nuclear weapons policy. A few -- better, a dozen or more -- skilled, focused hours can make a big difference.

The best time to talk things over, discuss the issues, or to discuss in greater detail some of the opportunities we see for service and/or internship, is probably on Mondays at 5:30 pm, here at the World Headquarters. If there is interest, we can schedule something -- just the once, or monthly, or weekly. Within limits, we can respond, both for discussions here at the Study Group and as regards external outreach opportunities, e.g. talks and discussions at other organizations and churches.

It is a very exciting time and a wonderful time to be engaged. I will try to share some our enthusiasm in more detail in the next Bulletin.

Best wishes,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

PS: I will be speaking to the anti-war committee of the Progressive Democrats of America - Central NM (PDACNM) late tomorrow Wednesday (afternoon), if anyone is a member of that group and would like to make a special effort to attend. I do not think it is a public meeting. If you want to know more contact [Bill Swift](#).



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"Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution!"

Dear friends,

Apologies for this late notice, but it has just occurred to me that some of you could be interested in a talk I will give this morning at 11 am at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship meeting at the Albuquerque Peace and Justice Center (202 Harvard Dr SE).

I will speak on Dr. King's still-timely theme: "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution."

Greg, for the Study Group

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Please help us foster dialog in our communities

October 21, 2017

Dear friends,

Early tomorrow morning I fly to Washington DC for a week, where we have *some* traction on *some* nuclear weapons, safety, and waste issues.

It is always heartening to be welcomed by senior people there, where decisions are actually made. It is always a scramble for us to be adequately prepared.

For the past decade it has been much easier to arrange meetings, often fruitful, with powerful people in dysfunctional Washington, than it is to meet with supposedly-sympathetic New Mexicans -- especially in Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

In New Mexico there is a great deal of silence -- from citizens, environmentalists, progressives, and churches. Silence, and taboo topics, discussion of which would require (and enable) actual *change in our politics*.

We would like you to help deepen dialogue in our communities, by inviting us to speak and discuss with you, your friends, your churches, your environmental groups, your political groups (in all parties).

To take one example, in the "progressive" community and among Democrats generally, and in environmental groups, there is a telling silence about militarism, war, and nuclear weapons -- the latter being New Mexico's special responsibility -- even though there is no chance whatsoever that any significant progressive gains can be made without dethroning the war machine from the apex of American society. Martin Luther King [called](#) it a "demonic, destructive suction tube" of war, which draws "men and skills and money" (it certainly does in New Mexico) -- "an enemy of the poor." By 1967, King understood that "America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor" as long as its military adventures continued.

Is this not self-evident? If so, why is it not discussed? Why is there not more impatience with militarism? Supporting nuclear weapons and war is not a "lesser evil." These are *gateway* evils.

Is it just because there is no draft other than the "poverty draft," that New Mexico progressives cannot find the gumption to oppose the two nuclear weapons enthusiasts we have sent to the Senate, who never saw a nuclear bomb they didn't like?

Bernie Sanders and his ilk are certainly no help. Quoting now from an October 20 article by Paul Street, "[The Not-So-Radical Socialist](#)" [From Vermont](#),"

Sadly and predictably enough, *Bernie Sanders' Guide to Political Revolution* says nothing -- and I really mean *nothing* -- about the giant U.S. Pentagon System, which carries the world's single largest institutional carbon footprint while paying for [at least 800 military bases spread across more than 80 foreign countries](#) and keeping (in David Vine's words) "troops or other military personnel in about 160 foreign countries and territories." You will search the book's index and text in vain for the following words and phrases: "Pentagon," "Pentagon System," "Empire," "imperialism," "military," "militarism," "military-industrial complex," or even just "foreign policy" (also absent, by the way, is "capitalism"). And here's a missing term from the *Guide's* "Glossary of Economic Terms": "Military Keynesianism."

These are all-too predictable if major deletions. [Bernie “F-35” Sanders](#) (the epically wasteful F-35 was a “job creator” in his home state) remains dysfunctionally wedded to the U.S. Empire, which accounts for more than 40 percent of *homo sapiens*’ blood-drenched military budget. The Empire attachment is a huge mistake, both morally and practically. As the leading and unabashedly radical writer, speaker and activist Glen Ford [noted on Black Agenda Report last June](#):

“The United States does not have a national health care system worthy of the name, because it is in the war business, not the health business or the social equality business. ... In the U.S., progress is defined by global dominance of the U.S. State—chiefly in military terms—rather than domestic social development. ... **War is not a side issue in the United States; it is the central political issue, on which all the others turn. War mania is the enemy of all social progress—especially so, when it unites disparate social forces, in opposition to their own interests, in the service of an imperialist state that is the tool of a rapacious white capitalist elite.**” (emphasis added)

But why pick on Bernie? This continent-wide blind spot is nearly universal among Democrats, if the blog posts, platform outlines, etc. I see are any indication. The Democratic Party is very much a war party now. Not one Democrat in either house voted against the Russia/Iran/North Korea sanctions bill. Are there any doves left?

In the "environmental" and "climate" community, meanwhile, *ecological thinking* has grown rare. We get more *political* thinking, and especially on climate and energy, more *wishful* thinking (which is not *thinking* at all). *Science* somehow got lost on the way to the bulk mailing center, or the latest Facebook post.

Most of our incomplete thinking can be traced to insufficient dialogue. We are socially atomized -- in large part by the same technologies that are destroying the planet. We aren't thinking together, which is necessary to develop con-science, what we know together.

With regard to ecological thinking, I would like to quote at length from an essay by Erik Lindberg from a few days ago ("[Transition Sacred](#)," October 16, 2017).

The goal of environmentalism is of course to “save the Earth” or “save Humanity.” These are not bad goals, per se, but in the hands of liberal environmentalists they are misguided in a number of ways. The most critical error is the almost-never-questioned belief that saving humanity or the Earth actually means preserving our high-energy way of life, hopefully without destroying our common home’s current ecological balance in the process. This will be done, we are told, by trading in our coal-powered electrical generation for wind and solar, while swapping-out our internal combustion engines for the electric ones we might plug into our new carbon-free energy system. Add in some Silicon Valley wizardry, and (so the story goes) we can make this all operate at a level of efficiency that will presumably also help us manage forests, stop soil erosion, preserve biodiversity and habitat, while we continue to grow the economy so that free-market democracy (one without any rationing or reinstatement of virtues such as temperance or moderation) can continue on its merry way, offering us a future that looks like the present, only in real-time higher resolution.

I can't help but wonder whether I should laugh or cry when I hear or read about the so-called people's climate march or about *most* [\[iii\]](#) environmental protesters in general — the sort who might follow the increasingly misguided (and misleading) false prophecy of the likes of Bill McKibben, Al Gore, or Leonardo Di Caprio. For at root, they are in effect protesting one form of energy collection and delivery in favor of a different one. It is presented as a great struggle over values and vision, though it is not. If there is faith at stake in the prevailing struggle (and I believe there is) it is a fully shared faith in progress struggling only over esoteric theological details, practical differences between fossil fuels and renewable energy notwithstanding. True each side draws upon differing versions of capitalism and Liberal democracy and some (not entirely unimportant) symbolic and aesthetic differences. And it is also true that many environmentalists love and cherish nature in some way or another and would like to see it preserved. But unquestioned in mainstream environmental movements are the more fundamental values surrounding the quest for mastery and domination over the Earth's natural systems; the pursuit of comfort, entertainment, and novelty; the securing of safety and convenience in the face of all the ravages of time and, ultimately, death. All we see are slightly differing versions of salvation through conquest and mastery.

Neither “side,” then, is interested in questioning the values of instrumental reason as the ultimate guide for most life-choices, nor in questioning whether fundamental life-choices might be more than a matter of “style.” No one, here, questions whether one should be allowed to buy and corner as much of the world's bounty as he or she can. You never hear any murmurs of discontent at climate marches over the fact that Americans make up about 6% of the world's population but use about a quarter of the Earth's energy and natural

resources. These marchers are the global 1%^[iii] and they have every intention of remaining so. They certainly are not there to protest against themselves. Many so-called progressives may say they would never be so selfish and shortsighted as to blow the tops off mountains just so that they can keep their Netflix up and running; but, I suspect, this is mainly because they are so utterly convinced that there is an alternative way to high-energy salvation. Renewable energy, Thoreau would say, provides “an improved means to an unimproved end.”

Liberal environmentalism, then, is not really directed towards “saving humanity” in any of many ways this phrase might be used.^[iv] Rather, it is geared towards saving the liberal, capitalist, and consumerist world order; it hopes to preserve our freedom to consume^[v] as we currently do. The argument is only how we might best do that. For this reason, the “debate” between the fossil fuel Cornucopians and the wind and solar Cornucopians is about as interesting and relevant as the “less filling/tastes great” [mock argument](#) of actors and celebrities pretending to be Miller Lite drinkers a few decades ago. The swilling will continue either way. The contest between environmentalists and their foes is, in other words, hardly a battle over values. It is a pragmatic and instrumental contest over the best way to maintain our current way of life. The debate focusses mainly on our choice of delivery systems^[vi] in a world where people believe that love makes a Subaru, as the advertisement preaches.

Speaking of wishful thinking, sometimes we hear about somebody's plan for a “100% renewable” future. Nearly always this refers to *electricity*, only. Even this [isn't really possible at anything approaching present overall consumption rates](#), far less the transformation of 100% of the *other* forms of energy Americans use domestically (see [this](#)), *while also* replacing the embodied energy in the imported [stuff](#) we buy (and/or the stuff itself).

Don't get me wrong. “We” -- but not you and I -- will certainly get to a 100% renewable way of life all right, assuming anyone is still alive.

Wishful thinking doesn't work, you see. It hurts us. It hurts the world. It hurts vulnerable species. It hurts the poor. *It keeps us from the commitment we need.* [Jason Hickel](#):

[A recent paper in the journal Nature](#) estimates that our chances of keeping global warming below the danger threshold of 2 degrees is now vanishingly small: only about 5 per cent. It's more likely that we're headed for around 3.2 degrees of warming, and possibly as much as 4.9 degrees. If scientists are clear about anything, it's that this level of climate change will be nothing short of catastrophic. Indeed, there's a good chance that it would render large-scale civilization impossible.

Why are our prospects so bleak? According to the paper's authors, it's because the cuts we're making to greenhouse gas emissions are being more than cancelled out by economic growth. In the coming decades, we'll be able to reduce the carbon intensity (CO₂ per unit of GDP) of the global economy by about 1.9 per cent per year, they say, if we make heavy investments in clean energy and efficient technology. That's a lot. But as long as the economy keeps growing by more than that, total emissions are still going to rise. Right now we're ratcheting up global GDP by 3 per cent per year. At that rate, the maths is not in our favour; on the contrary, it's slapping us in the face.

In fact, according to [new models published last year](#), with a background rate of 3 per cent GDP growth it's not possible to achieve any level of emissions reductions at all, even under best-case-scenario conditions. Study after study shows the same thing: keeping global warming below 2 degrees is simply not compatible with continued economic growth.

This is a tough pill to swallow. After all, right now GDP growth is the primary policy objective of virtually every government on Earth. Over in Silicon Valley, [tech-optimists are hoping](#) that a miracle of artificial intelligence might allow us to decarbonise the economy by 3 per cent or more per year, so we can continue growing the GDP while reducing emissions. It sounds wonderful. But remember, the goal is not just to reduce carbon emissions – the goal is to reduce them dramatically, and fast. How fast, exactly? Climate scientists Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows say that if we want to have even a mere 50 per cent chance of staying under 2 degrees, rich nations are going to have to [cut emissions by 8-10 per cent per year](#), beginning in 2015. Keep in mind we're already two years in, and so far our emissions reductions have been zero.

Why aren't there more conversations about this? In churches, in the public squares, in the newspapers? We want to be part of those conversations.

None of it is really all that new. Ted Trainer's [1985 analysis](#) still stands up well. We've been discussing this stuff in the Study Group for more than a decade. Me, for nearly five decades in one way or another.

We all need to talk. To listen. To have difficult conversations. To awaken our churches. To throw off the passivity and

despair that lurks underneath all the wishful thinking. To get past the purity trips, the virtue signaling, the classism. We are in this together.

To do that, and to do other rewarding things as well, we need serious volunteers. So do other organizations. To work on the outer layers of the policy onion -- which are almost easy, if one is patient and persistent.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

Greg, for the Study Group

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2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200



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Our [Fall fundraising request](#).

ICAN Nobel Peace Prize press conference; outreach and fundraising needed!

October 10, 2017

Dear friends,

[Yesterday's UN press conference](#) on the Nobel Peace Prize is available on UN TV at the link. As usual the ICAN team did an excellent job. You may find their comments useful and inspiring. It was also interesting to hear the Austrian Ambassador openly mention, in response to a question, the "pressure" on states, even "threats," to keep them from signing the new Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

We are proud of our work on this Treaty (e.g. [here](#)), the overall success of which was recognized in last week's Nobel Peace Prize. [You have been a part of that.](#)

The Treaty will now grow and ripen, a process which we can help a little. But the greater part of our work in nuclear disarmament, and in catalyzing better responses to our converging existential crises, will be based right here, and in Washington, DC where we have some modest influence with key decisionmakers.

Friends, it is particularly important that we hold the line on preventing the expansion of plutonium warhead core ("pit") production -- and more broadly, on limiting nuclear warhead modernization. History assigns these missions to New Mexico most of all, where pit production and a good part of warhead modernization is taking place. We have the legal standing, the moral authority, the knowledge, and the latent on-the-ground organization. If we don't stop it, nobody will. In fact, on pit production we are pretty much on our own.

[After all the sacrifices that were made by so many people to shut down the Rocky Flats Plant, it would be a crying shame if the whole cycle of industrial plutonium pit manufacturing, with all it entails for arms racing, domestic priorities, nuclear waste, and worker health, started up again in earnest, in our own back yard.](#)

We see these two poles of our work -- detailed policy intervention and the big-picture ban treaty -- as complementary. Both are part of a redefinition of security that prioritizes human beings and the environment. This re-prioritization is necessary for our survival and it must be accomplished quickly. "Catastrophe learning" will be a major part of how that happens in our benighted country, but for even this to happen we must be prepared and in motion ourselves, in the right direction.

Meanwhile we must curb the vast misallocation of resources underway in the \$1+ trillion nuclear weapons modernization program, which in turn is just a few percent of our giant military budget. The military currently sucks, on average, about \$1,800 from every New Mexican household annually. (You probably thought the state benefited from military spending. Yes and no. Most places in New Mexico pay net taxes -- tribute -- to the "military-industrial-congressional" complex, using [Eisenhower's draft name for it](#).) It is usually easier to halt bad programs when they are small, and that is what we must do with pit production and its related mega-construction. But will enough people figure out what's in store for them if they don't act?

In this connection we must mention the terrible prospect of opening a huge "temporary" storage site for the very worst kinds of nuclear waste. Because ours is a state that has gladly accepted dirty nuclear weapons work, and plutonium waste, New

Mexico now has a nuclear waste bulls-eye on it. If such a site were a good idea, perhaps New Mexico would be a good place for it. It is, however, not a good idea, as we have lightly [explained](#). More can and must be done to keep this from happening. Such a site would almost certainly be permanent and would be an environmental, social, and economic disaster.

To succeed in this we need your help with outreach, specifically at this time for fundraising.

Twenty-eight years ago, when the Study Group began, it was relatively easy to reach like-minded people, who would come to meetings. Newspapers covered the issues far better than they do today. Bringing people together is now much harder, for many reasons. Without your help, we usually can't afford it.

Back then, we spent very little time on fundraising. It sort of took care of itself. The situation is very different today.

Some outreach, including fundraising, we can do ourselves. But there is much we cannot do without outreach and fundraising eating up all our time and slender resources, leaving nothing with which to accomplish our main program goals, i.e. to actually stop nuclear modernization, prevent pit production, help bring the nuclear ban into force, and help our sister organizations accomplish common climate and environmental goals.

Our successful efforts to prevent the expansion of plutonium pit production have substantially depended upon local contributors. To win, we use objective facts and law. Given the nuclear loyalties of the New Mexico delegation, we shifted the focus of some of our work to Washington, DC, where we continue to educate and successfully influence decisionmakers.

We have beaten several Department of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) pit production proposals. Most recently, in the 2010-2012 period, we [litigated](#) to prevent the construction of a [very large factory](#), which was then imminent. It was NNSA's highest priority, and endorsed as such by a bipartisan strategic commission (see electronic pp. 70-72 in [America's Strategic Posture](#), William Perry et. al.). Once the project was halted in its tracks by DOE's fear of creating the very environmental impacts that would make our case before the judge, Washington decisionmakers across government became more "educable."

Many of you generously supported these successful efforts. Again, these are your victories, part of your story and legacy.

We don't have the resources to blanket our communities with mailings and other forms of outreach. We can't go to every soiree and meeting -- in fact, we can go to nearly none. You have friends and connections we don't. **We are very grateful for your own support but we need your help to reach out in ways we cannot.**

You can talk to your friends. You can forward this email to them. You can print it out and mail it. You can ask one of us to come speak to a gathering or meal with a few interested friends who want to know more. You can invite us to speak before a group of which you are a part. There are, in short, lots of ways to reach out.

You can also refer your friends to one of our cooperating solar companies, as we explained in our [letter of July 20](#).

We try to be as frugal as possible but we are a professional team, not a nickel-and-dime operation. We meet with powerful people, who listen to us. We work full-time and then some. In our experience, many New Mexicans -- so used to being powerless -- cannot understand our influence, or how it arises. Others have a hard time grasping that our policy analysis is better than DOE and the labs.

We are ready to help you and organizations of which you are a part whatever way we can. We want to share what we have learned and help catalyze truly effective political and social change.

Sincerely,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group



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Protest at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History today, 4:30 pm

October 6, 2017

Dear friends,

Stop the War Machine has called for a protest this afternoon at 4:30 pm at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (NMNSH), 601 Eubank Blvd SE, just south of and opposite Costco ([map](#)).

As part of its collection of nuclear memorabilia NMNSH has erected an almost-full-scale replica of the tower that was used at the Trinity Site test range on July 16, 1945. The exhibit will be dedicated today ([press release](#)).

Hence the protest.

In the test, the first plutonium bomb was lifted to the top of the tower. At the museum, a replica bomb is now suspended from the tower, on its way up. The symbolism of this is important. For a photo of the tower, integrated into the broader picture of atomic nostalgia being promoted nationally, see this page from the [Atomic Heritage Foundation](#).

The [Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium](#) will be there seeking compensation for the harms their communities and families experienced as a result of that test, as well as other groups.

While generally supportive of those goals, our focus will be on the present and future of New Mexico. But these issues and histories -- past, present, and future -- are all closely linked. What was personal then is, in a different way, state-wide and world-wide now.

Needless to say perhaps, but elevating The Bomb lifts it up -- as in the Mass, when the Host, representing the Body of Christ, is elevated. In this case, an engine of absolute destruction, made by human hands and subsequently used to annihilate two cities full of people, is what is being elevated.

Make no mistake, the nuclear weapons identity is a death cult. It has grievously harmed New Mexico, and not just physically, in terms of health as in the case of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders families, but also politically, morally, spiritually, and economically.

It continues to do so and to attract similar and potentially even more deadly industries, such as the proposed consolidated "interim" (i.e. for a century, meaning forever) on-and near-surface storage of commercial spent nuclear fuel.

The world does not support glorifying nuclear weapons. This was the message of the Nobel Committee earlier today ([Nobel Peace Prize Goes to International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#), press release - *updated*, Oct 6, 2017).

At NMNSC and in many other ways, New Mexico pays tribute to dangerously inverted values. This new exhibit makes it worse.

See you at 4:30 pm there, if you get this message in time.

Greg and Trish, for the Los Alamos Study Group



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Heinrich, Udall promote LANL plutonium pit manufacturing; please help

September 27, 2017

This letter:

1. **Please consider helping us financially and/or with your networking on our behalf!**
2. "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" opens for signature, with 53 states signing in the first three days!
3. Heinrich, Udall work closely with congressional neocons to promote and protect LANL plutonium warhead core ("pit") manufacturing in new law
4. Talk in Jemez Springs, Saturday October 7, 2 pm
5. LANL in yet another major plutonium criticality safety incident
6. Study Group in the news

Action suggestions this time:

1. Please help us raise funds to continue to the fight against new warheads, new plutonium pits, and the new factories to make them.
2. See our [letter of Sept. 15](#) for more suggestions.

Dear friends,

1. Please consider helping us financially and/or with your networking on our behalf!

Many nonprofits send fundraising letters on almost a daily basis, with or without accomplishments. We don't do that. But now we must ask.

We are proud of what we have been able to do, and to prevent from happening. It has all been with your solidarity, companionship, and concrete help. To you our donors, [thank you](#).

But being successful doesn't automatically translate into funding needed to fight and win again. Now is that relatively rare occasion when we really must ask for your help.

We are asking for two things: your financial support (continued or new), and your endorsement of our work to your friends.

As regards your outreach and networking on behalf of the Study Group, we can help. For example, if you want to plan a get-together with friends that might be interested, one or two of us can come. If such a discussion took place in a church or organization, so much the better.

You might want to mention our successful [climate and solar internship program](#) this past summer, which almost totally occupied us from late May through early August.

Just right now, we are quite thrilled about the historic, brand-new nuclear [ban treaty](#). Many people don't even know about it, or can't believe its real.

A few of you went with us to the UN in the first decade of this century to Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) conferences.

Others may remember the reports and interviews we sent back, to KUNM and elsewhere. To those who went and to all of you, I have this to say: [you won](#). We kept faith, gained experience and connections, and poured these into the ban treaty effort, which we judged sound. We ignored the negativity coming from the usual suspects in the arms control community, academia, and the funding community.

(For some of our contributions, see the left column [here](#). There were more. Also two of our board members, Ray Acheson in New York and Mia Gandenberger in Geneva, were deeply involved in leading this effort. Our former intern Michael Spies was the lead UN expert supporting the ban negotiations.)

You who have been with us through this time are part of this story. It's your baby too.

All too close to home, since 1989 we have played a central role in preventing a renaissance of pit production after the demise of the Rocky Flats Plant. There have been seven or eight attempts to build a new pit factory over these 28 years. We have been involved in defeating all of them. We could see the next attempt appear next year, however (see 3. below).

"You and Trish are rock stars!" gushed one congressional staff member in 2012. "Every time our chairman demanded to know why construction hadn't started [on the huge [pit facility](#) at LANL], NNSA said construction couldn't start because of your lawsuit!"

Our analyses meanwhile went to the Vice President, to Congress, to the military. And even though this project was the highest construction priority of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and a central commitment in the New START ratification deal, [we won](#). In the end, almost everybody agreed it should not be built -- even LANL, as we later heard.

Newcomers to New Mexico or to these issues can peruse the record of that battle ([main page](#); [litigation page](#)), the gist of which appeared in this [story](#) by journalist Roger Snodgrass.

As it turns out, that facility was the *only* nuclear weapons "modernization" project cancelled during the Obama Administration. Most so-called "anti-nuclear" groups had agreed to allow its construction, including groups in New Mexico, as part of the New START "deal."

Telling this story, I cannot omit the long hours put in by a few key board members and volunteers -- Peter Neils, Darwin Bond-Graham, Tom Hnasko at the Hinkle Law Firm, Willem Malten of CloudCliff Bakery and a few others.

I could list other policy victories over the years, which have been supported by lawsuits, media exposés, articles and opinion pieces, and focused expert lobbying. I could mention what have been hundreds of public meetings. Some media traces have been collected [here](#).

We have won -- a *lot* -- and we can win again. But as we have been saying for the past decade, "[this time is different](#)." If we win, it may be in part because of circumstances we don't like.

Please do join us. This can be as easy as a monthly donation of any size, or a single donation, either of which [Trish](#) can arrange for you. Or very conveniently, both can be set up via [JustGive](#) (they do take a small bit). The Study Group can sell that extra car for you (Trish is very good at this). You can remember the Study Group in your will. [Checks](#) work fine (our address is at the bottom of this email). [Credit card](#) donations can be taken over the phone or via [secure link](#). [Stock can be donated](#) (avoiding capital gains and associated taxes).

Thank you.

2. "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" opens for signature, with 53 states signing in the first three days!

A milestone in the prevention of nuclear war was reached last week when the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) opened for signature on September 20. In the first week, [53 states signed and 3 ratified](#), an excellent start. The Treaty enters into force 90 days after the first 50 ratifications. You have already received our [press release](#).

In opinion pieces in the [Albuquerque Journal](#), [Santa Fe New Mexican](#), and the [New Mexico Political Report](#) we called this Treaty a "lifeline" for New Mexico. But we -- an *activated minority* of the New Mexico body politic, will need to seize this lifeline, as part of a broader community awakening to our social and environmental responsibilities, for it to help. It would only take an *active* couple of percent to change a great deal for the better.

Kudos are due to Robin Collier, the wonderful force behind Cultural Energy in Taos (KCEI 90.1 FM and soon KCEI-LD Channel 18 broadcast TV, KCEY 89.5 FM), who [interviewed me about the Ban](#) for broadcast yesterday, September 26.

We have collected our publications on the Ban Treaty along with other key resources and links [here](#).

There is no question that news about this Treaty has been actively suppressed by the news media, in New Mexico and nationally. The opening of this Treaty was truly a historic occasion, a capstone of successful efforts by a *majority of the countries in the world* to prohibit nuclear weapons. How can that not be news, in New Mexico especially? The powers-that-be here (and the owners of major newspapers) believe nuclear weapons are a goose that lays plutonium and wastes golden eggs for New Mexico. This blackout -- along with the media's extravagant and unbalanced praise of the late Senator Domenici (during whose Senate tenure New Mexico markedly fell in its economic performance relative to other states) -- are data points suggesting that the state's opinion leaders are still too confused to grasp this lifeline. Yes, we are grateful for the op-ed placements, but the Treaty was *news*.

A friend who watched the opening ceremony with us noticed the striking sculpture in the UN Trusteeship Council Chamber where the ceremony took place, and wondered what it was. This morning he sent a link. It turns out that sculpture (Danish, 1953) depicts "[Mankind and Hope](#)." So, what attachments prevent us from living inside hope, as Barbara Kingsolver put it, in *Animal Dreams*? (Here's a little [essay](#) on that theme from 1998, which we have just posted.)

3. Heinrich, Udall work closely with congressional neocons to promote and protect LANL plutonium warhead core ("pit") manufacturing in new law

This is a serious development. Senator Heinrich, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), along with Senator Udall, successfully introduced a floor amendment ([S.Amdt.778](#) -- scroll down to see text) to the Fiscal Year 2018 Defense Authorization Act, which passed the Senate last week. There was apparently no debate on this amendment.

A coordinated prior effort in July introduced a similar House amendment. Bundled with others, that also passed without debate, by a voice vote.

The amendment, which is about to become law after reconciliation with the slightly-different House version (for text of the Senate version, see Section 13101, p. 1205ff in the [printed bill after Senate passage](#)),

a) gives NNSA a 30-day deadline for completing an analysis of alternatives (AoA) for ramping up pit production to an [arbitrary] demonstrated capacity of 50-80 pits per year by 2027 (full [requirements](#)), including any necessary new infrastructure;

b) allows the Pentagon and military to specify a pit production schedule of their choosing, *in addition* to the above legal mandate (which has not been taken with 100% seriousness since it is expensive, unnecessary, and arbitrary), namely one that is "responsive to [unstated, evolving] military requirements;" and finally the amendment;

c) adds review and concurrence requirements for the purpose of making it difficult to move pit production away from LANL, the location reaffirmed in a pro-forma 2013 "business case" analysis.

The bill concentrates decisionmaking power about pits in the Pentagon, military, and the armed services committees.

Were Democrats in charge in the House, a measure such as this would be unlikely to pass, given the resistance already manifest from Rep. Garamendi and many others ([Rep. John Garamendi, D-CA, offers amendment to cut funding for expansion of plutonium pit production at LANL](#), May 24, 2016; [role call vote](#); [amendment](#); [video](#)).

There are many ways to fight this. Rest assured we will, if you will help us. We have won seven times already.

Friends, we've said it again and again: this is not just about pits or nuclear weapons. We need a broad community awakening that understands and acts on *all* the converging crises we face *at the same time*, not as separate "stovepipes" that keep citizens running all over ineffectively but as an all-encompassing emergency that requires a political, moral, and spiritual awakening. We need to talk about that. As disasters press upon us (and they are and they will) that response will come, for some of us at least. It would be best to "make friends with the trends" *now*.

Our greatest challenge is not from the military-industrial complex but from the fear, despair, denial, and apathy in our own communities. Most people don't realize that it is actually easier to have quality meetings with congressional and committee staff in Washington than it is to have a discussion in supposedly "progressive" circles right here at home.

We don't like the enabling, greenwashing role of environmental and arms control groups in endorsing and [funding](#) individuals like Senator Heinrich, whose Democratic Party "all of the above" energy policies and [hyper-militarism](#) are incompatible with a viable climate and "liveable world," the latter being a reference to one of his most important [campaign contributors](#).

For more on these pit programs see [Bulletin 229](#), this short [fact sheet](#), and, *in extenso* [here](#) and [here](#).

4. Talk in Jemez Springs, Saturday October 7, 2 pm "'Remaining awake through a great revolution:' roles of citizen groups; some key issues"

This will be at the Community Library ([map](#)); for a description please see our [letter of Sept. 12](#).

5. LANL in yet another major plutonium criticality safety incident

This was [reported](#) by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), giving rise to these and other news articles and an interview:

- [Plutonium pits at Los Alamos](#), *Cultural Energy* radio interview, broadcast Sep 26, 2017 on KCEI 90.1 FM, Taos
- [LANL: No risk of radioactive 'criticality' accident in recent incident](#), *Albuquerque Journal*, Sep 25, 2017
- ['Criticality safety event' occurred at LANL's plutonium facility](#), *Albuquerque Journal North*, Sep 22, 2017
- [Report: LANL twice violated nuclear safety standards in Aug](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Sep 22, 2017

This was another epic management mistake and it well deserves the press attention it got. This activity-- pit hemi-shell casting -- was a high-profile undertaking with lots of management attention, a performance long in the making in the most mission-critical program in the PF-4 facility. To egregiously break safety rules including posted material limits, and not realize it for 3 days, speaks volumes about the fitness of line management. Please note: those who approved and conducted this work were not the most senior LANS managers, though it is they who bear the ultimate responsibility. The mistake(s) were down at the team, group, and facility level, people who will not change when a new contractor comes in a year from now.

NNSA and LANL say this violation was no problem at all but nonetheless [suspended](#) the workers involved. And if there is no problem when these rules are violated why do NNSA and LANL have these rules?

6. Study Group in the news

- [UT System prepares Los Alamos bid to manage U.S. nuclear facility](#), *Houston Chronicle*, Sep 22, 2017
- [Iran Blasts Trump at UN as "Rogue Newcomer,"](#) *Sputnik News, Loud & Clear*, Sep 21, 2017 (With [Brian Becker](#), co-host [John Kiriakou](#), and guest [Alex Mercouris](#))

Not everyone will like those last associations. I however largely agree with the views expressed and found the conversation to be very well informed.

On that subject, we are in the midst of a rising McCarthyism, as Robert Parry has repeatedly analyzed and discussed. Here's the conclusion of [yesterday's \(9/26\) excellent article](#):

So, instead of Democrats and Chancellor Merkel looking in the mirror and seeing the real reasons why many white working-class voters are turning toward "populist" and "extremist" alternatives, they can simply blame Putin and continue a crackdown on Internet-based dissent as the work of "Russian operatives."

Already, under the guise of combating "Russian propaganda" and "fake news," Google, Facebook and other tech giants have begun introducing [algorithms to hunt down and marginalize news](#) that challenges official U.S. government narratives on hot-button issues such as Ukraine and Syria. Again, no evidence is required, just the fact that Putin may have said something similar.

As Democrats, liberals and even some progressives join in this Russia-gate hysteria – driven by their hatred of Donald Trump and his supposedly "fascistic" tendencies – they might want to consider whom they've climbed into bed with and what these neocons have in mind for the future.

Thank you for your attention,

Greg Mello



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You are invited: Wednesday, 9/20, 6 am: breakfast with LASG, witness historic signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

September 15, 2017

This letter:

1. **Wednesday 9/20/17, 6:00-8:00 am: breakfast with LASG and witness (via UN Live Web TV) historic signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, LASG headquarters, 2901 Summit Place NE ([map](#)), Albuquerque**
2. **Opinion piece today in *Albuquerque Journal North*: "On nukes, another way for the City Different?" (Greg Mello)**
3. **Recommended short article: "100 Percent Wishful Thinking: the Green-Energy Cornucopia"**

A few action suggestions:

1. [Refer your friends](#) to our mailing list and events -- help us build our subscription and donor base (see September 12 letter).
2. [Be a climate and solar outreach volunteer](#). See [July 20](#) and [July 25](#) letters and Bulletin 232: "[Nuclear power for your home and business](#)," July 19.
3. [Write published short open letters to editors \(LTEs\)](#) asking our senators, and representatives Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Lujan the following two things. (You can also call or write them privately but it is much less effective; contact information is [here](#) in case you do that.). Ask them to:
 - a. Speak out NOW against creating consolidated storage sites for spent reactor fuel (SNF) instead of waiting and watching what happens (see [Bulletin #234](#), Aug. 12).
 - b. Go on record NOW opposing the needless expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) plutonium warhead core ("pit") production. See this [fact sheet](#), today's *Journal North* op-ed ("[On nukes, another way for the City Different?](#)," Sep. 15), and much more background [here](#).
4. [Recruit donors](#) to support our opposition to the Obama-Trump nuclear reinvestment plan and our regional "community awakening" initiatives. See for example [this appeal](#).
5. [Come to Study Group events](#) (see below for this coming Wednesday's breakfast discussion about the nuclear ban; note again the [October 7 talk in Jemez Springs](#)).
6. [Organize events](#). Mostly we respond to your requests, so don't wait on us.
7. [Be a regular volunteer](#). If you have appropriate skills and are in a position to do so, think about offering steady time to us as a volunteer. Call us at 505-265-1200.
8. [Create full-time climate activist internships](#) in your church, business, or organization. You probably have the resources. Focus on results within the next few years only.
9. [Simplify](#) in order to engage politically. Boycott ecocide. Harvest the "low-hanging fruit" in lowering climate footprint. Dreams of 100% renewable energy in a high-energy society like ours today are fantasies. The need for a rapid, just transition to simpler, more resilient communities is pressing.

Dear friends,

1. Wednesday 9/20/17, 6:00-8:00 am: breakfast with LASG and witness (via UN Live Web TV) historic signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, LASG headquarters, 2901 Summit Place NE ([map](#)), Albuquerque.

Step by step, the nuclear weapons ban treaty is coming to life. For background, see [this page](#). The ban will live in and through those who embody its ideals, and in the concrete actions taken by governments as a result of the treaty, not in the sheet of paper.

If you live nearby or find yourself in the Nuke City, please join us for breakfast on this happy occasion.

We will send out a more detailed commentary on this event as the time approaches.

You can also watch this at home or with friends at this [link](#)!

2. Opinion piece today at the *Albuquerque Journal North*: "On nukes, another way for the City Different?"

This will also be published at other outlets soon. If you wish to thank *Journal North* for publishing it, which might be helpful for the future, you can leave a message with the receptionist at 505-988-8881.

3. Recommended short article: "100 Percent Wishful Thinking: the Green-Energy Cornucopia" (Stan Cox, Sept. 14, 2017, *Counterpunch*)

This follows item 3 in the [last letter](#) ("Leaders and citizens of both parties agree: a sustainable future is "off the table"). Why off the table? Because these parties are not really aiming at a *real* sustainable future, just a fantasy with too little real responsibility attached. Cox's final paragraphs:

Some in the climate movement believe in the 100-percent dogma and the dream it holds out: that the (affluent) American way of life can keep running forward in time and outward in space without breaking stride. There are others who know that to be an impossibly rosy vision but urge the movement to limit public discussion to such green dreams anyway, because talking about a regulated, low-energy economy would crush hope and enthusiasm at the grassroots.

The debate about hope ignores the relevant question: what are we hoping *for*? If our hope is to deploy solar and wind capacity that maintains indefinitely the current throughput of energy in the world's affluent societies, then, yes, the situation is hopeless. But there can be other hopes that, although they're looking dim for now, are at least within reach: that greenhouse warming can be limited sufficiently to allow communities around the world who are currently impoverished and oppressed to improve their lives; that access to food, water, shelter, safety, culture, nature, and other necessities becomes sufficient for all; or that exploitation and oppression of humans and nature be brought to an end.

There's always hope, as long as we don't confuse dreams with reality.

To repeat, dreams of 100% renewable energy in a high-energy society like ours today are fantasies. They lull middle- and upper-class Americans into mistaken, lazy perspectives about the depth and speed of transformation required to save a living planet, our communities, and our children. The need for a rapid, just transition to simpler, more resilient communities is pressing. Emergency action is needed. *More* bold grassroots leadership, with all the creativity and accountability associated with it, is sorely needed.

Thank you!

Greg and Trish, for the Los Alamos Study Group



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In a surprise meeting of minds, leaders and citizens of both parties agree: a sustainable future is "off the table"

September 12, 2017

Contents:

1. **Talk at Jemez Springs Community Library ([map](#)), Saturday October 7 2:00 pm, "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution: Roles of Citizen Groups; Key issues"**
2. **"[To the Ends of the Earth](#):" more showings?**
3. **Massive nuclearization of New Mexico proposed; in a surprise meeting of minds, leaders and citizens of both parties agree: a sustainable future is "off the table"**
4. **Nine days: treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons opens for signature Sept. 20. It cuts deeper than jaded eyes want to admit.**
5. **[Bipartisan](#) climate conference in Santa Fe, October 28-29**
6. **Climate and solar outreach volunteers wanted!**
7. **Ask your friends if they want to receive these updates. If so they should [write](#) us.**
8. **We must now raise money**

Dear friends,

1. Talk at Jemez Springs Community Library ([map](#)) Saturday October 7, 2:00 pm, "Remaining awake through a great revolution: roles of citizen groups; some key issues"

Precis:

We live at the end of an age. A huge storm, bigger than any humanity has ever known, is barreling toward us. The wind is rising, the barometer falling. The first bands of rain have arrived. We cannot see into the dark clouds massed on the horizon. Much we have known is changing, radically.

It is an altogether revolutionary time – more so than in the 1950s and 60s when Dr. King repeatedly posed that challenge. It is night. Our freedom still lies in waking up, understanding our situation, and guiding our actions accordingly.

Churches and locally-accountable civic groups are critically important now as beacons and guides. Mr. Mello will discuss some roles these groups can play, from direct policy intervention to constructive action to nonviolent resistance. The field of leadership is wide open.

Mello will address some key peace and security issues in which local groups could play determinative roles. There are, for example, vast investments in new nuclear weapons now underway, in the New Mexico labs and elsewhere. There is an increasing push to store enormous quantities of nuclear waste in New Mexico. And the urgent transition to a fossil-fuel-free future is still a wide-open field.

Regarding that first issue, the recently-negotiated internationally treaty banning design, production, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons opens for signature on September 20. Amazingly, it outlaws most of the work at the nuclear weapons labs. It will be up to citizens worldwide to enforce this treaty -- directly, and through their governments.

Despite the loss of democracy on the national level, open-source intelligence and global communication can still defeat pervasive state and corporate propaganda. Small, motivated teams can be powerful on a much wider scale than ever before. Local democracies can be less damaged.

Needless to say society is fraying, as is the inhabitability of Earth for basically the same reasons.

Preserving life while building a more sustainable and nonviolent future is ennobling, joyful, and fundamentally *nonpartisan* work.

If you live in the area or are otherwise thinking of visiting lovely Jemez Springs, [please come!](#)

As our schedule allows, we are happy to talk to churches and organizations, formally or informally, publicly or privately. As we said in our most recent local letter ([Aug. 29](#)), we just do not see many sufficiently-serious discussions and actions. Leadership is thin on the ground. The environmental, liberal, and progressive reforms being sought by various well-intentioned groups are generally not going to happen, usually because they fail to face US militarism and empire, or because they fail to see the imminence and scale of the climate and energy disaster, or because of a misplaced quasi-religious faith in technology that can transcend the basic laws of chemistry and physics (or biology), or because of class blindness, or because people are simply naive about the depth of corruption in today's politics. Others imagine that "the personal is the political" when actually, the personal is the *opposite* of the political. While we cannot ignore the opportunities for reform we have, we are basically not in a "reform" situation any longer. That is the world we have left, or which left us when we didn't stand up when we should have. We dropped the ball. We have to wake up from dreams to the new world we actually have, while we still can.

2. ["To the Ends of the Earth:"](#) more showings?

We had a very successful film showing and discussion at the [Guild Theater](#) on Sept. 3 regarding, inter alia, our "perfect storm" of energy and economic crises (that affect climate change politics and everything else), as described in [Aug. 23](#) and [Aug. 29](#) local letters.

We bought the film and can now show this one-hour film and discuss its ideas in house meetings and other non-fee, non-theater settings. [Organize a group and we will come!](#)

The Berkeley *Daily Planet* had a very helpful [review](#) of the film by Gar Smith; here's the [trailer](#).

Friends, to our knowledge New Mexico environmental groups aren't talking about the implications of these facts. We are hurtling into a new world. Will it be "brave?" Will we? If we aren't, we won't *have* a world.

3. Massive nuclearization of New Mexico proposed; in a surprise meeting of minds, leaders and citizens of both parties agree: a sustainable future is "off the table"

This is a joke only insofar as no one *single* person or institution has made such a proposal. It is the composite effect of various proposals.

Promoting and supporting the nuclear labs means promoting nuclear weapons (especially in the case of Los Alamos, which has no significant other mission). With nuclear weapons comes nuclear waste. Accept one, accept the other. It's a package deal.

With them come nuclearized politics, here and in Washington. New Mexico is used to that screw, which is being turned again.

It is being turned as regards waste, as described in bulletins [233](#) and [234](#). Yesterday, the *Los Angeles Times* opined that New Mexico was the best place to take commercial spent nuclear fuel (SNF) ("[There's no great answer for nuclear waste, but almost anything is better than perching it on the Pacific](#)"). And Holtec and the Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA) just [reaffirmed](#) that they would press ahead with their giant SNF storage facility regardless of congressional action or its lack.

As regards weapons, see the introductory fact sheet "[Expansion of Los Alamos Plutonium Warhead "Pit" Factory Eyed.](#)" Since that was written in June 2016, there has been little overt "progress" in producing new pits and building the proposed new underground workshops to augment current facilities (see [this page](#) for more). Behind-the-scenes efforts to get ducks in a row continue, as do efforts to build facilities at Los Alamos to process tens of tons of waste plutonium *in the same facilities at the same time*. With Trump, the "warheads" now largely in charge of nuclear issues have a near-perfect patsy. We expect trouble, starting this winter. The interregnum is coming to an end.

The "agreement" that a sustainable future is impossible is also a composite of decisions being made -- actively by some, passively by others. The agreement is surprisingly broad and includes many progressives and environmentalists who don't know what they are agreeing to.

George Orwell got it very right when he said, in *1984*, "They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane."

4. Nine days: [treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons](#) opens for signature Sept. 20. It cuts deeper than

jaded eyes want to admit.

Stay tuned!

It is fashionable for many sophisticated foreign policy liberals to follow the lead of the Trump administration on this matter. That makes good career sense for them -- as does the notion that the US, with its many nuclear allies, is now and will always remain "the indispensable nation."

5. Bipartisan climate conference and training in Santa Fe, October 28-29

The [Santa Fe chapter](#) of [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#), a national organization with local chapters tightly organized around a revenue-neutral carbon tax and 100% rebate, is planning what looks like an interesting conference in Santa Fe on Saturday, October 28, from 9:00 am to 4:45 pm at the Monte del Sol Charter School in Santa Fe. The day-long symposium of speakers and panelists, which will be skyped among conference locations in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Taos, is CCL's [New Mexico State Conference: Plugging Into Solutions](#) (more details at link). On Sunday, October 29, the conference will continue with "Climate Advocate Training," a 3-hour training provided by Bill Barron, CCL's regional coordinator.

We have no personal experience with CCL but we do very much support the concept of a carbon tax and rebate and associated tariffs, *when (and only when) it is generalized into a comparable greenhouse gas tax and rebate*. CCL's structure is right for what they are trying to do, and CCL's on-line materials are very thoughtful and well-organized (see especially the bottom of their [home page](#), and their "[laser talks](#).")

We do not however see any comparative reference on the CCL web site to the "Republican Elders" "carbon dividend plan" ([plan](#); Ted Halstead [TED talk](#)), which in our view merits serious discussion along with CCL's approach. Charles Komanoff and his colleagues at the [Carbon Tax Center](#) (CTC) have been analyzing carbon taxes for a long time. His comments therefore carry weight ("[Don't Fear Exxon's Endorsement of the Baker-Shultz Carbon Tax](#)"). Importantly, CTC has analyzed the potential for carbon taxes at the state level ("[Opportunities for Carbon Taxes at the State Level](#)," April 2017).

Both the CCL plan and the "Republican Elders" plan offer far more carbon reductions than did the Obama "Clean Power Plan" (CPP). (We understand the CPP was part of a larger suite of proposed actions but the comparison would still, we believe, be accurate for the larger suite. Obama talked big and did little of positive consequence on climate.)

To repeat, only a "greenhouse gas dividend," not a "carbon dividend," makes sense. (For part of the reason why, please see 2017 Study Group summer intern Tatianna Vereschagin's fact sheet "[The myth of methane: why we must end our reliance on natural gas - Natural gas is not a "bridge fuel!"](#)".)

We are not optimistic that the federal government will enact any sufficient climate measures -- especially via standard lobbying such as that of CCL and Mr. Halstead's "Republican Elders" group, the [Climate Leadership Council](#) (CLC). It is however important to try, and to build bridges between people and organizations undertaking these reforms and the more radical approaches (and events) which are necessary -- and willy-nilly coming our way -- that complement them.

That said, all approaches to climate and energy which assume First-World living standards will fail. Such are naive and insufficiently informed by science, let alone justice and what will happen -- what is starting to happen -- when justice is absent. Militaries and police understand; climate activists generally do not. There will be no successful "100% renewables" transition except to much simpler and more strenuous lives, which need not be unhappy. Quite the contrary. We are entering the "Long Emergency" (Kunstler).

6. We are looking for volunteers to help with climate and solar outreach

As explained in letters of [July 20](#) and [July 25](#) and in Bulletin 232 ("[Nuclear power for your home and business](#)," July 19), we seek climate and solar "ambassadors" who would like to work with us in reaching out to friends, neighbors, organizations, churches, and networks to galvanize discussions about the climate crisis AND to promote solar energy.

If you want to get involved, call us at 505-265-1200 or email [Trish](#) or [Greg](#). Some of you are already involved -- thank you.

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Friends, now that our summer internship program is over and we have the freedom to re-focus somewhat, we must raise money. We really need your help. Our [fundraising appeal of late 2016](#) is still germane; you can find more information about us and our accomplishments in similar end-of-year letters from [2015](#) and [2014](#).

There are many ways to contribute. [See the header of this message for some](#). Call (505-265-1200) or [write](#). We will be broadening this appeal, using not just via email but through social media as well. Any help you can provide is welcome.

Thank you!

Greg and Trish, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200



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Upcoming film and discussion Sept. 3: "To the Ends of the Earth," on the desperate quest for MORE oil, and its context

August 29, 2017

Contents:

1. On Sunday, September 3, 1:00 pm, at the [Guild Cinema](#), Albuquerque, we are showing "To the Ends of the Earth," with discussion
2. We are trying to catalyze discussions and actions at a more serious level than we usually see
3. Ask your friends if they want to receive these updates. If so they should [write](#) us.
4. We are looking for volunteers to help with climate and solar outreach
5. We must now raise money

Dear friends,

1. On Sunday September 3, 1:00 pm, at the [Guild Cinema](#), Albuquerque, we are showing "To the Ends of the Earth," with discussion

If you can, please come!

We gave a brief introduction to this film and why we are showing it in our [last letter](#). Since Trump-bashing is so easy (and misses the point), let's hand the mic to President Obama now. Here he is, speaking at [West Point in May, 2014](#):

The United States is and remains the one indispensable nation...From Brazil to India, rising middle classes compete with us...The question we face, the question each of you will face, is not *whether* America will lead, but *how*...America's willingness to apply force around the world is the ultimate safeguard against chaos.
(emphasis added or restored)

These rising middle classes in other countries -- *which President Obama said were dispensable* -- for what resources do they "compete with us"?

Centrally, oil. The U.S. and China are the [world's largest oil importers](#). U.S. oil imports increased 7.4% last year. China's increased 9.1%. This cannot go on.

So what about our *own* middle classes, which are in clear decline? Candidate Trump said he would make them "great" again. This will not happen. Candidate Clinton simply cut off a great swath of the population from further serious consideration -- the "deplorables."

Why mention all this? Because "peak oil," as we will come to see, is a class phenomenon created by selective economic decline, not high oil prices. It's personal.

Meanwhile (and despite today's relatively low oil prices), there is a scramble for oil going on, literally "to the ends of the earth" as the title of this documentary has it. This scramble is leading not just toward environmental destruction but also, if not slowed and halted, toward more war -- not "just" today's proxy wars and direct U.S. "wars of aggression" against weak countries (the worst international crime, said the Nuremberg Tribunal) -- which together have produced millions of casualties and refugees to date -- but potentially between nuclear powers as well.

Please come if you can to the [Guild Cinema](#) in Albuquerque on Sunday, September 3 at 1:00 pm for a showing of "To the

For the record, here are some past essays on the oil-climate-economy-war-community-response nexus, from our blog.

- [Sustainability Requires Resistance](#) (9/27/16). [...] And save our communities. We aren't doing that. What's stopping us? In emergencies citizens usually respond rapidly, with surprising selflessness and skill. But our biggest emergencies are hidden in plain sight. Even most committed activists don't really understand the urgency of the crises we face, or how quickly they are unraveling our communities.
- [The Crisis at Hand, the Emergency Mode, and the Need for Full-Scale Mobilization](#) (7/31/16). A healthy response to the emergency we face means taking appropriate action and staying connected – with reality and to each other. Dysfunctional responses include endless distractions, despair, and any of the numerous policy fantasies available to us at little cost.
- ["We must triage the threats we face"](#) (3/16/16). As for lesser priorities, which we could all name, we may or may not have time or resources for them. If they conflict with these goals or similar ones, if they distract us, we may need to let them go. That is triage, something we face in disasters and war. We're there now. Now we can devise and carry out skillful treatments...
- ["What is to be done"](#) (12/31/15)...*Perhaps especially* in the educated and politically-active professional classes, denial and hopeful fantasies are the norm. It is toward this group that the distortions and strategic silences of the elite press, and the misdirection and distancing practices that usually dominate academia, are especially aimed. We have to re-educate ourselves, and it has to be done in part bodily, through action, and socially, as well as intellectually.
- [Turning point for oil, and us](#) (2/6/15). There are big things happening just now in oil, which will affect literally everything, including of course all human "best laid schemes." If you don't read anything else in this post, read Ron Patterson's blog post "Why we are at Peak Oil Right Now", Jeffrey Brown's short commentary, and Matt Mushalik's most recent post ("Peak...")
- [Season of the Witch](#) (7/4/14). "Owing to past neglect, in the face of the plainest warnings, we have entered upon a period of danger. The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedience of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences. We cannot avoid..."
- [The ignored gravity of our civilizational crisis – and the majesty of a wholehearted response](#) (2/9/14). "Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be only?" Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol" ... in *The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis* (1924) [Freud] wrote the following: "Neurosis does not disavow the reality, it ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries..."
- [Perfect storm](#) (4/4/13). Today I want to take up the theme of why assumptions of economic normalcy for the rest of the present decade are misplaced. It's a big subject and this is a long post. Even so, much of the weight of the argument is carried by referenced articles. Cassandra had a credibility problem....
- [The submerged mind of Empire](#) (3/27/13). "One thought alone occupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era." J.M. Coetze, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. But things which can't continue, won't. These include not just the U.S. empire but, looking to the whole developed world, our luxurious way of life...
- [Re: enraging desert](#) (3/20/13). "So, the question of evil, like the question of ugliness, refers primarily to the anesthetized heart, the heart that has no reaction to what it faces, thereby turning the variegated sensuous face of the world into monotony, sameness, oneness. The desert of modernity. Surprisingly, this desert is not heartless, because the desert is where the lion lives..."

2. We are trying to catalyze discussions and actions at a more serious level than we see around us

Friends, we do not see sufficiently-serious discussions and actions taking place around us. The hopes and platform planks of progressive Democrats, for example, will not be fulfilled to the extent they implicitly rely on economic growth and do not incorporate the need to disinvest from the military. Theories that our society, *at anywhere near present consumption levels*, could be based on "100% renewable energy," as we see stated by various environmental organizations, are simply fantasies. There are now peer-reviewed papers to explain this in greater depth if you are interested. "Simplify," said Henry Thoreau. First-world consumption levels must come down -- way down -- to be based on 100% renewable energy. We just aren't hearing that essential truth.

Political and environmental fantasies, whether presented by sincere people or demagogues, are dangerous. They undercut our knowledge and sense of reality -- our con-science, what we know together, which is as the word implies the basis for moral action. It is the only basis for society that we have. Propaganda and partisan echo chambers cannot be the basis for our moral and spiritual life, let alone for our practical response to the existential crises we face, which involve and require participation by all of us. Now.

I am mentioning this because I am not sure we are being understood on these points. We here at the Study Group are not quite on "the same side" as today's environmental community, for example. Yes, we share many values, hopes, and concerns and will try to help with limited reform agendas whenever we can. But we want to catalyze thought and action at another level of seriousness altogether -- an emergency level. As we [wrote to you](#) at the beginning of the year,

We are living at the end of an age. A huge storm, bigger than any humanity has ever known, is barreling

toward us. Already the wind is rising, the barometer falling. The first rain bands have arrived. We cannot see far into the dark clouds massed on the horizon. Everything we have known is starting to change, radically.

We live and work partly in one world that is vanishing, and partly in the brave new world that is taking its place.

Hurricane Harvey is not really just "over there." It's a hurricane and it's a metaphor. It's the world we are entering. Neither are our wars just "over there." A society addicted to oil and saturated in war, with the dams about to break, is incapable of prioritizing its own children, let alone those elsewhere.

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If you want to get involved, call us at 505-265-1200 or email [Trish](#) or [Greg](#). Some of you are already involved -- thank you.

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Thank you, and see some of you on Sunday,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group



Los Alamos Study Group

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Upcoming film and discussion Sept. 3; volunteers wanted; fundraising

August 23, 2017

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2. We are looking for volunteers to help with climate and solar outreach
3. On September 3, 1:00 pm, at the [Guild Cinema](#), Albuquerque, we are showing "[To the Ends of the Earth](#)," with discussion
4. Thank you, Taos United
5. We must now raise money

Dear friends,

1. Ask your friends if they want to receive these updates. If so they should [write](#) us.

We would like to recruit people to our mailing lists. Please ask your friends. We offer two levels of engagement.

- Our main listserve, which receives [bulletins](#) (roughly monthly) and [press releases](#) (also about monthly, apparently). Send a blank email here to [subscribe](#). This list is open to all.
- Our four New Mexico mailing lists (Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and everywhere else), which get less-formal [letters](#) like this roughly twice per month (increasing to weekly we hope, with more useful local information). To get on one of these lists, email [Trish](#) or [Greg](#). Everybody who is on these local lists is also on the wider, main list.

2. We are looking for volunteers to help with climate and solar outreach

As explained in letters of [July 20](#) and [July 25](#) and in Bulletin 232 ("[Nuclear power for your home and business](#)." July 19), we seek climate and solar "ambassadors" who would like to work with us in reaching out to friends, neighbors, organizations, churches, and networks to galvanize discussions about the climate crisis AND to promote solar energy.

Friends, this is easy as well as critically important. A high degree of grid penetration by distributed, renewable energy is among the *first* steps toward sustainability and survival, not a distant goal.

If you want to get involved, call us at 505-265-1200 or email [Trish](#) or [Greg](#). Some people are already involved -- thank you.

For groups of young persons -- at schools or churches, for example -- or for individuals that feel particularly strong callings in this area, we will try to work creatively with your circumstances.

Many don't see the gravity and urgency of the crises at hand, in part because our legacy news media, politicians, academics, and the "nonprofit-industrial complex" provide precious few clues amid the near-total "eclipse" of reality (h/t J.H. Kunstler) generally on offer from mainstream sources. The climate crisis, and the (intimately-related) civilizational energy crisis (see 3. below) are maturing at frightful speed.

And when these sources *do* inform us accurately, we all too often ignore them.

The "governmental reform" paradigm in which the nonprofit community almost exclusively works is necessary, but will not

avail. An entirely different paradigm, emergency mobilization, is necessary. *Some* form of mobilization, civil strife, or collapse will sooner or later come, like it or not. We can partially shape its nature -- positive, or negative, for us and for others -- if we seize the day now.

We offer a community of somewhat enlightened thought and action -- not, as Rumi put it, "a caravan of despair." If you can, join us.

3. On Sunday September 3, 1:00 pm, at the Guild Cinema, Albuquerque, we are showing "To the Ends of the Earth," with discussion

Perhaps this merits a bit of background -- just a partial glimpse.

The [2010 Joint Operating Environment](#) (JOE) report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (signed by none other than the current Secretary of Defense, James Mattis), correctly noted (see pp. 26-31) that there will soon not be enough oil to satisfy the world's needs. Not by a long shot.

That [looming oil] production bottleneck apart, the potential sources of future energy supplies nearly all present their own difficulties and vulnerabilities. None of these provide much reason for optimism. At present, the United States possesses approximately 250 million cars, while China with its immensely larger population possesses only 40 million...

Assuming the most optimistic scenario for improved petroleum production through enhanced recovery means, the development of non-conventional oils (such as oil shales or tar sands) and new discoveries, petroleum production will be hard pressed to meet the expected future demand of 118 million barrels per day [MBD] [by 2030]...

A severe energy crunch is inevitable without a massive expansion of production and refining capacity. While it is difficult to predict precisely what economic, political, and strategic effects such a shortfall might produce, it surely would reduce the prospects for growth in both the developing and developed worlds. Such an economic slowdown would exacerbate other unresolved tensions, push fragile and failing states further down the path toward collapse, and perhaps have serious economic impact on both China and India. At best, it would lead to periods of harsh economic adjustment. To what extent conservation measures, investments in alternative energy production, and efforts to expand petroleum production from tar sands and shale would mitigate such a period of adjustment is difficult to predict. One should not forget that the Great Depression spawned a number of totalitarian regimes that sought economic prosperity for their nations by ruthless conquest...

To generate the energy required worldwide by the 2030s would require us to find an additional 1.4 MBD every year until then.

So, how are "we" doing, seven years later? (Leaving aside for a moment the vital question of just who this "we" might be.)

In 2010 the world [produced](#) 74.6 MBD of crude oil (including extra-heavy oil, field condensate, and tar sands bitumen); in 2016, 79.9 MBD -- only a 0.9 MBD average annual increase, not Mattis' "1.4." To the extent there is growth at all, it will soon stall.

Other important factors notwithstanding, this is not enough to grow the world economy like in "the old days," especially considering the cost of this oil in energy and in dollars.

Almost all the *net* growth in oil production since 2005 [has come from U.S. shale oil and Canadian tar sands](#) -- that is, from unconventional, expensive, energy-intensive, and especially-destructive sources.

Canadian tar sands production is at a standstill. U.S. shale oil [may have peaked](#) in 2015 (time will tell). Meanwhile the annual depletion rate from existing U.S. shale oil wells has risen fast, as was expected, to [94% of total shale oil production](#), meaning nearly all incremental growth in shale oil (now slowing despite massive investment in the Permian Basin) must come from *new* wells. The U.S. shale oil "miracle" (a credit-driven Ponzi scheme with exponentially-increasing environmental cost) is in trouble (the single best overview may be [here](#)).

As the "JOE 2010" report illustrates there is a hidden oil crisis with very dangerous implications, that is far better understood by governments (and their militaries) than by the "happy-motoring" U.S. public.

Please come if you can to the [Guild Cinema](#) in Albuquerque on Sunday, September 3 at 1:00 pm for a showing of "[To the Ends of the Earth](#)," followed by discussion.

4. Thank you, Taos United

As described our Aug. 7 [letter](#), Trish and I headed up to Taos this past Saturday. I spoke on "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution: The Crucial Role of Citizen Groups; Key issues for New Mexico."

We are grateful to Taos United for hosting us and look forward to further interactions with our Taos friends new and old.

We did not have time for everything we had hoped to say in that talk, which ended up focusing more on current nuclear issues and somewhat less on the crucial roles of citizens groups. Fair enough.

One of those issues is the coming [nuclear ban treaty](#), which opens for signature on September 20 and which aims to make much of what our New Mexico nuclear labs do *illegal* under international law. Stay tuned. You will hear more from us soon on this.

There may be groups in other New Mexico places which would like to invite us to speak or simply to answer questions on the issues we have been working on. We prefer the context of an organization, or a church. One way or another, we believe face-to-face meetings are essential to any real progress on the issues.

5. We must now raise money

Friends, now that our summer internship program is over and we have the freedom to re-focus somewhat, one of those foci must be fundraising. We really need your help. Our [fundraising appeal of late 2016](#) is still germane; you can find more information about us and our accomplishments in similar end-of-year letters from [2015](#) and [2014](#).

Our foci for the remainder of the year will be, first of all, U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Many of you have already "got the briefing" on this. In brief we would like to realize the opportunities listed in [Bulletin 229: Overview of some NNSA issues](#). This is primarily an effort on the national stage. NNSA, LANL, and our congressional delegation and candidates please take note: with the help of our many committed friends, we will do whatever it takes to defeat plutonium warhead core (pit) production, as we have done before.

Our second focus will be in continuing the "community awakening" efforts begun in the summer internship program, discussed above in items 1-4. This is primarily a regional effort. We are in an emergency, as noted above. In New Mexico, we have unique technical insights and experience in this arena.

Our third focus lies in "bringing the [ban](#) home." On September 20 at 6:00 am MDT, the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) opens for signature at the United Nations. Signing ceremonies will continue all day. This treaty, when it enters into force, declares the core mission and activities of our nuclear weapons laboratories and plants illegal and requires signatories to pass national legislation criminalizing their work. Some 122 countries voted to adopt this treaty. We worked hard to bring it about and now we want to use it.

What does this mean in the U.S.? Trump's top nuclear advisor, Christopher Ford, said yesterday "during an unapologetically blunt address" that "the treaty would prohibit governments that ratify it from having a 'security relationship' with any country that relies even in part on nuclear weapons for national defense" ("[Trump Official Blasts U.N.'s Nuke Ban](#)," Exchange-Monitor *Morning Briefing* 8/23/17). In Chris Ford's perspective that's a worst-case scenario. In ours, a best case. He's exaggerating but the point is, there will be leverage. Will democracies use it? Will we in New Mexico? That's the question. We answer in the affirmative.

Our final focus will be in expanding and supporting this organization and ensuring its continuity and effectiveness.

There are many ways to contribute. See the header of this message for some. Call (505-265-1200) or [write](#). We will be broadening this appeal, using not just via email but through social media as well. Any help you can provide is welcome.

Stay tuned for more, and thank you,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group



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Taos talk: "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution:" The Crucial Role of Citizen Groups; Key issues for New Mexico

August 7, 2017

Dear friends,

We wanted to let you know about an upcoming talk and discussion in Taos, hosted by Taos United (see the announcement below).

There may be groups in other New Mexico places which would like to invite Trish and I to lead discussions similar to this one or on some of these detailed topics, which are best addressed within the context of an organization, or a church. **One way or another, face-to-face meetings are essential to any real progress on the issues.**

Our whirlwind 10-week summer internship program on climate and renewable energy ended this past week. Though it was smaller than we had originally hoped it was successful. (A few of the written products and a few pictures are [here](#). We also met with a number of political leaders; what you see is just the tip of the iceberg.) We are now in the process of re-tooling for the next steps in all our issues as well as in the broader community awakening we hope to help foster -- with your help -- across the more conscious organizations, businesses, and churches.

Meanwhile many of you will find this open letter to our congressional delegation about the push to socialize nuclear waste useful: [Publicly oppose consolidated interim storage of spent nuclear fuel, as well as H.R. 3053](#), open letter to NM delegation, Aug 2, 2017.

Now, about these local lists. I am going to start using them more to provide reference articles and thoughtful analyses which I think are of significant or signal importance to our work together. Some of you will appreciate that, and some will find it too much. If you want off these lists, let me know. I hope to initiate this in the next day or so. Hopefully we will keep many or most of you on board. We will also be adding some activist leaders in New Mexico locales besides Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Taos.

The Taos announcement follows.

In solidarity, Greg

"Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution:" The Crucial Role of Citizen Groups; Key issues for New Mexico

Talk for Taos United by Greg Mello, Los Alamos Study Group, with discussion

9:30 am Saturday August 19, 2017 at the Kit Carson Electric Co-op, 118 Cruz Alta Road, Taos

We live at the end of an age. A huge storm, bigger than any humanity has ever known, is barreling toward us. The wind is rising, the barometer falling. The first bands of rain have arrived. We cannot see into the dark clouds massed on the horizon. Much that we have known is about to change, radically.

It is an altogether revolutionary time, even more so than when Dr. King posed that challenge. Our freedom lies in waking up to this reality, understanding and accepting it, and guiding our actions accordingly. For our children to survive we are going to have to find the courage and respect for one another -- two sides of one

coin – that our post-democratic institutions have been so keen to hide.

Independent groups like Taos United are critically important at this historical juncture, as are churches and our civic organizations, not just for the sake of reform or for maintenance of our best civic traditions, but as beacons of wakefulness, energetic joy-in-action, and mutual respect.

Mr. Mello will discuss some of roles these groups can play at this time, from direct policy intervention to constructive action to nonviolent resistance. He will especially address some of the key peace and security issues in which local groups could play a determinative role. These include the vast investments in new nuclear weapons now underway, in which the New Mexico labs are playing a central and enabling role; the increasing push to store or dispose of enormous quantities of nuclear waste in the state; and the military push to use more of rural New Mexico for training. [*Nota bene*: I am not an expert on this last topic, as important and closely connected to all we do as it is. I will either invite someone from [Peaceful Skies](#) to speak on this, or else get an emergency briefing from them beforehand! The direct influence of the military in New Mexico is too important a topic to leave out.]

The recently-negotiated internationally treaty banning design, production, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, which will outlaw most of the work of the New Mexico nuclear labs, opens for signature in September. It is an important new tool for citizen engagement, locally and internationally. We can liken it to a grain-harvesting combine. The fields are ripe, and a brand-new combine has been purchased by the sweat and sacrifice of decades. Diesel's in the tank. There's the key. Shall we fire it up?

Open-source knowledge and intelligence on the one hand, and the pervasiveness of propaganda on the other, create the conditions for powerful new roles for local groups in countering false narratives. A few people can, in addition to their local activities, be powerful on a much wider scale than ever before.

The nature of U.S. society is now hanging in the balance, as is the inhabitability of Earth. Preserving life and building a more sustainable and nonviolent future is ennobling and joyful work, which can bring us together in new and creative ways if we let it.

There will be ample time for discussion.



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Climate+solar flyers update

July 25, 2017

Dear friends,

As we wrote on [7/20/17](#) and in ([Bulletin 232: Nuclear power for your home and business](#)), [we seek climate and solar "ambassadors" who would like to work with us in reaching out to friends, neighbors, organizations, churches, and networks to galvanize discussions about the climate crisis AND to promote solar energy.](#)

Since then we have realized that we should not be offering free solar consultations in the Taos area, because our solar installation partners aren't economically able to install there. It's just too far a trip for their small staffs and ours!

For everybody else on this list, [we now have plenty of handy postcard-size handouts for outreach.](#)

[Please let us know by return email how many of these you would like.](#) In Albuquerque you can get them here at our office. In Santa Fe you can get them at Study Group board member Lydia Clark's house at 1210 Vitalia Street ([map](#)) where they are in the unlocked front porch. You don't need to call ahead to get them.

Bulletin 233 ("Uninhabitable Earth? Not yet, and not if we can help it.") is coming soon. The title refers to David Wallace-Wells' superb piece in *New York* magazine ([here](#), with annotations) which is already the most-read article in the magazine's history. Overall (and despite detractors one can find, including some by climate scientists), I see nothing significantly wrong in that article. If Wallace-Wells' piece seems too dire I assure you there are worse, backed up by peer-reviewed science too.

It should be clear to everyone that converting our electricity generation at its present scale to 100% renewable energy (which is not affordable, despite so many Pollyanna claims, as we will discuss in the forthcoming Bulletin) would not by itself solve the climate predicament. Much more radical transformation is required. Much more much more radical transformation is coming, whether we want it or not. This transformation is being driven by *the whole suite* of converging crises we face, which is already eclipsing business-as-usual (BAU) worldwide, the impact falling most heavily on the most marginal peoples and creatures.

Tariel Murrigan's advice, from his path-breaking and still-unequaled synthesis, [Peak Energy, Climate Change, and the Collapse of Global Civilization](#), is sound: "[The sooner people and societies prepare for peak oil and a post-peak oil life, the more they will be able to influence the direction of their opportunities.](#)"

In other words, and however much one may criticize Murrigan's timing (which came from the Department of Energy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff among other authorities), there is much more going on in our accelerated history right now than just climate change, as dire as that is. Much is ending. What beginnings there are is partly up to us. There is not a moment to lose.

As we will see in the forthcoming Bulletin, most of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emission scenarios are actually impossible because they assume too-great an endowment and rate of extraction of oil, natural gas, and coal. That does not mean we are out of the woods. Wallace-Wells' piece does not need too much revision because of this good news. But it does mean that those who are putting their faith in BAU scenarios will be bitterly disappointed.

By the way, there will be no magic technical fixes that create new, concentrated, useful energy without massive new problems, worse than the ones we have. Sorry. Ingenuity is a great thing, but the laws of nature and especially the Second Law of Thermodynamics win, without exception.

Radical resistance is necessary, as well as radical simplification and a thoroughgoing constructive program. We see all these as mutually-supportive and -qualifying. [Ted Trainer](#) has had it [right](#) all along.

Please don't think we are pushing solar energy as the be-all and end-all of climate protection. We need [full-scale mobilization](#) and with it a new spirituality of work, community, and [rootedness](#) that is grounded on a deeper plane than consumerism has produced, or can.

Meanwhile, let's get solar, and in as many ways as possible, "get our house in order." A storm is coming.

Thank you,

Greg, for the Study Group

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[Please help us distribute climate+solar flyers!](#)

July 20, 2017

Dear friends,

As we wrote yesterday ([Bulletin 232: Nuclear power for your home and business](#)), [we seek climate and solar "ambassadors" who would like to work with us in reaching out to friends, neighbors, organizations, churches, and networks to galvanize discussions about the climate crisis AND to promote solar energy](#). To repeat, we have a "confluence of interest" in this, including raising funds for all our work -- on nuclear disarmament as well as climate and energy.

As an aside, we are proud of our unusually successful disarmament work, which to date has blocked creation of a new plutonium pit production facility in Los Alamos for decades (for example). The now-defunct, giant [CMRR Nuclear Facility](#) was the only nuclear modernization program to be blocked under Obama, as it turns out. We had to do that essentially alone, given the commitment to the facility that had been given by so many other groups. We are also proud of our years-long hard work on behalf of the now-adopted Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty, to be opened for signature on September 20. [We hope that as our ambassadors you will touch upon these successful programs, as well as the essential transition to renewable energy](#). We have always seen all these issues as intimately related.

We did not go into very many details in that Bulletin, either technical or political. Nor can we do so here. We didn't want to complicate the message and indeed at its core it is not complicated. The sun shines. Solar PV is cheap enough. As to details, we are working with them in our summer internship program here.

We hope to send some analysis and views regarding the political and organizing situation tomorrow, with something of a technical update to follow in a day or two.

Meanwhile there are two or three nuclear topics begging for communication to you as well, but for now these must wait. We are working with the news media on these, which will be a more powerful approach if it bears fruit.

[By early next week \(July 24 or 25\) we will have available some colorful small \(postcard-size and -weight\) flyers](#) with a very brief precis of climate issues on one side and solar energy on the other. These are for you to distribute, if you can, in the normal course of your activities or via dedicated outreach you may take on.

[Please let us know by return email how many of these you would like](#). In Albuquerque you can get them here at our office; in Santa Fe and Taos we can get them to you in any of several other simple ways, TBD. We will print more as needed!

We would like to foment a great deal more discussion about our converging crises, particularly the danger of climate collapse and the actions we need to take, than is occurring in our communities.

A weird paralysis seems to have settled over much of the New Mexico body politic since the last presidential election. "[We must disenthral ourselves](#)," said Lincoln. "The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise -- with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew." Indeed.

We and our interns have been meeting with political leaders at the state and local levels and discussing these issues -- the one, an urgent and existential danger to everyone and everything; the other, a radiant economic and political opportunity.

What we are asking you to do flows from that program and these meetings. [Overall, we call our summer program](#)

"Community Awakening," and we hope you will help us accomplish just that!

[We can't do it without you.](#)

[Please let us know ASAP how many postcards you would like!](#)

There are other elements to this outreach I haven't mentioned, so we aren't putting all our eggs in this basket. But if you help us, it is a very big basket indeed.

Thank you,

Greg, Trish, and our hard-working interns

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"Years of Living Dangerously," at LASG's headquarters this Thurs, June 15, 5:30-7:30pm!

June 12, 2017

Dear Albuquerque friends --

Join us this coming Thursday, June 15th, 5:30 - 7:30 pm, here at the Study Group's world headquarters, 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque, map: <https://goo.gl/maps/iVXsjpTTxZs>, to view the first episode of "Years of Living Dangerously", Showtime's Emmy Award-winning series that explores the devastating human impact of climate change and the damage it has caused around the world.



(Screenshot from "Years of Living Dangerously" on the National Geographic channel.)

This series ranks high for factual accuracy and human empathy, as well as production value and celebrity star-power. Part of this episode takes place in eastern NM and west TX.

A discussion on climate change will follow the episode and refreshments will be served.

Looking forward to seeing many of you on Thursday evening!

More then,

Trish, Greg, Tatianna, Andrew, & Jason

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DNFSB hearing in Santa Fe tonight re plutonium in Los Alamos; LASG public discussion at UNM tomorrow night: renewable energy: necessary NOW, but hardly sufficient

June 7, 2017

Please forward this email to your friends!

Dear friends --

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) is holding its long-delayed hearing **tonight** on [Understanding the Safety Posture of the Plutonium Facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory](#). The agenda, some background material, and public participation guidelines are at the link. The hearing will be held at the Santa Fe Convention Center, 201 W. Marcy Street ([map](#)). It will be [livestreamed](#). Our apologies for this late notice. We have been working around the clock.

The hearing will implicitly (Session 1) and explicitly (Session 2) discuss the future of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) plutonium operations.

Much will be said that is true, and some that doesn't, er, reach that standard. Crucial information will be left out. You have no need to know *that*, you see. William Blake's couplet comes to mind: "A truth that's told with bad intent/beats all the lies you can invent."

But we are in a post-truth age, are we not, where anything goes? Not in this shop, thank you.

We'll be there.

We've been busy "seven ways to Sunday." One recent product that may be of interest are these [Comments on the "Draft Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,"](#) working paper for negotiators, Jun 5, 2017.

Our Climate and Solar Ambassador program has well begun. We have a fantastic group of seven new people here. They have been working enthusiastically on preparations for lobbying and in trainings provided by our corporate partners ([Sunpower by Positive Energy](#) and [McCune Solar Works](#) -- thank you!).

Tomorrow night, as we mentioned in previous emails, we will be holding a **public discussion at the University of New Mexico (UNM) Law School** on Stanford Drive NE ([map](#)), in Room 2401. Our topic will be "**Renewable energy: necessary NOW, but hardly sufficient.**" Our interns will be presenting. It is high time we got farther along with the constructive nonviolence, as well as resistance. We are not having the conversations we should be. *Please come and meet our interns if you are in the Albuquerque area.*

As we said in an earlier [letter](#) (and others, [here](#) and [here](#) for example), **we want to meet with YOUR organization or church about our climate emergency** – its opportunities and its dangers.

More meetings will follow. All will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 pm except July 8, as shown.

June 15, ~~UNM Law School, Room 2401:~~ **topics in renewable energy and climate** LASG headquarters, 2901 Summit PL NE, Albuquerque: "*Years of Living Dangerously*," with discussion on climate change.

- June 22, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- June 29, *location TBD*: **topics in renewable energy and climate**

- July 6, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- **July 8, Ashley Pond Park Pavilion, Los Alamos ([map](#)), 12 noon to 2 pm: topic: secret for now** (meanwhile "[Stay calm, have courage, and wait for signs.](#)")
- July 13, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 20, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 27, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- August 3, *location TBA*: **capstone presentation and news conference, climate and solar ambassadors**

Our [calendar](#), for reference.

This summer's program is a financial stretch for us. Do you know others who can help? Solar referrals are our main source of funding for this program. We began canvassing last night.

Looking forward to seeing some of you tonight and tomorrow night,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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Reminder: talk and discussion THIS EVENING; solar party June 3; more

May 25, 2017

Dear Albuquerque friends --

Just a reminder, taken from the summer [schedule](#) sent a couple of weeks ago (or see this [calendar](#)):

- **This evening**, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, at the Study Group HQ, 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque ([map](#)) we will have a presentation and discussion on **our converging crises; the role of local organizing; overcoming silence in our communities**

Also please remember these:

- June 1, Study Group HQ, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, at the Study Group HQ: **welcome for and get-together with our climate and solar ambassadors**
- June 3, Summit Park, Constitution and Richmond NE, Albuquerque ([map](#)), 11 am to 3 pm: **Solar Party**, with solar displays and experts in attendance from [Positive Energy](#) and [McCune Solar Works](#); food and conversation in a kid-friendly environment

We are pleased to have two long-time community activists from Santa Fe joining us tonight.

A special request: **PLEASE HELP US GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE JUNE 3rd SOLAR PARTY.**

- First, here's a blurb you can **copy and paste to your own lists and those of organizations with which you may be involved** (obviously feel free to edit this for brevity as necessary):

Join us, the [Los Alamos Study Group](#), on Saturday, June 3rd, 11am - 3pm for a [Solar Party](#) at Summit Park, [Constitution and Richmond](#), here in Albuquerque!

There will be food, fun, and beverages. *No charge*. Bring your family and meet our eight [Climate and Solar Ambassadors](#) who will be working with us this summer! They will be working in our office mostly, but also circulating on occasion around our neighborhood to help others learn more about why household and business solar installations make excellent environmental and financial sense.

We are fortunate to have our two "[Solar Partners](#)" joining us as well on Saturday!

- [McCune Solar Works](#) will be on hand to demonstrate their "Canadian Solar 260 Watt Solar Diamond Glass-Glass Modules. These are among the highest quality, longest life PV modules available - 30 Year Warranty. The engineering and Quality control is impeccable."
- [Sunpower by Positive Energy](#) will have their "solar trailer" on hand and be there to demonstrate their superb, long-lived "SunPower panels [that] produce the highest power output per square inch..." They can also explain how you can afford a solar system by "working with your bank or our financing partners, you can purchase a solar system

with \$0 down and have no payments or interest for months, or acquire a loan and pay as you go."

As a special bonus for our non-profit organization, [McCune Solar Works](#) will pay \$500 to the Study Group for successful referrals that result in the purchase of a home or business PV system.

[Sunpower by Positive Energy](#) will pay the Study Group \$100 for every referral we provide that results in a consultation with a *possible* customer, with another \$400 awarded to us if that consultation then leads to the purchase of a home or business system.

These are both VERY good companies that offer somewhat different and complimentary products and services in the solar market.

We look forward to seeing many of you on Saturday, June 3rd!

We believe that this will be a superb networking event for those who might want to get involved in the solar energy industry.

This past Tuesday (5/23/17) you received our initial [press release](#) regarding the UN negotiations about to resume, aimed at producing [a treaty banning nuclear weapons 6 weeks from now](#).

Also on Tuesday, President Trump's first budget request hit the streets. We have parts of a detailed analysis of the warhead portion of the budget, but have not published anything on it yet. As we explained to a reporter this morning, we don't see any new programs or projects, despite the big increase in warhead spending. The weapons programs underway are simply costing more than was previously budgeted. This has been universally expected. The details are however quite interesting, and potentially pivotal. The news is not all bad.

The really novel bit in the Trump budget is the near-total destruction of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) programs (to be cut 70%, from \$2.069 billion to \$636 million). This draconian cut is unlikely to fully survive Congress but it's a safe bet that RE and EE are, er, not going to grow, to say the least! The energy future of the U.S. is very, very muddy, and the Democrats are almost as responsible for the mess as are the Republicans. Hence this summer's program, and the program tonight.

The bigger issue is that the priorities in the Trump budget, if continued, will, *of a certainty*, destroy the U.S. -- and especially New Mexico, which is among the states that will be most damaged by its militaristic priorities. The increases going to the labs will come from schools and our children, from the vulnerable, from Medicaid and the rest of the tattered safety net. Those cuts will ripple heavily through the rest of society. And the increases at the labs and military bases will also come from increased federal borrowing, which in the case of the bloated military does not invest in much of anything useful or productive, so there's no payback. The U.S. has got to take a U-turn on war and it's not going to be easy. Most likely this will come from inevitable (further) defeats abroad, which will test U.S. prudence and restraint this side of nuclear war.

New Mexico Democrats claim to support RE and EE -- not just at DOE but in the larger sense of these terms -- but their support is lukewarm and exaggerated for voter consumption. Their support for nuclear weapons and the military is by contrast full-throated, constant, and powerful.

New Mexico environmental groups constantly allow Democratic politicians to "greenwash" their positions. This makes them among New Mexico's most powerful, long-time enablers of militarism, economic inequality, and war. Is that plain enough for you? The climate groups that don't take on these issues, that remain silent about the barbarism exhibited by our leading Democrats, are setting up climate advocacy for failure. We have to stop pussyfooting around these realities. That's one of the messages from the Trump budget.

Stay tuned, take stock of your situation, and get ready,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group



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Our summer schedule so far -- please join us!

May 11, 2017

Dear friends --

There is a great deal going on at the Study Group. We are busy organizing our ambitious summer internship [program](#), finishing up our input to the [UN negotiations](#) on a [treaty banning nuclear weapons](#) which will begin in about a month, and much more.

In our last [letter](#) we mentioned weekly public meetings this summer. With the exceptions shown below, they will be on **Thursdays**, from **5:30 to 7:30 pm**. **They begin next week.**

As that [letter](#) (and others before it, [here](#) and [here](#) for example) said, **we want to meet with YOUR organization or church about our climate emergency** – its opportunities and its dangers.

The schedule, location, and general topics for these meetings are as follows. All meetings will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 pm except June 3 and July 8, as shown.

- May 18, Study Group HQ, 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque ([map](#)): **update on nuclear issues (weapons mostly but also waste) and the excellent opportunities at hand**, Study Group staff.
- May 25, Study Group HQ: **our converging crises; the role of local organizing; overcoming silence in our communities**, Study Group staff
- June 1, Study Group HQ: **welcome for and get-together with our climate and solar ambassadors**
- June 3, Summit Park, Constitution and Richmond NE, Albuquerque ([map](#)), 11 am to 3 pm: **Solar Party**, with solar displays and experts in attendance from [Positive Energy](#) and [McCune Solar Works](#); food and conversation in a kid-friendly environment
- June 8, University of New Mexico (UNM) Law School, Stanford Drive NE ([map](#)), Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- June 15, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- June 22, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- June 29, *location TBD*: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 6, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 8, Ashley Pond Park Pavilion, Los Alamos ([map](#)), 12 noon to 2 pm: **topic: secret for now** (meanwhile "[Stay calm, have courage, and wait for signs.](#)")
- July 13, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 20, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- July 27, UNM Law School, Room 2401: **topics in renewable energy and climate**
- August 3, *location TBD*: **capstone presentation and news conference**, climate and solar ambassadors

We will put these on our [calendar](#) shortly for reference.

We will have guest speakers, mostly via Skype, for most of these climate and energy meetings, but these aren't set up yet.

It will be hard for us to meet in Santa Fe or Taos during this period. Folks up north, **please join us in Albuquerque when you can! Please come and meet our talented interns. We are very excited and enthusiastic about this audacious program and we hope you are too!**

We will also film these events and if they have sufficient merit we will post them on our YouTube [channel](#).

About two-thirds of the program will be devoted to analysis and lobbying. We'll be starting that up right away, from the beginning.

This summer's program is a financial stretch for us. It is only because of your generosity and that of others that we can even think of doing this, needful as it is for our state and our world. Do you know others who can help fund this program? We don't ask too often but we are asking now!

We will be continuing with some nuclear weapons work this summer, on the side, picking up those issues again on a full-time basis in the later summer, by which time we expect some new opportunities to have appeared. We may also see some (more) immediate dangers, such as those signaled by Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Perry's visit yesterday to the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL's) main plutonium facility. We've been in Washington for a total of three weeks of lobbying since the presidential election, and despite all the hand-wringing in the mainstream media we can report that in some ways we are making more progress under Trump than in second-term Obama, because what used to be Obama policies are now Trump policies and Democrats can oppose them far more easily. That's on the plus side. There are plenty of negatives too. Come to the "World Headquarters" on May 18 for more.

Stay tuned, take stock of your situation, and get ready,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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Will your organization or church host a panel discussion on our climate emergency – its opportunities and its dangers – involving Greg Mello, Chuck McCune of McCune Solar Works, and any others you may choose?

For further information and arrangements please contact [Ernie Sturdevant](#) (505-321-8479) or [Trish Williams-Mello](#) (505-265-1200 office, 505-577-3366 cell)

May 5, 2017

Are we environmentalists and social justice advocates "[bright-siding](#)" our climate, energy, and environmental problems? Are we downplaying the dangers we face and exaggerating the positive effects of relatively easy policy choices that address only a small part of our climate, energy, and related problems? **We sure are**. As Clive Hamilton recently put it, we are [on the edge of the abyss](#), but we ignore it. His "we" includes most of us.

Climate change denial is pervasive today – as is belief in impossible energy futures, such as the fantasy of powering our present hyper-wasteful economy and society on 100% renewable energy.

Preventing runaway climate change will require *revolutionary change*, not just reform. We have to talk about this. *Effective emergency measures* are required, and *economic justice* will need to be at the fore. The truth is that our energy and economic situations have already changed more than we know, and revolutionary changes are coming to us whether we want them or not. We've got to seize the moment before the moment seizes us, in a bad way.

The good news is that we can take some very effective measures ourselves. Not all of them cost money (often the reverse, in fact), and they don't all require changes in government policy. They will instead *produce* policy changes, *if we organize*. Conservation, substitution, and resistance will bring us closer together if we let them, and are really necessary to renew our social contract. We need to start "boycotting ecocide," as local solar engineer [Chuck McCune](#) puts it. Ephemeral marches and protests are powerless, in comparison.

How can we get started? We start from where we are of course, the best and only place there is. Meanwhile, we recommend getting acquainted (for example) with the very clear educational materials available from [Climate Code Red](#) (such as this short [presentation](#) by David Spratt) and Margaret Salamon ("[Leading the Public into Emergency Mode: A New Strategy for the Climate Movement](#)"). This short [essay](#) of Greg's or this talk ("[The Crisis at Hand, the Emergency Mode, & the Need for Full-Scale Mobilization](#)") may also be helpful.

What we shouldn't do is to put our faith in either main U.S. political party, or imagine that regulatory processes alone will save us. The illusion of salvation within the present political and economic assumptions, for example by some sort of "clean energy utopia," is delaying action and awareness while also hiding and abetting an all-too-real class war. The U.S. is now [regressing](#) into the economic status of a developing country, in no small part because of our largely unopposed, rampant militarism -- nowhere more so than in New Mexico. We need nonviolent constructive action and resistance – both – as we build resilience into our lives and our communities, starting with households, organizations, and churches.

We like to find a way to talk to your group or church about these matters. Our knowledge and perspectives, honed over decades, are different (though largely complementary) to others you may have heard. **If you are interested please call Ernest Sturdevant, or Trish Williams-Mello, at the numbers above.**

Meanwhile we will be hosting weekly public talks and discussions as part of our summer internship [program](#), which runs from May 29 to August 4. We'll kick off on June 3 with a solar showcase and party in Summit Park ([map](#)) from 11 am to

3 pm. Following that we'll have weekly discussions, probably on Thursdays at UNM Law School ([map](#)), concluding August 3 with a capstone presentation by our eight interns. Exact dates, times, and topics will follow in due course. (Contact [Trish](#) if for some reason you don't get those announcements.)

In solidarity,

Greg Mello

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There is tremendous interest in our summer program; we need your help!

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April 15, 2017

Dear Albuquerque friends (with copies to Santa Fe and Taos friends) --

We have been developing our [Summer 2017 Climate and Solar Ambassador Program](#) over the past two months alongside our other work (here, at the UN, and in Washington, DC).

This program is shaping up to be really terrific!

We have over 30 diverse applicants from here and all over the country, many more than we can accept. Nearly all are highly qualified in terms of academic background, skills, and life experience. All are at least upper division undergrads and many are grad students in applicable fields. Some have considerable background in energy sciences and policy. Others have craft skills, graphic arts skills, and more. These bright people are passionate about saving this planet, with justice, and they are eager and excited about working with us.

Friends, the quality and quantity of this response has stunned us. We originally advertised our Climate and Solar Ambassador Program for a minimum of 5 and maximum of 9 interns. The outpouring of interest we are experiencing has led us to consider expanding the program to a maximum of 12, this being the most work spaces we can create in our office/home. **How many we can accept, up to a maximum of 12, will depend on how many living situations we can find.**

As you can see from the [program announcement](#), we will provide room, board, and a \$500/month stipend to those we accept (and a bicycle if needed). Some applicants are local and will not need housing, but others will.

We need your help! If you live in Albuquerque, especially if you live within a couple of miles of our office, please consider hosting one or two of these talented people! Or, you may have a friend in our area -- within a mile or two of 2901 Summit Place NE -- whom you think might want to help out. Please share this with them.

We also need money of course. As you can see, this is not a cheap program -- but beyond two or three interns, supervision is a full-time job in any case. There are economies of scale. And we want a real team atmosphere and experience for our interns this summer.

If you have even the tiniest shred of possible interest in hosting one of these interns, please call us -- or if you can, come to a meeting at our home and office ([map](#)) this coming Tuesday, April 18, at 6:30 pm. The interest expressed by these mostly young professionals and activists in climate protection, sustainability, and renewable energy is very important for our community and our state.

We can share more background about the program when you call and come on Tuesday.

We are very proud of our intern alumni, by the way. Some have important jobs related to the work they did for us here. It is hard not to stop right here and brag on some of them.

We have never focused our internship program on climate, energy, and solar issues specifically, although we have certainly worked on these issues for many years, decades even. We are also fortunate to have a national network of experts who will

be helping us this summer. We will be working closely with our two [solar partners](#) as well.

We anticipate weekly public discussions as part of this program as well as informal weekly video evenings and get-togethers. Course materials will be available for those interested.

Even if you can't host an intern but want to know more about the program, come on Tuesday!

You will hear more from us this coming week. There is a great deal more good news than we have yet shared.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group

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Re: Summer 2017 Climate and Solar Ambassador Program

March 26, 2017

Dear friends --

We have been developing the above 10-week internship program over the past month alongside our other work. We believe it will be a terrific program.

[Please distribute this announcement!](#)

Trish and I are now in New York for a week to support negotiation of a treaty banning the possession (and use, sharing, development, etc.) of nuclear weapons (see [ICAN](#); [our work](#) on this to date).

(After this week, I will be in Washington DC for a week for Hill and other meetings regarding nuclear weapons modernization -- including the "requirement" to build additional Los Alamos plutonium warhead "pit" production [facilities](#) and to produce pits for a new kind of warhead.)

Momentum toward a ban treaty continues unabated. If anything it is increasing. We will send more information later this weekend so that you can, if you wish, keep abreast of the negotiations, which begin Monday morning. I believe they will be webcast live on [UN TV](#).

There will be drama. US Ambassador Nikki Haley, with ambassadors of various US nuclear allies, is staging a press conference at 10 am Monday outside the negotiations to denounce them.

At this point, all US nuclear allies except The Netherlands, plus the nine nuclear weapon states (I am unsure about North Korea, which was the only nuclear weapons state to vote for the negotiating a treaty banning nuclear weapons), are boycotting the negotiations.

Japan, anguished as usual about the contradiction between its identity as nuclear victim and its psycho-political dependence on nuclear deterrence (with US nuclear weapons), is reportedly now planning on showing up briefly on Monday (morning?) to denounce the negotiations and then leave, a minor variation. The US demanded they boycott the proceedings.

This boycott, by the way, is not new with Trump. The Obama administration did everything it could to prevent these negotiations and announced last year its determination to boycott and (between the lines but understood by all) undermine them.

These undermining efforts are not working. Not at all.

Depending on the details, and especially on what "We" subsequently do -- "We" with a capital "W" -- a treaty banning possession, development, and use of nuclear weapons is likely to be very impactful, coming as it is amid other revolutionary changes in world affairs, such as the inevitable decline of the American empire and its replacement with a more multipolar world.

Please understand that the UN is only a negotiating forum for this treaty. If completed as planned, it will live independently, outside the vagaries of the UN bureaucracy. About 120 or 130 countries want this treaty, and if they succeed it will set legal

norms against all forms of nuclear weapons involvement that we can all use, in *many* ways. Most of the work at Los Alamos and Sandia, for example, will become illegal under international law.

There is a great deal we would like to share with you. We will do so, but our most important communications need to be face-to-face because we have important work to do together. We have an important story to make with you in our place and time, if you want. I am afraid email, Facebook, and the mainstream media are not dimensioned fully enough to carry the richness of that story.

If you want to have that conversation, and make that story, please write or call. When we do not hear from you we assume that for practical purposes you are not (or perhaps cannot afford to be), interested. If you write, and arrange something with your friends, we can very likely come -- by ourselves, or in panel discussions with inspiring others we know and who will in turn respond to us -- in whatever format works best for you.

As you can see, in addition to the climate and solar-themed 10-week internship program we announce with this message, our other work continues unabated! We crave your solidarity and help.

Meanwhile, please see Dahr Jamail, "[Release of Arctic Methane "May Be Apocalyptic," Study Warns.](#)" Let this study and article be a placeholder for a longer, urgent climate and energy conversation we all need to have. We believe our leading environmental groups are [bright-siding](#) the climate issue, while both political parties are simply in denial. We have to open a more truthful and revolutionary, conversation, as appropriate to these revolutionary times.

More soon, then, and best wishes,

Greg and Trish

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Important legislative alerts!

February 17, 2017

Dear friends --

Ideally, this organization would be keeping up better with important bills in the [New Mexico Legislature](#).

Be that as it may, here follow some very important bills we think everyone should know about. Please take whatever action you can to help support or defeat them, as the case may be!

Remember, New Mexico is a small state and YOUR actions, knowledge, connections, and sincerity count for a lot -- more than you might think!

First, here are legislators' phone numbers and office numbers (in case you can go to the Capitol in person) for the [House](#) (pdf) and [Senate](#) (pdf). And here are mailing addresses, business and personal phone numbers, and emails for the [House](#) (pdf) and [Senate](#) (pdf).

It is very easy to find legislation by bill number, sponsor, or key word at <https://www.nmlegis.gov/>. The links we provide below give the text, status, fiscal impact report, and other information about each bill.

Legislation shown in **bright green** is legislation we particularly endorse, or are opposed to. Ordinary type is used where we are just passing on recommendations of the group shown -- we just haven't had time to analyze the bill ourselves or know too little about it.

Let's start with these recommendations by the [Rio Grande Sierra Club](#):

Pro-Environment Legislation:

Sen. Wirth's **SB215**, which makes it much easier for homeowners to finance rooftop solar, energy storage or water-conservation projects (and allows the financing to stay with the house after it's sold). Renewable Energy Financing District Act (REFDA) is New Mexico's implementation of the concept known nationally as "PACE" - Property Assessed Clean Energy. With PACE, the installation of a renewable-energy system, energy-efficiency improvements, energy storage, or water-conservation measures may be financed through a local taxing district that creates a special assessment and a lien against the improved property.

Increase renewable energy (SB312): The Clean-Energy Jobs Bill would require New Mexico investor-owned utilities to provide 50% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2030, and 80% by 2040. The current Renewable Energy Act, last amended in 2007, has created thousands of New Mexico jobs, one of our state's few employment bright spots.

Solar tax credits: These bills would all restore the tax credit for New Mexicans who install solar on their rooftops. It is another proven job-creator and boosts the solar industry. Sarah Maestas Barnes has Pre-filed **HB61** to extend the Solar Market Tax Credit and in the Senate they have filled **SB41** supported by Mimi Stewart, Matthew McQueen and Sarah Maestas Barnes.

Anti-Environment Legislation:

Solar-company regulations HB199, SB210: This is a PNM bill that, under the guise of consumer protection, puts a host of onerous requirements on companies that install residential solar panels. The bill would be especially difficult for smaller, local companies to comply with, despite few consumer complaints from these companies.

And here is what **New Energy Economy** has to say about this pair of anti-solar bills:

Under the guise of "consumer protection" PNM is attempting to obstruct solar in this year's legislature

From the playbook of the The Koch Brothers' American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), PNM has introduced **HB199** and **SB210**, legislation designed to put small and medium solar installers out of business by imposing cumbersome regulations and financing restrictions that go beyond the industry standards already in place. One of the most outrageous requirements under the proposed bill is that solar installers would be required to refer customers to PNM to answer any questions about the solar system proposal for their home. PNM is trying to use their monopoly might to hamper rooftop solar in NM and advance a national movement to squander [squash?] the solar industry. Please raise your voices against this legislation. The Senate bill will be heard next in the Judiciary. We have strong Democrats in that committee that need to hear from you.

We very much agree, having heard precisely the same story from two solar companies ourselves. It is really important to kill these bills.

350.org New Mexico is also very much behind **SB312**. Here is their [page about the bill](#).

Finally, **New Mexico Climate Action** is sponsoring **Renewable Energy Day at the Roundhouse on Friday, March 3, 9 am – 3 pm**, with more details to come. To reserve a table for your organization for this event, contact Leslie: lbarnhart48@gmail.com. It would be very worthwhile to make a real show of strength on March 3!

We are sure there are many more important bills but these stand out right now for us. We do not believe it will be possible for the New Mexico economy to thrive without a very robust, community-changing commitment to home-grown, home-owned, renewable energy. We do not see this as yet but we can get there if everybody pitches in!

Please also see the [previous letter](#) for information about the new solar co-op in formation -- or better, go [here](#).

That's all for tonight -- thank you for your attention and action!

Greg and Trish, for the Study Group



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Fwd: TODAY! Circle of Love for New Mexico Children - REMIND your friends - Tweet it out

February 14, 2017

Dear friends --

Dear Santa Fe friends --

You should know about this small but important action at the Roundhouse THIS MORNING, about which Carol has just reminded us. Our listserv sometimes chokes on attachments so I haven't included the ones that came with the email, but the KOB report covers it well.

Best wishes everybody,

Greg

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: TODAY! Circle of Love for New Mexico Children - REMIND your friends - Tweet it out

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2017 08:44:15 -0700

From: Carol Miller <carolmiller@newmexico.com>

To: Carol Miller <carolmiller@newmexico.com>

Two or more people can make a Circle of Love wherever they are or join the circle at the Roundhouse. Post photos on the Circle of Love for New Mexico Children facebook page. Take a stand to raise up the children from the bottom of the lists of well-being.

Enjoy the TV report from KOB Channel 4: <http://www.kob.com/politics-news/circle-of-love-roundhouse-state-capitol-new-mexico-legislature-politics/4398729/?cat=504>

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Invitation to meetings; solar power production coop; priorities, given Trump

January 31, 2017

Dear friends --

We certainly live in "interesting" times, to say the least. We hope you are thriving, despite the spectacle on the national stage.

First of all, we've revised and clarified our most recent ([January 7](#)) local letter (about which a little more below). **Please consider looking at that [letter](#).**

While you are there you might want to check out the news articles on the right side of our [home page](#). Many of you may be interested in the excellent [New Mexican story](#) there about possible exploration for a possible high-level defense nuclear waste (HLW) disposal site northeast of Tucumcari, in Nara Visa, NM. DOE has another possible site near Alamogordo (we think that Otero County site is still a "go" -- we have a couple of inquiries out), and two others.

Meanwhile two sites near Carlsbad, one in New Mexico and one just across the state line in Andrews, TX, seek licenses for storing very large quantities of spent US commercial nuclear reactor fuel (SNF). All of it, in fact. That's a long story, for another day.

We've been working with ranchers near Nara Visa and it's just possible that Quay County will reconsider its official enthusiasm for this economy-killing project before it gets much farther. Actual HLW disposal is years away at worst, but the negative effect on local livelihoods and the state's economic attractiveness and reputation from all these nuclear waste and plutonium [processing](#) and [manufacturing](#) projects could begin rather soon. **Please help us if you can -- see next section!**

You're invited!

We are now inviting everyone who is interested, not just volunteers, to our offices at [2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque](#) for early evening gatherings to discuss current events affecting nuclear disarmament, climate mitigation, and related energy and economic issues -- and our community responses.

Why? Some of the reasons are given in the above [letter](#). More reasons follow in the last section of this letter.

If you are potentially interested we need to know that, and also when you *cannot* come, so we can schedule. If you want to express particular, specific interests please do so, and we will do our best to accommodate.

We are very happy to host meetings ourselves here in Albuquerque, but if you want to meet in Santa Fe, Taos, or elsewhere, someone must take the initiative and ask!

House meetings are quite valuable. Their more intimate setting sometimes leads conversation in deeper, fruitful directions. So go ahead and invite your friends, and/or community and nonprofit leaders and staff, and/or elected officials or their staff whom you may know, and/or potential supporters of our work, and let's talk -- seriously talk.

We will await your responses to these invitations before organizing other local meetings.

I (Greg), your agent, will be traveling to Washington next week to work on a short list of nuclear weapons policy priorities, which we will discuss with current and new allies and decisionmakers.

We do not see greater barriers to nuclear disarmament under Trump than under Obama. Unfortunately, Obama has left in place massive nuclear weapons commitments, including the quite needless construction and operation of a new pit factory in Los Alamos ([summary](#); details [here](#) and [here](#)) to produce new-design, "interoperable" nuclear warheads at great expense which *the military does not actually want*.

In March, Trish and I will travel to New York to join colleagues and diplomats for the first of two negotiating sessions aimed at producing, this year, a treaty banning nuclear weapons. (For background see "[In Historic Vote, UN General Assembly Mandates 2017 Negotiations to Ban Research, Development, Testing, Stockpiling, Use of Nuclear Weapons](#)," Dec 23, 2016.) We have a lot to do before that trip. There will be no draft treaty text immediately resulting from March negotiations, but after telephone discussions this month with some of those most closely involved, we are fairly optimistic that a treaty text will be ready by September.

[Your expression of interest can help get a solar power production co-op off the ground!](#)

As mentioned [before](#), the Study Group partners with two wonderful local solar companies:

- [McCune Solar Works/One World Co-op](#) (highest-reliability photovoltaic modules; systems tailored for renters; high-reliability, long-life, non-toxic LiFePO4 batteries; low-cost high-quality starter systems; \$500 to the Study Group with full system purchase); and
- [Positive Energy/Sunpower](#) (high-efficiency, long-life, hassle-free solar installations, including all permitting and paperwork for tax credits; \$100 to LASG for consultation and an additional \$400 with system installation -- please mention us).

We want you to be aware of a very interesting new initiative by the McCune team, the [One World Power Co-op](#). This co-op will allow members to become solar energy producers, users, owners, investors, or installers in a number of flexible ways to match household budgets (for owners or renters), interest level, the amount of sun exposure you have, whether or not you are connected to the electric grid, and so on. The core idea is to remove capital barriers to participation in solar energy through community ownership -- *as well as individual ownership to whatever extent is desired*. Local job creation and governance, diffusion of skills, and the growth of an *energy-producing* (not just *consuming*) mindset will be fostered, as will energy efficiency.

What the McCune team needs right now are expressions of potential interest from people, to show investors that there is interest. The necessary legal and administrative startup work is underway. The McCune team doesn't need any sort of commitment at this time, just an expression of interest.

They are working hard to make this co-op a reality and if you think you might be interested please do fill in [the preliminary interest form on-line](#) and share it widely with your friends and contacts.

Here's their summary in image form from the above [web site](#):

Building and promoting solar energy are powerful acts of resistance. Here, we've started talking not just in terms of "the constructive program," as Gandhi called his sustainable, non-colonial, village-based economic program, but in terms of "nonviolent constructive action," to emphasize the radical nature of steps we could and should take, and the close affinity between building not merely "sustainable" but also *productive* communities on the one hand, and effective resistance to the destruction of nature and livelihoods on the other.

In our neighborhood, as in any New Mexico neighborhood, there are tremendous opportunities for cost-effective, resilient, climate-protecting electricity production and efficiency investments. Most people don't know how inexpensive photovoltaic systems

have become, or how well they work.

Dear parents, and young people: *there are jobs in this field right now*. Our young people will need these skills. **McCune**

Solar Works has internship possibilities open, just like we do.

In the time of Trump (as before), priorities are necessary.

For many people this is a frightening time. It is certainly confusing, for all of us. The pace of events is not allowing adequate reflection. A lot of us are "flying blind." In such a time, when shocking new details appear almost hourly, clear reference points are important. We have to know what we want before we can figure out how to get it.

Our mainstream media are extremely partisan now, and widely unreliable. In degree, this is a new phenomenon. A lot of reporters and editors don't have the background to assess events, or they are simply too busy. But most importantly, there are so many axes being ground that the public is being badly burned by the sparks. There is madness in the air. That is the first point I wanted to make, without being specific in this brief letter. The problem with madness is that it does not produce the desired outcomes.

Yes, President Trump is a big problem in many ways, but so was Obama -- very much so -- and so also would have been Ms. Clinton. There are also, *in my expert opinion*, one or two good steps Trump has taken in the national security sphere (e.g. reaching out to Russia, and reorganizing the cancerous National Security Council by lowering the status of the CIA and taking the military out of non-military decisions). We shall see how all that goes.

Frankly this is how it is when empires fall, as John Michael Greer [reminds us](#). You don't get the leaders you want. The losses, dear friends, have been mounting for some years already. And this is just the beginning. What we see now is part of what we have been warning about extensively for many years. Again, that is all I want to say about that here.

It is quite possible that Trump may not last. If he does, he likely will do so in a more "conventional" way, in greater continuity with what has come before. Who knows what will happen, but if what is unique about Donald J. Trump is stripped away, what will be left will closely resemble the incumbency that has been there before, for some time. Call it the "Generic Republican Scenario" if you like, perhaps with a special dash of Mike Pence. In most respects the "Republican" part would be a distinction without a difference however, so maybe we should call it the "Bush/Obama/Clintons/Romney-like Scenario." None of those people sought, or would seek, major changes in the Empire's foreign policies, in predatory, neoliberalism capitalism; none ever articulated or sought major improvements in our social contract or in our relations to the Earth. Sure, Trump wants to drill his way to glory, but he won't get that far. He must be stopped, but regardless, he won't find "energy independence" in fossil fuels. That bag of goodies is down to the dregs.

The point is, that what will remain of this administration after what is most horrible about Donald Trump is scrubbed away, or after the man himself departs will be fairly supportive of Deep State interests,, and quite continuous with what has come before. How might he depart? From media pressure, donor pressure (e.g. from the Koch network, now bigger than ever), pressure from federal court decisions, from mainline Republican congressional opposition, from corporate opposition, from any number of possible "dirty tricks" ala Nixon, or any of the *other* techniques in the fat regime change playbook long perfected by the CIA and State Department.

What would remain would still be a government supportive of policies that are immensely destructive to most people, and to life on earth.

So again, what do we want? Priorities are necessary. We have to know what we want *most*, before we can figure out who our allies and adversaries are, and what political means are appropriate.

In the new era of converging *existential* crises -- and that word is key here -- new lenses are needed with which to view events and organize responses, as we [said on January 7](#). Not all stories are equally important. There are big narratives that determine the context and overall outcome of smaller ones. These largest struggles, which are also stories -- *our* stories whether we accept them or not -- will determine the fate of the earth and of everyone's children and grandchildren on it.

This letter, again, cannot carry this line of thought in detail. Nevertheless, for your contemplation, here are three of what I think are the most important struggles. This list is too compact, though I have tried to choose the words carefully.

- The nexus of climate, energy, environment, and economy: the master issue of our time, now difficult to disentangle
 - Climate destruction, *which we must replace with* climate restoration, greenhouse gas *removal*, and simplicity of life
 - Fossil fuel and nuclear energy use, *which we must replace with* renewable energy, energy conservation, energy efficiency, and simplicity
 - Habitat and species losses, *which we must replace with* effective protection of both
 - Economic growth, *which we must replace with* sufficiency, sharing or rationing, simple living, and non-material happiness.
- The nexus of militarism and empire, *which we must replace with* something akin to "[the moral equivalent of war](#)"

(William James), cooperation, and non-aggression

- The nexus of inequality and disposability, *which we must replace with* material justice, material respect, and defense of the vulnerable.

How can we focus on these existentially-important struggles, without success in which no other struggles can succeed?

For starters, by refocusing away from some of our more *petty* grievances, divisive special identities, our prestige-seeking careerism, and above all our expectations of material plenty and ease. By listening to people across the political aisle. By realizing that the political assumptions and identities "we" on the liberal left have been carrying around have been so politically dysfunctional "we" have not had significant victories in decades.

Now, some of these same dysfunctions -- the ones that offered essentially nothing to a great many voters, while thoroughly disrespecting them -- have produced a President Trump. Trump is the natural outcome of the actions and inactions of Democrats like Bingaman, Richardson, Udall, Heinrich, and above all the Clintons and Obama. We are sorry to have to be the ones to carry that message.

Regarding the above central issues, Democrats, progressives, most of the environmental and climate community, the peace and security establishments, the academy -- few in any these circles really "get it" at this point, at least in their public discourse. There is very little leadership. Some people are trying.

We are really in an emergency situation. We tried to get at this in a talk for the New Mexico chapter of 350.org ([The Crisis at Hand, the Emergency Mode, & the Need for Full-Scale Mobilization](#), June 27, 2016; [video](#)).

That is why we are plugging the solar power coop above, and what we have meant by "mobilization." It's not about a few hours here and there.

Our door is open, and we welcome your solidarity.

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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What you can do

January 7, 2017 (updated January 29, 2017)

Dear New Mexico friends:

We are living at the end of an age. A huge storm, bigger than any humanity has ever known, is barreling toward us. Already the wind is rising, the barometer falling. The first rain bands have arrived. We cannot see far into the dark clouds massed on the horizon. Everything we have known is starting to change, radically.

We live and work partly in one world that is vanishing, and partly in the brave new world that is taking its place.

At this critical juncture, we are all being exposed to a constant din of propaganda from many sources -- primarily from the US state and its vast "Wurlitzer" of compliant media clients and repeating outlets, and of course in another sense from commercial advertising, but also from "progressive" and liberal blogs and elsewhere.

At the Study Group we are deeply concerned about the propaganda coming from Democratic Party and "progressive" sources. Partisan propaganda from these sources is particularly damaging to prospects for success on the issues we care most about. Today, Senator Heinrich gave the keynote address at a New Mexico meeting of "progressives" aimed at "taking back democracy." How shameful! Remember, there was no stronger advocate for nuclear weapons among Democratic congresspersons than Congressman Heinrich.

In yesterday's note I said: "*Our present highly-militarized society and failing global empire will not be able to deliver on any significant progressive or environmental agenda whatsoever, or even to maintain a viable civilian economy.*" Senator Heinrich's political priorities are deeply antithetical to any progressive agenda.

We have all just seen liberals and progressives allied with the CIA and elements in the Green Party in what amounted to an attempted coup d'état in the Electoral College, with very little self-consciousness of what that meant. I have never seen anything like it in my life.

These, like Trump's electoral victory, are indicators that these are not normal times. "Normal" times are now in the rear-view mirror, for good. They were behind us before the election, but few saw just how far from prior political assumptions the world had moved -- how much of the old world had already crumbled. This year will see more upsets. People will hear and ask, again, "How can this be happening?"

Like it or not (and few of us do) we now live in a revolutionary time, and not just in a single dimension either.

From this frontier and height of land, we can see several different frames of reference for interpreting events, making choices, and establishing priorities in our moral and political lives. We could prioritize racism, or gender issues, or nuclear disarmament, or inequality, or war and peace. We could group these concerns and try to find common ground in the inherently divisive terrain of identity politics through what is called these days "intersectional" politics.

It sounds spiffy, but by itself "intersectional" politics is nothing more than old-fashioned, lowest-common-denominator, let's-all-get-along politics. This makes it a handy tool of manipulation for center-right Democratic candidates. The earnest template provided by "intersectional" activists is, for politicians, a set-up for "triangulation as usual."

Crucially, the "intersectional" politics of looking for common ground among diverse issues and constituencies provides no information about priorities. Priorities are necessary. When they finally appear, the superficial harmony disappears and the stage is set for lesser-evilism (again).

For our children and for nature to survive we need much more than this.

We who are mortal, if we would be mature and fully human (*menschlich*), we must from time to time consider our lives and actions *sub specie aeternitatis* ("under the aspect of eternity"). That full humanity is just what Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Joseph Rotblat, and their collaborators spoke of in the [Einstein-Russell Manifesto of 1955](#) against nuclear armaments and war.

There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death. (emphasis added)

Today, our long inaction in the face of converging environmental and social disasters requires us to consider our lives and actions from another perspective as well. All that we are and do, and would do, must be weighed *sub specie Terrae*, with a capital T -- from the perspective of Earth.

This is not a new idea. It is much older than human civilization. It's in us even now.

Ecological vision, encompassing climate concerns and society, is now the most fundamental, integrative, and important reference frame for interpreting current history and our role in it. It is by nature radical -- of the root -- and it roots us as well. It is almost entirely absent from public discourse.

Said differently, the biggest story and struggle of our time and our greatest, most salient struggles, lie in the nexus of climate, energy, economics, and environment. These connected crises have now thoroughly converged, although this is obvious to few.

Our collapsing climate; the rapid energy transition driven by declining conventional oil and gas resources and *quickly required* to save a habitable earth; the dramatic environmental impacts of energy choices and climate deterioration as well as the environmental measures we may take in response; and finally the radical economic and social implications of these harsh new realities -- this tight nexus will dominate human affairs, openly and cryptically, from this moment forward.

We now need to anchor all our politics, *including nuclear disarmament politics*, in the work of saving our only home and the creatures in it, who have come this long way with us and made us who we are.

This is not just "another issue." It is the *master predicament* that we and our children are facing. *We are facing it right now, in this decade.*

Climate collapse must be halted and reversed before critical thresholds are passed, lest it become unstoppable.

These thresholds are upon us now. The collapse of Arctic albedo (reflectivity) due to shrinking sea ice is already leading to dramatic Arctic warming. The consequences of this, if continued, could be irrecoverably catastrophic to life and civilization. *The moment for emergency action is already here.* (See also: [The Crisis at Hand, the Emergency Mode, & the Need for Full-Scale Mobilization](#), presentation at 350.org, Jun 27, 2016.)

Our time, attention and resources are finite. Prioritizing some things means de-prioritizing others. We could make a long list of political practices on the "progressive" left which could and should be de-emphasized, starting with all forms of identity politics.

Disarmament is not one of the things we can de-prioritize. *Without ending militarism and empire, the climate won't be saved.* Those who advocate slow disarmament under current global power and neoliberal economic arrangements are advocating, in effect, the end of the world. Those who tend to temporize, like Obama, tend to be irrelevant or worse.

Besides, events in multiple spheres are running much faster than incrementalist approaches now.

"So what can we do? What precisely are you suggesting?"

1. Try to understand what is going on, not just react to the latest propaganda from a position of ignorance (as many writers on progressive blogs are doing). Read critically. Discuss. "Question more," as RT's motto goes.

2. Clarify your own intentions, assess your capabilities as you understand them, and prepare for new commitments with your family and household. Harmony and peace, inner and outer, are high *desiderata* in their own right and bring freedom of action.
3. Connect to others, especially with trusted friends. New ventures involving risk go best with a high degree of trust.
4. Decide to mobilize some fraction of your time, energy, and resources and to make this a part of who you are, in a deep sense. Such decisions are very powerful and liberating.
5. "Rinse and repeat" as experience, clarity, connections, knowledge, and commitment change and grow.

"Much more specific, please."

6. You can apply to join the Study Group team as a volunteer. We will need a commitment of at least 10 hours per week from you. Talk to us; we want to make sure we are right for you, and vice-versa.
7. You can volunteer with other organizations, enhancing them qualitatively and quantitatively (as you would this one).
8. You can organize a niche for a full-time activist at your church (or even at some businesses), as we have discussed in previous letters. Full-time, eyes-open, independently-supported organizers and activists are a rare and precious breed.
9. You can decide to devote a year of your life as a full-time volunteer, at the Study Group or at another organization. Talk to us about this.
10. You can arrange speaking opportunities for us, or arrange a house meeting. Talk to us about this. Face-to-face meetings are of particular importance in the internet age.

"You didn't provide specific things to do." No, I didn't. I don't want to give the impression that a flash-in-the-pan effort, one of a thousand such atomized efforts, without a supporting community and infrastructure, without reflection or knowledge, and without a longer-term commitment of any kind is going to succeed.

Especially if you are involved in any of items 6-10 above, we'd like to invite you to discussions at our "World Headquarters." Solidarity and camaraderie are very important at this time. Without discussion and mutual exploration we will not be able to get past the propaganda in which we are immersed. From our schedules it seems that early evenings will be the best (if not the only) time for these discussions. If you want to come, the first step is to tell us a) that you are interested and b) when you *cannot* come.

In solidarity,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group



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350.org demonstration Monday (continued tomorrow: what you can do)

January 6, 2017

Dear New Mexico friends: **a very happy New Year to all!**

First, many of you have sent contributions recently. On behalf of the Study Group community: thank you again, very much. These are not easy times and we know this support involves significant sacrifice for many of you. We take our relationships in the Study Group community very seriously.

And it is a community. Call on us, and call on each other.

350.org demonstration Monday, January 9: #DayAgainstDenial

When: 11:30am-1pm Monday Jan 9, 2017

Where: 400 Gold Ave. SW, Abq, NM 87102 – outside Sen. Udall & Sen. Heinrich's offices.

Link to event: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/jan-9th-dayagainstdenial>

Link on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1789646477965303/>

Description from NM 350.org: "On January 9th, people in all 50 states will send a message to every US Senator: reject Donald Trump's reckless climate denying cabinet nominees. We'll rally outside the offices of our two U.S. Senators, Sen. Heinrich and Sen. Udall to thank them for their past support for climate solutions, and call on them to stand strong on the climate and to reject all four of these dangerous cabinet picks as part of the #DayAgainstDenial: Rex Tillerson, CEO of Exxon, for Secretary of State; Scott Pruitt for EPA Administrator; Ex-Gov. Rick Perry for Secretary of Energy; Rep. Ryan Zinke for Department of Interior."

We urge you to attend. I (Greg) will speak on the nomination of Rick Perry. See: "[Trump Selects Former Texas Governor Rick Perry for Secretary of Energy](#)" press release of Dec 13, 2016.

But first off, regarding thanking Udall and Heinrich "for their past support for climate solutions," it has to be said that we haven't seen any such support. In our concerted opinion here, senators Udall and Heinrich haven't done much to provide any climate solution, ever. Neither has Obama. They get "Ds" in our book. They never "stand strong" on this subject. Their unwavering support for militarism, empire, and nuclear weapons means they cannot, and do not, support climate protection, which is utterly incompatible with these priorities, both fiscally and in political terms.

Our present highly-militarized society and failing global empire will not be able to deliver on any significant progressive or environmental agenda whatsoever, or even to maintain a viable civilian economy.

As for Perry, he isn't qualified to run the Department of Energy (DOE). He is a political choice. He's not the first and won't be the last of those at DOE. He's also a "drill baby drill" guy who imagines he understands oil because he is from West Texas. As regards nuclear weapons, DOE's biggest mission, Trump will pick some poor sucker for that job and that person, and/or the military, will run that (big) part of DOE.

So there will be a limited amount of damage Perry can do. If he wants to damage the nuclear weapons mission, go for it.

In our view the Perry confirmation can and should be opposed, but in a smart way. Udall and Heinrich will not do that. They will focus on preventing cuts at the NM labs by extracting promises from Perry, which is the exact opposite of what should be

done.

Somebody needs to stick pins in our inflated labs. **We all need to emphasize cutting the labs to our un-dynamic senatorial duo -- not just oppose Perry per se.** (News reports suggest, by the way, that Senate Democrats may [not oppose Perry](#).)

Trump is starting out at the "F" level on climate and energy. It may be his greatest negative as President-Elect.

He may not stay that way. He needs US renewable energy (RE) companies to grow, and fast, if he wants enough new US jobs to keep voters from turning on him even more quickly than they otherwise will. He just doesn't know he loves RE yet, or he isn't saying it. Will he slash all those wind jobs in electoral college swing states, or in Texas? Hell no. (Offshore wind? That's another story.)

Trump wants "energy independence." For that too he needs renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) as he will soon discover, as well as energy conservation (a much harder sell). But he can't drill his way to energy independence no matter how hard he tries (which he will). Tillerson at least knows that.

The climate timeline is very, very short and we have got use this demo and others as springboards for more and deeper activism. We all need to make a resolution to do that, ourselves. The energy basis of our civilization -- which created and is rapidly worsening our climate problem -- is changing subtly but dramatically regardless of policy, because the cheap oil we need for our complex economic arrangements is in slow, terminal decline. Real economic growth is over, forever. These days, in the US and around the world, we borrow (print) money and call it "growth," because there are a few more blips on screens. The election of Trump is in part a symptom of that lack of growth and a milestone on the wild road we're on now. Our lives and our children's are going to change profoundly at an accelerating pace, in ways we cannot imagine.

What can we do? We have a voice, and hands. We can be agents and actors, rather than victims.

Simone Weil, who thought long and hard about how France could recover from fascism, once said: "I can, therefore I am."

So how many of us, even as renters, have at least one solar panel? (You can talk to [McCune Solar Works](#) about that!) How many of us know the basics of how to hook one up, so we can teach our children? We need to get on with the transition, now.

Again I think it's important to note, especially in this most partisan of times, and given the title of this event, that it is also *Democrats* who are in *denial* about the gravity of climate deterioration. The hard-right Republican style is actually closer to *delusion*, a more serious symptom that is indicative of psychosis -- and in a polity, with tyranny. Dmitri Orlov has a lovely [review](#) of these two styles, which you may enjoy.

The bottom line: Democrats have been failing to address climate change almost as effectively as Republicans. What happened on climate when Obama was in the White House and Democrats controlled both houses of Congress? To make a long story short, *nothing* happened. This is not a partisan issue. It's much bigger, and deeper.

Tomorrow I will send the second part of this letter, on what you can do, and what the Study Group is offering.

Good evening,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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