Dear New Mexico friends –

As we have said, what is being proposed for New Mexico is dramatically more than even the level of nuclear military subordination we have experienced up to now. We are being invaded again. Look at the numbers. Look at the plans, to the extent we know them (which is very little).

Many people near and far, including Democrats who consider themselves very "progressive," consider New Mexico's increasing commitment to nuclear weapons and waste to be our state's "Manifest Destiny." They like the jobs. They think it's inevitable. They don't use that term, "Manifest Destiny," and they may not even realize they are endorsing it, but what is happening now is in many ways an extension of what happened here and across the West in 1846 and for a half-century or so afterwards.

These people think, Los Alamos is the natural place for a pit factory -- they already make pits.* [*Reality check: 29 pits in 24 years.*] We don't want "expanded" pit production [i.e. production at a non-LANL location]. It goes without saying. New Mexico is after all a kind of "savage reservation" (Aldous Huxley, Brave New World). It is a poor state. It needs economic development and jobs. Those who oppose building a pit factory here are provincial. They are NIMBYs. They are not as enlightened and objective as we of the professional managerial class, we in the "arms control" community, who understand that New Mexico needs to make this small sacrifice for the greater good.

It's bullshit. There's no logic or truth in any of it. It is the language of conquest.

You all know that if LANL can't set up and operate a new "little" Rocky Flats pit factory by the mid-2020s, NNSA will not be able to produce a new warhead for the Air Force's planned new ballistic missile any time soon. It isn't needed, not even to field the new missiles, but all parties want it. As far as new pits any time soon are concerned, that, not the hokey-pokey, is what it's all about. Not pit aging, or any other malarkey. New warheads, with new "features" and much greater accuracy.

If the arms control community truly opposed this warhead, why would they want LANL to make pits for it?

* Today, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) published a draft Supplement Analysis (SA) for pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Find NNSA's announcement and link to the SA here.

Our comment, which you can mine for talking points: *Failure To Conduct Detailed EIS Process For LANL Is Dangerous Insult To Los Alamos And...
Northern New Mexico”.

We have commented on the need for a new SWEIS many times before, for example here (further links within). The Albuquerque Journal North has editorialized on this recently ("Delegation should support strong review of pit production", Feb 16, 2020).

Many more shoes remain to be dropped on this issue, a small part of the overall LANL expansion and pit production battle. We are working on concert with others but we need your help. Please call.

- Report on last week’s demonstration (noon) and workshop(evening)

There were about 20 people who met with us outside Senator Udall’s office to ask the Senator to request a SWEIS. A dozen or so continued with us to Senator Heinrich’s, to ask the same thing. Representatives came out to meet with us (federal security being what it is) -- one from Senator Udall’s (who did not take notes) and two from Senator Heinrich’s office (who did).

To all those who came -- thank you.

We have asked the senators and Governor for their help in getting a SWEIS started many times over the past two years. They have not done so. Hence today’s commentary.

About a dozen people also came for the evening workshop and discussion. One person set to work even before she left, and since then we have had an interesting and hopeful report from a conversation with a Santa Fe city councilor. Please do call those councilors!

- Today Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) presented a petition calling for a SWEIS and what is called a "programmatic" (nationwide) EIS (PEIS) for pit production

We are somewhat supportive of this effort. We would fully support it if it didn't have a call for a PEIS in it, asexplained in our last letter.

This is a much bigger issue than just this petition.

We are sympathetic because in 2018 and 2019, we also called for two EIS efforts, a PEIS (or supplement), and a SWEIS. It made sense, we thought.

Now, however:

1. A local EIS is underway for pit production at the Savannah River Site (SRS), but not here;
2. We can better see the great scale of the proposed LANL expansion, including but not limited to pit production; and
3. We see many parties seeking to build a pit production facility at LANL, or passively allowing it, ignoring both our own and NNSA’s analysis. It is the default liberal and Democratic Party choice. Facts and engineering realities seem to make no difference for many people. Apparently, if LANL can’t make pits these folks would have to come to grips with their own tacit support, or semi-collapsed opposition, to new nuclear weapons. It’s too big a step for them. It will cost friends, financial support, and political support. So LANL is the "go-to" place to make pits, the compromise they and their friends can live with, keep their jobs, etc.

In this political environment, so highly prejudicial against New Mexico for these reasons and many others, asking for a PEIS does not make sense any more. Requesting a PEIS means, politically, "Pit production at SRS should be reevaluated, but you can go ahead in my back yard."

By the way, any nationwide EIS (PEIS) on pit production would not address LANL’s vast expansion plans in their entirety, just LANL’s pit production plans -- and that, without crucial detail and alternatives. So it would be both less broad and less deep than a SWEIS.

It is important to draw a bright line here, and to understand what is going on. Unless the emphasis is changed away from a "nationwide" perspective, those who are seeking (or standing aside for) a pit factory will look at the call for a PEIS and take away just that message, ignoring the call for a SWEIS and anything else -- which in Washington are pejoratively called "local issues." They will not stop or reconsider what they are doing in promoting a pit factory here. Remember, for the arms control community, their funders, the Big Green groups active on nuclear issues, nearly all active Democrats outside this state, and most if not all of the Democratic leadership in this state, LANL is the natural place for pit production, the best political option.

So it is important to resist, to not "get along," to draw a line while we can. It is important to not agree with those who are OK with making a pit factory in NM, with those who unconsciously think it is our "Manifest Destiny" to be colonized by federal nuclear forces. If we don't draw that line our natural social instincts will be used to "socially engineer" us straight to hell.

We know CCNS very much doesn't want LANL to be a pit factory, and that is why they are doing this petition. We are eager to stand with them on this from this time forward, provided they ditch the call for a PEIS.

- We are in a time of revolutionary change. We all must change, and will.

As we said in Bulletin #268, COVID19 is rapidly changing the world. It will change all of our lives. If you weren't convinced, or didn't already realize this, I hope you do now.

Some people think things will return to "normal" after a while -- say, when Trump no longer is president, a vaccine and better treatments for COVID19 are found, the collapse of our climate is "solved," and so on.
That is not going to happen.

Just as regards COVID19, there is no reason to think the US health system is better than northern Italy's. Unless something changes for the better, COVID19 is likely to overwhelm the US health system by roughly late May. Do you think New Mexico is ready? It most assuredly is not, as one supervising physician recently remarked. Meanwhile, much in our social, economic, and political life will change.

But there is more, so much more. Picking up another thread, global production of crude oil (technically, crude oil and field condensate) temporarily peaked in late 2018. Since depletion of existing fields never sleeps, it took massive US fracking efforts to keep world production rising just a little bit until late 2018. Now demand and price have collapsed. US fracking efforts will decline, since even with previous prices the industry as a whole made no profit. “Sweet spots” — the best spots to drill — were declining anyway. The Governor and legislature are exquisitely attuned to this, but the plans that have been made to improve New Mexico’s social development now have even less chance of success than they did before, which was very little. This Governor has largely sacrificed the environment for a neoliberal development fantasy of plutonium pits, fracking, Facebook, the Space Force, and movies. We are sympathetic; that is more or less the menu of choices our political culture provides. But what about a real social contract and real human and environmental values? What about a future for our young people that makes social, ecological and economic sense for a change?

I could go on, but the point to return to is that big changes are coming -- fast. It is very easy to underestimate that of which we have no experience.

Here at the Study Group, we expect a changed social and organizing environment perhaps as early as by this week’s end or next week, simply due to further COVID19 case discovery. We cannot expect to “turn out the troops” in numbers for a while now, nor should we try.

We are living in a revolutionary time. We need to pull out all the stops for each other, for our communities, for the timeless values that really count when the chips are down. Because they are going down. It is a teachable moment. What will we demonstrate, in the time we have?

Greg, for the Study Group
Dear New Mexico friends –

Please come tomorrow!

As we said a few days ago, what is being proposed for northern New Mexico -- let's not kid ourselves, all of New Mexico -- is dramatically different than even the level of nuclear military enthrallment we have suffered thus far.

The good news is that the nuclear-military juggernaut is a tottering wreck, and a storm is coming. We will talk about that tomorrow.

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Finally in the news: the huge accumulated National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) "slush fund" of unspent prior-year funds, now in the range of $8 billion dollars ("$20B Budget Would 'Choke' NNSA, Skeptical House Approps Cardinal Says", Nuclear Security & Deterrence Monitor, Feb 28, 2020):

Meanwhile, [Rep. Marcy] Kaptur, like her counterpart on the House Armed Services Committee days before, said she was concerned that the NNSA is sitting on some $8 billion of unspent appropriations from 2019. The chairwoman said that pile of cash itself is proof that the agency has already bitten off more than it can chew from the Treasury.

"[T]he fact that they're a little bit behind tells us that, again, we can't choke them with money that'll just sit there," Kaptur told reporters. "We have to develop a budget that can be realistically accomplished in the nuclear modernization."

An NNSA spokesperson, in a statement ahead of Thursday's appropriations hearing, said most of the $8 billion in carry-over funding from fiscal 2019 was earmarked for existing weapons life-extension and construction operations. A fraction, some $340 million, was unobligated.

Most of the carry-over funds are in the Directed Stockpile program, the spokesperson said, where they help pay the bills for operating and expanding the NNSA nuclear weapons complex. That includes "funding nuclear warhead life extension programs, and infrastructure activities, [and] capital construction projects..."

Related, Feb. 27: Feinstein, Markey Request GAO Study on Affordability of Nuclear Weapons

We are usually unimpressed with Sen. Markey's activities but when paired with the powerful Sen. Feinstein, and knowing some of the parties involved, we are very pleased.

Rep. Thornberry, Ranking Member of House Armed Services and a major hawk, foresees a "most contentious" fight over nuclear modernization. Let us hope he is right. Bring it on.

We have corrected and updated (with the additional data now available, all inflated to 2020 dollars) this chart of US warhead design, testing, and production spending, from 1948 to this year's proposed spending levels for FY21-25.

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On the novel coronavirus, we expect a large number of US cases to be reported this week as testing becomes more prevalent. The mainstream media is getting better on this issue; readers might want to also follow The Automatic Earth as a decent source of filtered updates. There are others of course, if you want to put in more time and thought.

The New Mexico State Epidemiologist Dr. Michael Landen said yesterday: "We feel that community spread in New Mexico is likely." Contingency plans for school closures are being readied, among other preparations.

It is possible, depending on how this virus propagates, that portions of the US nuclear weapons complex will temporarily suspend operations.

We will discuss the wider implications of this epidemic tomorrow evening. We are entering an Age of Disruption. Not just our nuclear-military juggernaut but pretty much everything in our just-in-time, financialized economy is now teetering, or slipping, or being renegotiated -- you pick the word. In many ways we are on the brink of collapse. It will be gradual in some ways, sudden in others, plain to see sometimes, and hidden in others. The extent to which it is also an age of renewal is up to us.

In that regard you may find this Alexander Aston essay rather excellent, as I do. It begins:

> It took until the first two months of 2020 for the long Twentieth Century to finally come to an end. One thing now seems absolutely clear, this will be the decade that the majority finally come to understand that things are never going back to “normal.” To be sure, the complex entanglements of institutions, narratives, cultural practices, and economic relationships that emerged during the previous century have been under immense strain these past two decades. Enormous effort has been expended to maintain the inertia of the global system, from the immense violence of imperial politics and regime change wars, to the more subtle violence of economic dispossession by a privileged elite that control the mechanisms of power.

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Just before Christmas, we wrote (in Bulletin 265):

> Very real dangers aside, nuclear weapons undermine the moral, material, diplomatic, and ecological foundations of our country and civilization.

There are those who think local governments and citizens should rejoice in the booty looted from taxpayers by our nuclear weapons labs. Our New Mexico politicians want to increase that spending. But nuclear weapons do not give us anything. They take. They corrode every aspect of our civilization. What seeming benefits they provide to a few incur great expense to all. Some of those costs are plain to see; others are hidden amidst our society's overall crassness, violence, and environmental carelessness.

Even many of the founders of Los Alamos, Rotblat first but later Oppenheimer, Fermi, Rabi, Bethe and many others, understood that thermonuclear weapons were genocidal. Rabi and Fermi said as much, and called the hydrogen bomb "[n]ecessarily an evil thing in any light."

Those who pursue disarmament and peace should consider carefully these words of the great Indian journalist, political analyst, and activist Praful Bidwai (1949-2015):

> Historically, [internal] differences have never prevented disarmament campaigns from becoming effective.; What has crippled them is lack of clarity on the point that nuclear weapons are wholly evil, unacceptable and indefensible -- that is, failure to mobilise enough moral force internally.; Moral force is all-important when you are rolling back an epochal injustice. Without it, India could not have achieved independence, nor South Africa liberation from apartheid. On such morality, there can be no compromise.

Praful Bidwai, "The Struggle for Nuclear Disarmament," in Out of the Nuclear Shadow, Smitu Kothari and Zia Mian, eds.

Unfortunately such views remain effectively marginal among "progressives" and the environmental community in New Mexico.

To be politically effective, it is important if not essential to actually support, and actually oppose, real things in the here and now. Everything else is pretty much hot air. "All politics is local" said Tip O'Neill. And so it is in nuclear politics also.

Logically, asking for a national ("programmatic") environmental impact statement (PEIS) for pit production, to be followed by more detailed EISs (site-wide, or project-specific) at the two proposed production sites, makes sense. That's what we said early last year, and in the year before.

Logical, yes. Best, no. We support a PEIS for pit production, but for New Mexicans it should be secondary to a new LANL site-wide EIS (SWEIS), for many reasons.

More broadly, all it would take to deliver New Mexico over to the nuclear colonialists entirely would be to get those who might oppose the nuclear assault on New Mexico to think nationally (or worse, internationally). Sounds rather high-minded, doesn't it, to look at the bigger picture?
It is not. It is at best mistaken, both in its direction and in the degree to which it rises to the "name of action," as Hamlet put it.

We support a PEIS for pit production. Let it come after a commitment to a new LANL SWEIS. It is at LANL, and on New Mexico, that the hammer is falling hardest by far. Don't get suckered by nuclear agendas set in Washington, compatible with the goals of our nuclear pork-barrel delegation, that promote or accept a pit factory at LANL. The pit factory in your back yard is the only one you can really stop.

We can discuss this further on Wednesday.

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group
SANTA FE, NORTHERN NEW MEXICO UNDER NUCLEAR ASSAULT

1. Emergency demonstration

As the Santa Fe New Mexican has written, the National Nuclear Security Administration’s (NNSA's) "[p]roposed budget would almost triple plutonium spending" (Feb 24, 2020).

Our press release of the day before had further shocking details. (More have come to light since then, which will be summarized by us elsewhere).

At Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the 5-year proposed spending for building up a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory is $5.4 billion -- more than a billion per year for the foreseeable future. Even this does not include a billion or so in other related construction over these 5 years.

Thousands of new workers are being hired to support the growing "Rocky Flats" mission, about 1,000 people per year for the next 5 years.

The new mission will be housed in an old, unsafe facility. How do we know it is unsafe? The highest independent defense nuclear safety authority in the U.S. says so ("Safety Board: The Los Alamos plutonium facility does not adequately protect the public," Dec 2, 2019).

Where, you might ask, is the environmental impact analysis for building a new "Rocky Flats South"? After all, an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed pit factory at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina, which will handle much less plutonium and have less environmental impact than the surplus plutonium mission it is replacing in the same facility, has been underway since last year.

So South Carolina, that paragon of environmental consciousness represented by ultra-green Senator Lindsay Graham and his colleagues (LOL), gets a new EIS. New Mexico, represented by senators Udall and Heinrich, does not get any EIS -- despite the reality that LANL plans to build dozens of new facilities and a second campus altogether, all as part of the greatest contemplated LANL expansion since the early 1950s.

(Undoubtedly, even more strange, our "liberal" or "progressive" congressional delegation and governor have been hyperactive in promoting LANL as the sole and only site to make plutonium pits, while "pretty hawkish" (his words) Lindsay Graham and colleagues have been quite diffident about pit production at SRS. In the words of one highly-engaged person in South Carolina, they are "missing in action" as far as pit production is concerned. By contrast, every single one of our Democratic delegation, and our Governor, are gung-ho for pits at LANL.)

Udall supposedly believes in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Just not when it might expose environmental and safety problems that might delay plutonium pit production.

We need to stop this nonsense. We need to wake people up. All it would take for NNSA to decide to write a desperately-needed Site-Wide EIS (SWEIS) encompassing all these contemplated changes, alternatives to them, and mitigation strategies, would be a letter from the New Mexico delegation. NNSA fears the openness of a SWEIS. They fear possible delays. They fear having to commit to limits of any kind of enforceable Record of Decision involving a Mitigation Plan. They fear having to bring up modern solutions to their commuting problem that might inconvenience their precious new hires. (It is so very difficult to hire, indoctrinate, and retain thousands of new scientists and engineers to work on nuclear weapons when the world is crying out for their help in other fields.)

So please come to the emergency demonstration, first at Sen. Udall's office (map) in Santa Fe, at noon on Wednesday, March 4, and then...
at Senator Heinrich's office on Marcy Street.

2. Discussion and workshop

The proposed Trump nuclear buildup just gets bigger and bigger. As we have explained, the initiative in doing this is coming from NNSA and the labs. Even the Pentagon, which was caught flat-footed by NNSA's Christmastime power play (ask us Wednesday), was appalled, according to multiple sources.

For New Mexico this is already a political disaster. Do you think our leading politicians will pay sufficient attention to any other essential issue bearing on the material, public health, and environmental health of the state, especially northern New Mexico, while they believe its future lies in nuclear weapons, the Space Force, pit production, and all the wonderful things the labs can do for the state?

Ben Ray Lujan has even introduced a package of legislation that would use the labs to replace even more functions of government (or "to spur growth, innovation, and opportunities for New Mexicans", as he put it).

The fact is, we live in an age of disruption. Going back to the priorities of the Cold War would cement New Mexico's position at the bottom of every scale, and ensure that collapse, not transformation and renewal, would be the outcome for the US as a whole. The decade is only two months old, but its fundamental character should already be clear. Dorothy said it, in The Wizard of Oz: "We are not in Kansas any more." Most people don't understand this yet. Without being a lot clearer about where we are in the larger scheme of things, no policy prescriptions will "work."

No matter what issue is the main one for you, if you live in New Mexico you are either working against nuclear weapons and war or you are being sold on Capitol Hill as a nuclear weapons supporter by the people you probably voted for.

Please come on Wednesday evening as well as to the demonstration if you can. We are virtually certain it will be a valuable discussion and a kind of comfort, if we may say that, in these troubled times. We have a pretty good community of people standing with us, people whom we admire. We don't have to agree about everything. The main thing is, we want to work with you and we need your help. We are all in this situation together.

Among the things we will discuss is the City's Midtown process and how you can keep NNSA and LANL out of it.

3. Midtown: Please help us bar NNSA and LANL participation

We have made this web page to capture recent developments and resources on this project. New talking points are being added to the above web page, so you may want to check those out.

To those who came to the last City Council meeting this past Wednesday -- thank you.

We gave two draft resolutions to the City Council for their consideration:

- Prohibiting the City of Santa Fe from entering into any development agreement involving any nuclear weapons agencies or their instrumentalities.
- Requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for the proposed expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), including the proposed expansion of plutonium missions.

We need your help in promoting these to the Council. Please call or write your councilors!

LANL's (and NNSA's, but let's keep it simple) participation in this project appears to be driven or pulled from three directions -- from LANL, from the City, and some of the developers.

Regarding the first, Los Alamos -- the lab, the town, and the county -- are out of room. There is literally no place for all these people in existing facilities and in nearby housing. What to do? Move some non-plutonium LANL functions off The Hill. Where?

So far the answer seems to be into a second LANL campus in Santa Fe, via secret Midtown Project negotiations between carefully-selected City staff, developers, and their backers.

Every single thing about this process is secret: the changing evaluation criteria, the identities of the project teams and their investors, the names of all the people on the evaluation committee (the composition of which can be changed or augmented without notice), the development proposals, whether the City will sell or lease the land, the price being negotiated -- everything. Everything is fluid, and everything is secret. The contractor in charge of the whole process reports to the Mayor and the City's Economic Development office. Everything about this process is being hidden from the public and the City Council.

The one thing that is clear is that the City requires that developers have access to a lot of money up front, which more or less rules out nonprofit educational uses -- the historic propose of this site. Developer Affeldt told his listeners in December that this would be a circa $400 million project.

This is all about money and private profits -- not people, values, or real economic development. It's about privatization. It's an enclosure. It's colonial. There is nothing democratic about it. Affordable housing? The goal of this project is to gentrify, not just all but the bare legal minimum of the project itself but the large Opportunity Zones surrounding it.

And if LANL gets in, they will control. LANL's grip on the City will increase dramatically.
Why the secrecy? Because the City is doing something very ugly, and the Mayor and others involved want to keep the public from having any voice.

In words that assistant city attorney Marcos Martinez wrote to us, even the supposedly-rejected (but as it turns out, not really rejected) development proposals have to be kept from public eyes, lest they be “used inappropriately to sway negotiations through public pressures that are not based on the objective [sic] criteria set out in the [Request for Expressions of Interest].” Secrecy is not a legal requirement (“Keeping campus proposals secret was the city’s own choice, Albuquerque Journal Editorial, Feb 9, 2020).

We can discuss this further on Wednesday.

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group

PS: our contest for a new name that would be applicable to a nuclearized “City Formerly Known as Santa Fe” remains open! The top five entries (we have two excellent ones but only two so far) will each receive a tasteful cloisonne lapel pin featuring a peace symbol and broken bomb.
Dear New Mexico friends –

As you will have seen from last night's press alert ("Administration seeks 49% increase in Los Alamos nuclear weapons activities, 33% plus-up for LANL overall"), the Santa Fe area is poised to fall under a nuclear cloud far darker than anything seen thus far.

Of course, this won't happen if we effectively object. Whatever you do, please don't think the threat to the world, the US, New Mexico, and to northern New Mexico from an emergency "surge" in US nuclear warhead production is not very, very real.

Because northern New Mexico has been kept poor and vulnerable by long-running failures by New Mexico's political leadership, and because Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is the only place available for the next 10 or so years to produce new plutonium cores for atomic bombs (the first explosive stage in every US nuclear weapon), the nuclear hammer is falling most heavily on northern New Mexico.

The impacts are political, social, economic, and environmental and they have already begun. Their most prominent symptom is passivity. "LANL brings economic development, which trickles down, so we need not come to grips with our lack of a viable social contract." Etc.

As we said in last night's press alert, LANL probably cannot succeed in its huge expansion plans without expanding into Santa Fe:

The lab has outgrown the buildable areas on its site, its nearby housing market, the regional road capacity, its electrical supply, its nuclear waste handling and shipping capacity, and the nearby labor force. The entire region has outgrown its water supply. Apparently, LANL must expand off-site to succeed. as a new 'Rocky Flats South.'

"Whither Santa Fe?" has become a very pertinent question -- and a powerful one, even on the whole world's stage.

The "Royal City of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis" now has to choose between two prayers. One is that of Saint Francis -- "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace" -- and the other, "Government, make me an instrument of your wars."

If we don't choose -- and not just in our private opinion, but powerfully in the public sphere -- the choice will be made for us.

We have a lot of political power in this matter. What Arundhati Roy called "the power of proximity." We should use it. Those who are silent in the face of this metastasis are effectively assenting.

Nobody is coming to Santa Fe's rescue, by the way. This particular challenge is ours.

- Please come to the Santa Fe City Council meeting this Wednesday, February 26, at the Southside Library, 6599 Jaguar Dr (map). We will meet at 6:30 pm, prior to the evening session at 7:00 pm.

Our issue at this meeting is the role of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and LANL in Santa Fe's Midtown project, about which more below.

At this meeting we should each be able to speak for approximately 3 minutes under Item F on the evening agenda, "Petitions from the Floor."

Our basic message to the Council is that we do not want, and the Council should formally bar, participation by NNSA and its instrumentalities, such as LANL, in the Midtown development.

It is perfectly legal for the City to prohibit activities in this project that do not meet the City's criteria. That is why the City has criteria, and that is why...
the City is having this process in the first place.

For its part, NNSA has no First Amendment rights, or any other civil rights, as it is not a person or even corporate person. (For what it may be worth, the Study Group established in FOIA litigation that LANL is a federal, not a private or corporate, entity.)

The City's criteria are evolving, as a careful reading of the latest missives from the City will show, and which the original Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) made clear as well. This is a very fluid process.

Remember, NNSA and its LANL contractor are nuclear weapons institutions. They want to be in Santa Fe to further their nuclear weapons activities, and for no other purpose. That is not just our opinion. That's the law. NNSA cannot do work it is not funded to do. NNSA funds LANL to do nuclear weapons work, primarily. Eighty-five percent of LANL's proposed budget for FY21 is nuclear weapons activities, and most of the rest supports or derives from that mission. By helping NNSA and LANL, the City would be helping the Trump Administration's outrageous, unprecedented nuclear weapons buildup.

Neither we, nor the press, nor the City Council know what NNSA and LANL are proposing to do with or on this rather huge, centrally-located chunk of what is now City land. That is really outrageous, don't you think?

The City is hiding behind secrecy provisions it has voluntarily adopted, as the Albuquerque Journal pointed out ("Keeping campus proposals secret was the city’s own choice," Albuquerque Journal Editorial, Feb 9, 2020).

Nevertheless the City can take, and is taking, whatever ideas and work products are submitted and give them to other offerors. Only the public and Council are locked out.

More talking points are available in recent Study Group letters and press releases.

- Contest! If you have ideas for a new name that would be applicable to a nuclearized "City Formerly Known as Santa Fe," please send them to us by this Wednesday at 5 pm or bring them to the City Council meeting! The top five entries will each receive a tasteful cloisonne lapel pin featuring a peace symbol and broken bomb.

Feel free to suggest them to the Council as well, or put them on a sign. No sticks please.

- On March 4 we will have two events: a demonstration in Santa Fe, at noon at Senator Udall's office, 120 South Federal Place (map -- this is the downtown Post Office), and then a discussion and workshop at 6 pm at the First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe (map)

We will be asking Senator Udall to request a new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL. When we have concluded our business with Senator Udall, we hope to walk from there over to Senator Heinrich's office on Marcy Street, assuming enough of those who attend have time.

- Finally, if you can help us organize please, please call Lydia Clark in Santa Fe at 505-501-2606 or Trish at 505-577-3366.

See you Wednesday, and the following Wednesday!

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group
Dear New Mexico friends –

Many of you are rightly focused on the remaining few days of the 2020 legislative session. For those who are, and even more so for those who aren't, please consider the following.

1. A new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is badly needed. There are four people who could make it happen. Many of you know them.

In prior letters and Bulletins, we have explained why a new LANL SWEIS is desperately needed (follow the links for more details).

In a new editorial, the Albuquerque Journal explains why as well ("Delegation should support strong review of pit production," 2/16/20).

The four people who could make a new SWEIS happen are our two senators, our governor, and the congressman in whose district all this is happening. Here is how to contact them. You know how to write letters to editors (LTEs). You know how to contact us to help us with outreach. We are stretched very thinly indeed.

2. If you live in the Santa Fe area, please contact the city councilors and ask them to roll back the secrecy enveloping the huge Midtown project -- and to oppose all LANL involvement.

Here are their phone numbers and email addresses. We have explained in detail why this is important in past letters and we add new information below.

The Albuquerque Journal has editorialized against this secrecy and provided important legal and political background ("Keeping campus proposals secret was the city's own choice," 2/9/20), including the interesting facts that three Santa Fe city councilors didn't want this level of secrecy, which was chosen by the City and is not a legal mandate under state law.

The Santa Fe New Mexican editorialized against a closed process as well ("A closed Midtown Campus process serves no one," 1/30/20)

We have been in correspondence with the City's attorneys about what we see as their illegal denial of public access to the four rejected Master Developer applications, including and especially that of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), to which none of the City's arguments for secrecy apply.

We have learned that the four rejected applications aren't really rejected at all, insofar as these applicants "could still be considered for collaborations at a later stage of the project."

What stage? Apparently any stage, including the financial interviews with the evaluation committee scheduled this coming Thursday. Subsequent to these interviews, the City will issue Requests for Clarification (RFCs) covering most of the key issues at the site, followed by discussions ("interviews") with whoever the applicants want to bring to the table with them.

What we see in this process is a fluid cabal of insiders meeting privately to discuss essentially all aspects of the largest real estate development within City limits we can remember, or perhaps in Santa Fe history, with initial investments in the $400 million range (as stated in a December 8 presentation by Alan Affeldt). Returns on investment would of course be greater than this, and the gentrification investment opportunities in the extensive surrounding Opportunity Zones would be extensive.

Some people are clearly planning on making tens of millions of dollars of profits with this project while re-making Santa Fe in ways decided solely by themselves, a small cabal of fellow developers who meet the City's financial requirements for a project of this magnitude, and the small group of City insiders who are deciding essentially everything about this project in total secrecy.
After providing generic "input" which may or may not be followed, citizens and their elected representatives are completely frozen out of this process until it is completed.

We aren't asking to see the proposals under consideration, but we are asking to see the rejected applications, which by definition are supposedly not being considered any more. And above all we want NNSA's application, because as explained below, we believe NNSA and LANL need Santa Fe to facilitate plutonium pit production, and they are trying to make this new identity for Santa Fe a reality before it can be effectively opposed.

The City is now offering weekly updates as to the progress of their secret deliberations in a sort of 1984 version of "transparency ."

Even without NNSA, great fortunes, massive egos, and vaulting political ambitions are involved in this development. These ambitions may need LANL as much as LANL needs them.

Please contact your councilors. The intense secrecy of this process smells very bad to us.

3. A bit of background

I have just returned from a busy week in Washington, DC, where I met with a number of parties on and around Capitol Hill as well as with directors of the nuclear warhead plants and labs at an annual nuclear weapons conference.

What is most important to relay first, in this letter, is that the transformation of LANL into its new role as a "production agency" involving "24/7 operations" at LANL's aging plutonium facility is not proceeding in any kind of "normal" government fashion. There is little or no oversight, not even by NNSA.

It is a crash program proceeding in an entirely unaccountable manner, more characteristic of wartime than peacetime governance. There are many other indicators of this which could be cited, even an ominous mention by NNSA of its government-wide leadership in "continuity of government" (COG) planning.

Despite statutory requirements that mandate detailed plans, as of last week no plans for pit production at LANL have been submitted to Congress. (By contrast we do have a snapshot of planning at the Savannah River Site (SRS), as well as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) underway, as well as preliminary engineering analyses.)

Yet Congress fully funded the program at both LANL and at SRS. As noted in my last letter, House Democrats, supported by arms control and nearly all environmental NGOs, have made the LANL program -- a pig in a poke -- the centerpiece of their preferred policy.

When Congress has asked NNSA for plans, the answer has been, "We trust the contractor" [i.e. Triad, LLC].

The environmental and social impacts of pit production at LANL would be far greater than at SRS -- that much is clear. Is New Mexico too corrupt to care?

No details of the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget request have been submitted to Congress so far, and reportedly none will be, for "weeks," raising the specter of Congress proceeding into budget markup with no budget to mark up.

We are hearing a rumor that the pit production budget request for FY21 has been increased by roughly $400 million from the level projected last year, to $1.4 billion, roughly double this year's amount (chart, to get a rough idea of the program growth that was projected last year). We shall see.

LANL is hiring roughly 1,000 new employees per year and expects to continue doing so for several more years. LANL is also planning some $13 billion in capital projects over the coming decade. Dozens of new buildings are planned.

The lab has outgrown its site, its nearby housing market, the regional road capacity, its electrical supply, its nuclear waste handling and shipping capacity, and the nearby labor force. The entire region has outgrown its water supply.

LANL must expand off-site to succeed in the new pit production mission, now "needed" not only for the Air Force's new W87-1 warhead, which would enable a new generation of land-based missiles (the fabulously-expensive Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, GBSD), but also for the proposed "W93" Navy warhead, which is planned for production starting in 2036.

LANL is unlikely to expand significantly in the Espanola Valley, given that region's poverty and drug problems. At the August 8 subcontractor forum, neither Espanola nor northern New Mexico were even mentioned.

LANL’s greatest challenge is hiring, retaining, and training the nuclear weapons workforce of the future. LANL is therefore looking to Santa Fe for expansion. That is why NNSA and LANL are so interested in Santa Fe Midtown Project.

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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February 11, 2020

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This letter: Do all Democrats and arms control groups want a pit factory at LANL? So far, yes. Don't be a propaganda victim!

Dear New Mexico friends –

I am in Washington, DC and am scrambling between meetings and necessary followup, so this letter must be very brief.

I could tell you how outraged you should be about the proposed nuclear warhead budget. I will do that in a chart. The red dot is the FY21 proposed Weapons Activities budget of NNSA, with its share of administrative costs. The red line below it is what NNSA projected just last year. They won't get all this money of course, but they will likely get much of it.

How did this happen? That is a longer story, one that the Democratic Party as well as Republican hawks have to answer for. Trump's original budget this year lay along that red line, but with an impeachment vote looming, neoconservatives and lab shills sprinkled throughout government sprang their long-prepared plan, catching NNSA staff, DoD, OMB, and the DOE Secretary by surprise. The head of NNSA and her nuclear weapons deputy, working with Republicans whose support Trump needed to survive impeachment, foisted this budget on the president. DoD was outraged -- to the extent it is funded, it will come from their budget. At this point the dissenters (mostly?) have been brought in line. The Borg moves forward. There is much more interesting to tell you about all this, but it is not so important as what I am about to say.

If you read the newspaper you may get the impression that all those who are critical of this massive increase, in which pit production is a large component, are going to oppose pit production, or oppose the dramatic expansion of LANL. They are not. At the moment, every single Democrat in Congress has voted for making LANL a pit factory. They have no problem with LANL expansion. The nuances in Republican positions are less clear, because there have been fewer votes that would expose the differences. Let's put it this way: Congress does engineering poorly. The military is another matter. Some do know.

At the moment, every single arms control organization wants LANL to be a pit factory. At the moment, Democratic-Party-aligned
"antinuclear" groups are not really opposing this. Some groups even actively support the LANL-as-pit-factory legislation, and theory. Some see it as a workable compromise. Some see it as a looming failure, which failure can accomplish what they do not have the moral or political strength to oppose.

For some this is certainly justified. Committee staff and government auditors sometimes say that failure in this program, especially at LANL, is not a matter of if, but when. The most honest and conscientious have said, "I just hope not too many people are hurt." That's an exact quote. I do not fault such people at all. The system back here will spit out any dissenters faster than you can say, um, "Chelsea Manning" or "Tulsi Gabbard."

Newspapers struggle to get articles out on short notice, with very limited information. This morning's articles on the nuclear weapons budget (Journal: President's budget calls for more spending on nuclear production; New Mexican: Trump proposes 25 percent bump in nuke spending) were good articles, but they do little to inform dissent in an age of pervasive propaganda and influence. I wrote this comment to the New Mexican piece:

It would be great if all these commenters were on the same page, or even singing the same style of music. They are not, not by a long shot. And that is part of the core of the political problem we face. Council for a Livable World supports Democrats, period. Democrats like Martin Heinrich, who have pushed for more nuclear weapons. They pull very close to the opposite direction from the Los Alamos Study Group. Union of Concerned Scientists? They lie between these poles. I will see Stephen Young and others later today or tomorrow here in Washington, where I have come to try and undo some of the damage. We shall see what happens. But beware, New Mexicans! All these parties are comfortable with a plutonium pit factory at LANL. Every single one of them. New Mexicans who care about new priorities must cut through the fog and understand that whatever your opinion may be, your actual power lies in the degree of activity you display with regard to what you can actually change -- which is what happens in the greater Santa Fe area, including Los Alamos. If you want to be more involved, call 505-501-2606 (Lydia Clark) or write me at gmello@lasg.org. We can win. Many factors are lining up to help. But don't be lulled or confused. National-level opinions merely will not avail, unless you are here in Washington as I am, with expert entre to decisionmakers [you can't really be listened to otherwise]. Opinion means little by itself. Local actions, not just opinions, can definitely avail. Crystal clarity is needed, and you can tell the real from the fake resistance in part by whether and how hard the Democrats who have been pushing for pit production are being challenged.

Asking for a nationwide environmental impact statement is quite compatible with, if not -- depending on how it is handled -- helpful toward making LANL to be a pit factory, or with standing aside to let that happen.

Asking for a Site-Wide EIS is far better, because the devil -- to NNSA, that is -- is in the local details. At LANL -- a local EIS is already underway in South Carolina. A SWEIS could bring out a lot of truth, and truth is toxic to nuclear weapons, like sunlight to bacteria.

But any NEPA analysis is very far from a panacea. Much more direct opposition is needed, which is why I stuck our contact information in that comment. Please do call or write us if you want to help.

What the arms control groups and the powerful funders who control matters from oak-paneled boardrooms far away do not yet understand, or perhaps care enough about, is that by greenlighting pit production at LANL they are greenlighting the new weapons they decry. LANL is the pit production bellwether and leading site. Air Force hopes for its new warhead now rest on the hope that LANL will be able to "surge" to produce enough pits to at least get started with warhead production. To this end, a major effort to undercut warhead complex safety is underway.

The key takeaway is that a lot rests on the activity and discernment of New Mexicans. Congress pretty much assumes New Mexicans like being hostage to nuclear weapons, because that is what our congressional delegation tells them, and far too many people are silent.

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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January 21, 2020

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This letter: Discussion Thursday, Jan. 23, 6 pm, Santa Fe: opposing LANL expansion: what, why, how; more; please write Midtown evaluation committee

1. Discussion this Thursday, Jan. 23, 6-8 pm in Santa Fe: Opposing LANL expansion: what, why, how
2. NM delegation rejects new environmental analysis of pit production & LANL expansion
3. Discussions next month: Jemez Springs; Taos
5. Tell me again, what are these pits for?
6. Bring the troops home! Global Day of Protest Saturday, Jan. 25
7. Meet Michelle Matisons, Research Associate
8. Billboard coming, stay tuned
9. Don’t forget to write the Midtown Project evaluation committee: No LANL in Santa Fe, not as master developer, not as tenant

Dear New Mexico friends –

1. Practical discussion Thursday, January 23, 6-8 pm in Santa Fe at St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail (map), Room SB-5: Opposing LANL expansion a) into and b) around Santa Fe, as well as c) in Los Alamos itself: what, why, how.

It seems absurd that the United States would want to build nuclear weapons at this time in human -- and earth -- history. But such is the case. The U.S. global empire, now slipping away, requires ceaseless, increasing investment to maintain appearances -- no matter how many people and how much nature must be thrown under the proverbial bus to do so.

Successfully building and running an industrial plutonium warhead core (“pit”) production operation at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is essential to empire, not to mention essential to new kinds of warheads that can’t use any of our 5,000 or so surplus pits.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA, which owns LANL), as well as the Pentagon, knows this production will be very hard to achieve. Many who work at LANL cannot imagine LANL succeeding. At the same time many New Mexico progressives think this transformation will be all but impossible to stop. It will be hard to stop if nobody does anything!

There is much to be done, and we hope you will help. If you come on Thursday you will make connections to people, acquire knowledge, and be stronger in that work.

The purposes of this meeting are to make sure you have everything you need to act powerfully and to suggest, discuss, and refine possible actions.

2. Update on our congressional delegation's failure to request a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) and a nation-wide (“programmatic”) EIS (PEIS) for pit production.

As noted previously, our two senators, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, and Governor Michele Lujan Grisham had nothing to say when asked by the Associated Press if they support further environmental analysis prior to expanding pit production at LANL.

They were waiting for a briefing from NNSA before knowing what to say. That briefing occurred on January 16.

The delegation then jointly said that no further EIS was necessary -- a disappointing but expected response.

What does this mean?
predictable problems and impacts on our communities and environment.

It means they don't want environmental science because it is inconvenient to their militaristic agenda. They fear environmental truth. They want ignorance, for the public and officialdom alike.

It means that when push comes to shove -- actually, long before this -- they are mouthpieces for the labs.

I hope their statement, which will be public soon, clarifies the situation for you. As you will see soon it is worded to give a false impression.

*What does this mean for citizen action? What can we do?*

**Come on Thursday.**

### 3. Discussions next month

We are scheduling other in-depth discussions on NNSA's and LANL's efforts to build a pit production facility in Los Alamos while greatly expanding LANL for the sake of designing (and now building) new nuclear weapons:

- In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza (map).
- In Taos, February 5 (note change!), noon, location TBD.

LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some $13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s.

### 4. Last week's Santa Fe City Hall action

We were pleased with the turnout at the press conference ("Citizens Protest Possible Nuclear Weapons Agency Presence in Major Santa Fe Development," Jan 14, 2020) at City Hall on the 15th. Trish counted 55 people there, and a few more came later. The press treated us kindly ("Anti-nuclear protesters oppose LANL's midtown campus proposal," Santa Fe New Mexican; "Anti-nukers rally against NNSA proposal for Santa Fe campus," Albuquerque Journal, both Jan 15, 2020).

Prior to the press conference three of us met with the Mayor. We had a cordial discussion. The Mayor was constrained by law from discussing the procurement process or the merits of the applicants so he didn't, but he did hear us out.

We do however have the general idea, from impressions gained on multiple occasions, that the Mayor sees LANL's possible roles more positively than we do. We know some of the developers do as well -- a profound understatement, most likely.

We do not like this Midtown project as it is currently conceived. Our more fundamental critique, and possible alternatives, do not fit in this email. We can discuss this further on Thursday.

### 5. What are these pits for?

See the LASG friends ltr of January 13, 2020, item 5.

### 6. Bring the troops home! Global Day of Protest Saturday, Jan. 25

We know of four locations in New Mexico but there may be others (where is Santa Fe?). Here they are:

- **Albuquerque, NM**
  2:00pm at Kirtland Air Force Base (intersection of Gibson & San Mateo)

- **Taos, NM**
  12 Noon at 102 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte

- **Las Vegas, NM**
  1:00pm at Old Town Plaza gazebo

- **Peñasco, NM**
  12 Noon at The "T"

*Protests such as these are not enough. We all know this. We need to nonviolently escalate our resistance and constructive efforts, organizing our own lives and efforts under different banners as may suit us -- meanwhile discussing, agreeing, disagreeing but agreeing to disagree, respectfully continuing the conversation as we are able, until we find ourselves in a new place of inner and outer freedom, respect, and awareness. We do not think this is utopian at all.*

### 7. Meet Michelle Matisons, Research Associate

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Michelle Renee Matisons is working with us full-time, as Research Associate. Michelle brings to us a wide variety of research, teaching, journalism, and organizing experience and is wading into the nuclear swamp with gusto (alligators beware). We will post a short version of Michelle's bio on our web site in the next day or two; her *Counterpunch* oeuvre is here. Michelle will be with us on Thursday if
In her spare time last week Michelle penned this useful article that bears directly on Santa Fe's Midtown project: "Opportunity zone' tax breaks shown as duplicitous development schemes across the country," Michelle Matisons, *Multi-Briefs*, Jan 17, 2020.

8. Billboard coming

Stay tuned: we have a new billboard at the printers. We'll have a press release Friday.

9. Don't forget to write the Midtown Project evaluation committee: No LANL in Santa Fe, not as master developer, not as tenant

Contact information was provided on [Action Sheet 1 for the Midtown Campus Project](#). You can use these talking points also. On Thursday we will bring up another set of talking points, on a deeper level. Hopefully the horrific prospect of NNSA as Master Developer will be in the rear-view mirror by then, and we can focus on the problem of LANL-as-tenant.

There's a lot else to say but this must suffice for tonight. Please do write the committee, and/or write letters to editors (LTEs).

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

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2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200
Press release 14 January 2020

Citizens Protest Possible Nuclear Weapons Agency Presence in Major Santa Fe Development

Press conference and demonstration at noon Wednesday, January 15, Santa Fe City Hall

Contact: Lydia Clark, 505-501-2606; Greg Mello, 505-265-1200 office / 505-577-8563 cell

Santa Fe and Albuquerque -- At noon tomorrow, January 15, at the Santa Fe City Hall (map), the Los Alamos Study Group will be holding a press conference and demonstration regarding the City's Midtown District project.

We have chosen tomorrow because it is the day on which the City has said it may announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the 64 or more acre site.

Seven entities have applied to be Master Developer, including the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the nation's nuclear warhead agency. NNSA manages Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), some 37 road miles to the northwest.

Regarding this project the Mayor's message to potential developers says (e-page 8):

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to collect great ideas that will create a new urban center of activity and also represent the soul of Santa Fe. We can create a place that is truly Santa Fe: our history, our people, our beauty, and our spirit.

Lydia Clark, Study Group Outreach Director:

"We cannot see how these ideals -- 'urban center,' 'soul of Santa Fe,' 'our history, our people, our beauty, and our spirit' could ever be compatible with NNSA or LANL participation. We cannot for a minute see how any presence of NNSA or LANL in this project meets any of the criteria, purposes, or values set forth in the City's Solicitation.

The "development types" (e-pages 11-12) and "business types" (e-pages 13-14) essentially preclude NNSA or LANL participation. "Administrative office only" business uses are not allowed; any LANL prototyping, laboratory, engineering, or manufacturing support functions would require security arrangements that would be functionally incompatible with other project criteria and activities. The City's criteria for businesses include "creat[ing] a town center" (e-pages 12), but the physical security needed by LANL would preclude any "town center" from developing.

The project "vision" is one of "an essential hub of Santa Fe reflecting the city's heritage and culture where all residents are invited to live, work, play, and learn."

NNSA and LANL do not reflect either the city's heritage or its culture; neither can contribute to a development where "all residents" will ever feel welcome, let alone "work, play, and learn."

Clark again:

"LANL and NNSA do not represent sustainability or sustainable innovation. During their long presence of LANL in New Mexico, most of the State has not reaped the supposed benefits. What portion of the money allocated by Congress to LANL that actually enters the economy of New Mexico does so only in a “trickle-down” manner, exacerbating inequality and creating no actual economic and social development for society as a whole.

"Most of rural northern New Mexico (and much of urban New Mexico) remains paralyzed in a culture of poverty, with few good employment options, poor educational outcomes, poor access to health care, and few prospects for improvement. Food insecurity is at an all-time high. LANL represents the antithesis of the political values and priorities which could lift New Mexico. LANL consumes vast resources for nuclear weapons design and production instead.

"There is always a lack of safety and accountability at LANL. Plutonium pit production (pits are the cores of nuclear weapons) is currently scheduled to increase dramatically at LANL. LANL and NNSA have both stated in their proposals the need for housing and office space to accommodate this expansion, as well as deal with challenging commuting issues, with "1,000" new personnel to be hired annually for the next several years. Omitted in their statements is that these increased needs are solely for the purpose of increasing nuclear weapons production and design.

"NNSA and LANL have been poor managers in the past, creating hazardous working conditions and many failed projects.
and environmental violations, which have led to a permanent legacy of contamination. There is no indication that any of this has changed -- or even can change.

"LANL/NNSA's presence in the Mid-Town project will continue to support only a very small group of people, not the community as a whole, and will create even more instability and inequality.

"Congress will not change LANL's mission in the direction of “technology transfer” – as if there was much technology at LANL that could or should be transferred. LANL has always had a single primary mission, but over the past 20 years the nuclear weapons share of DOE funding at LANL has risen to nearly 80%, with most of the remaining 20% supporting that primary mission."

Study Group director Greg Mello:

"For more than 400 years, Santa Fe has been identified with Saint Francis. It is the "Royal City of the Holy Faith [Santa Fe] of Saint Francis of Assisi." And there have been 25 years' worth of formal City resolutions more or less against nuclear weapons passed by successive City councils and mayors. If now for the first time, Santa Fe accepts nuclear weapons in its Midtown proposal by welcoming the agencies which build them, thus weaving these weapons into the fabric and identity of Santa Fe, it will be enormously consequential not just for Santa Fe, but for the entire world.

"Bringing nuclear weapons into Santa Fe would be corrosive of our traditions and culture, our creativity and the spirit of tolerance and openness to the world that are the very soul of Santa Fe. Two competing visions of Santa Fe would contend in two "plazas," one with a beautiful cathedral devoted to a man of peace and the patron saint of ecological harmony, the other supporting weapons of mass destruction in one way or another. This would be a disaster for Santa Fe's reputation, identity, and attractiveness to visitors. It would harm, not help, our youth.

"Innovation? LANL and NNSA are largely stuck in the past, fighting yesteryear's wars, forever re-solving variations of the same problems. LANL primarily innovates in narrow fields, nearly all of them classified. The list of LANL spinoffs is short and disappointing. There is very little fully-civilian research at LANL. LANL's mission is not economic development or technology transfer. Its mission is making nuclear bombs.

"We do not know the outcome of the City's deliberations. We hope the City does not include NNSA or LANL in its Master Developer finalists, and hope we have occasion to praise the City for this decision.

"This organization is directed toward a culture of peace, not war, in New Mexico. Regardless of tomorrow's decision we aim to continue this campaign until there are binding prohibitions against nuclear weapon activities in Santa Fe.”

***ENDS***
January 13, 2020

Dear New Mexico friends –

1. Please help us recruit for Wednesday’s press conference and demonstration

As we explained in yesterday’s letter and previous ones, on Wednesday the City of Santa Fe will announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the former College of Santa Fe site and possibly some surrounding lands.

While it seems absurd that the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) could be a possible "master developer," we can’t be sure what this City Administration wants. NNSA and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are apparently present in some (not all) other proposals as tenant(s).

Getting people there on Wednesday is the most important thing we can recommend to do in our immediate region right now for the sake of nuclear disarmament and future of the region.

2. Leading Democrats seem to love plutonium pits more than environmental knowledge, protection, and impact mitigation

Our two senators, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, and Governor Michele Grisham had nothing to say when asked by the Associated Press if they support further environmental analysis prior to expanding pit production at LANL. They are waiting for NNSA talking points later this week. We are glad their environmental hypocrisy is finally getting some attention.

3. Workshops next month

We are scheduling in-depth workshops on NNSA’s and LANL’s efforts to build a pit production facility in Los Alamos while greatly expanding LANL for the sake of designing and now building new nuclear weapons. LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some $13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s. So far:

- In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1-4 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza (map).
- In Taos, February 4, time and place TBD.

4. Last week's Santa Fe City Hall action

It was an excellent event, one where -- as is always the case -- reality was illuminated by each speaker in a unique way. Some who didn’t speak quietly held signs, making a total presence of a dozen or so.

LANL was the only issue brought up in public comments.

We thought the City Council paid respectful attention, though the Mayor seemed annoyed.

As mentioned last time, the Midtown Campus decision process is open-ended, fluid, and uncertain -- and now closed to formal public input. With your help we are creating democratic opportunities. We are just beginning.

We see the Midtown process as part and parcel of building a wider culture of peace -- and very closely linked with halting construction and operation of a new plutonium pit factory in Los Alamos. We think that for the nuclear weapons enterprise, trying to set up shop in Santa Fe will be a bridge too far.

The Santa Fe Reporter ("Opposition to LANL’s Midtown bid grows," Jan 8, 2020) filed a supportive story.

5. What are these pits for?
In a nutshell, and to correct some recent NNSA statements, plutonium pits are needed in the 2030s solely to field all-new warheads of a (new) type and (increased) number (several hundred) that will enable future breakout from current deployment levels should a future administration desire to do so -- say, to signal "resolve" in tensions with Russia. (Resolve for what? Omnicide?)

Got that? These pits are "needed" solely for new nuclear weapons and to allow, if desired, uploading of more warheads than are deployed right now.

They are not needed to increase "safety." They are not needed because of "pit aging." We have enough modern warheads of the exact right kind to take care of those problems, which aren't really serious anyway.

Of course, retiring all silo-based missiles would be the simplest and best solution.

As it happens -- just coincidentally of course -- "surging" with round-the-clock pit production at LANL to make these new pits starting in 2023 and then ramping up quickly also makes possible --

- this new warhead (cost: >$15 B);
- a new missile system (cost: ~$85-140 B);
- the whole package helps sustain two nuclear weapons physics labs, the "clean lab" (in CA) and one the "dirty lab" (in NM); as well as
- one engineering lab (in NM); as well as
- five other testing and production sites; plus
- federal administration.

It adds up to "real money." Think of what that would buy for this country.

Without these pits, the U.S. warhead complex would have very little to do in the 2030s. The Navy has already said it does not want any new warheads. Nevertheless NNSA is planning to hire an extra 20,000 workers over the coming 5 years, on top of the existing 41,000 -- a mad flurry of activity.

6. Talking points

Lydia prepared these talking points for our Jan. 2 workshop in Santa Fe. You can use them in your letters to officials. (For now, let's concentrate on getting as many people there at noon on Wednesday as possible. We need to concentrate our efforts!)

We will devote the next letter to more.

In the meantime we have to ask -- what will our story be?

Because those of you who spoke last Wednesday touched upon, in different ways, the momentous choice involved as the City of Santa Fe contemplates reversing 400 years of identification with Saint Francis as well as 25 years of formal City resolutions to, for the first time, possibly support nuclear weapons and weave them into the fabric and identity of Santa Fe. It is an enormously consequential decision not just for Santa Fe, up to now a City of Peace, but for the world.

In this decision, two worlds contend -- two stories, two worldviews, two normative orders, two identities, two ways of ordering society.

7. Two worlds in collision -- what will our story be?

We might call it, "St. Francis vs. Plutopia." Which will it be for Santa Fe? What do we value?

One way or another, this collision was what concerned several speakers at City Hall last Wednesday.

This was what Ohkay Owingeh elder Herman Agoyo, with whom we frequently met in those years, questioned in a 1993 talk, entitled "Who Here Will Begin This Story?" I would like to quote him at length:

*When I was a young boy my grandfather told me, "That place in the mountains is a blessing." I was very familiar with "The Hill" as it was known in those early years, because my aunt and uncle lived and worked there. They frequently arranged "passes" for family members to visit "The Hill." I interpreted grandpa's statement to mean "The Hill" meant jobs, education, and new opportunities.*

*It has been nearly fifty years, and as my grandfather and the years have passed, as Los Alamos National Laboratory has carved its place into the people and the land of New Mexico, a different understanding grips us. What shall I tell my grandson?*

*The promise of jobs and development has not truly benefited us. Yes, people weren't as hungry as before, some were able to buy cars and trucks, but for the most part, the poor people, Indians, and Spanish were and still are at the bottom of the work ladder where advanced science and the highest technology positions are rewarded for the very few. The vision of "education" has also been an elusive entitlement. Approximately 30 percent of our young people do not finish high school and the majority who do graduate end up with an 8th grade level education, and consequently they are derailed in so many preventable and cruel ways from the best technical and leadership opportunities. Worse, our children are never systematically taught the most important and complex truths about the world they live in, truths that are needed to instill a sense of clear purpose and decision-making confidence in our human society.*

*The "opportunities" have also turned to ashes. We have slowly realized that this work which started out to harness an unimaginable*
power has in fact harmed human beings and the planet beyond any calculation. It has harmed us all by the sickness, death, and destruction that has been the ultimate product of this work. It has harmed us by the nightmare fear instilled in the hearts and minds of all the world's peoples about nuclear war and radiation "accidents." It has violated and harmed us by the awful problems of pollution and defilement caused in handling and disposing of the radioactive materials dumped onto and into Mother Earth.

The most important truth about Los Alamos National Laboratory is that it has always been and still is a secret; a center whose work has always been kept utterly shrouded from the view of the world; a place with no public memory. What do our children know of the Laboratory and what do they care? And if they do not know and do not care because it's just another "adult problem," that is the more reason for them to be indifferent and reject our ways. Then who is left to understand and care?

... What moves me today is the deep belief that we are entering a new time, a new century, and a new understanding. The epoch of modern war and the national security state is moving into its late, late afternoon. The world's people will no longer tolerate, nor can we afford, the costs of war and rampant inhumanity. Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that the fall of mighty Russia was the result of star wars or our military and scientific superiority. Russia fell because the people were fed up with their form of government, and mind you, modern Russia collapsed without an all-out bloody revolution. We must open our eyes to a way to find a refreshing and energetic solution. This evening, I ask you to look at an opportunity that can bring us all together through our children.

If we turn to our children as the source of memory, the repository of what we know as the truth, as the sources of how we are to gather together to cleanse Mother Earth and join to transcend the experience of the last fifty years, I believe we will have a way to transform ourselves. The old way will be hard to break, change will come slowly. A new generation will have to be taught a new way of harmony, mutual respect, common interest, and love for each other and the planet.

Let us make a commitment here, this weekend, to mount a sharing of all stories, first to the youth in our communities, and then increase the circle of participation among all the children in our state and country. If the children understand what we have done here, if the children hear our passionate plea for their active participation in all aspects of how we are to move forward together with this land that belongs to their children's children's children, we will have begun the most important miracle of all. Memory and meaning go hand in hand.

Who here will begin this storytelling with the Indian tribes? Let us call together our best storytellers, our most passionate teachers, and our most creative media artists to this sustained work as the beginning of the true cleansing that we must perform.

My grandson and my grandfather count on me. Yours count on you. Let us form the circle together.

St. Francis prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." Some in Santa Fe and our senators' offices are praying, "Government, make me an instrument of your wars."

And with that, civilization comes to an end -- even before the third bomb is dropped. As would the social, economic, and cultural development of Santa Fe, if we let that be our story.

We have to choose. Now that NNSA wants to build a plutonium factory in our midst, we can't kick The Bomb down the road any longer.

The choices for a Santa Fe "meta-narrative" in a time of ecological emergency boil down to life vs. death, biophilia vs. the death cult. Compare the Canticle of the Sun to Oppenheimer's self-identification, "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." (video).

Generation vs. genocide.

Sustainability and resilience vs. instability and the threat of extinction.

Politically, administration vs. democracy.

Russell Hoban's fine post-apocalyptic novel Riddley Walker features a central story that is canonical to the characters in the novel, called "The Eusa Story." The Story concludes with the "Littl Man" -- who is the "Addom" Eusa split after killing the "Hart of the Wud" -- questioning Eusa, whose lust for power has caused the death of millions, including his own wife and children.

The Littl Man sed, Eusa wut is the idear uv yu? Eusa cudn say enne thing. The Littl Man sed, Yu doan hav tu say wut it is. Jus say if it is. Eusa stil cudn say enne thing.

Eusa has no communicable story -- no "public memory," in Herman Agoyo's terms. No purpose.

Eusa sought "Chaynjis" but got more than he bargained for, with no end in sight for this pitiful shell of a man.

Eusa sed, How menne Chaynjis ar thayr? The Littl Man sed, Yu mus no aul abowt that I seen yu rite thay Nos. down in the hart uv the wud. Eusa sed, That riting is long gon & aul thay Nos. hav gon owt uv my myn I doan remember nothing uv them. Woan yu pleas tel me how menne Chaynjis thayr ar? The Littl Man sed, As menne as reqwyrd. Eusa sed, Reqwyrd by wut? The Littl Man sed, Reqwyrd by the idear uv yu. Eusa sed, Wut is the idear uv me? The Littl Man sed, That we doan no til yuv gon thru aul yur Chaynjis.

In the absence of an heroic story, one true to the reality of our situation on this planet and to our common humanity, Santa Fe and the region will be as rudderless and pathetic as Eusa.
However with such a story, and the political commitment that goes with it, people can pull together toward something worthwhile. Everyone can have a job. Agoyo: "A new generation will have to be taught a new way of harmony, mutual respect, common interest, and love for each other and the planet....Memory and meaning go hand in hand."

Santa Fe already has such a story. It should not be thrown away.

Thank you for your attention and --

Please help us recruit attendees for Wednesday!

Greg Mello
January 12, 2020

Dear New Mexico friends –

As we have explained in previous letters, Wednesday is the day on which the City will announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the former College of Santa Fe site (and possibly surrounding properties as well, a 64- to ~100-acre project). The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has applied for this role. NNSA and/or Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are present in some (not all) other proposals, as tenant(s).

The situation is opaque, fluid, and developing. So far, Mayor Webber has disdainfully rebuffed our requests to meet or discuss the momentous social, cultural, and economic development impacts of placing a nuclear weapons campus in Santa Fe. (Don't be deceived -- that is exactly what LANL is and what this would be.)

People power may be the only force stronger than LANL's money and corruption. We really need you to help us expand our numbers.

If you live anywhere nearby please come to this joint press conference, and please ask as many friends to come as possible. Sheer attendance matters. A strong showing Wednesday will save countless hours of work later, and will give wings to efforts to push back on LANL's entirely unjustified expansion. There are many powerful people in Washington who know LANL specializes in taxpayer ripoffs. Some of them need to see some spine from us out here to take to their bosses.

New Mexico is being selected to be a nuclear weapons support and sacrifice area. That now includes the Santa Fe metro area.

We may not know know the outcome of this first Midtown Campus decision by noon Wednesday but regardless of that we must seize the day.

While it seems absurd that NNSA could be a possible "master developer," we can't be sure that Mayor Webber and the people around him wouldn't want that -- or want, say, a training facility for plutonium workers. We just don't know.

This event will also give us a chance for us to network with each other and with representatives of any other groups present, as well as speak to any City officials willing to do so.

Getting people to come on Wednesday is the sole action item we are recommending right now. It is very, very important!

Thank you!

Greg, Trish, Lydia, Ernie, Michelle, and the rest of the Study Group
January 7, 2020

Permalink for this letter. Please forward! Other Letters

Dear New Mexico activist friends –

First, if you live nearby please join us tomorrow, Wednesday, January 8, at 6 pm at the Santa Fe City Council meeting at City Hall (map). This will be the last City Council meeting before the City decides which applicants will be the finalists for "Master Developer" of the City's 64-acre Midtown District and possibly other surrounding lands. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which builds U.S. nuclear warheads, has applied for Master Developer. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), our local nuclear bomb lab (that does little else and can do little else), figures in at least one proposal as a partner or tenant as well.

We will meet outside the City Council chambers for an hour or so before the evening session, in preparation for citizen comment under Item F on the agenda, "Petitions from the Floor." There are no other formal opportunities for public comment prior to this decision.

Our demand is simple: No LANL in Santa Fe!

We brought talking points to our Jan. 2 meeting. NNSA and LANL meet none of requirements for Master Developer, and so we expect to win this first round. What embodied moral force we can bring out tomorrow, in our bodies, will be momentum toward the next challenge -- keeping a satellite nuclear weapons administrative, engineering, and training center out of Santa Fe.

Second, please contact others to bring as many people as possible to the meetings tomorrow (ours and the Council's). Not everyone need speak at the latter, but a show of force will make everything easier from this point forward.

Third, please write letters, op eds if possible (Willem Malten's: "Grab the opportunity to make a difference"), and call the Mayor and City councilors. (Handy contacts and background were provided in our December 12 update). Meet with them if you can. They may say they can't discuss these proposals, which is fine, but they can and should listen.

There is no question that the Mayor has already met with LANL representatives during or just preceding this process. His initial response to us, on the other hand, is that he cannot meet. We need to make sure he and the councilors understand the gravity of this issue, and just how negatively LANL's presence will affect the viability of any proposal that includes it.

Tomorrow's ACTION SHEET is now posted.

Fourth, if you live nearby please come at noon on Wednesday, January 15 to the Santa Fe City Hall (map), where we will have a demonstration and joint press conference. We can't know the outcome of the decision, or exactly when on the 15th it will be announced, but as it is a work day and we also need to give the press time to write, noon it will be.

This will also give us a chance to network among each other and with representatives of other groups present.

Fifth, we are scheduling in-depth workshops on NNSA's and LANL's efforts to build a new "Goldilocks"-sized Rocky Flats plutonium plant in Los Alamos and to greatly expand LANL, for the sake of designing and now building new nuclear weapons. LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some $13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s. So far:

- In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1-4 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza (map).
In Taos, February 4, time and place TBD.

Sixth, tomorrow NNSA will publish its decision to *NOT* conduct further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for its pit production program. We are *shocked, shocked.* A comparable decision -- to avoid further NEPA analysis -- is likely at LANL as well. We must challenge both.

NNSA is flying blind, and at the same pulling the wool -- if only it was as organic as that -- over local officials' eyes.

If our senators, Governor, or Congressman Ben Ray Lujan demanded a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS), it would happen.

And if our senators demanded a Supplemental Programmatic EIS (SPEIS), *that* would happen, contrary to tomorrow's decision. But they haven't. They want to rush pit production forward, without further environmental analysis.

From this point forward, all local government and civic leaders who silently sit on their hands are part of the problem. We need to wake them up.

We sent these quick comments to a few newspapers:

This decision favors ignorance over knowledge and planning. It strikes a blow against good science, good engineering, and good government. NNSA is trying to rush into pit production for purely ideological and pork barrel reasons, an approach very likely to fail.

NNSA does not want to expose the contradictions in its pit production plans to further scrutiny by the public, tribes, affected governments, Congress, or even by other NNSA and DOE programs, some of which will suffer as a result of the rush into pit production.

Much more is known now than in 2008 about the impacts and risks of NNSA's pit production plans. None of this new knowledge is supportive of NNSA's plans, which are proceeding without the required environmental analysis of reasonable alternatives.

Many of NNSA's 2008 assumptions turned out to be optimistic. At LANL for example, NNSA assumed it could use a new $6 billion nuclear facility to help produce pits. That facility was never built.

Either NNSA has not learned that NEPA helps vet bad policy choices, or else NNSA knows it is making a bad choice and hopes to brazen its way through, as some in DoD have advised.

NNSA sees opposition, but not the facts behind that opposition. Those facts -- of geology, topography, location, of NNSA's own failures to date, of infrastructure limitations, and of a rapidly-changing planet earth -- aren't going away.

As of at least mid-November, and despite clear legislative reporting requirements, NNSA had no clear idea how to proceed with its pit production plans at LANL in particular, the first site at which industrial pit production is supposed to take place.

Especially in this administration, NNSA obeys laws selectively, thumbing its nose at Congress and now at our nation's foundational environmental law. A new plutonium pit production plan involving multiple sites in multiple states, with ramifying effects on transportation and on waste management at all DOE sites that produce, store, or dispose of transuranic waste, inherently requires programmatic analysis under NEPA. To repeat, much has changed since 2008.

This decision also violates a legal settlement to which this organization was a party. NNSA is therefore also thumbing its nose at the courts, and to the parties in that prior litigation, with whom it made a solemn agreement. We will challenge this decision, to the best of our ability.

Our comments on the draft "Supplement Analysis" (the final version will be published tomorrow) are [here](#) and [here](#).

Seventh, these pit production plans are our main local contribution to the war machine that is producing the war Trump is intensifying so criminally in the Middle East. Pit production is a big part of New Mexico's way of saying it will never lead on climate mitigation, or toward making our communities resilient. This is a binomial choice, friends, a choice between two whole worlds of meaning and authority, narrative, morality, and possibility (*nomos*, in the Coverian sense). We see the struggle against nuclear weapons -- in our midst, and growing in social, political, and economic influence -- as identical to the struggles against the extinction of nature and an increasingly ruthless politics of disposability.

There will be another antiwar action Saturday in Santa Fe. I am sure there are other local protests as well. A global day of action has been declared for January 25, local details TBD. New developments good and bad are occurring hourly, and we can't burden this letter with them.

We urge you to get involved, and get nonviolently serious. Mere protesting will not be enough to mitigate any of our converging crises, this growing war and the extinction crisis included, but at and through these protests, *which will hopefully grow to halt business as usual in this country*, we can build and deepen relationships and political strength. We need to understand and live, as best we can, the essential unity of all serious resistance and constructive programs. The greater the nonviolence, the greater the moral, persuasive force.

Greg, for the Study Group

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Last month's local letters

- (12/31/19): [Reminder: workshop & training Thursday January 2, Santa Fe](#)
- (12/22/19): Important meetings January 2 & 8
- (12/12/19): No LANL in Santa Fe -- update
- (12/07/19): Please come tomorrow to Collected Works Bookstore, 202 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, 11 am: Developer to present plans for Midtown Santa Fe campus; will they include nuclear weapons research, training, manufacturing, administration?
- (12/02/19): Safety Board: Los Alamos plutonium facility does not adequately protect the public
Dear New Mexico activist friends –

The Study Group is joining number of antiwar and social justice groups locally and across the US in emergency demonstrations tomorrow, Saturday, at 2 pm at Kirtland Air Force Base (specifically, the corner of San Mateo and Gibson Blvds, map) in Albuquerque. Groups sponsoring include Stop the War Machine, Popular Resistance, Code Pink, UNAC, Answer, International Action Center, Veterans For Peace, Los Alamos Study Group, Voices for Peace and many others.

If you don't live in Albuquerque perhaps you will find another way to join the nationwide expressions of disgust where you are.

Any demonstration like this is a short-lived thing, of little value in itself. But it can be a start.

This latest U.S. act of war is illegal even by degraded U.S. standards, let alone international ones. Some quick background:

- Fear of a Major Mideast War (Joe Lauria, Consortium News)
- U.S. Will Come To Regret Its Assassination of Qassim Soleimani (Moon of Alabama, "MoA")
- US Assassination Of Top Iranian Military Official May Ignite World War (Caitlin Johnstone)
- US Kick Starts Raging '20s Declaring War on Iran (Pepe Escobar, Consortium News)

Yesterday's strike comes on the heels of a previous air strike on Shia militias in the Iraqi army (Background from the valuable MoA: After U.S. Strike On Iraqi Forces Its Troops Will (Again) Have To Leave and What Will The Trump Administration Do When Iraq Asks U.S. Troops To Leave?).

You will notice the absence of major mainstream media in this list. I usually don't have time to parse the truth from the lies and strategic omissions in the typical New York Times or Washington Post story. Cable and broadcast news, including PBS and NPR, are even worse.

Now there is a third strike (Iraq official says airstrike targets Iran-backed militia, AP).

As Caitlin Johnstone put it at the link above,

"And now, as I sit as the mother of two teenagers watching what might be a third world war looming on the horizon, all I can think is about how infuriating it is that we've spent the last three years on Russia bullshit and sectarian political infighting instead of building an actual cohesive antiwar movement and pushing real opposition to Trump's warmongering.

We need to talk about U.S. militarism, urgently. Tomorrow is a good place to start, at this demonstration and after. If you live nearby, hopefully we will see you there.

Greg, for the Study Group"