



Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

For Immediate Release

September 29, 2006

NNSA, Lockheed Host “Academic” Panel Discussion at UNM of New Nuclear Warheads and “Responsive” Manufacturing Plants

Entire panel works for, or is otherwise tied to, NNSA, labs – all other voices excluded

“Academic” event hosted by UNM “office” funded entirely by Lockheed

Contact: Greg Mello 505-265-1200

ALBUQUERQUE – Today, September 29, 2006, from 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm at the Student Union Building (SUB) on the University of New Mexico (UNM) main campus in Albuquerque in Santa Ana rooms A & B, there will be a panel discussion about the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. The event is sponsored by the UNM Office for Policy, Security, and Technology (OPST), Sandia National Laboratories (SNL), and Women in International Security (WIIS). Details can be found at <http://www.unm.edu/%7Eopst/events.html>.

Greg Mello, Study Group Director: “The goal of today’s discussion, from the perspective of those paying for it, has nothing whatsoever to do with its technical or policy content. What is being attempted is to harness the academic thirst for prestige to create a façade of legitimacy for U.S. weapons of mass destruction programs, which are now in political and financial trouble.”

The so-called RRW program and its associated construction program designed to create a “responsive infrastructure” of agile nuclear warhead factories that will replace all U.S. nuclear weapons with new-design warheads over the coming 30 or so years. U.S. nuclear warheads are highly reliable – far more so than other weapons systems components – and current life-extension programs are in the process of extending their “shelf-life” for decades to come. Tens of billions of dollars have already been committed. In the proposed new RRW program, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) wishes to gradually replace existing warheads with untested new warheads. Neither Congress nor the Pentagon has yet approved RRW except in its earliest stages.

Greg Mello, Study Group Director:

“The key questions regarding Friday’s panel are not this or that management strategy for U.S. nuclear weapons. They are not whether nuclear weapons are a problem in some sense – or perhaps a panacea for military insufficiency, as U.S. nuclear doctrine suggests. These are very important questions but they are not the gravamen of concern today. The key issues are rather:

- The false impression being given that this is an “academic” panel, when in fact all but one of the panelists work for NNSA, SNL, or LANL. Each would be fired in a heartbeat if they said anything that strayed too far from the “party line.” These people must do the bidding of higher authorities in the nuclear weapons complex or find a new job, quite likely at much lower pay. There is therefore little or no uncoerced deliberative content to the panel.
- Lockheed-Martin, the world’s largest military contractor, has created its own little Lockheed-funded portion of UNM with a \$1.25 million, 5-year grant. LockMart is using UNM as a public relations front to advance a political agenda that will benefit the corporation’s profit-oriented idea of “national security,” which polls show is not widely shared by the American

people in this case as in many others. The panel is thus not just somewhat interest-conflicted – it is almost totally interest-conflicted. The RRW program will involve more than \$100 billion in contract work over 30 years; much of that work would go to the corporations represented on the panel. The U.S. nuclear weapons complex is now 96% privatized; the 20-year, no-bid LANL contract alone is worth \$37 billion, according to the Department of Energy (DOE). Most Americans, and most members of the UNM community, have no idea how intellectually corrupt these institutions are, or how coercive are their internal cultures.

- The U.S. has signed binding treaties and agreements which require complete nuclear disarmament, not nuclear maintenance – and certainly not nuclear rearmament, which the “responsive infrastructure” is meant to provide. Under what legal basis does the work proceed?
- The organizers of the panel have taken every pain to assure that the panel appears authoritative and prestigious. In fact, the effort to produce weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the context of treaties requiring the exact opposite outcome – especially in the context of the aggressive wars now underway (which must invariably bring in their train violations of the Geneva Convention and widespread suffering) – breaks clear international law.
- It also breaks domestic law, as ratified treaties become binding U.S. domestic law as well. The speakers’ careers challenge the Nuremberg Principles, which require individuals to act independently of illegal government orders to uphold universal moral and legal principles even when the most serious personal repercussions may result – which is not at all the case here. Preparing the instruments of mass murder breaks the universal moral norms of humankind and challenges civilization itself. The purpose of the RRW is to threaten and if necessary annihilate entire countries and peoples, the very definition of genocide. The supervisors of the individuals who will speak today have openly said the purpose of these weapons is to threaten the annihilation of countries and peoples, and to carry out this threat if necessary, on a number of occasions.
- The University of New Mexico, the primary institution in this state charged with passing on the precious fruits of human civilization to future generations, is being suborned and perverted in this way. It is possible that career ambitions and personal gain have been placed above academic and moral judgment, not just within the OPST but also in the political science department and elsewhere in the University. It is our universal moral duty to speak up against preparations for nuclear holocaust, not to provide “intellectual” peer review for it.

Mello continues: “Today, the entire world is watching the RRW program and New Mexico, and wondering whether a discussion of new kinds of nuclear weapons can proceed and be reported as a technical and management issue, free from legal, moral, and social friction. Day and night many of us pray that journalists will be able to challenge this false authority and report the facts, standing on the firm ground of the values which uphold civilization, not the underlying hate, fear, and greed that drive the push for more weapons of mass destruction.”

Do not forget that every people deserves the regime it is willing to endure... Nothing is so unworthy of a civilized nation as allowing itself to be governed without opposition by an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct.

From pamphlets written by the “White Rose” student resistance group at the University of Munich, 1942.

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