



Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

[A hyperlinked version of this letter can be found at http://www.lasg.org/LASG_2017_funding_appeal.pdf]

November 16, 2017

Dear friends –

As we approach the winter solstice and the holiday season, it is time to again thank all of you who have supported the Los Alamos Study Group financially this year and in previous years. With this mailing we are also reaching out to a few who might be interested in helping support our work but might not be familiar with it.

We also want to thank our volunteers, whose contributions have been essential to our successes.

Right now we are particularly pleased about the brand-new [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#), on which we have been [working](#) these past three years alongside our domestic nuclear policy work. The [International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN), which coordinated the campaign for the Treaty and in which we have been a stalwart part, was [awarded](#) the Nobel Peace Prize last month! We – our staff, directors, and former interns – are proud of our various roles in bringing forth this Treaty.

The Los Alamos Study Group has been working for disarmament – and short of that, saner nuclear weapons and laboratory policies – for more than 25 years. If we are new to you, you may wish to take a look at our [web site](#). If you are receiving this letter by post, you may find the enclosed materials interesting.

Our work is, centrally, nuclear disarmament – in the context of urgently seeking sustainable energy and climate policies, safe management of nuclear facilities, and transition to a sustainable, just economy. In New Mexico even more than elsewhere, these issues are closely related and we approach them that way.

There is no time to lose. As the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently [put it](#), we are in a “watershed moment for US nuclear forces.” (See “[CBO: US Nuclear Forces To Cost \\$1.2 Trillion over 30 Years](#),” and “[Yesterday is tomorrow: estimating the full cost of a nuclear buildup](#),” by Study Group director [Bob Alvarez](#).)

A month from now, President Trump’s new nuclear policy package will be delivered to the Oval Office. It is likely to be even more aggressive, dangerous, and expensive than President Obama’s, which committed to replacing each and every US nuclear weapon system with upgraded versions. Replacing the entire nuclear arsenal implies a further shift of priorities away from society and the environment, toward the military and the corporate nuclear complex.

Congress, led by nuclear hawks and pork-barrel interests in this matter, has not been idle. Of special note, our New Mexico senators – second to none in their support of nuclear weapons – added an [amendment](#) to this year’s National Defense Authorization Act (see: [Conference Report](#)) which attempts to force the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to build expensive, unnecessary, dangerous, and provocative [underground modular factories](#) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for plutonium warhead cores (“pits”).

There are literally tons of extra pits. The US has at least 16,000 retired pits in storage, plus 5,000 more in non-deployed warheads. They last a very long time; even LANL [says](#) pit aging is no reason to make more. New pits are needed only for new kinds of warheads. Existing facilities can make hundreds of new pits; new facilities would enable even greater production. [The new pits to be made, and the new industrial capacity to quickly build them, are “needed” solely to enable, and thus threaten, breakout from New START nuclear deployment levels.](#)

With your help we can stop this madness, as we have done before.

This is not the moment for modesty. In halting the [most recent attempt](#) to build a LANL pit factory we had to act almost alone, among parties outside government. Success came through [litigation](#), careful analysis, and educating nuclear decisionmakers in Washington. We hope you will help us win again.

In concert with allies in government and outside it, and drawing on our informal pool of sympathetic experts from around the country, we’ve built an

Those of you who wish to help support our efforts and have not yet done so can donate by [check](#) to the address below, by [credit card](#) over the phone or via secure [link](#), by donating [stock](#) (thus avoiding capital gains and the associated taxes), or by donating your [car, boat, or real estate](#). You can set up a [monthly donation](#). The Study Group is a 501(c)(3) organization; all donations are fully tax deductible. *If you are already a donor, please consider being an ambassador for us. We set great store on peer-to-peer fundraising.* You have contacts and friends that we do not. Fundraising conversations are important political work – among the most important.

unmatched record of success in stopping hair-brained nuclear projects planned and underway in this state.

We use every efficient means available, from lobbying, to media exposure, to litigation, to organizing and [advertising](#). (These last two are not affordable at the moment.) We've seeded or participated in [thousands of news articles](#) and hundreds of radio programs. We've held hundreds of public meetings here in New Mexico, and hundreds of briefings with decisionmakers on Capitol Hill. Our research is used around the world.

The Study Group brings to the national nuclear weapons debate unique expertise, an internationalist as well as a detailed local perspective, accumulated credibility from more than two decades of detailed engagement, and knowledge across the narrow issue "stovepipes" that characterize professional careers in Washington. Our training and long experience give us an overview of nuclear weapons issues that is rare outside the nuclear establishment. Our access in Washington is therefore quite good. Because of our record and the threat we pose to bad policy and projects, we are respected by friends and adversaries alike. With your help, we will leverage these assets in the critical contests ahead.

We particularly seek to train young people as researchers, activists, and lobbyists, beyond the political and career limitations of the Washington, DC Beltway. This, like everything else, takes money – and a few volunteers.

We remain community-based in New Mexico and independent of political fashions and parties. We are accountable to our membership.

The Study Group relies on New Mexico sources for more than half its budget – which is always pretty tight, uncertain, and limiting. We have "the power of proximity" (Arundhati Roy), but to wield it we need committed friends.

We have not described our [personnel](#) or our programs in any detail in this brief appeal, either what we have recently done or what we hope to do next year. Please do visit our [web site](#) (lasg.org). You can write us, or call. On line, you can peruse our [bulletins](#), local [letters](#), and work products. See also our [press coverage](#) (the most recent is on our home page; older articles can be found in our on-line archives).

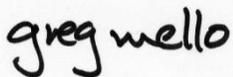
As mentioned above, we are proud to be an active partner in [ICAN](#). Our reference materials, analyses, and in-person presentations about U.S. nuclear weapons have been a feature of diplomatic conferences in New York, Vienna, Geneva, the European Parliament, and elsewhere. Two of our [board](#) members have played central roles in nuclear diplomacy in recent years and are widely respected for that work. On December 10 we'll be quietly celebrating with our New Mexico friends during the Oslo Nobel award ceremony. We'll send an announcement shortly to our main list serve about this.

New Mexico is also at a "watershed moment." Voters appear to have had quite enough of laissez-faire governance. But will our new leadership teams look once more to the military and nuclear weapons labs for the economic development they cannot provide? This is a besetting error in New Mexico politics. Our senators make this error.

We at the Study Group may be able to provide a platform for your own commitment and work, but of course we aren't for everybody. If we don't change our direction very fast, and profoundly, in the direction of sustainability and respect for each other and the living earth, all will be lost. *Emergency* actions and political commitments are now necessary. We who are politically active need to talk, honestly and respectfully, about the opportunities and crises we face. We at the Study Group are ready to contribute our experience and expertise to those discussions, as we have been.

If you are not already subscribed to our list serve and wish to do so, please send a blank email to lasg-subscribe@lists.riseup.net. We also have smaller local lists arranged geographically for our more active members.

Sincerely,



Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

PS: You can also ask [Positive Energy](#) to [install a photovoltaic system](#) at your home or business, mentioning us as the source of the referral. When the project is complete they will donate \$500 to the Study Group!

Dr. Frank von Hippel, Princeton Program on Science and Global Security: "The Los Alamos Study Group plays a unique role in the nuclear-weapons policy debate. Its Director, Greg Mello, understands more deeply than any other independent expert the plans and policy initiatives of the nation's nuclear-weapon laboratories as they try to construct a future of planned obsolescence and continual renewal for the U.S. nuclear-weapon arsenal. He is a precious early warning system and strategic advisor for those of us who propose, in contrast, a future in which the U.S. nuclear stockpile is steadily reduced and increasingly marginalized in U.S. security policy considerations."