



Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

November 22, 2014

Dear friends and interested parties –

Some of you have been part of the Los Alamos Study Group community for years. Others may not know much about us. It's the time of year when I must write to request your financial support for the Study Group's work next year. In the nuclear weapons business, this next year is crucial, both in the U.S. and internationally.

You can be a monthly sustaining donor, make a one-time donation of any size, donate stock or other assets (thus avoiding capital gains), or even donate an unused vehicle. You can donate through our secure [on-line portal](#), or via regular mail at the address below. Please call us at 505-265-1200 if you have any questions, or [write](#). Donations to the Los Alamos Study Group, a 501(c)(3) organization, are fully tax-deductible.

We very much hope you will help us with peer-to-peer fundraising and with outreach more generally, and join in our work in other ways. We have prepared issue and fundraising packets for those who want to help in this way. Talk to your friends and associates – please. You have sympathetic contacts we do not.

To volunteer in other ways please peruse our [Bulletins](#) for background and suggestions, or call, or [write](#).

If you are not familiar with our work please take a look at our [web site](#). See also the enclosed materials, if you are getting this letter by postal mail.

The Los Alamos Study Group, based in New Mexico, works primarily to foster nuclear disarmament. We do so in the context of urgently seeking sustainable energy and climate policies, safe management of nuclear facilities, and transition to a sustainable and just economy. We have no time to lose. In New Mexico these issues are all closely related. Since our first public meetings 25 years ago, we have approached these issues together, in their total cultural, economic, and political context, in as much technical detail as time has allowed.

This is not the moment for modesty. I am pleased to say that 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 unmatched track record of success in stopping hare-brained nuclear projects planned and underway in this state.

We have repeatedly stymied nuclear weapons projects described by the Department of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) as “essential.” Sometimes, as in the recent case of the \$6+ billion plutonium warhead core (“pit”) factory under design at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), which we delayed and then killed through [litigation](#), analysis, and hundreds of lobbying visits, we had to buck a national consensus supporting the project not just within government but in the arms control community and its funders as well.

We use every efficient means we can, from lobbying, to media exposure, to litigation, to organizing, to [advertising](#) (no longer affordable). In our public education role we've seeded or participated in more than 3,000 separate news articles and hundreds of radio programs. We've held hundreds of public meetings here in New Mexico and hundreds of meetings with decisionmakers on Capitol Hill. Our research is used around the world.

Our training and long experience give us a solid overview of nuclear weapons issues that is rare outside the nuclear establishment. Our relationships go back a long ways in some cases and our access in Washington is quite good. Because of our record and the threat we pose to bad policy and projects we are respected by friends and adversaries alike.

We remain community-based in New Mexico and independent of political fashions and parties. We are accountable to our membership. With your help, we will leverage these assets in the critical contests ahead.

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” (A. Roy), but to wield it we need committed friends.

I imagine many people think it takes tens of millions of dollars to change U.S. nuclear policy. From long experience I can assure you it takes orders of magnitude less. We don't have to chop down the deadly "[Upas Tree](#)" ([Pushkin](#)). Girdling will do. In tough times even less is required. But beware: those watering it want all the water.

We can never fully predict when or how success will come, though [we will keep winning](#) on nuclear weapons overall because history, budgets, much of the military, and some conservatives are on our side. [Nuclear weapons are increasingly unaffordable and visibly obsolete](#), while remaining as immoral, illegal, and profoundly dangerous as ever.

In the coming year we will:

- [Fight against the modernization policies of the Obama Administration](#), and *for* management reforms in Washington across the weapons complex, *including much lower nuclear budgets*. (For suggested reforms at the nuclear labs, see [here](#).) We work both within current policy paradigms and outside them. We are fighting the "Cold War II" thinking – an imperial extension of "Cold War I" thinking and very aggressive, we believe, for fundamental economic, resource, and geographic reasons – that has quickly become *de rigueur* in many circles.
- Internationally, [we will contribute our expertise, perspectives, and energy toward a formal ban on the possession and use of nuclear weapons](#), which we see as foundational. We are an active part of the growing [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN).
- [We will oppose by all effective means the unnecessary, provocative, and dangerous new plan to build a multibillion-dollar production complex for plutonium warhead cores \("pits"\) at Los Alamos National Laboratory \(LANL\)](#). In addition to its effects on nuclear policy if built as planned, such a complex would dramatically harm the economic prospects of northern New Mexico. We've stopped such plans before and we aim to do it again.
- [We will continue to provide a comprehensive clearinghouse for information about U.S. nuclear weapons and policy issues](#) for the news media and other organizations.
- [We will train young people as researchers, activists, and lobbyists](#). We are asking you to help be our recruiting eyes and ears – and to materially encourage younger activists with your financial help. Powerful stories are waiting here for someone's devoted research and writing.
- [We will work as much as time allows with other organizations on climate and energy issues, in which we have considerable background](#). We are devoting about 20% of our time to these critically important issues, which demand a complete redefinition of "national security."

Please help us if you can, or reach out to others who can. We will use your contribution as effectively as possible.

Thank you,

Greg Mello, Executive Director



P.S.: You may be interested in these generous endorsements:

[David Krieger, President, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation](#): "The Los Alamos Study Group is one of the most effective organizations in the country in providing clear and understandable information about what is going on behind the closed doors of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The Laboratory is one of the major proponents and drivers of continued US reliance on nuclear weapons. Without the Los Alamos Study Group much of what happens at the Laboratory would be hidden from public view or distorted beyond recognition by clever public relations."

[Dr. Frank von Hippel, Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University](#): "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."