



Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

December 15, 2015



Dear friends –

As we approach the winter solstice and the end of 2015 it is time to thank all of you who have supported the Los Alamos Study Group financially – this year and in previous years.

Without you there very likely would be underway a [huge construction project](#) sprawling across two mesas and a dozen or more technical areas at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), aimed at greatly increasing U.S. manufacturing capacity for plutonium warhead cores (“pits”). In early 2012 that project was [deferred](#) “for at least 5 years.” It was finally [cancelled](#) in 2014.

Pit production at *any* scale is [unjustified](#), even to maintain a huge, diverse U.S. arsenal. U.S. pits age very slowly (see [here](#) and [here](#)); they all have several decades more “deterrence” (translation: “apocalyptic threat to most life on earth”) remaining. In addition to the pits in [7,200 intact warheads and bombs](#), the U.S. also maintains an inventory of [several thousand other pits](#) (the “war reserve”; see also p. 19 [here](#)). *One* kind of planned new warhead might, *sometime after 2030*, “need” more pits of a certain type than are present in inventory, *but just to make extra warheads, enough to quickly double or triple the number of warheads on U.S. ICBMs if desired, after the New START treaty expires in the early 2020s. 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.*

The proposed new ICBM warhead is the main justification for what is now a \$4.2 to \$6.1 billion (B) plutonium factory expansion project at LANL. (The estimated cost just rose by another \$800 million this month; see [here](#) vs. [here](#). These costs do not include hundreds of millions in new nuclear waste infrastructure and other new facilities. Neither do they include hundreds of millions in program expenses every year.) Once built, even more billions will be required to actually *operate* the factory complex and build the warheads, plus tens of billions for the new (or renewed) ICBMs to carry the new warheads, plus major silo and communications upgrades, all of which together will cost *many tens of billions more*.

This is just a small part of the whole. All in all, [Obama’s nuclear weapons plans and programs](#) are expected to cost [at least \\$1 trillion over the next 30 years](#). Nobody knows for sure where this money will come from.

This huge “self-licking ice cream cone” was ordered up by an unholy alliance between neoconservatives (in Congress and embedded in the Administration), a weak White House and captive DOE, the nuclear weapons lobby (including, especially, the privatized nuclear labs), and our craven, pork-barrel politicians.

It sounds crazy, or criminal. It is both. These unnecessary “investments” are not about “deterrence” at all. Rather they are part of a plan to “break” Russia, as Henry Kissinger recently [described](#) our policy, while further militarizing our country, turning it rightward politically, and undermining social and environmental commitments.

It is our job to instead break these plans and the policies behind them. We can do that. We have done it many times. But we need your help, now more than ever. We greatly depend on individual, private donors.

We have not described all our programs and [personnel](#) in this brief appeal, either what we have recently done or what we [hope to do](#) in 2016. Please visit our [web site](#), or just [ask!](#) Peruse our [bulletins](#), local [letters](#), and [work products](#) (also [here](#)); see our press coverage ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) and a few notable [endorsements](#). It is a very hopeful time, on nuclear issues as well as many others – but only if we act with faith and élan.

You 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](#). You can ask [Positive Energy](#) to [install a photovoltaic system](#) at your home or business; when the project is complete they will give the Study Group \$500. *If you are already a donor please considering being an ambassador for us.* The Study Group is a 501(c)(3) organization; all do nations are fully tax deductible.

Sincerely,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group community