May 12, 2020

Santa Fe Midtown Project virtual meeting today 5-7 pm; the City will take questions for possible use if sent pronto; background

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Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

Good morning. We hope everybody is well and happy, despite the overall situation. Please stay safe.

We've been quite busy in the office, mostly on projects with national and international audiences; there's been little to add to our previous letters. We will make some of that work available before long.

So busy in fact that were it not for today's editorial in the New Mexican we would have forgotten about today's virtual meeting with the new Midtown developer, which will apparently be live today from 5 to 7 pm on the City's YouTube channel.

It is ludicrously late but if you want to send questions to the City by 1:00 pm, send them to info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com. Sorry about that.

I have taken the liberty of pasting some recent articles below in their entirety by way of background.

We have many concerns about Midtown but our primary one has to do with the possible role of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and its federal parent the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) in this development, either directly or through some of the educational institutions mentioned below.

Especially in trying economic times developers may seek an anchor commercial tenant that could also bring "market-rate" residential customers. Some think LANL could be that.

From documents obtained from the City we know there have been private meetings between LANL, NNSA, Sandia National Laboratory, and other major corporate actors and developers with Mayor Webber and others regarding projects of mutual interest, at Midtown and elsewhere -- off NM599, specifically.

This "LANL overflow" is all about the truly massive effort to prepare LANL for a large pit production mission involving about 4,000 people, with 24/7 operations. I will spare you new details about this for now.

There are starting to be fresh calls for new national security priorities, a constant refrain from us for the past 31 years. This is excellent; it is a fertile time. But they must be concrete. Here in New Mexico we have a superior way to make those visions real.

More soon, thank you for your attention,

Greg Mello

https://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/editorials/speak-up-about-midtown-campus-plan/article_7a89b3ae-93ba-11ea-a65c-ff16ddba007.html

Speak up about midtown campus plan

The New Mexican, May 11, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

For all the residents of Santa Fe who have expressed interest in the redevelopment of the midtown campus — whether how a master developer was chosen or what will be built at the site, the time to pay attention for the future is now.

On Tuesday, May 12, a virtual meeting to hear from the development team is scheduled from 5 to 7 p.m. on the city of Santa Fe's YouTube channel.
Questions can be submitted before the meeting by 1 p.m., using the address info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com.

So don't be shy. Ask away.

Last week, the City Council voted 7-2 to affirm the choice of KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners, a somewhat controversial choice for two reasons. First, locals tend to worry about out-of-state developers — and this is a Texas group, no less!

Second, critics — we have been among them — were concerned the process in choosing the master developer was overly secretive. (In fact, a complaint has been filed with the Attorney General’s office by a group of citizens unhappy with the process; we'll be watching to see what happens there.)

For now, a choice has been made. It's important that both individuals and groups take part in what happens next. We'd encourage people to watch the presentation — it offers encouragement about possibilities for this chunk of real estate. (Watch the video at https://bit.ly/2zqp8vp.)

All that exists right now is potential. That's why public engagement matters. The city has signed an exclusive negotiation agreement with a master developer; over the next months will come the creation of a development plan.

There's a hint of possibilities in initial presentations from KDC and the contributions of its many local partners. This will be a lengthy process with many opportunities for people to weigh in.

Partners working with the developers are all Santa Fe-based, including some of the more respected nonprofits in town. They are invested in the idea of making the midtown area a place to live, work and play. That partners well with what residents have said they want — using the 64-acre site as a place for housing, social services, education, arts and entertainment, and other activities that serve the public.

Residents have made it clear they want a midtown center that helps revive nearby neighborhoods without gentrifying the area to the point that people are forced out. The proposed development as outlined focuses on mixed-income affordable housing, multimedia and film studio expansion, along with areas for recreation and space for arts and cultural events. All were listed as important to residents who assisted with the initial discussions.

In the proposal being developed, the University of New Mexico and Santa Fe Community College are in the mix to ensure higher education will continue at the site. There is emphasis on the health of the community, with YouthWorks and Christus St. Vincent also signed on as partners. Other collaborators include Homewise, Yes Housing, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and a host of local organizations, companies and businesses.

Christus CEO Lillian Montoya said in a video introducing the proposal, "If you start with the right people and the right project, you come out of the gate really fast." She said Christus envisions offering primary care services, partnering with educational institutions to offer training and working with Homewise to provide homebuying and rental opportunities for its employees.

Given the lagging economic climate because of the plummeting price of oil and business shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the prospect of developing a chunk of Santa Fe into a center that offers jobs, education and housing is one our city can't afford to get wrong.

For that to happen, residents must get involved now — not in a year or two after decisions are set in stone. This is no time to sit on the sidelines.


Eight people infected with COVID-19 among those housed at midtown campus

By Daniel J. Chacón dchacon@sfnewmexican.com May 11, 2020 Updated 4 hrs ago

The city of Santa Fe worked relentlessly in March to transform what was then a mostly vacant midtown campus into an emergency shelter, primarily to try to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus among the homeless.

So far, the plan has worked, and now the campus is serving as a backup for hospitals and other facilities and providing housing for eight people who were recently transferred there after testing positive for COVID-19.

"The shelter has been operating so well that I think Christus [St. Vincent Regional Medical Center] and [the New Mexico Department of Health] have been looking for a way to use it as a fallback resource," Mayor Alan Webber said Monday during a virtual news conference.

"As the other parts of the caring network need a relief valve, that space is now a relief valve," he added.

The campus is currently housing 43 people.

The city’s public works director, Regina Wheeler, who has been serving as Santa Fe’s emergency operations incident commander for nearly two
months, said none of the eight people infected with the contagious disease was admitted under the original process established by the city.

“You know how we’re taking homeless people that are screened from the shelters and are at risk on the streets and testing them? All the people that we’ve gotten that way are negative,” she said. “The way that I get my COVID positives are from the Department of Health or Buffalo Thunder or Christus St. Vincent. They have a COVID-positive person, and they seek some place to shelter them.”

Wheeler said people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are being housed at the shelter for various reasons.

“A big one is that Buffalo Thunder isn’t allowing oxygen in the rooms,” she said, referring to the casino and resort north of Santa Fe that is serving as a self-isolation site for New Mexico tribal members.

Webber called the emergency shelter at the old College of Santa Fe campus on St. Michael’s Drive “a national example of a remarkable achievement.”

While the city established the emergency shelter primarily for homeless people as it tried to alleviate overcrowding at homeless shelters, which one official called a “potential tinderbox” for the spread of the virus, it always envisioned housing other groups of people there, including health care workers who test positive for the coronavirus and might need a place to stay and be monitored medically.

But most of the residents up to this point have been homeless people.

“Starting Tuesday, [Albuquerque] Health Care for the Homeless will be running a clinic for the people there,” Webber said.

Webber said the emergency shelter is safe to visit, though he didn’t say whether he has been on the campus himself.

“There is a way to wear a mask and gloves and go check it out,” he said.

The emergency shelter is providing other benefits to homeless people in Santa Fe besides a roof over their heads and what the mayor said were “three square meals a day.”

“People are actually getting their lives together because they finally have a safe place to live and wraparound services,” Webber said.

The midtown campus, which the city is eyeing for redevelopment, started housing people on a temporary and emergency basis March 28.


Master developer for midtown campus builds entirely local team

By Teya Vitu tvitu@sfnnewmexican.com May 11, 2020 Updated 4 hrs ago

The firm negotiating with the city of Santa Fe to redevelop the midtown campus is based in Dallas, but there’s New Mexico flavor galore.

And in fact, it may have been a loose-knit but heavily local push that reeled in KDC Real Estate Development & Investment/Cienda Partners to take on the massive project in an alliance that will include 17 different New Mexico partners.

The City Council last week selected the Texas firm as master developer of the city-owned, 64-acre property on St. Michael’s Drive. The city and KDC/Cienda will now enter into exclusive negotiations that could last as long as 16 months, followed by at least 10 years of construction.

After the council vote May 4, the firm outlined its vision for the onetime college campus, a proposal that includes housing, health care, education, film production and other components.

“I would say our vision is 90 percent from our” Santa Fe team, said Bill Guthrey, KDC’s senior vice president of land development. “We help each of our partners realize their vision.”

Some of the team members hoping for a significant presence on the property are the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College and the Higher Education Center; Santa Fe youth job-training and advocacy group YouthWorks; Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center; Santa Fe-based housing nonprofit Homewise; Albuquerque nonprofit Yes Housing; and Pacifica Ventures, a film production firm that plans to add four to six sound studios on the campus.

Late last summer, a group of Santa Fe organizations, including many working on the project now, was searching for a potential master developer to lead their development proposal before submissions were due to the city in October.

Actor-director Justin Golding and Sage Morris-Greene, general manager of the Santa Fe business brokerage Sam Goldenberg & Associate, brought the team together, and Jay Grab, an associate broker at Phase One Realty, called a commercial broker friend in Dallas seeking
suggestions for a firm with the ability to make the project happen.

The friend suggested KDC.

“When we talked to [KDC], they got very excited,” Grab said. “They were out here within two days to take a look at the site. … We needed to find someone who had the capability to pull off a project of this magnitude in this city.”

Other members of the team reached out to Cienda Partners, said James Feild, senior vice president of Cienda. “We were getting calls,” he said.

KDC and Cienda quickly became 50/50 partners.

Developers rarely see ready-made teams approach them at the beginning, Guthrey and Feild said.

“It’s extremely unique,” Guthrey said. “It’s what made it so compelling. To start with medical, education, film studios and a range of housing is remarkable. Each of the partners has a very specific idea from the outset what their requirements are. We have pieces and parts and are able to drop them into a conceptual plan.”

KDC and Cienda Partners both have prior connections in Santa Fe.

Cienda Partners owns La Fonda on the Plaza, where it has spent more than $14 million in renovations since 2014. It also owned, remodeled and sold the El Rey Court to a partner and is the developer of Las Campanas.

Guthrey, KDC’s point man for the midtown campus, owns a home in Santa Fe, grew up in El Paso, and his father grew up in Silver City and graduated from UNM.

At this stage, Feild said, Cienda is scoping out which buildings will remain on the midtown campus. It also is focusing on housing development and the public-private partnership with the city.

KDC is taking charge of infrastructure and commercial development.

“My goal is to get the film school up and running as fast as possible,” in collaboration with UNM, SFCC and the Higher Education Center, Feild said. “… We have infrastructure that is 60 years old.”

Affordable housing could be an early player, too.

“We don’t really know what the mix needs to be, but we got the clear message we need affordable housing,” Feild said. “Our approach is to work with the community. What and how much does the mix need to be? … There’s not a magic bullet.”

He added, “We want a cool place where you can minimize the car. We want a combination of local and regional productions at the [Greer] Garson Theater. We want to make sure to broaden out the Fogelson Library to the public library system. We want to turn that into a state-of-the-art library.

“I don’t know where I’m going with this,” he added, “but the arts have got to be important.”

“We’re talking about something that has longevity and resilience,” Guthrey said. “That’s what everybody is signing into: the bigger picture.”

KDC/Cienda is getting started on the project in an uncertain time, as the economic effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic take aim at a range of businesses.

“These are unprecedented times,” Guthrey said. “We are going into this with eyes wide open.”

Especially with the pandemic-related shutdown and its economic toll, Feild said, “everything is up in the air” in terms of the projected costs for the redevelopment and the time line for construction.

“What I can say is we are looking at this as a career capper for most of us,” he said. “I think it’s a 10- to 15-year build-out. Several hundred million dollars is not out of the question.”

The KDC/Cienda Partners team

Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners assembled an all-New Mexico team to build its midtown campus proposal

• University of New Mexico

• Santa Fe Community College
Meet the developer

KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners and the city of Santa Fe are gathering public input on plans for redevelopment of the midtown campus, a city-owned former college campus on St. Michael's Drive.

The process continues with a Meet the Developer public virtual session from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday on the city's YouTube channel. The public is invited to submit questions through 1 p.m. Tuesday to the development team at info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com.


Santa Fe taps Dallas developer for midtown campus

By Teya Vitu tvitu@sfnewmexican.com May 4, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

The cat is finally out of the bag for the city of Santa Fe's midtown campus.

Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners — the presumptive master developer of the 64-acre property on St. Michael's Drive following a City Council vote late Monday — outlined its plan to build affordable housing, add numerous film studios and collaborate with the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College, YouthWorks and Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center on what is expected to be a yearslong project at the site.

The City Council and Mayor Alan Webber voted 7-2 during a special meeting Monday to enter into an exclusive negotiation agreement with the firm after three hours of fiery debate.

Several councilors expressed concern they didn't have adequate time to review the agreement with KDC/Cienda before casting a vote and that the selection process for the master developer lacked public involvement. Some said they received dozens of comments and questions from the public just an hour before the meeting and wanted to address them before making the deal official.

Councilors JoAnne Vigil Coppler and Renee Villarreal voted against the agreement.

"I am very disillusioned with the lack of public input," Vigil Coppler said. "... The public has been terribly left out. I didn't know we had 70 questions [from the public] because we just got them. This is a major decision. This whole thing seems to be very rushed."
Councilor Michael Garcia approved the agreement but said he thought the process established by Webber and the city's contracted midtown campus manager, Daniel Hernandez, to select a master developer was shrouded in secrecy.

"We got a lot of questions submitted to us," Garcia said. "I think we should answer those questions prior to a vote."

Villarreal agreed. "These are questions I would have liked to hear," she said. "The fact we received these an hour before the meeting — it’s hard to sift through them."

Vigil Coppler also noted councilors did not get copies of the agreement until the night before the special meeting.

The agreement between the city and KDC/Cienda calls for a 12-month negotiation period with a built-in, four-month extension due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Either party can terminate negotiations after six months if they decide there is no likelihood of reaching a disposition and development agreement for the former college campus.

Neither KDC/Cienda nor the city had given any indication until Monday what the Dallas team intended for the midtown campus. Officials had cited the competitive sealed procurement process.

The firm introduced its Santa Fe-based team with a 20-minute video laying out the basic vision.

Homewise, a major developer of affordable housing in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, would coordinate the housing component of the redevelopment.

Mike Loftin, CEO of the nonprofit Homewise, said affordable housing would play a key role in the project — but not the only role.

"We will have a housing component that addresses the whole spectrum from affordable to high end and everything in between," Loftin said, adding there would be ownership opportunities and rentals, along with housing incorporated into mixed-use structures.

Coppler Vigil was critical of the variety of housing proposed.

"We need affordable housing," she said. "I will not support any measure for market housing. That defeats the whole purpose."

Garson Studios, a filmmaking venue on the campus, would be significantly expanded with four to six more sound studios developed by Pacifica Ventures. The firm built and operated Albuquerque Studios until 2018, when it sold the property to Netflix.

Christus St. Vincent plans to add a primary care clinic at the campus for residents of the community and the surrounding neighborhoods, CEO Lillian Montoya said in the video.

YouthWorks, a local nonprofit that offers job training, counseling and other support services for young people, would have a community kitchen on the campus and help with workforce development, CEO Melynn Schuyler said.

Bill Guthrey, KDC's senior vice president of land development, said the company sought to partner with the largest educational institutions, the largest affordable housing provider and the largest health care provider in Santa Fe.

While KDC is based in Dallas, Guthrey said he has a second home in Santa Fe and grew up in El Paso. His father was from Silver City, he said.

Cienda Partners owns La Fonda on the Plaza.

The Monday presentation by KDC/Cienda was the first of several planned "Meet the Developer" sessions.

The first of four more virtual sessions is scheduled May 12. Each session will address a specific set of topics: housing and housing affordability; transportation and connectivity; job creation, career training and job placement; sustainable sites and green building; master planning and urban design.

The nonprofit social justice organization Chainbreaker Collective monitored Monday’s meeting on YouTube.

"Chainbreaker has been conducting community engagement around this issue since the beginning," Director Tomás Rivera said. "We are looking forward to sharing our experience, expertise and working with the city as they honor the commitments they made tonight to ensure meaningful community engagement."
Santa Fe residents file complaint, threaten suit over midtown campus project secrecy

By Danielle Prokop dprokop@sfnm.com May 4, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

A group of Santa Fe residents have filed a complaint with the New Mexico Attorney General’s Office accusing the city of violating the state’s open meetings law in its process of selecting a developer for the midtown campus.

“We didn’t need to see names, we didn’t need to see bottom lines,” retired schoolteacher María Bautista said in an interview Monday. “We wanted to see ideas, and they locked us out.”

Bautista announced the complaint in a Facebook post Monday, hours before the City Council was set to take a big step forward in what is expected to be a yearslong, massive redevelopment of the city-owned property on St. Michael’s Drive.

In a virtual public meeting Monday evening that drew comments from dozens of people, the council voted to hire Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners as the master developer of the former college.

Bautista said she filed the complaint in a joint effort with Miguel Chavez, a former city councilor and county commissioner; former employees of the shuttered college; and other residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

She and her attorney, A. Blair Dunn, also expect to file a lawsuit against the city, asking a judge to order officials to roll back any actions on the project until they gather more public input on its scope and developer, she said.

Matt Baca, a spokesman for Attorney General Hector Balderas, confirmed the office had received the complaint.

Bautista sent an email to the city last week expressing her concerns.

City Attorney Erin McSherry responded, saying the City Council has taken no votes behind closed doors and that all discussions on the midtown project followed the open meetings law.

“Procurement Code requires that discussion of competitive sealed proposals, such as those submitted regarding the Midtown Property, occur during executive session, so that other competing proposers do not have access to their competition’s proposal during the negotiation process,” McSherry wrote.

Bautista still believes some decisions were made in closed-door meetings.

She noted the city had narrowed its list of possible developers to two finalists from 21 contenders between November and Monday.

“What they’ve missed is they can’t have these closed-door meetings to whittle down the developers,” Dunn said.

Webber said in teleconference Monday he was unaware a complaint had been filed with the Attorney General’s Office.

But Webber defended the selection process for the master developer when asked if he thought there was enough community engagement to meet the public’s expectations. He acknowledged there was “enormous appetite for engagement” in what he called a landmark, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“I think that the process the city embarked on, which is essentially an RFP process — a request for proposal process — is not a process that is involving public participation,” he said.

“It’s not a political process any more than any other contract the city lets is a political process.”


Redevelopment of Santa Fe’s Midtown site moves ahead
By Monica Roman Gagnier / Journal staff writer
Published: Monday, May 4th, 2020 at 11:09pm
Updated: Tuesday, May 5th, 2020 at 12:05am

The Santa Fe City Council approved a one-year exclusive negotiating agreement with KDC Real Estate Development and Investments/Cienda Partners to develop the 64-acre Midtown property during a special meeting on Monday. This photo from September shows weeds growing in the sidewalk outside Lasalle Hall on the campus that once housed the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.
The city of Santa Fe governing body, which includes Mayor Alan Webber and the eight-member city council, voted Monday to enter a one-year contract with a master developer for the city-owned Midtown site, the former home of the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

Under the terms of the exclusive negotiating agreement, KDC Real Estate Development and Investments/Cienda Partners’ plans and local partnerships will be made public. As the city has sought to find a master developer for the 64-acre property off St. Michael’s Drive, it has faced criticism for keeping private the responses to its request for expressions of interest in the site.

The only two opposing votes to the one-year “get to know you” deal came from city councilors Renee Villareal and JoAnne Vigil Coppler. Both expressed concern that public input had not been sufficient during the search for a master developer.

“I want the public to know we don’t know hardly more than they do,” said Vigil Coppler during the special meeting, which took place via the Zoom digital platform because of restrictions against public gatherings during the coronavirus crisis. “Everything has been so confidential. This whole thing bothers me to no end, but here we are.”

The Midtown site is in District 4, which Vigil Coppler represents.

After the vote, the principals of KDC and Cienda showed a video that introduced the council and the public to its local partners. Under the mixed-use development envisioned, Christus St. Vincent, Homewise, Santa Fe Community College, the University of New Mexico and Pacifica Ventures, the former owner of Albuquerque Studios, will be tenants or possibly buyers of parcels on the site.

Under the ambitious plan, the Midtown campus would have health care facilities from Christus that would be used to train surgical technicians through a program at SFCC. Homewise would work to create housing for both rental and lease at a variety of price points. SFCC would partner with UNM to create degree programs to train students for digital and film careers.

The opportunity to revitalize the campus in the heart of the city was hailed by Mayor Webber as “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

The big question mark is coronavirus, which could prevent surveys and inspections from taking place and even limit the ability of local residents to comment on the proposal. The fallout from the virus could also hurt business.

The contract calls for a four-month extension and could be extended further if shutdowns prevent work from occurring, said City Attorney Erin McSherry.

The presence of SFCC and UNM at the Midtown site would continue the tradition of education on the campus that dates back to 1859, when St. Michael’s College, later known as the College of Santa Fe, was founded. After the school ran into financial trouble, the city of Santa Fe bought the campus in 2009 in conjunction with the state of New Mexico and Laureate Education.

The school reopened as the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, but closed in May 2018, also because of financial woes.

Councilor Signe Lindell reminded some of her colleagues who were advocating a go-slow approach that the empty facility is a burden on city finances, which have taken a hit due to the loss of tourism.

“”In the last six weeks, we have witnessed a worldwide economic meltdown. This property costs between $6,000 and $8,000 a day. That's a lot of money folks. Let's make this happen as quickly as possible,” she said prior to the vote.

The city will hold a virtual meeting on Tuesday, May 12, to solicit questions and comments from the public about its new relationship with the master developer.
April 7, 2020

If you don't want plutonium pit production you will need to speak up. We provide a powerful way.

Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

Right now, liberals and progressives in New Mexico are effectively "on record" as supporting a new Rocky Flats Plant for producing plutonium warhead cores ("pits") near Santa Fe.

This mission involves:

- the transport of tons of plutonium to and from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL);
- the processing and storage of plutonium;
- processing, storage, transportation, and disposal of nuclear and chemical wastes;
- 24/7 operations;
- commuting and housing to support 4,000 pit-related workers (LANL's figure, not ours);
- construction of support infrastructure; and
- before long, construction of dedicated new production facilities.

How so? Why are liberals and progressives "on record" supporting this?

Because this factory is very much a New Mexico Democratic Party priority. Senators Heinrich and Udall have very actively supported this factory, as did our Governor when she was a congresswoman, as has Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, now a senatorial candidate.

Unless liberals and progressives find a way to effectively and publicly register their disagreement on this issue, they are effectively silent. That silence is not just taken as political assent. It is political assent.

A LANL pit factory was not a Trump Administration priority until the New Mexico congressional delegation made it one.

Not resting on their laurels, both New Mexico senators want LANL to be the ONLY pit factory. They want the entire mission for LANL, now and always.

How big of a factory? Just a "little" one, in the existing plutonium facility?

Here's the first part of your answer: Last year, Senator Heinrich successfully co-sponsored an amendment with Senator Lindsay Graham to make the Trump Administration's pit requirement -- to be producing at least 80 "war reserve" pits per year by 2030 -- a law.

Small? No.

Here's the second part of the answer: LANL's old, smallish, built-for-R&D, unsafe plutonium facility, built on a narrow, soft mesa with high seismic risk, won't support 24/7 production for long -- if ever. All parties know that. An industrial pit mission requires industrial facilities. When the political dust settles, LANL would need a dedicated new production facility for this mission. Almost every task which was done at the Rocky Flats Plant would also have to be done at LANL. Tasks require people and buildings -- a lot of them. This is not a "small" mission. It's a huge, transformative mission not just for LANL but for the region.

Some of you helped us fight off this mission for four decades. We have won again and again. But now there is mostly silence.

Just 15 years ago, senators Domenici and Bingaman, Governor Richardson, and Congressman Udall all agreed that LANL should not do this. Now our entire congressional delegation, and as far as we know the Democratic Governor, want LANL to have this mission.

The silence is deafening.
What we would like you to do

In the present pandemic all of us are encountering new pressures of many kinds, even as we seek practical political solutions while largely physically isolated.

Right now, the Los Alamos Study Group is responding to these conditions and others -- including the quite specific nuclear assault on northern New Mexico described above -- with the Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production.

This Call is a manifesto and rallying point for collective engagement by businesses, organizations and churches. It is not a petition.

Your role is crucial! We need your help to recruit business and organizational endorsers. This can be fairly easily done, without physical proximity. (We don't like the term "social distancing." A better watchword is: "Physical separation, social unity.")

If we want new priorities for New Mexico, there is no better time to ask for them than right now.

Here's how to do it:

1. Read the Call and supporting short background (on the same page).
2. Jot down a short list of businesses and organizations you think might endorse the Call. This is your starting call and email list.
3. Compose a short script you can use if you have to leave a phone message. Here's an example:

   Hello my name is ________________________.

   I am calling to encourage [business or organization name] to endorse the Los Alamos Study Group's "Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production." It's posted at lasg.org in the red "Take Action" box, right at the top of the home page.

   It is a critically important time to express our community's resolve in the face of the Los Alamos Lab's proposed expansion, primarily for production of plutonium warhead cores ("pits").

   As you may know there's also a possible expansion of LANL into the City of Santa Fe, indirectly supporting pit production.

   The Study Group currently has two resolutions opposing these actions before Santa Fe's City Council.

   If opposing pit production is something you support, please visit our website (lasg.org) and fill out the business endorsement form online.

   It takes just a minute. With enough businesses and organizations, it will definitely make an impact. Don't forget to hit the final "Submit" button! (They will get a confirmatory email.)

   Thank you!

4. Keep a record of who you have called and their responses. Tell us how you are doing by phone (505-265-1200) or email. Contact us if you have questions or problems!
5. Ask interested businesses and organizations you speak to if they would like to help with outreach for this Call.
6. We will soon post a list of endorsing businesses and organizations. Your contacts will be able to see those too.
7. Interested businesses and organizations can take further actions right now. They can:

   • Write letters to editors (LTEs) for different security priorities, opposing pit production, opposing LANL in Midtown, etc. You can draw talking points from our letters and bulletins. This primer may be helpful. An LTE campaign can be very, very powerful and is "easy" to do during a pandemic -- as easy as anything is right now.

   • Write letters to Santa Fe city councilors asking them to introduce and endorse our two city council resolutions. One calls for a LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS); the other opposes any LANL presence in the Santa Fe Midtown project and prohibits City contracts with nuclear weapons agencies and prime contractors.

In 1994, we brought together 60 organizations and tribes to ask for a LANL SWEIS. We got one, with extra hearings and eventually, a Record of Decision limiting LANL pit production to a maximum of 20 pits per year, which LANL has never come close to.

In 2005, hundreds of businesses, organizations, and churches joined the Call for Nuclear Disarmament, upon which the current Call is based. Not coincidentally, in 2008 the 20 pit per year limit was reiterated by DOE. Public, local government, and tribal engagement on these issues has created a three-decade social contract that has limited pit production at LANL, which has averaged only about 1 pit per year. We have explained many times why pit production has not been, and is not now, "necessary" in any sense. It is a crucial foundation for a vast nuclear arms enterprise that embodies inverted national security priorities.

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you.

Greg, Trish, Michelle, and Lydia, for the Study Group
March 26, 2020

Permalink for this letter (give us a few minutes). **PLEASE FORWARD!** Other Letters

Home page; Press Releases; Bulletins;

To subscribe to our Activist Leaders listserv (formerly "Friends") send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.

To subscribe to our Main listserve (less content, less frequent) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.

Our blog (makeover in progress): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ, Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

A wakeup call for new priorities; Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production; Santa Fe Midtown -- calls and letters needed ASAP

Suggested actions:

1. **Call for Sanity:** help us recruit businesses, organizations, and religious communities.
2. As discussed below, write or call Santa Fe city councilors, if you live there, and recruit others to do so.
3. Write letters to editors; they are effective.
4. Please help us recruit other activist leaders; they can subscribe to this list by sending a blank email here.

Dear New Mexico activist leaders --

1. **Our country desperately needs new, humane priorities. Now is the time to push for them.**

The COVID-19 (CV) pandemic has created difficulties, distractions, and dangers for all of us.

There are also opportunities. Jean Nichols of Penasco rightly reminds us we can and should treat COVID-19 as a **wakeup call**.

This pandemic is re-making our world, more than any of us can fully grasp.

Watching part of last night's Santa Fe City Council on-line, we had the distinct impression that City leaders are in denial about the gravity of the present crisis. After the pandemic -- and when will that be? -- will the economic and social life of the state and City return to some approximation of "business as usual?"

In a word, no.

CV cases and deaths in the US are still rising exponentially, doubling every 2-3 days (see the straight line on a logarithmic scale). Total US cases have surpassed all other countries. Cases and deaths worldwide are rising exponentially, with horrific spread into crowded refugee camps and slums yet to come. There are likely to be life-threatening economic consequences to come for much of the world. We pray that the toll of death and destruction is as low as possible, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at a minimum, millions of individual people -- real people with families and communities and aspirations and brave hearts -- will die.

How many will die in our own country, state, and city depends on the actions we collectively take. In this regard, we felt we had to write the Governor about what we thought would be a normative framework for COVID-19 epidemiological response: test widely, trace thoroughly, isolate cases and clusters, and aim at preventing every case, not "flattening the curve." You will see a very good explanation of that policy in Tomas Pueyo's article here. If you follow the link provided to an interactive epidemic model you can experiment with different policies.

The medical aspects of CV are just the beginning of the changes at hand. The US financial and economic system is being deeply challenged, as it is in almost every country at this point. Predictions of the depth and duration of the present US economic decline vary. We think our economy was very sick to begin with, and much of the value being destroyed was notional in the first place. It is not coming back.

As is obvious to all, the current collapse of demand for oil is crushing shale producers, which on average made no net money anyway. Cash was certainly extracted (entering the New Mexico economy, sure enough) but on balance it was mostly borrowed by the upstream producers. Prices are now too long, and will be low too long, to drill and complete hundreds of new wells that will lose money. Shale production will peak and decline. Worldwide, existing fields deplete about 6% per year. US shale oil was tipping the balance toward net growth. Even before CV, world production of crude oil peaked in late 2018. That peak is now going to be permanent.

Why is this important? Because even though we can "print" notional money, it take actual energy to produce real goods and services. A fairly constant fraction of the energy needed has to be in the form of oil. There are no immediate substitutes. Transportation, mining, farming all depend
Batteries won't cut it even if we had them. The energy density is too low.

The upshot is the prosperity, which we might crudely define as goods and services per capita, is going to decline, even if a CV cure is found tomorrow.

Basically CV has pricked the balloon of our false prosperity. It has kicked us off the knife-edge we were on.

Will carefree travelers roam the world, thronging into crowded venues in Santa Fe like they used to do? It is fairly doubtful. When the dust settles -- and we have no idea when that will be or whether the people formerly known by our names will be in that dust -- will tourism still be a bonanza for New Mexico? What about movies?

The point is, we are entering a brave new world -- at least, it had better be brave -- the values, narratives, and operating terms of which are being negotiated right now, with or without us.

As Bansky put it in a classic graffiti, "Sorry -- the lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock."

Will we have more disaster capitalism, or less? More military-industrial-intelligence domination, or less?

Joe Lauria:

"Nobody in their wildest dreams would have thought we would need tens of thousands of ventilators," Trump said. But the Pentagon's wildest dreams of 11 aircraft carriers, 65 attack submarines, 65 destroyers, 104 B-1 bombers, 744 B-52 bombers, 8,848 M1 Abrams tanks, 6,724 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and 1018 F-16 fighter jets have for years come true.

The U.S. can afford to build the greatest arsenal ever known to fight two major wars at once while scrambling to produce hospital gowns, surgical masks and hand sanitizer. All of America's mighty "defenses" could not defend the nation against the humblest of things put upon the earth.

The United States prepared for the wrong war.

A trillion dollars a year is spent on the military and nuclear weapons when America has no real armed enemies. Instead the U.S. is an enemy to nations that seek to impede its dominance by protecting their own sovereign interests.

There would be virtually no public support for this spending if the American people understood the U.S. as an offensive force. So the targets of its dominance must be portrayed at every turn as the menace. When Russia, for instance, defends its interests in Ukraine or on its borders against NATO troop deployments, the aggressive U.S. role is cloaked by government and the media, while the Russian response is branded a threat.

Nuclear weapons are a key enabler of US offensive forces and wars worldwide. They provide the ultimate threat that "deters" defense against our expeditionary forces. If "deterring" attack on the US itself by some "evil empire" were actually the objective, the US would have a small nuclear "monad" like the UK and France.

There are a lot of people in New Mexico, some of whom call themselves liberals or "progressives," who think Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is engaged in some kind of "nuclear deterrence" mission that keeps "America" safe. Earth to propaganda victims: wake up.

LANL has a new tag line: "Delivering science and technology to protect our nation and promote world stability." Wow. Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning, not an instruction manual.

Many liberals think the "jobs" that come from the world's most monstrous military machine are somehow "good" for New Mexico, despite 75 years of social and economic data otherwise. They see the hand of the labs -- the whip hand -- with a few dollars in it, but they don't see the other hand in our back pockets, looting the money that should have gone to community needs.

They think maybe "tech transfer" will produce "jobs" for Santa Feans at the Midtown Campus, even though that has never really happened to any significant extent before. As if the cost to our souls would be worth it in the first place.

2. The Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production

This Call is not a petition. It is a league of solidarity among business and civic leaders, which you (we hope) will help us bring to powerful life. Please help us recruit endorsers!

This Call is not for individuals. We encourage individuals to recruit businesses and organizations to join this Call.

After endorsing this Call, we hope businesses and organizations will make their voices heard by calling or writing elected officials and in other ways.

We want everyone -- individuals, businesses, organizations, churches -- to write letters to editors (LTEs) and guest editorials.

Nearly all our elected officials either support expanded nuclear weapons or are passive. They support federal priorities that fatten the nuclear-military-industrial-intelligence complex. They won't change until politically forced to do so.
We will post a list of endorsers when we have the first 100. Please help us reach this first target! These businesses and organizations are a good place to start.

3. Midtown: we need calls and letters to the Santa Fe City Council! Please!

Midtown is roaring forward despite the accelerating pandemic, associated financial and economic instability -- and the shift to virtual "public" meetings where public comments are taken (from the few who find out it is possible) but the City Council can't hear them because of technical problems.

From the New Mexican, 3/23/20:

The city also is making plans for when the public health crisis ends. Webber said planning for the redevelopment of the midtown campus is ongoing; he has asked his directors of economic development, public works, and parks and recreation to get brick-and-mortar projects ready for construction.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see a package come out of the Congress and signed by the president that is comparable to FDR's first 100 days," he said, referring to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. "If we're prepared with a lot of projects that can immediately be implemented, I think there will be a huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism to put America and put Santa Fe back to work." (emphasis added)

Setting aside the ridiculous comparison between what has just come from Congress and the New Deal, what we see in the case of Midtown is pure disaster capitalism. The City is not the developer here. The City's aim is to sell this property to a master developer or possible multiple developers, who will develop the property on a for-profit basis. It is these developers who would profit from the "package" Webber refers to, greased by the "huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism" (which has got to be better than negative optimism, right?).

The City's opacity on this huge, central development -- especially after promising a far more open process -- is really disturbing. Why is this being rammed through right now, in the middle of the worst pandemic since polio or the 1918 flu, at a time when the City Council cannot even properly meet and no real public meetings are even possible? And why is the City not ruling out selling or leasing all or part of this land to a nuclear weapons agency, after all the resolutions the City has passed condemning that mission?

Lydia Clark, LASG Outreach Director, spoke last night at the virtual City Council meeting, asking the City to consider using the Midtown Campus --

to create a centralized location for temporary services. It is spacious enough to create the necessary social distancing between people while conducting these services, and it has numerous buildings which can accommodate these needs now. This is the highest and best use of this property on a temporary basis to serve the community of Santa Fe during this crisis.

This means tabling and postponing any further development of Santa Fe Midtown Campus project until this crisis is over. Pursuing this development at this time is a careless use of time, energy, and funds by the City given the current economic instability of our city, state, country and the world. Please remember you work for us, not the developers. Use this property for the City of Santa Fe now.

Joni Arends of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) also spoke, making the notable point that much more transparency in this process was recently promised but not delivered:

We are requesting more transparency in the Midtown decision-making process. We cite from the November 16, 2019 Santa Fe New Mexican article, which reads:

"Starting in early January, Hernandez will have a series of public study sessions with the mayor and City Council discussing how candidates score under various criteria such as experience, financial approach, composition of the team, the development program, respecting adjacent neighbors and how their ideas fit into the city's theme for the property: "Live, work, learn, play."

Further in the same article:

"The evaluation and study session period may or may not lead to an exclusivity agreement with a master developer that is designed to lead toward a disposition and development agreement, possibly by the end of 2020, detailing terms of sale of the campus and phasing of the project, likely over several, even many years, Hernandez said."

We reference the January 14, 2020 Santa Fe New Mexican article, which reads:

"A new component of public input will come into play in February, March and April as the city seeks more specifics from the community of what is wanted at the midtown campus. Hernandez said city funding has been set aside to invite local organizations to engage the community in novel ways to get specific input that will be used as the city negotiations with the chosen developer."

Such public input events have not taken place, which is understandable given the current pandemic. Nevertheless, we have seen no notices in newspapers or in the Midtown Monday updates about such opportunities - nor any type of notice about postponement about such input events.
Instead of the promised public process that was to begin in January -- long before choosing a developer -- some of us got an email from the City saying

...the Governing Body will host a special hearing on April 13, 2020 to provide an opportunity for the public to meet the master developer that the Evaluation Committee is recommending for approval to enter into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement with the City.

In other words, the public is invited to a virtual reception to meet the master developer that has already been chosen. The City Council will have no comparative vote -- only up or down. The public will have no say at all in who develops this property. As for LANL at Midtown, all possibilities are still open.

Our proposed resolutions (no LANL at Midtown, support for a Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement [SWEIS]) have not been introduced by any councilor.

Greg, for the Study Group
March 25, 2020

Permalink for this letter (give us a few minutes). PLEASE FORWARD! Other Letters
Home page; Press Releases; Bulletins;
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Our blog (makeover in progress): Remember your Humanity, Twitter: @TrishABQ,
Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

If you are in Santa Fe, quick Midtown Project alert: if you want to speak against a LANL site in Santa Fe, call or email the City before 1 pm today

Dear friends in Santa Fe –

Apologies for the rather late notice, but this morning's Santa Fe New Mexican alerted us to an opportunity for public input to the City Council regarding any possible LANL role in the City's Midtown Project ("Santa Fe City Council to consider $500,000 for coronavirus response"). Tonight's agenda

includes three [I see only two] public hearings in which people who wish to testify or make "petitions from the floor" on a matter not on the agenda have been instructed to call the city at 505-955-6520 or send an email to publiccomment@santafenm.gov with their name and number before 1 p.m.

"We will call you during the meeting," the agenda states.

An employee in the City Clerk's Office said around 3 p.m. Tuesday that no one had yet requested to speak.

Comments about Midtown or LANL will need to be in "petitions from the floor" at or after 7:00 pm and if you wish to speak then you should put "petitions from the floor" in the subject line of your email.

Recent previous letters and our Midtown web page provide talking points.

Mayor Webber and the City are forging on as fast as possible on the Midtown project.

The city also is making plans for when the public health crisis ends. Webber said planning for the redevelopment of the midtown campus is ongoing; he has asked his directors of economic development, public works, and parks and recreation to get brick-and-mortar projects ready for construction.

"I wouldn’t be surprised to see a package come out of the Congress and signed by the president that is comparable to FDR’s first 100 days," he said, referring to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. "If we’re prepared with a lot of projects that can immediately be implemented, I think there will be a huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism to put America and put Santa Fe back to work."

After initially promising feedback from one or two city councilors regarding our proposed resolutions we have received no further replies to any inquiries. We believe the Council is being railroaded using a dubious interpretation of (voluntary) city procurement rules.

Obviously, you can write letters or make calls to City councilors, or write letters to editors, at any time!

Stay safe,

Greg, for the Study Group
We call for sanity, not nuclear production: please join and recruit others

Suggested actions:

1. **Call for Sanity**: help us recruit businesses, organizations, and religious communities.
2. As described in the previous letter write or call Santa Fe city councilors, if you live there, and recruit others to do so. (For more talking points see this letter from LASG Outreach Director Lydia Clark.)
3. **Write letters to editors; they are effective**.
4. Please help us recruit other activist leaders; they can subscribe to this list by sending a blank email here.

Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

In 2005 and 2006, hundreds of organizations and businesses in New Mexico, nearly a hundred national and international organizations, and thousands of individuals joined the "Call for Nuclear Disarmament," demanding "Disarmament, Not Production!" (this brochure went with the Call; it is dated now but is still a useful overview).

With this letter we are reopening that Call now in an updated form, to reflect current pressing issues. Here is the new version: "We call for sanity, not nuclear production."

Please help us recruit business, organizational, and religious community sign-ons!

Many of the signers of that earlier Call are still in business today and are likely to sign the new Call if asked. Will you be the one to ask them? Please do!

We will frequently update a published list of signatories so we can all avoid duplication of effort. We will put a link to that list near the top of the Call.

You may have noticed that we have changed the name of this list from "friends" to "activist leaders." We hope you will be exactly that -- as many of you already are. Anyone can help with this Call, in ways large or small. Every phone call will help.

We are not opening this Call to individuals. The role for individuals in this Call is to recruit businesses, organizations, and churches.

Recruiting sign-ons to this Call can be done from home, an important consideration given the COVID-19 public health emergency.

We need you because we don't have your contacts, and we are working long hours in other ways. Building local opposition to the "Plutopia" planned for us while demanding values compatible with civilization, democracy, and a sustainable environment is extremely important work that everyone can do. Your help could really make a difference; it did in 2005-2006 and it will again today.

LANL is now gearing up for round-the-clock pit production involving 2,000 additional production and support staff by 2025 at the latest, on top of what we are now hearing are 2,000 pit production-related staff already in place -- 4,000 pit-related staff in all. NNSA expects LANL pit production expansion and related construction to cost more than $6.5 billion over the next five years, and that is just the beginning.

How much political loyalty do you imagine $1.3 billion per year would buy in New Mexico? Do you want progressive values in our political leaders? A Green New Deal? Social justice? Climate protection? Economic and social renewal? Environmental protection? Forget all those, because a new not-so-little Rocky Flats is pretty much their policy and fiscal opposite.

Under this plan LANL would become a new, mid-sized "Rocky Flats Plant." Yet for its first three decades, Rocky Flats had fewer total staff than LANL expects to recruit and assign to pit production. So please don't think this is to be any kind of "mini" or "boutique" operation. And it's full scope
has not yet been revealed, because LANL simply cannot do this mission in its old existing facilities, or do so for long, or do so safely. Once the hook is set, we can expect even bigger plans than the ones we see now.

As you may read tomorrow in the newspaper, or soon, and contrary to prior statements to contractors, news media, citizens, and local governments, LANL has begun amassing the staff, facilities, and funding to produce not just 30 or more pits per year (ppy) by 2026, but also at least 80 ppy by 2030.

This story was first covered by the Nuclear Security and Deterrence Monitor ("Planned Los Alamos Pit Plant Could Surge to 80 a Year, NNSA Says," Mar 11, 2020) and the Aiken Standard NNSA study: Los Alamos National Lab could boost pit production to meet national needs, Mar 13, 2020).

We will tell this story -- a story of contractor greed, partisan pork-barrel competition, and neocon bloodlust -- in the next Bulletin. Our senators and Rep. Lujan are on the wrong side.

Finally, you may find these two articles inspiring and useful in the present emergency. I did.

- COVID-19: A Lesson Coronavirus is About to Teach the World (Jonathan Cook, 19 Mar 2020)
- COVID-19: The Mutilated World Is Moved by the Nurses and Doctors (Vijay Prashad, 19 Mar 2020, moving illustrations)

Greg, for the Study Group
March 17, 2020

PLEASE FORWARD! Other Letters

Home page; Press Releases; Bulletins;
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Our blog (makeover in progress!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.
Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

Action items, this letter:

- If in Santa Fe: urgently write or call your City councilor and any other councilors you may know (contact information). Messages:
  - "No LANL in Santa Fe." Use your words. (Background, talking points on the Midtown project)
  - Adopt a resolution preventing LANL or its parent NNSA from participating in the Midtown project (draft, submitted to Council Feb. 26)
  - Adopt a resolution requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL (draft, submitted to Council Feb. 26)
  - In your calls and letters, condemn industrial plutonium processing and manufacture of plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at LANL; reject nuclear pork-barrel and its specious "economic development" promises

- If you know anyone in Santa Fe, ask them to make these calls.

Dear New Mexico friends –

The action portion of this message is similar to our March 10 letter. Please see the action items above!

There is this added bit of news, received in an emailing from the City, which makes our request very urgent:

“The Midtown Redevelopment Evaluation Committee has made its recommendation for the most qualified developer to the Governing Body [City Council], who will meet with the developer in an executive session on March 25 to get clarification and ask questions before moving forward with an exclusivity agreement.”

The City is very close to formally selecting a developer. We do not know who this developer is, or what the roles our nuclear weapons agency (NNSA) and its LANL contractor (Triad, LLC) might play in his or her proposal, right now or in the future.

At this point, there is zero transparency as to what this project really is. The proposed components, "values," and "visions" comprise a large, vague smorgasbord from which many different outcomes could materialize. The process is entirely secret.

We remain very concerned about a possible NNSA or LANL presence in this project. LANL’s work is nearly all nuclear weapons related. It is a bomb lab and unless we can stop it, is about to be a production plant – perhaps soon a failed production plant. We do not want the City to enable nuclear weapons production.

Separately, we also do not believe it is wise to proceed with this project under current a) pandemic and b) incipient economic recession conditions.

We hope you will contact the City Council ASAP and convince your friends to do so as well, expressing these and/or related supporting views if you share them.

In two emails, Lydia wrote to the City Council,

In view of the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis facing the nation, the State of New Mexico, and the City of Santa Fe, we are requesting that no further work be conducted on the Santa Fe Midtown (Campus) District Project at this time, and until further notice.

The duty and highest priority of the City Council at this time is to provide the best prevention, protection, health care and welfare for the citizens of the City of Santa Fe.

We appreciate your concern, attention and actions on behalf of the City of Santa Fe, and ask a response to this request by March 20, 2020.
In prayers for safety, health, and peace for our City, our nation, and the world, we remain, and

The coronavirus pandemic is a national emergency that is already changing our society and economy, to a degree and in ways we do not yet understand. We cannot be sure that yesterday's financial guarantees will be solid tomorrow, or that any given developer or tenant will want to, or be able to, follow through on their commitments. The City's priorities may change. Federal priorities may change. To move forward with a huge project like this, with its very high development costs, in these very fragile times is not advisable. This is a big financial gamble for the City of Santa Fe at this time. The instability of the economy of the United States is weighing heavily in the minds of Americans. What convincing evidence of financial stability could any developer really provide?

We aren't asking to abandon the project, but to put it on hold until there is more clarity and this multifaceted emergency is past. It is going to get a lot worse before it gets better.

It is very important to try to reach councilors as soon as you can.

There is some really big news about LANL's proposed mission change: NNSA is building an 80 pit per year (ppy) plant at LANL, not a 30 ppy plant. Next time.

Thank you in advance!

Greg, for the Study Group
March 10, 2020

Permalink for this letter (give us a few minutes). PLEASE FORWARD! Other Letters
Home page; Press Releases; Bulletins;
To subscribe to our Activist Leaders listserv (formerly by invitation only) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here. To subscribe to our Main listserv (less content, less frequent) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here. Our blog (makeover in progress!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.
Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

Please write, call, and/or attend the Santa Fe City Council: "No LANL in Santa Fe"; more

Action items, this letter:

- **If in Santa Fe:**
  1. Please write or call the City Council (contact information). Messages:
     a. "No LANL in Santa Fe." Use your words. (Background, talking points on the Midtown project)
     b. Adopt a resolution preventing LANL or its parent NNSA from participating in the Midtown project (draft, submitted to Council Feb. 26)
     c. Adopt a resolution requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL (draft, submitted to Council Feb. 26)
     d. Condemn industrial plutonium processing and manufacture of plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at LANL; reject nuclear pork-barrel and its specious "economic development" promises
  2. Attend the first part of the evening session of the City Council meeting tomorrow, City Council chambers downtown (map), 7:00 pm, to make these points during petitions from the floor

Wherever you are: call us at 505-265-1200 and volunteer. We have work to do -- good work, for you, with us, if you want to help.

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
March 3, 2020

Permalink for this letter (give us a few minutes). PLEASE FORWARD! Other Letters

To subscribe to our Activist Leaders listserv (formerly by invitation only) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.

To subscribe to our Main listserv (less content, less frequent) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.

Our blog (makeover in progress!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.

Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

REMINDER: TOMORROW -- DEMONSTRATION (NOON), DISCUSSION AND WORKSHOP (6 PM)

- Emergency demonstration at Sen. Udall's office (map) in Santa Fe, noon Wednesday 3/4/20; when we are done speaking with Udall's people we will walk to Sen. Heinrich's office on Marcy Street
- Also tomorrow(3/4/20): discussion, action planning at 6 pm, First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe (map)
- Mark your calendars: update, discussion, in Albuquerque Wednesday March 11, place TBD
- Think locally, act locally, win locally and globally; avoid distraction and division

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, foresee 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.

*******

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
Dear New Mexico friends –

We have resorted to literally purple prose but we are not exaggerating. Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico truly are 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.

(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 **g 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
February 17, 2020

Permalink for this letter (soon). Please forward! Other Letters

To subscribe to our Friends listserv (formerly by invitation only) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.
To subscribe to our Main listserve (less content, less frequent) send a blank email here. To unsubscribe send a blank email here.

Our blog (makeover in progress!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.

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Our blog (makeover in progress!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.

Contribute. Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

This letter: LANL-wide EIS needed; Santa Fe doubles down on Midtown secrecy & possible weapons expansion; your help wanted

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
February 11, 2020

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
Do all Democrats and arms control groups want a pit factory at LANL? So far, yes. Don't be a propaganda victim!, 11 Feb 2020

"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's what our congressional delegation tells them, and far too many people are silent.

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

[^ back to top] 2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200
January 21, 2020

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Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

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?

It means that they want all parties to remain in the dark about the environmental impacts of a new Rocky-Flats-type plutonium warhead factory in Los Alamos, in their rush to offer New Mexico’s assistance to Trump’s nuclear weapons agenda.

It means they all want as much dirty warhead manufacturing as possible for Los Alamos, and they don't want anybody to know or discuss the
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 agree 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
you come -- so do!

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

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Our blog (makeover coming!): Remember your Humanity. Twitter: @TrishABQ.

Contribute, Volunteer. Contact us (Greg and Trish in our main office, Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office)

This letter: Reminder: please come and recruit your friends to the press conference and demonstration outside Santa Fe City Hall at noon on Wednesday Jan. 15 (map); more

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 for 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 transcendent 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 ar 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
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
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 time 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, 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