



# Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

Press Advisory 3/22/05

## Members of European Parliament and NGOs Express Concern Over U.S. Nuclear Buildup, Plan To Visit N.M. and Other Nuke Sites

Contact: Greg Mello at 505.265.1200 (cell 505.577.8563)

ALBUQUERQUE – Study Group Director Greg Mello returned this week from speaking in Brussels and London about current and proposed U.S. nuclear weapons initiatives.

His trip was sponsored by Jean Lambert, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from London, as well as by the British-American Security Information Council (BASIC), a prominent arms-control think-tank based in London and Washington. Mello traveled with his wife Trish; the two of them conducted videotaped interviews with MEPs and NGO leaders in addition to making presentations about U.S. nuclear programs and plans in the two cities.

Mello returns bearing a message of profound concern from many MEPs over the continuance, scale, and direction of the U.S. nuclear weapons program. Jean Lambert's remarks were typical of many members and NGOs: "Given the terrible state of the US nuclear weapons program, its extent and its continuation, the EU needs to learn from citizen's inspections [of nuclear facilities] – not least because there are US nuclear weapons situated in Europe."

Mello's message was simple: As he said in Brussels: "It is important that EU leaders become more involved in US nuclear weapons policy decisions which hurt efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The direction of US policy is quite dangerous, and the state of debate in America is utterly incapable of restraining these dangers. American nuclear policy needs a closer review by leaders in other democracies."

In response to Mello's appeal, the *EU Observer* reports that a cross-party delegation of the European Parliament is planning a visit to US nuclear weapons facilities later this year. (More likely, this trip would occur in 2006.)

Concern about U.S. policies is by no means confined to a small minority of MEPs. Just days prior to Mello's visit, the European Parliament (EP) passed an omnibus resolution on nuclear nonproliferation, the second in as many years to assert the crucial linkage between nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation – and to criticize U.S. nuclear policies (available at <http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk/> under "Nonproliferation Treaty"). Among its many provisions, the resolution –

- "Recalls that the EU and the NPT's ultimate objective is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and expects both declared and undeclared nuclear-weapon states to engage actively with this issue and to make further progress towards reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons."
- "Stresses its strong belief that nuclear disarmament activity will contribute significantly to international security and strategic stability and also reduce the risk of thefts of plutonium or highly enriched uranium by terrorists;"
- "Urges the EU to work hard for the adoption of the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention [a draft nuclear abolition treaty] that has already been deposited at the UN and which could provide a framework of steps within a legally binding disarmament process;"
- "Stresses the importance and urgency of signature and ratification, without delay, without conditions and in accordance with institutional processes of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)."

The government of the United States denies or rejects all these things.

Going further, the EP “reiterates its call for the USA to stop the development of new generations of battlefield nuclear weapons (bunkerbusters) and to sign and ratify the CTBT; and also calls on the USA to clarify the situation as regards the quantity and strategic objectives of its tactical nuclear arsenals stationed on European bases.”

Instead of supporting U.S. policies, the EP “Renews its support for the international mayors’ campaign – initiated by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – on nuclear disarmament, and recommends that the international community carefully consider the campaign’s ‘Project Vision 2020’, urging a scheduled programme of elimination of all nuclear weapons.”

Mello told the MEPs that “We cannot promote compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) while we break it every day by retaining huge stockpiles of weapons and working to make these weapons more usable militarily. The extent to which this is going on is something U.S. diplomats do not talk about or even know, and it affects all of us. The difficult negotiations with Iran are not helped by continued US violations of the NPT and the tendency of the US to denigrate multinational efforts in favor of unilateral expressions of power.”

This trip is an example of the heightened concern being felt worldwide over the fate of efforts to stem nuclear proliferation, both in the U.S. and elsewhere. Starting on May 1, states parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (188 countries) will meet in formal session in New York to review the operation of the Treaty. The U.S. has already signaled its intent to withdraw from the consensus disarmament commitments which salvaged the last such conference at the last minute in 2000, contributing to fears that this conference will be unsuccessful and that the treaty – which the U.S. State Department calls the “cornerstone” of efforts to control proliferation – will lose “buy-in.” The treaty establishes universal norms against the possession of nuclear weapons (instantly and forever for 183 countries, eventually for 5). The U.S. position, in a nutshell, is that the U.S. has disarmed enough, and has every right to threaten other nations with nuclear weapons and to use such weapons if needed under a variety of circumstances.

The Study Group will lead a citizens’ delegation to the NPT Review Conference in New York in early May, as it has done on prior occasions.

Digital video and audio clips of interviews, photographic stills, and portions of presentations are available upon request.

For clear and concise background on the NPT, see <http://www.basicint.org/npt/>.

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*