

**nuclear watch new mexico**

# watchdog

**news that bites back**

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## **2010 Year in Review**

**Nuclear Watch New Mexico wishes you the best Happy Holidays and a prosperous 2011!**

**2010** has been a fast-moving year in the movement to abolish nuclear weapons, a crusade made especially necessary in the post-9.11 world. This year ends in a crescendo, with a new arms control treaty finally making it to the Senate floor for ratification. At this writing a handful of Republicans are trying to run the clock out in this lame duck Congress to prevent ratification.

### **New START**

Last April, after months of negotiations, the presidents of the United States and Russia signed "New START" to replace the old Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that expired in December 2009. Since that time there has been no "boots-on-the ground" American inspectors in Russia to verify compliance within treaty limits. New START has broad endorsement from the highest levels of the U.S. military and former government officials (for example with the explicit support of a dozen former Secretaries of State and Defense).

The Obama administration is prioritizing treaty ratification during what's left of this lame duck Congress, for which "only" 9 Republican votes are needed to reach the required 2/3's majority of 67. We now have the needed positive votes if the same Senators vote as they did to allow the treaty to come to the floor. When the 112th Congress convenes in early January 14 Republican votes will be needed, which is probably a bridge too far.



This Treaty is relatively modest in terms of arms reductions, as it will cut deployed strategic (i.e., long range) weapons from around 2,200 to 1,550 each. Nevertheless, New START will help "reset" bilateral relations, which we think is absolutely essential given that together the U.S. and Russia possess more than 90% of all nuclear weapons. Further, we very much need Russian cooperation to meet proliferation challenges around the world, including Iran and North Korea.

Unfortunately, ratification of New START (which again is hardly a radical arms control treaty) has become a highly partisan issue, in part to block Obama from any major foreign policy victory. Today, our conventional military is stretched thin by two costly wars, the Pentagon has serious reservations about the usefulness of a vast nuclear arsenal, and the nation is struggling to control the national debt. The rest of the world is watching for signs that the U.S. and Russia are progressing in good faith on their Nonproliferation Treaty obligation to work towards nuclear disarmament. Yet, sadly, the internal political price to pay for this modest arms reduction agreement is the overwhelming rebuilding of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex with expanded capabilities for more nuclear weapons production. It is a damned if you do and damned if you don't decision to support New START ratification or not, when there is a directly related deal to throw yet more money at the already privileged nuclear weapons labs.

Internationally ratification is essential as a stepping stone toward: 1) subsequent treaties that would progressively institute deeper cuts to strategic weapons; 2) cut tactical (battlefield) weapons, which are particularly difficult to track and monitor and are more prone to theft and diversion; and 3) lead

to multilateral negotiations involving all nuclear powers toward the goal of abolition. Failure to ratify New START by either the U.S. or Russia should not be an option, as it could have very serious negative consequences, freezing progress in international arms control, unraveling global nonproliferation norms, and encouraging would-be proliferators by example. What is needed is greater international cooperation against nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East, East Asia, or anywhere else in the world. Ratification of New START is utterly necessary in order to forge present and future international cooperation against proliferation, along with a long-term commitment to honor the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty's obligation to disarm nuclear stockpiles. Ratification of New START is needed now to encourage an evolving global arms control process that leads to multilateral negotiations that compel all nuclear weapons powers to genuinely work towards abolition.

Some may understandably think it naïve to argue that nuclear weapons can be globally eliminated, that there will always be a cheater somewhere. We argue that historically we have been so close to global annihilation a number of times (and anytime is one time too many) that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only lasting and realistic solution. Their possession by any country is a threat to all. The abolition of nuclear weapons will be done because it must be done, especially in the post-9.11 world. A global nonproliferation regime must be encouraged and strengthened that aggressively deals with rogue proliferating nations such as North Korea (through non-military means) and eliminates nuclear bomb materials for foolproof prevention of illicit diversion.

Ratifying New START is the requisite first step toward reaching that goal. Hopefully it will be ratified by the time you read this. But whether it is or not, in 2011 Nuclear Watch New Mexico will be fighting against rising nuclear weapons budgets and planned expanded production capabilities.

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## Modernization

Ratification of New START comes with a big catch. Critics in the Senate, led primarily by Republican Whip Jon Kyl (R.-AZ), have raised unfounded claims that New START would constrain future ballistic missile defenses. More seriously, they are also claiming that multiyear funding commitments to “modernization” must be made as a *quid pro quo* for ratification.

Given the necessity to “buy” at least 9 pivotal Republican votes, Kyl has been in the catbird seat while making his demands. He successfully engineered an amendment to the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act that required the submission to the Senate of a “modernization plan” simultaneous with the submission of New START. The Obama Administration responded in spades, pledging in May **\$100 billion** for modernizing delivery systems (missiles, subs and bombers) and **\$80 billion** for modernizing the nuclear weapons stockpile and its supporting research and production complex. Moreover, for fiscal year 2011 Obama specifically gave a 14% raise to the nuclear weapons programs of the Department of Energy’s semi-autonomous National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). In contrast, funding levels for all non-military programs (for example education, environmental protection and transportation) are to be frozen for the next three years. Longer term, the Administration plans to increase funding for NNSA nuclear weapons programs from \$6.4 billion in 2010 to just under **\$10 billion** by 2020, nearly double the historic Cold War average. Still this did not satisfy Kyl et al, and in November the Obama Administration further pledged another \$4.5 billion dedicated to “modernizing” the nuclear weapons complex. (For more, please see budget graph on page 5, or [www.nukewatch.org](http://www.nukewatch.org)).

“Modernization” means expanded capabilities for more nuclear weapons production, certainly not needed at this point in our country’s history. In his now-famous April 2009 Prague speech President Obama declared a nuclear weapons-free world to be a critical long-term national security goal. **We agree.** At the same time, he also said that in the interim the safety and reliability of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile must be rigorously maintained and guaranteed. We also strongly agree with that as well. Our difference lies

in the fact that the best way to maintain nuclear weapons safety and reliability is a “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” approach (in a word, “curatorship”).

The existing nuclear weapons stockpile has been extensively full-scale tested with over a 1,000 tests. It has been certified to be safe and reliable every year since Bush Sr. signed the testing moratorium in 1992. A 1993 “Stockpile Life Study” by the Sandia National Laboratories stated, “It is clear that, although nuclear weapons age, they do not wear out; they last as long as the nuclear weapons community (DoD and DOE) desires. In fact, we can find no example of a nuclear weapons retirement where age was ever a major factor in the retirement decision.” (see [http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/Sandia\\_93\\_StockpileLife.pdf](http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/Sandia_93_StockpileLife.pdf)).

Since then, a November 2006 study initiated by NukeWatch NM though Senator Jeff Bingaman found that the performance lifetimes of the critical plutonium pit triggers last more than a century, contrary to the previous NNSA claims of just around 45 years. Further, in December 2009 the same independent nuclear weapons consultants to the federal government found that “Lifetimes of today’s nuclear warheads could be extended for decades, with no anticipated loss in confidence, by using approaches similar to those employed in LEPs to date.” (see [http://www.fas.org/rlg/JASON\\_LEP%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.fas.org/rlg/JASON_LEP%5B1%5D.pdf)). LEPs are Life Extension Programs that are already being implemented within existing programs and existing facilities. Thus there is no need for the hyperbolic “modernization” that is part of the bargain of ratifying New START.

In contradiction to the rhetoric of a future nuclear weapons-free world, the NNSA’s official FY 2011 Stockpile Stewardship and Management (SSM) Plan states “the future NNSA infrastructure will support total stockpiles up to a range of approximately 3,000 to 3,500 active, logistic spare, and reserve warheads” (see <http://www.nukewatch.org/importantdocs/index.html>). While the timeframe for that sized stockpile is not explicitly stated, budgets for NNSA nuclear weapons programs are projected to continue rising through the year 2030.



## Rebuilding the Production Side of the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex

Put very simply, modern nuclear weapons are comprised of three broad types of components: the fissile (meaning capable of an atomic neutron chain reaction) plutonium pits that when combined with high explosives form the primaries at the core of nuclear weapons; the uranium/lithium secondaries (AKA “canned subassemblies”) triggered by the primaries that create the immense thermonuclear fusion yields of modern nuclear weapons; and the thousands of non-nuclear components that create deliverable weapons of mass destruction (fuzes, radar, bomb cases, etc.). The U.S. is aggressively pursuing major new production facilities for all three types of components.

The SSM Plan calls for building a **Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Project (CMRR) Nuclear Facility** at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) that will provide “analytical capabilities in support of [plutonium] pit surveillance and production.” Directly related, the Plan calls for LANL’s adjoining Plutonium Facility (PF)-4 to ramp up to a production capability of up to **80 pits per year** in 2022, for which the necessary additional equipment has already been installed. Expanded nuclear weapons production inevitably means expanded nuclear waste production - - in this case bomb-making plutonium waste generation will multiply from ~200 cubic yards per year to ~500.

NNSA’s FY 2011 SSM Plan also calls for building a new **Uranium Processing Facility** at the Y-12 production plant near Oak Ridge, TN to “ramp up to a production capability of up to 80 canned subassemblies per year by 2022.” In addition, “Occupy a modern, leased non-nuclear production facility in FY 2014.” This is the **new Kansas City Plant**, which will cost taxpayers \$1.2 billion in rent over the next 20 years. In short, the Plan outlines rebuilding the production side of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex.

**What is all of this future nuclear weapons production capacity for?** A few years ago expanded production was explicitly linked to new-design “Reliable Replacement Warheads” (RRW), which were fortunately rejected by Congress. Today’s SSM

Plan states “Modernization of the stockpile will be accomplished through life extension programs (LEPs), which will include improved safety and security for all systems...” Safety and security sound good (who can argue against that?). However, NukeWatch believes they are being used as a politically acceptable foil to change nuclear weapons military capabilities despite denials at the highest levels of government.

## Life Extension Programs vs. Dismantlements

There are three possible broad methods that can be used in Life Extension Programs (LEPs), which are the refurbishment of various components, or their reuse, or entirely new replacements, including the nuclear explosives package (or a mix of these three methods). The Lab Directors have already demonstrated a bias toward wholesale replacements, given their past advocacy for RRW. Moreover, their objectivity is questionable, given that while they are lab directors they also simultaneously act as the presidents of the for-profit limited liability corporations contracted by the federal government to run the labs.



NukeWatch believes that the vested nuclear weapons community will try to achieve its long-range RRW goals of endless make-work and “improved” military capabilities through progressively more extensive Life Extension Programs. For example, the current LEP for the sub-launched W76 warhead is endowing it with a new-design fuse that reportedly gives it selectable heights of burst. In combination with increased missile accuracy the W76 is essentially being transformed from a “countervalue” weapon of deterrence that holds soft targets such as cities hostage into a “counterforce” weapon that can attack hardened military and command targets. At

this point Life Extension Programs for three other types of warheads and bombs are being planned with even more extensive changes. Ultimately, all these planned changes could undermine national security by eroding confidence in the performance reliability of the already comprehensively full-scale tested nuclear weapons stockpile.

The NNSA FY 2011 SSM Plan shows Life Extension Programs continuing to at least 2030. But NNSA treats irreversible dismantlements as a far lesser priority (as a practical matter, the same facilities are needed for both assembling and disassembling nuclear weapons). The NNSA Plan states, “The current program of record reflects a completion date of 2022 for the inventory of weapons slated for dismantlement.” That date, a dozen years from now, does not include additional weapons that may be retired under New START. **This is a seriously backwards priority** where NNSA fails to rapidly work off the backlog of dismantlements, which would increase our security and save money by eliminating security costs. Instead, NNSA ties up the necessary facilities with extending the service lives of nuclear weapons for many decades and possibly giving them new military capabilities.

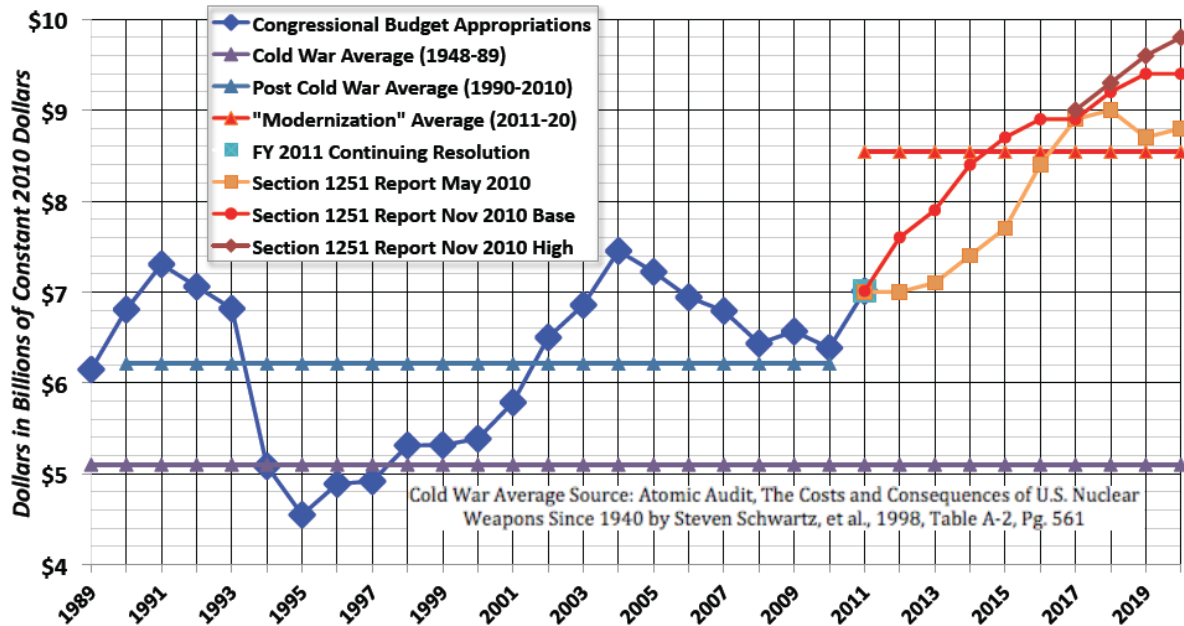
## CMRR-Nuclear Facility

Nuclear Watch has pursued a three-pronged attack to stop construction of the proposed \$5 billion-plus addition to the Lab’s plutonium bomb making complex. ***the primary purpose of the NF is to expand plutonium pit production*** The “Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Project” Nuclear Facility (NF) is still in the design phase, but it’s getting down to the nitty-gritty because construction could be funded in FY 2012. We have long argued that the primary purpose of the NF is to expand plutonium pit production above the currently approved rate of up to 20 per year, even when there is no foreseeable decision by the government to do so. Therefore, **we have been requesting a capacity study to demonstrate whether or not the NF is needed under current plans.**

Coincidentally or not, DOE Secretary Steven Chu has partially met our request by empanelling a group of

**(continued on page 7 )**

# Follow the Money: DOE Nuclear Weapon Budgets, 1989-2020



1989-2011 amounts are from Dept. of Energy Congressional Budget Requests for nuclear weapons research, testing and production programs. 2011-2020 amounts are projections from National Defense Authorization Act FY10 Section 1251 Reports, May & Nov. 2010, that address "modernization" of the nuclear stockpile and DOE nuclear weapons complex.



**The Cold War average (1949-89) is \$5.1B/yr.**

(These are in constant 2010 dollars adjusted for inflation.)

**The post-Cold War average (1990-2010) is \$6.2B/yr.**

(These are in constant 2010 dollars adjusted for inflation.)

**The "Modernization" average estimate (2011-2020) is \$8.6B/yr.**

The Department of Energy's nuclear weapons budget could double in the period from 1995 (~\$4.6B) to 2020 (~\$9.4 for the Section 1251 Nov. base estimate).

The Cold War has been over for a quarter century. **What's wrong with this picture?**



## CUT HERE, USE ENCLOSED RETURN ENVELOPE

Dear friends and supporters of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, We would like to request your continued support. We understand these may be lean times for you. They are for us too. However, **as you can see from the chart above, the federal budget for nuclear weapons is headed for almost double the cold-war average.** Your contribution at this time would help insure we are able to keep up the work we are doing here in New Mexico and across the weapons complex. With your help we can delve into the next federal budget request in the spring, continue our efforts to halt the development of the new Nuclear Facility at LANL, assist grassroots resistance to the new nuke parts plant in Kansas City, and watchdog environmental issues.

Contributions to Nuclear Watch are tax deductible. We will quickly reply to your donation with a thank you letter that you may use, come tax time, as a record of your generous donation to a non-profit organization. Southwest Research and Information Center of Albuquerque, NM, a 501(c)3 organization, is the fiscal agent for Nuclear Watch New Mexico.



Left to right above: John Witham, Communications; Scott Kovac, operations and Research; Jay Coghlan, Executive Director.

From all of us here at Nuclear Watch, **THANK YOU!**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ DONATION AMOUNT

**Nuclear Watch New Mexico**

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# OUR PLEDGE: WHAT NUKEWATCH WILL DO IN 2011

**OPPOSE SO-CALLED "MODERNIZATION" OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX AND DIRECTLY RELATED EXPANDED CAPABILITIES FOR INCREASED NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION. THIS SPECIFICALLY INVOLVES WORKING AGAINST THE PLUTONIUM "NUCLEAR FACILITY" AT LOS ALAMOS, THE URANIUM PROCESSING FACILITY AT THE Y-12 PLANT NEAR OAK RIDGE, TN, AND THE NEW KANSAS CITY PLANT.**

**WE WILL ALSO OPPOSE SO-CALLED MODERNIZATION OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS STOCKPILE ITSELF, WHICH WE BELIEVE IS SUBSTANTIALLY ABOUT CREATING NEW MILITARY CAPABILITIES THROUGH PLANNED "LIFE EXTENSION PROGRAMS." RELATED, WE WILL OPPOSE THE INCREASING TENDENCY TOWARD EVER MORE EXTENSIVE CHANGES TO EXISTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WHICH WE FEAR COULD ERODE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR WELL ESTABLISHED RELIABILITY. IN A WORD, WE WILL ADVOCATE A "CURATORSHIP" APPROACH TO MAINTAINING THE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STOCKPILE WHILE AWAITING FURTHER REDUCTIONS LEADING TO ABOLITION.**

**WE WILL WORK TO CUT RISING NUCLEAR WEAPONS RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION BUDGETS. WE WILL OFFER BUDGET ANALYSES OF THE NNSA'S FY 2012 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET REQUEST THAT WILL BE RELEASED THE FIRST MONDAY OF FEBRUARY, AND SUBSEQUENT CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESSES. WE WILL FIGHT TO REDIRECT THOSE MONIES TOWARD IRREVERSIBLE DISMANTLEMENTS AND DEVELOPING THE TECHNICAL UNDERPINNINGS FOR TREATY VERIFICATIONS THAT LEAD TO THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.**

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE CLEANUP AT LOS ALAMOS AND ALL DOE SITES. WE WILL MONITOR AND SUBMIT PUBLIC COMMENT ON NM ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT-MANDATED MILESTONES FOR CLEANUP OF LEGACY WASTES AT THE LAB, AND ENCOURAGE THE INCOMING GUBERNATORIAL ADMINISTRATION TO ENFORCE THOSE MILESTONES.**

**WE WILL PROMOTE MISSION CHANGE AT LANL TO REDIRECT IT FROM CORE NUCLEAR WEAPONS RESEARCH, TESTING AND PRODUCTION PROGRAMS TO TODAY'S CRITICAL NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES, SUCH AS PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, PROMOTING NATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, AND COMBATING GLOBAL WARMING.**

**WE WILL STRIVE TO BE YOUR WORTHY REPRESENTATIVE HERE IN THIS STATE AND IN WASHINGTON, DC, ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUES THAT AFFECT OUR COMMUNITIES, NEW MEXICO, THE NATION, AND THE WORLD. DEMOCRACY IS A MUSCLE - - USE IT OR LOSE IT!**

**AND PLEASE, DO WHAT YOU CAN TO SUPPORT THESE ACTIVITIES.**

**USE THE SLIP ON THE REVERSE TO SEND YOUR DONATION SOON!**

(~Continued from page 4)

experts to examine the fundamental need for the CMRR-NF, although we fear are that could be just a rubber stamp. We have written to Chu and Congress emphasizing the need to examine the fundamental necessity for the CMRR-NF if plutonium pit production is not going to be expanded.

**Second, we made Congress aware that NNSA wants to segment CMRR-NF construction into five phases** even before final cost estimates are calculated in 2014, which would snowball the project before taxpayers know what they are truly paying for. This resulted in legislative language from the Senate Armed Services Committee directing NNSA to conduct “a true independent cost estimate for the CMRR Nuclear Facility... to be accounted for as a single project.” In cooperation with the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability we also got language that requires the Department of Energy to inform Congress when costs and schedules go 25% beyond original estimates. We hope this could be somewhat of a poison pill for NNSA given its chronic cost overruns and slipped schedules.

**Third, in May we asked for a comprehensive supplement to the CMRR’s legally required 2003 environmental impact statement** that gave the project a green light. We made that demand because the project had doubled in size, cost estimates increased seven-fold from \$660 million in 2004 to \$5 billion and climbing, and new calculations had projected potential seismic risks to be twice as severe as previously thought. On June 4 NNSA wrote to Nuclear Watch agreeing that it would review the 2003 CMRR Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for current relevance and subsequently correctly concluded that a comprehensive supplement was needed. We then wrote 24-pages of “scoping” comments suggesting what the breadth and depth of the new supplement should be (see [http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/CMRR\\_SEIS\\_Scoping\\_Comments-NWNM.pdf](http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/CMRR_SEIS_Scoping_Comments-NWNM.pdf)). We expect NNSA to release a draft supplemental EIS sometime in February, after which we will organize for public hearings and write even more substantial comment. Our overall aim is to compel disclosure that the CMRR-Nuclear Facility is not needed without expanded plutonium pit production (again for which there is no foreseeable decision to expand), and therefore should not be built.

## The New Kansas City Nuclear Weapons Plant

Nuclear Watch New Mexico has been very active in issues concerning the Kansas City Plant. We chose to do so because first we view all eight NNSA sites within the nuclear weapons complex as interlocking pieces of the whole (there’s a reason it’s called a complex), and **the not-so-well-known Kansas City Plant is the most productive site of all.** The Plant produces and/or procures 85% of all types of nuclear weapons components, as well as 85% of the total number of components produced. It specializes in all of the nonnuclear components that create deliverable WMDs, such as radars, guidance systems, arming, firing and fusing sets, plus reservoirs for tritium (a radioactive gas used to boost the destructive power of nuclear weapons). KCP boasts that the Plant’s workload is the heaviest it has been in 20 years, which is expected to last until 2015. This is astonishing given that the height of the Cold War nuclear build-up was over 20 years ago.

We also chose to become involved because the new Kansas City Plant is the first major new nuclear weapons production plant that the U.S. has built in 35 years. **NukeWatch first traveled to Kansas City five years ago to successfully instigate local activism.**

*The new Kansas City Plant is the first major new nuclear weapons production plant that the U.S. has built in 35 years*



Protesters stopping dignitary bus at KCP groundbreaking.  
-photo: Joshua McElwe

close air support @ KCP  
groundbreaking



NO NUKE BOMB PLANT!

powered by *nukewatch.org*

photo: Robin Hass

We have made repeated trips every year since, giving numerous public presentations and advising the local chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility and others that have taken on the issue. NNSA broke ground on the new KCP at an official Sept. 8 ceremony, for which we hired an airplane with a banner reading “**NO NUKE BOMB PLANT**” to circle above the dignitaries’ tent. NukeWatch NM is pleased to report that activism in the KC metro area against the Kansas City Plant is now thriving.

Unlike the 5 billion-plus each in taxpayers’ dollars for the CMRR-NF and Uranium Processing Facility, the new KCP is being built and operated by the private developer CenterPoint Zimmer (CPZ). This limited liability corporation is a partnership of the Kansas City magnate Zimmer Real Estate Services and the Chicago-based CenterPoint Property Trust. Zimmer “happened” to own the 165 acres of farmland that the federal government chose as the site for new Plant. Although the Kansas City Planned Industrial Expansion Authority (PIEA) declared that the site was “blighted,” CPZ sold the land to the municipal Kansas City, MO (KCMO) government for an estimated **\$26,000 an acre**, when regional farmland typically sells for \$2,000 to \$4,000 an acre, one very tidy profit for “blighted” land!

The reason that the PIEA declared the site “blighted” was so that construction of this new federal nuclear weapons production plant could be subsidized by KCMO municipal bonds. The charter of Planned Industrial Expansion Authorities under

Missouri state law is to recommend to city councils whether or not tax abatements and/or bonds should be implemented to fight blight when “the development of such area or areas is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of such city.”

Through the PIEA the KCMO municipal government will own the new Plant after construction for

***We believe it of questionable “morals” to have a city own a federal nuclear weapons production plant.***

at least 20 years while the private developers pay the municipal bonds back. We believe this is globally unprecedented and of questionable “morals” to have a city own a federal nuclear weapons production plant. The PIEA will then lease it to CenterPoint Zimmer Holding LLC, who as sub-landlord, will lease it to the private developers CenterPoint Zimmer LLC. CPZ will then sub-sublease

the new Plant to the federal General Services Administration, who will then sub-sub-sublease (really!) this new federal nuclear weapons production plant to the NNSA.

**G o t t h a t ? ?**

This is a financial scheme that keeps KCP construction costs outside of the NNSA annual Congressional Budget Requests, since it is being built by private developers subsidized by the

KCMO municipal government. Congress likely would not have funded the new Plant with conventional appropriations. Key Congressional staff have told us that there will never again be a major NNSA facility built with “alternative financing,” which seems to be borne out by the quiet death of a proposed alternative financed project at Los Alamos which NukeWatch had originally exposed.

It is a very sweet deal for Centerpoint Zimmer, who first sold the land to the PIEA; then is subsidized by sale of municipal bonds to build the Plant; is granted a 20-year lease-to-purchase by the PIEA in which it pays the bonds back with guaranteed income from the NNSA; and after that owns the Plant outright. During this 20-year term the NNSA will pay \$1.2 billion in lease costs, and still not own the plant, not a good deal for the American taxpayer!

However NNSA has stated, “because the new facility will be leased, there will be no capital investment and NNSA will not be burdened by costs for legacy disposition should the mission ever be discontinued.” The “legacy” of the old Plant is one of serious contamination with cancer-causing volatile organic compounds (mostly industrial solvents) and PCBs, for which NNSA has formulated no comprehensive cleanup plan. NNSA plans to be fully operating in the new Plant in a couple of years while in effect abandoning the old Plant.

The Kansas City municipal government is counting on reusing the existing Plant for local economic development, which probably cannot take place without comprehensive cleanup costing more than \$250 million. Sadly, according to U.S. Dept. of Labor statistics, 1,993 former KCP workers or their survivors have filed health claims seeking compensation (but only 211 have been paid to date).

***The federal government should be cleaning up its nuclear weapons complex, not building it up!***

Kansas City subsidies for a new nuclear weapons production plant reward the federal government even as the federal government ignores its moral responsibility to protect its citizens and their future economic prosperity through full environmental restoration of the old Plant. **The federal government should be cleaning up its nuclear weapons complex, not building it up!**

## **NPT Review Conference**

Nuclear Watch attended the first week of the 2010 nuclear **NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference** at the United Nations in New York City in May, as well as the preceding **Abolition Conference** of international NGOs. We met informally with various UN delegations to inform them about U.S. intentions to “modernize” its stockpile and nuclear weapons complex (most notably with Ireland who has been a prominent member of the Middle Powers Initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons). Working with our colleague Tri-Valley CAREs we distributed 150 bound copies of our report we co-wrote with the Natural Resources Defense Council et al called **“Transforming the U.S. Strategic Posture and Weapons Complex For Transition to a Nuclear Weapons-Free World”** to international delegations (see <http://www.nukewatch.org/policynetwork/index.html>). Nuclear Watch also co-presented at two workshops on modernization for NGOs.

## **WIPP Permit and Recertification**

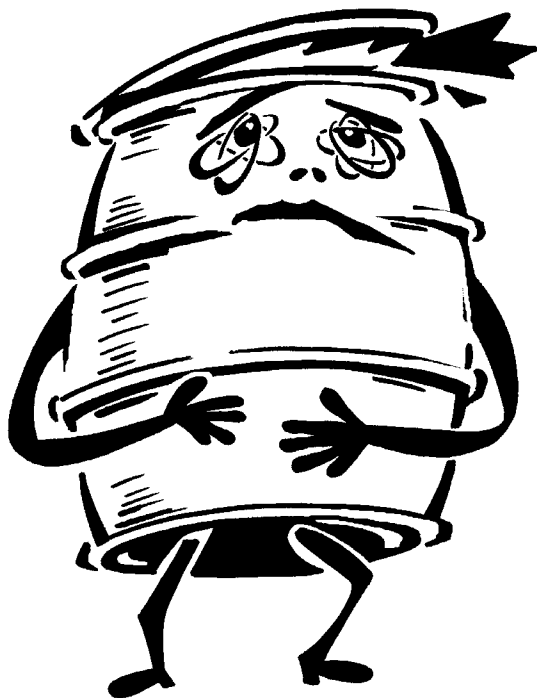
The U.S. Department of Energy’s Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) passed two permit milestones in 2010. Bomb-making transuranic wastes (meaning mostly plutonium) that is temporarily stored at sites around the country is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

First, in 2010 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recertified WIPP. This means that the

EPA concluded that the underground repository could continue to contain transuranic waste for the 10,000-year regulatory period. **How anything could be guaranteed for 10,000 years boggles our mind.** The recertification was based on various technical analyses and public comments (including our own extensive comments). Most everybody is convinced that everything is OK, except for some members of the public (for example, us!). This was the second time this 5-year permit has been reapproved.

Second, WIPP has been granted its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit renewal from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the first time that it has received this 10-year permit renewal. The federal government regulates radioactive material emplaced at WIPP, but hazardous components, which are mixed in much of the radioactive waste disposed at WIPP, are regulated by the state.

On the positive side, with public input from NukeWatch and others, the new state Hazardous Waste Facility Permit now provides for enhanced community relations, consolidation of permit-related public documents on the WIPP web page, expanded public e-mail notification, and myriad opportunities for public involvement.



## LANL Hazardous Waste Permit

NMED also granted the renewal of the hazardous waste permit for Los Alamos National Laboratory. The permit goes into effect this December 30. The

***The Permit hearings lasted 15 days, which followed 18 months of negotiations.***

permit, which will be in effect for 10 years, authorizes LANL to manage and store hazardous waste from research and development activities, general facility operations, environmental restoration activities, and decontamination and decommissioning projects.

The Department worked with the applicants and other interested individuals and groups, very much including NukeWatch, for several years to finalize this complex renewal Permit. The Permit hearings lasted 15 days, which followed 18 months of negotiations.

The permit allows the Lab to store hazardous waste at 24 permitted hazardous waste management units and to treat hazardous waste by stabilization at one location. LANL generated approximately 255,000 lbs. of hazardous and mixed wastes in 2008. The new permit denies LANL the ability to dispose of high explosive hazardous waste by burning in the open air.

As a result of much input from NukeWatch and other local groups, the permit includes new provisions which enhance the public's ability to participate and be informed. It requires the Lab to notify interested persons to receive e-mail notification on certain actions and submittals. The permit also requires the Lab to establish a formal community relations plan that will be developed in consultation with and annually reviewed by affected communities and interested members of the public. In addition, the Lab will be required to provide the public with online access to documents and information and at a physical location for hard copies.

We applaud the hard, dedicated work of both the state Environment Department and our New Mexican NGO colleagues in strengthening this LANL waste permit and making it much more amenable to public advise and comment.

## NukeWatch's Research and Analyses

As a few selected examples, during 2010 we analyzed and commented on the following (not all inclusive):

- The NNSA FY 2011 Congressional Budget Request.
- Related congressional legislation, particularly the Energy and Water Development Appropriations and Defense Authorization Acts, as they progress from each chamber to Senate/House conference, typically spanning from February to as late as October.
- The new "Nuclear Posture Review" released in April by the Obama Administration (long awaited but in our judgment ultimately not as game-changing as hoped).
- The Senate ratification process for New START and related budget increases for "modernization" of the nuclear weapons complex.
- The CMRR-Nuclear Facility Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
- The LANL RCRA Permit
- The WIPP Hazardous Waste Permit and EPA Recertification.

The fruits of our research and analysis have been featured in the **New York Times**, Amy Goodman's **Democracy Now!**, and regional media (the **Albuquerque Journal**, the **New Mexican**, the **Santa Fe Reporter**, local radio stations, etc.)

Lists of our work products can be viewed at-  
<http://www.nukewatch.org/media/WorkProduct.htm>  
Media appearances are at-  
<http://www.nukewatch.org/media/Media.htm>

## Follow NukeWatch Online

### Blog:

[www.nukewatch.org/watchblog/](http://www.nukewatch.org/watchblog/)

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/NukeWatch.NM](http://www.facebook.com/NukeWatch.NM)

### YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/user/NuclearWatch](http://www.youtube.com/user/NuclearWatch)

### Cause:

[www.causes.com/causes/486721](http://www.causes.com/causes/486721)

## DC Work

Nuclear Watch is in weekly communication with the Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall Senate offices, and at least monthly contact with the office of our Congressman Ben Ray Lujan. During 2010 NukeWatch traveled to Washington, DC three times for a total of ~50 meetings with Congress and the Administration. We find these meetings to be invaluable in directly lobbying on our issues and in building relationships with Congressional Members and their staff (we confirm the maxim that politics is all about relationships). In 2011 NukeWatch is already scheduled to travel to Washington, DC in January and April, but there will no doubt be additional trips as well.





# nuclear watch new mexico

december 2010

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***In This Issue: New START,  
Following the Money,  
Modernizing the Weapons  
Complex, Life Extensions,  
CMRR-NF, Nukewatch  
in DC, WIPP and LANL  
Permits and more...***

### **mission statement**

Through comprehensive research, public education and effective citizen action, **Nuclear Watch New Mexico** seeks to promote safety and environmental protection; diversification away from nuclear weapons programs; greater accountability and cleanup in the nationwide nuclear weapons complex; and consistent U.S. leadership toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

## ***Our Watchdog and the Blog***

Loyal readers of this newsletter may notice a few changes here. Some have resulted from the departure of our steadfast editor, Sasha Pyle. Sasha is continuing her activism by other means now and we will continue to evolve the Watchdog tradition. Stay tuned for her guest-feature stories here and pithy posts on our blog.

We are immensely pleased with the launch of the Nukewatch Blog, the "WatchBlog" at the end of last year. It is part of our effort to efficiently create and participate in an informed, timely dialog.

- Blog:** [www.nukewatch.org/watchblog/](http://www.nukewatch.org/watchblog/)
- Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/NukeWatch.NM](http://www.facebook.com/NukeWatch.NM)
- YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/user/NuclearWatch](http://www.youtube.com/user/NuclearWatch)
- Cause:** [www.causes.com/causes/486721](http://www.causes.com/causes/486721)

If you currently receive a hard-copy version of the Watchdog, and would like to save trees and postage by subscribing to an email version, please let us know by emailing: [info@nukewatch.org](mailto:info@nukewatch.org).



### **nuclear watch new mexico**

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