

Some Simple Facts about New Mexico and Nuclear Weapons

- Were New Mexico to secede from the United States it would automatically be the 3rd largest nuclear weapons power in the world. There are an estimated 2,500 (exact number classified) stored warheads at the Kirtland Air Force base just a few miles east of the Albuquerque International Airport runway.
- The Fiscal Year 2005 Congressional Budget Request for “Total Weapons Activities” of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy (DOE), is \$6.57 billion. This funding is for the core programs for nuclear weapons research, development, testing and production. It is more than 50% above the Cold War average and is equal to the all-time high set during 1985, the peak year of President Reagan’s military buildup.
- A full 42% of this \$6.57 billion (\$2.8 billion) is to be spent in New Mexico alone. With two of the nation’s three nuclear weapons laboratories (Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories) and the world’s only deep underground dump for radioactive bomb wastes (the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant), New Mexico is arguably the key state in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex.
- DOE plans to spend a total of \$3.97 billion in New Mexico in FY 2005. Of that, 70% (\$2.8 billion) is directly for core nuclear weapons research, development, testing and production programs. The direction of these programs can be best described as *counterproliferation*. This is because they are on a path to develop and produce new or modified nuclear weapons (such as the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator and “mini-nukes”) to deter and possibly preemptively use against perceived WMD threats. One likely outcome is that other nations may well conclude that they must have their own weapons of mass destruction to deter America. Due to that and the bad international precedent of pursuing new nuclear weapons these programs arguably encourage proliferation.
- In contrast, DOE funding in New Mexico for *nonproliferation* programs (\$330.6 million) will equal only 12% of the spending for the *counterproliferation* programs. These programs seek, for example, to help keep Russian nuclear weapons materials from falling into terrorists’ hands. More broadly, if all of the U.S.’s nuclear weapons programs were genuinely nonproliferation programs, it would logically follow that they would then be severely cut. This is because Article VI of the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty (which the U.S. formally repledged to in 2000) mandates that all nuclear powers are obliged to disarm their stockpiles.
- New Mexico is blessed with vast renewable energy resources (solar, wind, geothermal). Yet less than 1% (\$25.2 million, a 29% decline over two years) of the DOE’s in-state funding will be dedicated to the research and development of renewable energy technologies.
- The budgets for cleanup at the two labs will be funded at a level of only 3% of their “Total Weapons Activities.” Even this funding remains uncertain because the DOE has recently tried to leverage the money into pressuring the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) into endorsing the labs’ so-called Accelerated Cleanup Programs. To date, the NMED has refused to do so and has issued “Corrective Action Orders” against both Los Alamos and Sandia Labs.
- Despite the massive in-state presence of the nuclear weapons industry New Mexico has slid from being 37th in per capita income in 1959 to 47th in 2002. Census Bureau data shows that New Mexico has the second highest rate of poverty (even more than Mississippi). A December 2003 report from the Corporation for Enterprise Development ranked New Mexico as having the highest rate of working poor and the least amount of employer health benefits. Other reports have ranked New Mexico dead last for child well-being. The nuclear weapons industry is, in effect, subsidized by this State, even as more weapons of mass destruction programs are proposed to be located here. Clearly New Mexico needs to take stock and seriously evaluate its future direction.

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