

Complex 2030 Scoping Hearing

Santa Fe, NM, December 6, 2006

*Comments submitted for Nuclear Watch New Mexico
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Debunked: the NNSA claim that plutonium pits will waste themselves

**“We know that plutonium pits have a limited lifetime.”
Without replacing the bombs, “we could wake up and find out
half our stockpile gone to waste.”**

NNSA spokesman Brian Wilkes announcing the need for a super bomb plant, The Las Vegas Sun, September 27, 2002.

“Most primary types [pits surrounded by high explosives] have credible minimum lifetimes in excess of 100 years as regards aging of plutonium; those with assessed minimum lifetimes of 100 years or less have clear mitigation paths that are proposed and/or being implemented.”

“Pit Lifetime,” JASON, November 20, 2006, http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/JASON_ReportPuAging.pdf

Nothing has really changed, this was known long ago

“... 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.”

Stockpile Life Study, Sandia National Laboratories, December 1993, (parens in original)
http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/Sandia_93_StockpileLife.pdf

Oldest weapons in planned U.S. stockpile are 28 years old. There remains ~70 years for democratic discussion of rational nuclear weapons policies.

| Weapon Type | Age of FPU | Age of Last Unit | Average Age | 2006 Numbers | 2013 Numbers |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| B61-3, 4 | 27 | 15 | 21 | 790 | 400 |
| B61-7* | 21 | 15 | 18 | 480 | 465 |
| B61-10 | 16 | 14 | 15 | 206 | 180 |
| W62 | 36 | 29 | 32.5 | 580 | 0 |
| W76 | 28 | 18 | 23 | 3030 | 1840 |
| W78 | 27 | 23 | 25 | 805 | 400 |
| W80-0, 1 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 2105 | 1090 |
| B83-0, 1 | 23 | 15 | 19 | 626 | 625 |
| W84 | 23 | 17 | 20 | 383 | 0 |
| W87 | 20 | 16 | 18 | 553 | 545 |
| W88 | 18 | 15 | 16.5 | 404 | 400 |
| | | | | 9962 | 5945 |

Average age of all U.S. nuclear weapons 21.6 years / 20.5 years

Weapons ages from "Stockpile Surveillance: Past and Future," Los Alamos, Sandia & Lawrence Livermore National Labs, September 1995. For much more, see <http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/WeaponsAge.pdf>

Reaching for other arguments

“Regardless of the quality or safety of the plutonium, there will still be various other parts of the weapons program that will age and need to be dealt with,” said Matt Letourneau, a Domenici spokesman.

“Longer Lives Seen for Nukes,” John Arnold, Albuquerque Journal, November 30th, 2006.

“Neither plutonium lifetime nor pit lifetime equal weapon lifetime. A nuclear weapon relies on 1,000’s of parts and components... We must have a responsive infrastructure to support the stockpile because we know that stockpile repairs and replacements will be required.”

Mr. Ted Wyka, Complex 2030 Document Manager, Socorro, NM hearing, December 4, 2006.

Those arguments too were debunked years ago

“... the high explosive used in US weapons has been found to improve systematically with age in key measures of performance...”

“Science-Based Stockpile Stewardship,” Dr. Raymond Jeanloz, December 2000, Physics Online.

“Thus, over time [due to manufacturing data and subsequent lab tests], high confidence in the safety and reliability of nonnuclear components and subsystems can be established.”

Stockpile Stewardship and Management PEIS, DOE, 1996, Summary p. 19.

But DOE chooses to neglect simple “nuts and bolts” steps to ensure stockpile safety and reliability: “...as a result of the continuing backlog of surveillance tests, the Department lacks vital information about the reliability of the stockpile.”

“Follow-up Audit on Stockpile Surveillance Testing,” DOE Inspector General, October 2006.

What is Complex 2030 really about?

- It's about implementing Bush's 2001 "Nuclear Posture Review" (NPR), which expanded the rationale for the possible use of nuclear weapons and targeted countries.
- The NPR called for earth-penetrating nuclear weapons ("bunker-busters") and lower yield and more accurately targeted, hence more "usable," nuclear weapons ("mini-nukes"). As a current example, President Bush has refused to rule out all options when it comes to dealing with alleged Iranian nuclear facilities.
- **"The weapons design community that was revitalized by the RRW program can adapt an existing weapon within 18 months and design, develop, and begin production of a new warhead within 3-4 years of a decision to enter engineering development."**

"Implementing the New Triad," Linton F. Brooks, NNSA Administrator, December 15, 2005

NNSA's claim that it only implements policy is half true, half false

In January 2001 the neo-conservative National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP) released a report called "Rationale and Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Forces and Arms Control."

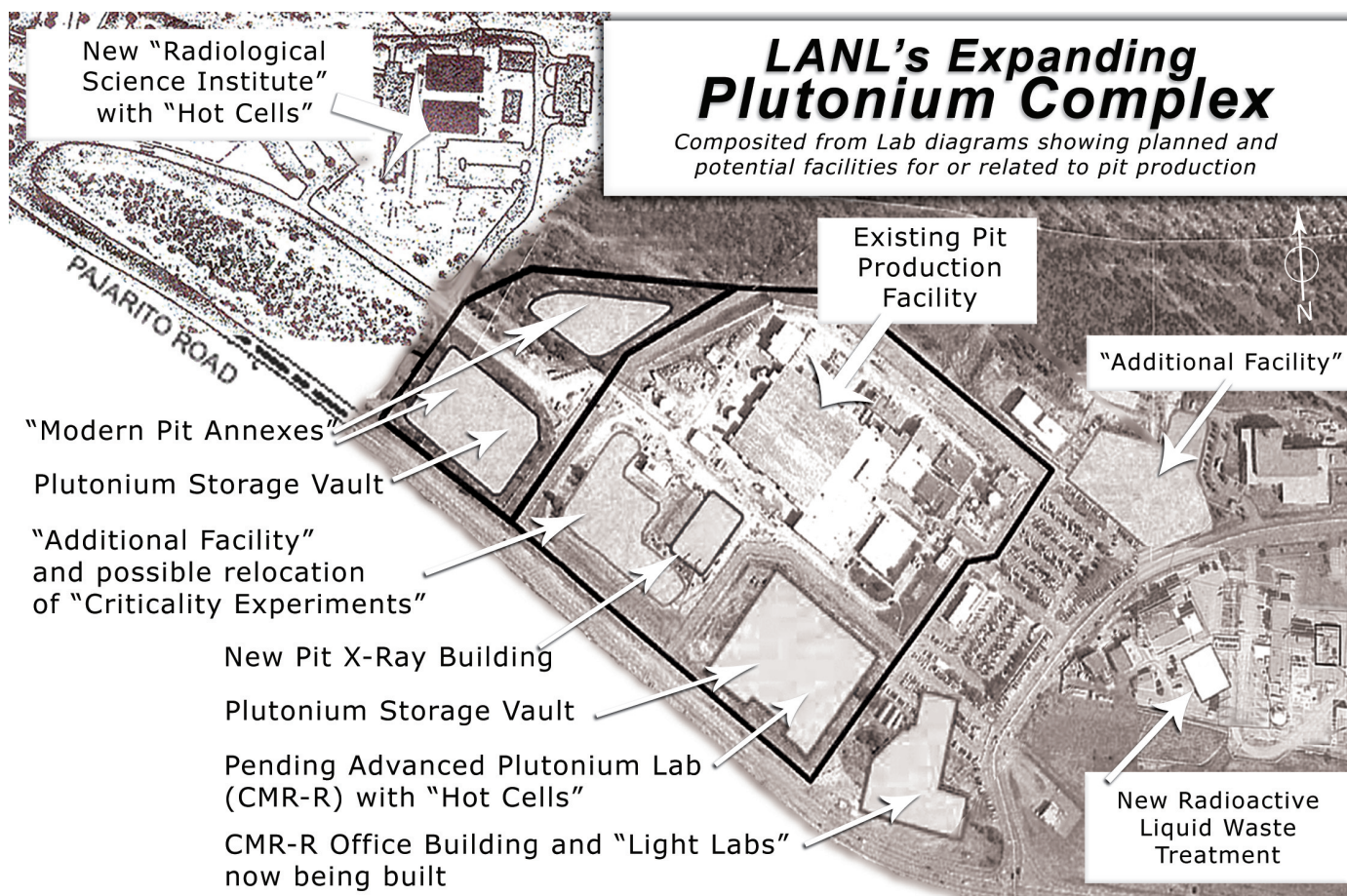
By December 2001 the Bush Administration incorporated NIPP's recommendations nearly wholesale as the backbone of the Nuclear Posture Review. By July 2002, Linton Brooks, one of the participants in the NIPP report, took over as head of NNSA.

False choices between varying degrees of expanded bomb production and new designs

“Complex 2030” has three stated scenarios:

- The preferred “Transformation to Complex 2030” calls for production of at least 125 plutonium pits per year at a site yet-to-be determined.
- Both the so-called *No Action* and *Reduced Operations Alternatives* call for up to 80 pits per year to be produced at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.
- An *Enhanced Global Security Alternative* must be considered, whose essence is custodianship of nuclear weapons while they await dismantlements. This alternative would strengthen our own national security by encouraging all countries toward nuclear disarmament as mandated by the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty.

What does this mean to Los Alamos? Answer: LANL is likely to become the nation's permanent Pit Production Center



Politics: let the fun begin!

“I have always had serious questions as to whether the (reliable replacement warhead) program constitutes the development of new weapons, which would be counter to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. ... Now, with the added information about the longevity of pits, the (warhead) may not be necessary,” said Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said last week that in light of the study, **“It is possible that we will not need the same level of capacity as originally proposed.”**

“LANL at Center of Debate,” John Arnold, Albuquerque Journal, December 4, 2006.

More politics

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said the study, delivered to Congress this week, **“confirms that our existing stockpile does not require new pit manufacturing.”** He called for a Senate hearing to determine whether RRW [Reliable Replacement Warhead] is necessary.

“Longer Lives Seen for Nukes,” John Arnold, Albuquerque Journal, November 30th, 2006

But watch out that RRW and the nuclear weapons complex don’t become self-justifying ends unto themselves!

“Keep in mind what RRW is: It’s an opportunity to rejuvenate the complex.” Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-CA, whose district includes the Livermore Lab.

“Report pre-empts new nuke program-Weapons-grade plutonium lasts far longer than believed,” Ian Hoffman, Oakland Tribune, November 29, 2006.

W e c a n w i n !

Collectively, the American public has:

- Defeated the “Modern Pit Facility” designed to produce up to 450 plutonium pits per year and the “Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator.”
- Played a role in plutonium pit lifetime studies, thereby knocking out the “aging” argument.
- Created widespread political change in the last election, offering the opportunity for rejecting the Bush Administration’s extreme nuclear weapons policies as well.

Lesson learned?!

- *Keep moving!*
- Submit scoping comments by January 17, 2007.
- At a minimum stay tuned to www.nukewatch.org and submit the downloadable “postcard.”
- Submit comments on the draft “Complex 2030” in summer 2007.
- Most importantly, **play politics!** Pressure your New Mexican congressional delegation on how you want rational nuclear weapons policies for yourselves, your children and grandchildren!