



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2007

Contact: Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch, 505.989.7342, c. 505.920.7118, jay@nukewatch.org  
Scott Kovac, Nuclear Watch, 505.989.7342, scott@nukewatch.org

## **Los Alamos to “Celebrate” First Certified Plutonium Trigger For Nuclear Weapons**

*Santa Fe, NM*- The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has invited Members of Congress to “celebrate” on July 2 its production of its first certified plutonium trigger (AKA “pit” or “primary”) for the W88, a sub-launched nuclear weapon more than 200 times more powerful than the plutonium pit that destroyed Nagasaki. As the invitation notes, this will be the first plutonium pit produced by the U.S. certified for deployment to the nuclear stockpile since 1989. That is when an FBI raid investigating environmental crimes shut down the Rocky Flats pit production plant near Denver.

Since then, LANL has struggled to establish so-called interim plutonium pit production, which it is currently seeking to expand to 50 pits per year. In the recent past the nuclear weapons complex as a whole has proposed a new super bomb plant capable of producing up to 450 pits per year.

According to Department of Energy (DOE) annual budgets, LANL was required to produce its first certified plutonium pit in 2001, by which time the DOE’s pit manufacturing and certification “campaign” had been funded around 513 million dollars since 1998. Now, six years later, LANL has finally produced its first certified pit, with total cumulative campaign and facilities costs of around \$2.2 billion.

Just yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee passed a bill that cuts funding for the plutonium pit production campaign by 48% in fiscal year 2008. This is in large part due to a November 2006 study that concluded that plutonium pits have reliable lifetimes of at least 85 years. Additionally, expanded pit production is primarily geared toward producing new-design pits for new nuclear weapons under the so-called Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) Program. The House Appropriations Committee completely cut funding for RRW in FY08, and redirected 10% of DOE’s \$6.5 billion nuclear weapons budget to energy independence, including renewables, and nonproliferation efforts. Meanwhile, Senator Domenici has pledged to restore funding for RRW and pit production in the Senate.

Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch Director, commented, “Los Alamos can go ahead and celebrate its first certified plutonium pit five years late and a billion dollars over budget. But it just goes to show how far behind the times the Lab really is. Even senior ex-officials like Henry Kissinger are now calling for a world free of nuclear weapons. I predict that New Mexicans and the American public will be eager to join the Lab in celebration when it finally changes its mission. Los Alamos should prioritize real national security threats like global climate change and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, instead of encouraging proliferation through new nuclear weapons production.”

###

See second page for Los Alamos invitation to “celebrate” nuclear weapons production.



*Office of the Director*

May 30, 2007

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Member of Congress  
1410 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Udall,

Please join us at 9:00 a.m., July 2, 2007, to help celebrate the delivery of the first certified W88 primary, which was manufactured at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Your support for this project and the Laboratory has been central to our success.

This milestone is important for the nation because it is the first time the United States has manufactured a pit for use in the nuclear weapons stockpile since the Rocky Flats Plant closed in 1989. In addition, it is another major Stockpile Stewardship Program success for NNSA and the Department of Energy. Because of the investments made in the stockpile stewardship tools, this will be the first primary to become part of the nation's nuclear deterrent without the need of an underground test. For the Laboratory, it is the culmination of years of hard work and dedication by a broad spectrum of the work force, including chemists, engineers, physicists, and production technicians, to name but a few.

I look forward to your attendance. Please have a member of your staff contact Mariana Martinez at 505-667-5670 or via e-mail [mmmartinez@lanl.gov](mailto:mmmartinez@lanl.gov) to confirm your attendance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Anastasio".

Michael R. Anastasio  
Director

Cy: IRM-RMMSO, A150  
DIR-07-158