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watchdog

"float like a butterfly, bite like a dawg"

National Security: Back to the Future Major Policy Shift Paves Way for New Nukes

"We're driving recklessly down a road that we're telling other people not to walk down." --Senator Carl Levin (D-MI)

National security will always be the fundamental issue in all debates over the present and future course of U.S. nuclear weapons policies. What we need to ask is: **what is truly in our long-term national security interests?** Is it to produce earth-penetrating nuclear weapons that likely won't work and will not contain fallout, and to develop battlefield "mini-nukes" that could well contaminate our own troops? These pursuits could convince other nations that the only way to defend themselves against the U.S. is to acquire their own nuclear weapons, thus further eroding our own national security. Or is the prudent course to convince the world that weapons of mass destruction urgently need to be eliminated-- by refraining from the further advancement of our own? Sadly, we are not going down that higher road.

In late May, both the House and Senate approved funding for the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator," overturned the decade-old prohibition against the development of low-yield battlefield weapons and mandated the shortening of the lead time necessary to return to full-scale testing. New Mexico's own Congresswoman Heather Wilson contributed substantial groundwork for these changes. In February the House Policy Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, which she chairs, released "A New Agenda for Nuclear Weapons." Despite its seemingly non-partisan name this committee is a Republican Party organization whose stated mission is "for the enunciation of Republican priorities on issues." She credits her lead staffer for making this report possible, but doesn't mention his background with Sandia Labs. Further, Wilson has long been under the tutelage of Senator Pete Domenici, for decades a fierce provider for the nuclear weapons labs.

Recent congressional votes are largely congruent with the main recommendations in Wilson's report. At one point in the debate she said, "We must continue to maintain our weapons of mass destruction program so that we can never be subject to surprise," citing reports that the Russians are now considering their own new nuclear weapons designs. **The sad truth is that the U.S. has surprised and dismayed much of the world with its recent actions.** These include the expansion of potential nuclear targets from two countries to seven (now presumably minus Iraq) and the related expansion of the targeting rationale from just against nuclear weapons to also include biological and chemical threats. And these threats don't necessarily have to be demonstrated, just suspected (sound familiar?). Add to this our new self-assumed right of pre-emptive strikes, including nuclear, if deemed necessary. Thus we maintain our own weapons of mass destruction programs, even as we preach to others, backed by military might, to drop theirs. Please consider whether this is the right way to enhance our national security and, more importantly, speak out-- and vote-- in accordance with your opinions. --Jay Coghlan

America's Nuclear Senator: Domenici's Powerful Role

New Mexico's senior Senator Pete Domenici plays a much more influential role in national and international policies than many people outside of federal government might know. Long ago dubbed "**Senator Strangelove**" by *Mother Jones* magazine, for decades he's been the quietly dominating **linchpin of the nuclear industries** in America, unfailingly serving the interests of nuclear weapons and nuclear power.

Domenici has tirelessly promoted the Department of Energy in New Mexico, holding aloft the belief that weapons weapons programs are the means to economic development. (This myth has been deconstructed; see [nukewatch.org](http://www.nukewatch.org) and read Professor Dumas's definitive study disproving DOE's economic propaganda.)

Some telling examples of Senator Domenici's political and legislative track record on behalf of the nuclear industries:

- Single-handedly procured more funding for the nation's weapons labs, specifically nuclear weapons design and production, than any other member of Congress;

- Authored a recent push for design and construction of a new generation of nuclear power plants, with taxpayers assuming the liability costs; and

- Played a leading role in the congressional override of Nevada's veto of the Yucca Mountain high-level waste dump.

Congresswoman Heather Wilson (R-NM) has been carefully groomed by Domenici as his protégée and his possible future successor. To check out some highlights of the voting records that our congressional delegation has amassed on nuclear issues, turn to "Nuke the Vote" on page 2!

Nuke the Vote! The 2004 Defense Authorization & Senate Energy Bills

At the end of May, the U.S. House and Senate debated and voted on the 2004 Defense Authorization Act (DAA). The DAA includes provisions to add \$15 million to research and design the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) and a repeal of the decade-old prohibition against research into "mini-nukes." Mini-nukes passed the Senate 51-43 and RNEP funding passed 56-41. In the House, RNEP passed 266-199; there was no specific vote on mini-nukes. Here's how New Mexico voted:

Name	Funding for RNEP	Wants mini-nukes
Pete Domenici (R)	Yes	Yes
Jeff Bingaman (D)	No	No
Heather Wilson (R, 1st District)	Yes	Yes
Steve Pearce (R, 2nd District)	Yes	Yes
Tom Udall (D, 3rd District)	No	No

One small victory for moderation: the Senate added an amendment requiring the President to obtain specific Congressional authorization and appropriations prior to actual production of mini-nukes and the RNEP.

While the votes are finished, the fight is not. The amended Acts will go back to conference where the House and the Senate will reconcile the two different versions of the Defense Authorization Act. From that point it will again come back to the Senate and House floors for approval. This could happen as soon as July.

Note: Heather Wilson played a major role in pushing for mini-nukes, the RNEP, an "advanced concept initiative" for new nuclear weapons, and reducing the lead time to resume full-scale testing. She voted against every amendment that came up in the House Armed Services Committee, and she wrote a very extreme policy paper on the U.S. need for current and new nuclear weapons. Please see the cover article, "Back to the Future."

2004 Senate Energy Bill

In June the Senate debated and voted on its version of the Energy Omnibus Bill. The Senate version represents a strong push for everything nuclear, led by Pete Domenici. The Senate Energy Bill promotes more nuclear power plants (granting \$1.5 billion in subsidies over each of the next five years); removes formal review of environmental protection on Native American lands; allows further deregulation of power companies (i.e., Enrons) and more! Senator Bingaman sponsored an amendment to provide significant environmental review process for Indian energy projects, and he co-sponsored an amendment to eliminate the nuclear power plant disgrace. These amendments were both defeated: the first 47-52, the second 48-50. Here's how New Mexico voted:

Name	More nuclear power plants	Less protection on Native American land
Domenici	Yes	Yes
Bingaman	No	No

St. Pete: The Man With the Nuke Plan

In the post-2002 election Senator Pete Domenici was installed as the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Ever since he got the big chair, the 2004 Senate Energy Omnibus Bill has been his baby -- and the recent June vote shows how fast kids grow up.

Serious environmental and consumer liabilities are woven throughout Domenici's energy bill. New nuke power plants and further deregulation of electricity; nuclear-generated hydrogen; reauthorization of the Price-Anderson Act (which indemnifies nuclear power plant operators from most responsibilities due to accidents); new reprocessing of irradiated nuclear fuels (which up to now has been against U.S. policy); and oil, gas, coal and nuclear corporate subsidies are all found within this disastrous bill.

After the dust settled on the Senate voting, Domenici said: "Had we lost, the nuclear plan would have fallen years behind. This is the major victory for nuclear power for the past 15 to 20 years." (*The Albuquerque Journal*, June 11, 2003.)

Indeed, Domenici is the man with the nuke plan. In fact, his nuke plan has global reach! St. Pete has been a fierce advocate for expanded nuclear weapons programs at the Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories for decades. Furthermore, he has been an enthusiastic proponent of burning military plutonium in civilian nuclear power reactors in both the U.S. and Russia, despite the inherent expense and grave concerns regarding safety, security and proliferation. Of course Pete doesn't need to worry about such things, he's not on that committee.

--Geoff Petrie

Money, and the Congress Members Who Love It

How much money do members of the New Mexican congressional delegation receive from the Energy and Natural Resource sector? As it turns out, quite a bit. With the **only exception being Congressman Tom Udall** (D-3rd District), the rest of the State's delegation makes a **pretty penny in campaign contributions** from political action committees (PACs) and individual contributors **from the Energy and Natural Resource (E&NR) sector**. (A sector is a group of corporations that work within the same general industry. In this case, oil, gas, nuclear power, etc.) Here's a quick breakdown:

Name	Total Contributions	Total E&NR (PAC)
Domenici	\$4,643,808 (1997-2002)	\$293,578
Bingaman	3,180,335 (1997-2002)	276,974
Wilson	2,735,478 (2001-2002)	172,936
Pearce	1,599,195 (2001-2002)	47,250
Udall	430,721 (2001-2002)	1,400

Name	E&NR (individuals)	% from E&NR	Highest single contributor*
Domenici	\$142,415	9.4%	\$26,850 (Intel Corp)
Bingaman	77,487	11.1%	21,250 (Exelon Corp)
Wilson	36,500	7.7%	26,125 (Lockheed Martin)
Pearce	51,500	6.2%	**
Udall	3,000	1.0%	***

It should be noted that Senator Domenici received \$13,150 from people affiliated with Lockheed Martin (Sandia Lab's manager) and also received \$11,950 from people affiliated with the Los Alamos National Lab. When the contributions are combined, the total from people representing Sandia and LANL comes to \$25,100.

The same is true for Senator Bingaman. He received \$20,717 from people who affiliated themselves with Lockheed Martin and \$14,558 from LANL-affiliated persons. This comes to \$35,275 from the major New Mexico nuclear laboratories. It is notable that Wilson received \$26,125 from Lockheed Martin.

Furthermore, there are a host of other energy-affiliated PACs and individuals who have handed over money to the New Mexican congressional delegation. For more on this, please see nukewatch.org/congresswatch.

* The highest single contributor is not necessarily from the listed corporation itself. Typically it comes from the corporation's PAC or from individuals who affiliate themselves with that corporation.

** Congressman Pearce had a six-way tie for the highest contributor. Americans for a Republican Majority, Freedom Project, Future Leaders PAC, Keep Our Majority PAC, National Auto Dealers Association, and the National Beer Wholesalers Association each gave the congressman \$10,000.

*** Congressman Udall had a three-way tie for the highest single contributor. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the National Association of Realtors, and the United Auto Workers all gave the congressman \$10,000 each. Congressman Udall also received \$3,300 from LANL-affiliated people.

Source: The Center for Responsive Government

--Geoff Petrie

*Nuclear Watch is working for you!
And every contribution helps us--
more than you know.*

*So please take a moment
to send a check, small or large, to:
551 Cordova Road #808
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mission statement

The mission of Nuclear Watch New Mexico is to provide timely and accurate information to the public on nuclear issues in the American Southwest, and to encourage effective citizen involvement and activism in these issues. We seek to promote greater environmental protection, safe disposition of radioactive wastes, and federal policy changes that will curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Inside: Dreaming Up New Weapons; Which NM Congresspeople Best Serve the Nuclear Industry?
Can't Wait for the "Modern" Pit Facility? Our Cool Fact Sheet Keeps You Up-to-Date

**More of...What To Do!
Speak Your Piece on the New Bomb Factory!**

1. Go to the "Modern Pit Facility" hearings (see below) and please send in your written comments by August 5. Need a hand? Ready-to-send comments will be available by July 21 on our website nukewatch.org.

Hearings:

WIPP Site: June 30, 6:00 - 10:00 p.m., DOE Carlsbad Office, 4021 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad NM, (505) 234-7227

Los Alamos Site: July 1, 7:00 - 10:00 p.m., Cities of Gold Hotel, Highway 84/285, Pojoaque NM (505) 455-0515

Check out the enclosed fact sheet for hearings in Texas, Nevada, South Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Written comments on the MPF should be sent to:
Mr. Jay Rose, MPF Document Manager, DOE/NNSA, 1000 Independence Ave., Washington, DC 20585 by August 5, 2003 (or faxed to 202.586.5324, or e-mailed to James.Rose@nnsa.doe.gov).

2. Send written comments on pending WIPP permit modification requests. Info available now at nukewatch.org, and ready-to-send comments (and how to submit them) will be posted on the site by July 7.

3. Give your congressperson a piece of your mind concerning funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator.

nuclear watch new mexico

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