Watchdogs Release Secret Warhead Memo

The U.S. Navy does not support nor will it pay for a Feasibility Study to build a new warhead to be used interchangeably on Navy subs and land-based missiles that the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory proposes to design, according to a secret memorandum released by two nuclear weapons watchdog organizations.

The memo, obtained by Tri-Valley CAREs and Nuclear Watch New Mexico, outlines the Navy’s decision not to move forward with a proliferation-provocative new weapon concept involving a massive redesign of both the W78 warhead that sits atop the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile and the Navy’s W88 warhead that tops Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles, using elements of both nuclear weapons combined with the plutonium pit (core) of a third warhead type, the W87, to create the new W78/88-1 “common platform” warhead.

"The proposal for the W78/88-1 reveals that Livermore Lab is putting its desire to flex its weapons design muscles ahead of tax-payer accountability and the more modest requirement of the existing stockpile to be maintained safely and reliably until the weapons are retired," noted Marylia Kelley, Tri-Valley CAREs’ Executive Director.

"Straying from the fully-tested, ‘pedigreed’ designs to a novel concept using mix and match parts from three distinct warheads could, ironically, degrade the reliability of the arsenal in the name of improving it," stated Jay Coughlan, the Executive Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico.

Both groups applauded the Navy’s position. “We are pleased to see the Secretary of the Navy put a roadblock in front of this adventurous weapons design program," say the watchdogs.

The leaked memo, titled “Navy Perspectives of the W78/88-1 Life Extension Program Phase 6.2, ‘Analysis of Alternatives/Feasibility Study,’” states, “While the Dept. of the Navy (DON) recognizes the objectives the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) is attempting to achieve with this LEP [Life Extension Program], we do not support commencing the effort at this time...”

The memo, dated September 27, 2012, elucidates several reasons the Navy is declining to participate in the Phase 6.2 study, which had been slated to begin later in 2013.

The Navy states that a Life Extension Program for its W88 warhead need not commence “until Fiscal Year 2020 for an initial operational capability scheduled for FY2028.” The Navy further notes that, therefore, it is not funded for the W78/88-1 LEP and that the Dept. of the Navy estimates participation in the near-term Phase 6.2 study at “approximately $43 million.”

The Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which owns the nuclear weapons labs and production complex, has already spent more than $100 million over two years on the initial effort, called a Phase 6.1 options study. The budget request for Fiscal Year 2013 included an additional $76.6 million, which is currently being funded under a Continuing Resolution that ends in March.

The FY2012 NNSA “Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan” estimated spending for a simpler LEP for the W78 at nearly $5 billion. The more extreme W78/88-1 LEP option is expected to cost far in excess of that amount, and could easily double or triple in price.

The leaked memo continues: “Additionally, the uncertainty of the NNSA's ability to execute its currently programmed work... raises questions as to the feasibility of effectively accomplishing this new emergent work.”

The watchdog groups note that, indeed, the NNSA has a long history of mismanagement, program delays and cost overruns that triple (and more) a nuclear weapons project’s original estimate. One recent example is the National Ignition Facility at Livermore Lab, a $1 billion project that has already cost $8 billion for construction and related R&D and has not achieved ignition. Another example is the cost of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement – Nuclear Facility at Los Alamos Lab, initially estimated at under $700 million but rising to nearly $6 billion before the Obama Administration stepped in and delayed the project for 5-years or more.

The Navy memo further suggests the W78/88-1 LEP moving forward now may put the nuclear cart before the horse since

Continued on Page 3...
Crossroad...  Cont. from Page 4

across the country over the transport of plutonium bomb cores to Livermore Lab. Recently, 46 groups signed a letter to DOE Headquarters opposing this dangerous plan and recommending safer alternatives.

Livermore Lab stands at a crossroad. Without the large quantities of plutonium and security infrastructure it once had, its nuclear weapons R&D capabilities are necessarily limited. Thus, the Lab faces two options. It can appease the weapons designers, give security variances (potentially violating environmental and safety laws) and test plutonium bomb cores on-site, or forge a new path, focused on environmental justice, cleanup of poisons already dumped into our environment and long-term, safer, unclassified civilian science missions.

Your voice is crucial in determining which future will happen. Public pressure is one of the few ways we the people can influence nuclear weapons policy decisions. This is why we believe it is crucial that the community come together now. Together, we will build opposition to this poorly thought out plutonium bomb plan - and develop our collective vision for a better future.

According to Kelley, “People are understandably outraged that the DOE is moving forward with plans to bring deadly plutonium bomb cores to Livermore. This forum is a chance for the community to ask questions, learn more, and make its voices heard.”

The forum will also feature Tri-Valley CAREs Staff Attorney, Scott Yundt, on the legal questions posed by the plutonium plan, and Peter Strauss, an environmental scientist and technical advisor on the Superfund cleanup of toxic and radioactive contamination at Livermore Lab. There will also be Spanish translation available, refreshments and plenty of time for community discussion.

The forum, presented free of charge, takes place from 7-9 pm on Wed., Jan. 30 at the Livermore main library. We sincerely hope you can join us for this timely and important topic. For more information, please see the enclosed flier, contact Tri-Valley CAREs at 925-443-7148 or check www.trivalleycares.org.

Print Bites: All the News that Fits to Print

Energy Departures. Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Tom D’Agostino, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) chief, have both stepped down. The two men left amid heavy criticism, Chu for investing taxpayer dollars in the now failed Solyndra solar company and D’Agostino for systemic management problems and a security failure that allowed for infiltration, and an extended stay, by protestors at the Y-12 facility in Tennessee. No successor has been named for Chu. D’Agostino will be succeeded on an interim basis by Ms. Neile Miller, the current NNSA principle deputy administrator. Permanent appointments for both positions will be made by President Obama and require Senate confirmation. Check back for updates.

Hearings on Nuke Plant? The San Onofre nuclear power plant in Orange County, California has been closed for the past year because thousands of nearly new tubes experienced rapid embrittlement, causing some to leak radioactive steam last January. The tubes had been replaced, along with a new steam generator, which used a different alloy for the tubing, increased the number of tubes and had changes in design for the support structure. Worse, Southern California Edison made all of those changes without applying for a design change in its license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), a process that would have required public hearings. Activists argue that the tubing breakdowns were foreseeable, and had the operator notified NRC and undertaken public hearings, the problem tubes might have been addressed before leaking radioactivity. The NRC is reviewing the petition for public hearings now. We hope NRC will grant the hearings, and that they will take place before the agency has completed its internal review of the restart plan. Restart at San Onofre could happen as early as March 2013, though activists across the state are working to prevent it.

Radioactive Zipper? The Dept. of Energy (DOE) proposes to allow the sale of tons of scrap metal from government nuclear sites, which could be contaminated with radioactivity. If sold, the metal would be recycled and commingled into commercial products. DOE claims that allowing radioactive metal into commercial products will expose consumers to a “negligible individual dose” of additional radiation. But the DOE does not take into account all of the potential uses of this recycled metal, which could end up in belt buckles, hip-replacement joints, and eye glasses. Such items could increase the user’s cancer risk more substantially, especially if the user is a pregnant woman, child or health-compromised individual. The proposal is under debate. We will keep you posted.

Win for Lab Retirees Health Care. A state appeals court overturned a 2008 trial court decision that dismissed the Livermore Lab Retirees lawsuit over losing their promised University of California (UC) healthcare plan and being forced to buy more expensive and weaker private plans. Their newly revived lawsuit can now proceed, and the workers are seeking reinstatement of UC health coverage for all Livermore retirees. In 2007, when Lab management changed from UC to a private partnership (the Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC), the University terminated the retiree’s health insurance with the promise that they would receive equivalent coverage from the new manager. That promise proved false. The workers’ efforts for justice proceed.

Slowing Nuclear Drawdown. New START ratification is scarcely two years old, yet a new report from the Federation of American Scientists finds that despite the treaty, both Russia and the U.S. have slowed the rate at which they are reducing their nuclear arsenals. The report notes that the drawdown has slowed since 2007 and both counties are now investing huge sums of money in new nuclear weapon systems that are designed to operate toward the end of the century. The U.S. stockpile of strategic and

Continued on Page 3...
Dear Tri-Valley CAREs supporter,

I am thrilled to let you know that Tri-Valley CAREs will celebrate its 30th Anniversary in 2013! And the two most important words I want to say to you are THANK YOU.

*It’s you and others like you who have made it possible for Tri-Valley CAREs to grow and thrive over the past 30 years.* Together, we have advocated unceasingly for a nuclear weapons-free world. We have spoken truth to power at the gates of Livermore Lab, in public hearings, at community meetings, at the United Nations and in the halls of Congress.

Tri-Valley CAREs was founded by a small group of dedicated Livermore residents in 1983. I remember our early meetings in Millissa Sacco’s mother’s kitchen. Over the years, we have grown to more than 5,000 wonderful friends and supporters like you.

*We have won enormous victories,* from stopping the creation of horrific new U.S. nuclear weapons to ensuring that directly affected community members have a voice in decisions that impact their lives. Yet, you and I both realize that there is much work still to be done if we are to achieve a more just, peaceful and nuclear-free future.

*May I count on you to be with us in the coming struggles?*

With you, our grassroots advocacy will transform Livermore Lab from nuclear weapons to a “green lab.” We will put an end to the development of nuclear bombs and related technology. And we will achieve the equitable society we seek for ourselves and our children.

Together, we will continue to sue the government when necessary to enforce our nation’s environmental and public right to know laws. United, we will build the political clout necessary to successfully demand the cleanup of nuclear wastes in our air, soil and water.

*“What impresses me most about Tri-Valley CAREs is how they work to protect us all from nuclear weapons and pollution. Against great odds, these watchdogs have defeated government proposals for radioactive waste incinerators and new bunker-busting nuclear bombs. I offer my heartfelt congratulations on your 30 years of amazing activism. Keep on going, Tri-Valley CAREs.”* – Bonnie Raitt, legendary singer, songwriter, slide guitarist and co-founder of Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE)

With your support, our advocacy will continue to grow and succeed. For all of this and more, I say “thank you.” I want you to know that I truly appreciate your participation in Tri-Valley CAREs and the contributions you have made toward the vision we both share.

Today, I ask you to donate to our special **30th Anniversary Campaign** so that we can start the New Year ready to win new victories on the issues you and I care about so deeply.

With your help, and with others like you, I *know we can meet our goal of raising $30,000* to honor our 30th year over the next 30 days. Please give as generously as you are able.

*(Turn over)*
I hope you enjoy your Citizens’ Watch newsletter. Also, with your contribution, we will host a town meeting in late January, petition the government to prevent plutonium bomb cores from being hauled in trucks from Los Alamos, NM to Livermore, CA and conduct a full suite of activities with allied groups to stop nuclear weapons everywhere, no exceptions!

I have been honored to take this journey with you and others over the past 30 years. And it is with great pleasure that I ask you to join me now in “keeping on” with Tri-Valley CAREs into the future.

For peace, justice and a healthy environment,

Marylia Kelley, Executive Director

I work for a foundation that has helped fund Tri-Valley CAREs every year since 1993. This speaks volumes about TVC’s effectiveness and ability to craft successful strategies and tactics. TVC has been at the forefront of the most significant victories during these past decades and will continue to be an unwavering, savvy force for public policy change in the years to come!” -- Paul Carroll, Program Director, Ploughshares Fund

P.S. You can mail us a check with the reply card below or you can give on-line through our secure site at www.trivalleycares.org. And we invite you to check in on how we are doing meeting our $30,000 goal by viewing our special webpage (click the thermometer image on our homepage) where we also are acknowledging the good folks who have contributed so far.

“Over the decades that I have been involved with Tri-Valley CAREs, I have particularly admired the group’s careful research and thoughtful analysis. They have maintained a fidelity to principles, speaking to Livermore Lab scientists and community members alike. Tri-Valley CAREs’ hallmark is to get things done. They have changed laws and raised awareness about the effects of nuclear development in Livermore and globally. Tri-Valley CAREs, thank you for 30 years of faithful action to effect the great turning.” -- Joanna Macy, noted author, scholar and systems thinker

Tri-Valley CAREs
2582 Old First St.
Livermore, CA 94550

YES! Here is my tax-deductible donation of

___ $30  ___ $50  ___ $100  ___ $300  ___ $1000  ___ Other

Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
Address _________________________ Email ___________________________
State ________________ Zip __________ City _________________________

☐ I am contributing $30 or more. Please send me a commemorative Tri-Valley CAREs 30th Anniversary Canvas Tote Bag
A Community Forum to Stop a Plan to Truck Deadly Plutonium Across Three States to Livermore...

LIVERMORE LAB AT THE CROSSROAD:
NEW PLUTONIUM BOMB SHIPMENTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP?

Which future for Livermore Lab?
In September 2012, Livermore Lab’s security level was downgraded. The Livermore Lab is no longer authorized to handle, test or store nuclear bomb-usable quantities of plutonium, including, of course, whole plutonium bomb cores (also called pits).

Yet...
Plutonium Pits are Coming on a Freeway Near You: According to a new Dept. of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) plan, the government will ship dangerous plutonium bomb cores from Los Alamos, New Mexico to the Livermore Lab, possibly multiple times per year.

Further...
The Plan May be as Illegal as it is Dangerous: The NNSA has done no environmental impact statement or review of the potential consequences of using Livermore Lab to test plutonium bomb cores without the necessary security infrastructure.

Meanwhile...
Cleanup Hangs in the Balance: The Livermore Lab and its Site 300 are both federal Superfund cleanup sites. Will the Lab invest in cleaning up the toxic and radioactive wastes already leaking - or continue dangerous weapons activities that contaminate the air, soil and groundwater?

Finally...
Your Voice will Make a Difference: There are safer alternatives, and public involvement now can stop the plutonium bomb cores from being put on the road. We will discuss another vision for the future of Livermore Lab and offer tangible action steps for getting there.

Join Us...

When: Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2013 from 7-9 pm
Where: The Livermore Main Library, 1188 South Livermore Ave. in the Large Community Room

Presenters: Jay Coghlan, Executive Director, Nuclear Watch New Mexico; Peter Strauss, Environmental Scientist & Superfund Technical Advisor; Marylia Kelley, Executive Director, Tri-Valley CAREs; and Scott Yundt, Staff Attorney, Tri-Valley CAREs

Refreshments served, and Spanish interpretation available.

More: www.trivalleycares.org; 925-443-7148; Tri-Valley CAREs, 2582 Old First St., Livermore, CA
Livermore Peace Vigil for Nuclear Abolition

Date: February 8, 2013

Time: 7:00-8:30 AM

Place: Gates to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Corner of East Ave. and Vasco Road, Livermore

This is the first in a series of vigils to be held at the gates of Livermore Lab on the first Friday of each month.

Who will lead the vigils? Vigil leaders are Chelsea Collonge, a former intern at Tri-Valley CAREs, and her partner, Marcus Page. The monthly vigils are an active practice of peace. Workers will be encouraged to stop and discuss nuclear weapons and their abolition. Chelsea and Marcus have been effective peacemakers over the past decade at Livermore, the Nevada Test, and the Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico. Starting in February, they will also staff the Catholic Worker house at Sheep Ranch, in the Sierra foothills.

Why vigil for nuclear abolition at Livermore Lab? The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) was established in 1952 as one of our nation’s two nuclear weapons research and design laboratories, the other being Los Alamos. Despite the impression given by LLNL’s public relations materials, the Lab’s focus continues to be nuclear weapons R&D. Approximately 88% of LLNL’s current budget is spent on Nuclear Weapon Activities, about $1 billion annually.

The LLNL main site, where the vigils will occur, was listed on the National Priorities List (AKA the Superfund List) of the most contaminated sites in the country in 1987. The contamination includes toxic poisons and radiation dumped into the air, soil and water. Children born in Livermore were found to have 6 times the expected rate of malignant melanoma. More than 1600 LLNL employees have filed claims for illnesses caused by on the job exposures, and the number is growing.

In 2008, Tri-Valley CAREs and the Project on Government Oversight publicized the results of security drills, documenting that a team of mock terrorists accessed the Lab’s nuclear material and detonated a “radiological device” while another group stole plutonium and left the site unmolested. The government then made the final decision to remove the weapons-usable quantities of plutonium from Livermore Lab. That goal was finally achieved last year, and more than 100 security guards were reassigned or laid off. However, a new plan to test plutonium bomb cores at Livermore Lab will put the public at risk.

What will you accomplish? Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment) has been a leading voice for nuclear accountability, transparency and political change for 30 years. Please join us. Bring signs, candles, aspirations and good vibes. Come prepared to stand (or sit) witness for nuclear abolition, and to discuss your presence with any workers who choose to engage.

For more info contact Tri-Valley CAREs • 2582 Old First St., Livermore, CA 94550
Telephone: (925) 443-7148 • Website: www.trivalleycares.org
PETITION

To Prevent the Transport of Plutonium Bomb Cores Back and Forth Between Los Alamos, New Mexico and Livermore, California

WHEREAS, these nuclear bomb cores will be transported back and forth on trucks through three states - New Mexico, Arizona and California.

WHEREAS, the government lowered the security at Livermore Lab on September 30, 2012 so that the facility has no authorization to handle, test or store nuclear bomb usable quantities of plutonium, including these bomb cores.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration has proposed trucking plutonium bomb cores from its Los Alamos Lab in NM to Livermore Lab in the Bay Area, despite its lack of security.

WHEREAS, the bomb cores would undergo diagnostic tests at Livermore Lab that involve a “shaker pit,” “thermal chamber,” and “drop test” that simulate conditions during the bombs’ ‘storage, transportation or use environment.”

WHEREAS, after completing these diagnostic tests in Livermore, the plutonium bomb cores would be loaded back on trucks and sent on the road again to Los Alamos.

WHEREAS, publically available DOE documents state that it would take only 4 trucks to move the diagnostics from Livermore Lab to a more secure location at or near the bomb cores, thus reducing or eliminating their transport.

WHEREAS, these diagnostic tests were not performed on any of the nation’s plutonium bomb cores for a period of about six years, from 2005 to 2011, and the DOE has not publically justified a “need” to resume them now.

WHEREAS, the proposal to bring plutonium bomb cores to Livermore Lab, with its reduced security status, has never been analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act, our nation’s most basic environmental protection law.

WHEREAS, this proposal may, therefore, be illegal as well as dangerous.

THEREFORE, WE CALL ON THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO CANCEL ITS PLAN TO TRANSPORT PLUTONIUM BOMB CORES TO LIVERMORE LAB. WE FURTHER CALL ON THE AGENCY TO PRIORITIZE ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD REDUCE OR ELIMINATE TRANSPORTATION RISKS.

Your Name (print or write clearly) Address/City/State/Zip Email √ for updates

1.

2.

3.

4.

Send to/Request more from: Tri-Valley CAREs, 2582 Old First St., Livermore, CA 94550 • www.trivalleycares.org
PETICIÓN

Para Prevenir el Transporte de los Núcleos de Bombas de Plutonio de Ida y Vuelta Entre Los Alamos, New Mexico y Livermore, California

MIENTRAS QUE, estos núcleos de bombas nucleares serán transportados de ida y vuelta en camiones por tres estados – New Mexico, Arizona y California.

MIENTRAS QUE, el gobierno bajó la seguridad del Laboratorio de Livermore en el 30 de septiembre, 2012 para que la instalación no tenga la autorización para utilizar, probar o guardar niveles de plutonio que sean suficiente para una bomba, lo cual incluye estos núcleos de bombas.

MIENTRAS QUE, la Administración de la Seguridad Nuclear Nacional del Departamento de Energía (DOE) ha propuesto el transporte por camión de los núcleos de bombas nucleares de su Laboratorio de Los Alamos en NM al Laboratorio de Livermore en el Bay Area, a pesar de su falta de seguridad.

MIENTRAS QUE, los núcleos de bombas nucleares pasarían por pruebas diagnósticas en el Laboratorio de Livermore que incluyen un “hoyo de agitación” (shaker pit), “una cámara térmico” (thermal chamber), y “una prueba de caída” (drop test) que simulan las condiciones del “almacenamiento, la transportación o el ambiente de uso” de las bombas.

MIENTRAS QUE, después de completar estas pruebas diagnósticas en Livermore, los núcleos de bombas de plutonio serían cargados en camión y transportados de nuevo por carretera a Los Alamos.

MIENTRAS QUE, los documentos del DOE que están disponibles al público indican que requeriría sólo 4 camiones para transportar los diagnósticos de Livermore Lab a algún lugar más seguro o más cerca de los núcleos de bombas, así reduciendo o eliminando su transporte.

MIENTRAS QUE, estas pruebas diagnósticas no han sido realizadas en ninguna de los núcleos de bombas de plutonio de esta nación por un periodo de seis años, de 2005 a 2011, y el DOE no ha justificado públicamente una “necesidad” de resumirlas ahora.

MIENTRAS QUE, la proposición de llevar los núcleos de bombas de plutonio al Laboratorio de Livermore, con su estado de seguridad desminuida, nunca ha sido analizado bajo el Acto de la Política Nacional del Medio Ambiente, la ley más básico de nuestra nación acerca de la protección del medio ambiente.

MIENTRAS QUE, esta proposición puede, por lo tanto, ser tanto ilegal como peligrosa.

POR LO TANTO, HACEMOS UN RECLAMO HACIA EL DEPARTAMENTO DE ENERGÍA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS PARA QUE CANCELEN SU PLAN DE TRANSPORTAR LOS NÚCLEOS DE BOMBAS DE PLUTONIO AL LABORATORIO DE LIVERMORE. ADEMÁS, RECLAMAMOS QUE LA AGENCIA Dé PRIORIDAD A LOS ALTERNATIVOS QUE REDUCIRÍAN O ELIMINARÍAN LOS RIESGOS DE TRANSPORTACIÓN.

Nombre (imprima claramente) Dirección/Ciudad/Estado/C. Postal Email √ para actualizaciones

Enviar a / Pedir más de: Tri-Valley CAREs, 2582 Old First St., Livermore, CA 94550 • trivalleycares.org
Wednesday, January 30
Community Forum: Livermore Lab at the Crossroad
7 PM – 9 PM, Livermore Library
Large Community Room (A+B)
1188 So. Livermore Ave.
(925) 443-7148 for details

Join us for this very important community gathering. (See our flier in the enclosed insert)

Thursday, February 7
Letter to the Editor writing party
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM, Tri-Valley CAREs
2582 Old First St., Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

Write a letter to the editor of your favorite newspaper in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. We will offer a short briefing and handouts on recent events to get your creative juices flowing.

Friday, February 8
Livermore Peace Vigil
7 AM - 8:30 AM, Livermore Lab
Corner of East Ave. and Vasco Rd.
(925) 443-7148 for details

Join us for the first monthly peace vigil for nuclear disarmament. (See our flier in the enclosed insert)

Thursday, February 21
Tri-Valley CAREs meets
7:30 PM – 9 PM, Livermore Library
Community Room A
1188 So. Livermore Ave.
(925) 443-7148 for details

Tri-Valley CAREs monthly meetings are a great way to stay involved with the group. Help us to create a more peaceful and just world, learn about important issues facing us as a community and nation, and have fun doing it. Long-time and new members alike are welcome. Snacks and refreshments served.

Secret Memo... Cont. from Page 1
the Nuclear Weapons Council’s stockpile strategic planning process has not been completed and “its conclusions may recommend against the concept [i.e., a ‘common platform’ warhead].”

The pathway to the Navy’s refusal to participate in the W78/88-1 LEP began in July 2010 when the NNSA designated Livermore the lead nuclear weapons design lab for the Life Extension Program for the W78, which was originally a Los Alamos Lab design. A team of about thirty Livermore Lab physicists, engineers and chemists put together the Phase 6.1 options study to “life extend” the W78 warhead, and they did not resist the chance to push for an exotic new weapon design that would fill their coffers for many years.

According to Livermore Lab’s magazine, the weaponizers considered refurbishing the existing design for the W78, but preferred, instead, to undertake the more complex and novel concept of reusing components from other stockpiled designs to create a new W78/88-1 that could be placed on either Air Force ICBMs or Navy subs.

As its Phase 6.1 study drew to a close, the Livermore Lab managers presented their recommended option to the “Project Officers Group” of the Nuclear Weapons Council. As the Navy memo documents, Livermore’s preferred option was to move forward with Phase 6.2 in the design of the new “common platform” W78/88-1 warhead.

Clearly, the Navy does not concur. The memo concludes: “We support delaying this study effort until the mid 2020s as Commander, USSTRATCOM notionally suggested in his July 13, 2012 briefing to the NWC.”

Tri-Valley CAREs further recommends that Congress discontinue all funding for the W78/88-1 warhead and, instead, instruct the NNSA and Livermore Lab to go back to the drawing board and avoid any proliferation-provocative, needlessly costly new designs.

Get Our E-Alerts!
Make sure we have your correct email address by sending us an email at: scott@trivalleycares.org

Print Bites... Cont. from Page 2
tactical nuclear warheads presently stands at roughly 4,650, down from more than 19,000 in 1991, and Russia has dropped from 30,000 warheads to about 4,500 over the same period. However, together the two countries still posses around 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons. We agree with the Report’s recommendation that Obama make nuclear arms reduction a more prominent and visible part of his policy agenda.

Debacle at Hanford. The Dept. of Energy has contracted with Bechtel National Inc. to build and operate the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP) at the Hanford Reservation along the banks of the Colombia River in Washington State. According to a new Government Accountability Office report and a leaked internal DOE memo, the WTP, slated to treat millions of gallons of highly radioactive liquid waste from the production of nuclear weapons, has hundreds of technical problems that could lead to serious safety breaches, ranging from hydrogen explosions to nuclear chain reactions. The potential consequences of continuing with these plans prematurely could be devastating, said Rep. Ed Markey in a recent letter urging DOE to put the project on hold. Additionally, WTP costs have ballooned from $4 billion to over $13 billion, and will likely continue to climb.

Return of Mobile Nukes? At the Air Force, the 1980’s are back in vogue, and not in a good way. The Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. announced a study to modernize its fleet of nuclear tipped Minuteman III ICBMs. The report will reportedly include an analysis of reinvigorating mobile based systems, like either the “Midgetman” program of the mid-80s that sought to place small ICBMs on massive blast-resistant vehicles or the late-80’s program that sought to place 50 missiles on moving rail cars. U.S. development of a mobile missile system would likely lead to an 21st Century arms race for “mobile-basing.” Let’s hope the Air Force realizes its plans are as passé as the Swatch and Val-speak and a whole lot more dangerous.
Livermore Lab at the Crossroad: Nuclear Bomb Cores or Cleanup?

On Wednesday, January 30, Tri-Valley CAREs invites you to a time-critical community forum featuring environmental, legal and nuclear weapons experts from New Mexico and California. We will discuss, and organize to prevent, the potentially illegal transport of plutonium bomb cores from Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico to Livermore Lab. These bomb cores are part of the government’s “Life Extension Programs” for U.S. nuclear bombs and warheads. After arriving by truck at Livermore Lab, the plutonium cores will undergo a series of tests, including vibration, thermal and drop tests, to determine how the bomb cores will perform in a “storage, transportation or use environment.” Then the plutonium bombs will be put back on trucks and sent on the highway again to Los Alamos.

According to various officials we interviewed, the Dept. of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration has yet to complete any detailed written plan, and so the number of bomb cores that will be put on the road is not known. One official told Tri-Valley CAREs the plutonium bomb core shipments could go back and forth through New Mexico, Arizona and California “around six times a year.” The number could vary greatly, however, depending on the nuclear weapon “campaigns” going on that year. There has been no stringent environmental review of the hazards, which could be extreme.

On September 30, 2012, Livermore Lab’s security status was downgraded from a Category I/II facility to the lower threshold of a Category III facility, meaning it is no longer authorized to handle, test or store bomb-usable quantities of plutonium, including these plutonium bomb cores.

This important forum will educate participants about the dangers posed by plutonium bomb cores and develop community-wide strategies for challenging this plan now, before it is set in stone and the trucks are on the highway. As a first step, Tri-Valley CAREs has begun collecting signatures on a petition to show community opposition to the plan (see insert in English and Spanish). Many hundreds of petitions have been collected, but more are needed. Please sign, gather as many signatures as you can and mail them back to us - or bring the petitions to the forum.

The event will feature Jay Coghill, Executive Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, and our Executive Director, Marylia Kelley. Coghill has worked on issues involving Los Alamos Lab, nuclear weapons and the environment for 22 years. Kelley has spent 30 years at the helm of Tri-Valley CAREs, focusing on Livermore Lab, its role in the nuclear weapons complex and its impacts on community and worker health and the environment.

Together, they will share information from numerous meetings with decision-makers in Washington, DC and their perspectives on this bomb plan as a New Mexican and Californian.

There is growing concern among national, regional and local organizations... Continued on Page 2...

On the Inside

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- Navy Nixes Planned Livermore Lab Weapon. See page 1
- Print Bites, from Radioactive Zippers to Nuke Plant News. See pages 2 & 3
- Community Meeting, Peace Vigil, and Other Events. See page 3
- Livermore Lab at the Crossroad. See page 4
- And More!