



**VETERANS FOR PEACE**  
**The Donald & Sally-Alice Thompson Chapter 63**  
**202 Harvard Dr SE**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87106**

Progressive Democrats of America, Central New Mexico Chapter  
Monthly Community Gathering  
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Thank you for this opportunity to represent the Albuquerque Chapter of Veterans for Peace on this distinguished panel. I will make a few observations of today's two prior presentations, then brief you on our priorities as they pertain to New Mexico.

With regard to Mr. Gagnon's elucidating talk, I'd like to add that we are distressed over Senator Heinrich's unwavering support for all things nuclear in our state. He pushed for the US Space Command establishing a headquarters here, the Los Alamos Lab's expansion due to its mission shift, and the development of the B-61 warhead.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the outrageous involvement of Kirtland AFB base in nuclear activities. Kirtland hosts the "Nuclear Weapons Complex."

The Complex includes:

the Nuclear Weapons Center whose mission is to, **quote** "deliver nuclear capabilities warfighters use every day" **close quote**;

the Sandia Lab;

**and** the nation's largest depository of operational nuclear weapons (estimated at up to 2,500 warheads).

Kirtland houses

the Space Vehicle Directorate,

the Airborne Laser System Program Office (the Starfire Optical Range hidden in the Monzano Mountains),

the Operational Responsive Space Office,

the School for Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies,

**and** the Office of Secure Transportation (of nuclear ordnance).

We want all this activity to **stop** and for Kirtland to **divest** itself of those units and missions!

Concerning Ms. Arends' very enlightening presentation, we would point out that our chapter **priorities** are:

**First** and most urgently, in the interest of social justice, we implore our Congressional office holders to work diligently to extend the life of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 (RECA) which will sunset on July 10, 2022. The scope of the Act must be expanded to include New Mexican uranium miners, millers, and ore transporters, on-site participants in weapons tests, and Downwinders of the Trinity Test and the Nevada Test Site detonations.

**Second**, we must relentlessly pressure the DOE to clean up the 40,000-50,000 55-gallon drums, or equivalent containers, of radioactive waste that are strained and deteriorating at the Los Alamos Lab. Since September 2020 the lab has shipped zero waste to the WIPP due to lack of funding from DOE and NNSA's noncompliance with Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board requirements. We implore all elected officials at every level and state regulators to take affirmative and drastic steps to motivate DOE and NNSA to fund the cleanup of the entire original footprint of the lab.

**Third**, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) must close on September 31, 2024, as agreed when Congress authorized the WIPP in 1979! To safeguard the future of our state from further degradation, the WIPP **must not** remain open, it **must not** be expanded in size or volume, and it **must not** accept waste that has heretofore been ineligible for deposit. No "downblended" waste should be permitted to enter the WIPP. The US Departments of Interior (EPA) and Energy must be moved to begin the ten-year closure phase of the WIPP in 2024.

**Fourth**, the US Air Force must **stop** training F-16 pilots at Holloman AFB to deliver and launch nuclear weapons.

**Fifth**, we ought to cease calling the Los Alamos Lab a laboratory and refer to it instead as a "Plutonium Weapon Plant." The label "lab" is now a mere fig leaf for a dangerous, polluting, resource-consuming, weapons manufacturing operation. When 83% of its operating budget for FY2021 was allocated to weapons production and related facility conversion and upgrade, the scientific character of the 1942 lab changed. Our Chapter strongly opposes the shift in mission of the Plant and the establishment of a "factory of death" in our midst. The squandering of our most precious natural resource--**WATER**--toward offensive weapons manufacturing is an outrage and an affront to all New Mexicans! All three of the missions assigned or contemplated for the Plant are inappropriate.

The Plant will soon  
produce nuclear triggers for atomic weapons;  
“down blend” highly enriched uranium, as received from many other sites  
across the nation, for possible acceptance into the WIPP;  
and reconfigure some of the 20,000 plutonium pits now stored in the national  
stockpile or the 4,500 plutonium pits held in the national reserve.

Chapter 63 appreciates this opportunity to share our vision with you and invite your  
support as we work together to create a nuclear-weapon-free and nuclear-waste-free future.

**Thank you.**