

# THE BOMBPLEX

## An Overview of the U.S. Department of Energy's "Complex Transformation" Plan (formerly "Complex 2030")

**Background:** On October 19, 2006, the Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intent to "transform" the U.S. nuclear weapons complex at 8 locations across the nation, including Livermore Lab. The DOE originally called this scheme "Complex 2030."

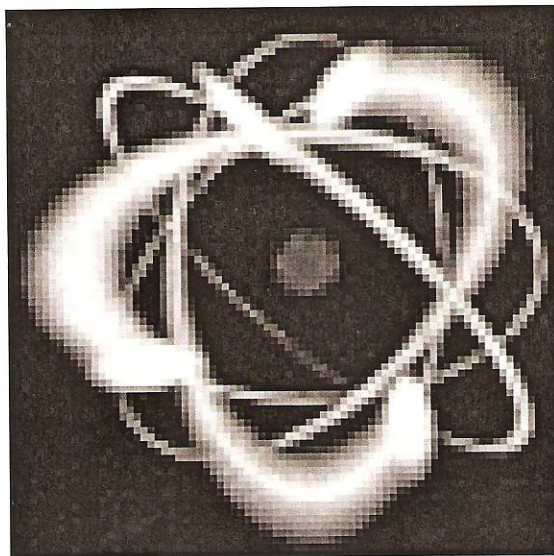
**DOE's story:** Here is what DOE says it wants to do in the name of "Complex Transformation" —

- Develop and produce new nuclear weapons through the "Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW) program, starting with a "replacement" design for the W76 submarine-launched nuclear warhead. The RRW program envisions a new weapon design coming out of the weapons labs every 5 years and the production (i.e., actual building) of 125 new RRW weapons each year. *(Note: Since publication of the notice in the Federal Register, Livermore Lab has been chosen to design the first of these new warheads, the RRW1 or, as DOE now calls it, the WR1.)*

- Build a new plutonium pit (bomb core) production facility, capable of churning out 125 certified bomb cores every year. Added shifts could increase the number of bomb cores produced. *(Note: It is not a coincidence that the bomb core factory will be sized to serve the RRW program).*

- Build new facilities at multiple sites to expand the U.S. nuclear weapons production infrastructure, including for uranium processing. *(Note: If the U.S. were to forego design and production of new nukes, many of these proposed facilities would not be "needed" at all.)*

- Consolidate plutonium and highly enriched uranium to fewer sites in the complex and to fewer locations within the sites to reduce the costs of security. *(Note: While consolidation of nuclear materials into more secure locations is generally a good idea, the DOE is proposing a particularly harebrained scheme in its "Complex Transformation" plan, which would move plutonium around the country more than once in order to serve the RRW program.)*



- Dismantle some of the old bomb types that have previously been taken out of the arsenal. *(Note: This part of "Complex Transformation" is a good idea.)*

In addition, the DOE proposes to build a whole new Kansas City Plant, where roughly 85% of the non-nuclear parts in nuclear bombs are produced.

The new Kansas City Plant would be across town from the current one.

**The "consolidation" deception:** The DOE calls the revitalization of the nuclear weapons complex "consolidation" because it would encompass (in some cases) smaller or fewer buildings than were used during the heyday of the Cold War.

We call it "Bombplex" because the DOE plans to build entirely new bomb production facilities and additional new nuclear weapon design capability — and to create new nuclear weapons into the far-flung future with no end in sight.

Moreover, it is notable that the "Complex Transformation" plan starts with 8 nuclear weapon sites across the country and ends with the same 8 sites



— with new facilities inside them, which is hardly a true consolidation.

The 8 sites are located at Livermore, CA; Los Alamos, NM; Sandia, CA and NM; the Nevada Test Site; Pantex, TX; Kansas City, MO; Y-12, TN; and, Savannah River, SC. (See maps on page 4.)

**The nuclear policy implications:** The DOE notice in the Federal Register and the agency's "Complex Transformation" planning documents all point to the Bush Administration's December 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) as the agency's mandate for designing new nuclear weapons and instituting the "Bombplex" in order to produce them.

In so doing, the DOE ignores U.S. and international law while it attempts to pursue a reckless and aggressive course of action that will escalate the nuclear danger at home and around the world for decades to come. When it comes to "Complex Transformation," policy matters.

## **The Nuclear Posture Review versus The Non-Proliferation Treaty**

The Bush Administration Nuclear Posture Review calls for a "new triad" that will consist of land, air and submarine-based nuclear weapons (which are the old triad) along with Ballistic Missile Defense and a new "responsive infrastructure."

The NPR further calls for DOE to be able "to design, develop, manufacture, and certify new warheads in response to new national requirements; and maintain readiness to resume underground nuclear testing if required." It states that a new, modern plutonium pit production facility will be needed and that capabilities at the Y-12 facility and the Pantex Plant will be greatly expanded. The NPR also calls for a nuclear earth-penetrating bomb and for lower-yield, more usable nuclear weapons.

Clearly the Bush NPR expands the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. policy (and consolidates nothing). However, it is important to realize that as a driver for DOE to build new nukes and new bomb facilities slated to come on line all the way up to the year 2030 — the NPR is not a sufficient legal, let alone moral, basis for planning.

Simply put, the Bush NPR is a policy paper. It is not a U.S. law. It is likely that the next President, whether Democrat or Republican, will be directed by Congress to produce a new nuclear posture review.

Is there a more enduring foundation on which to base planning the size and capability of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex of the future? In fact, there is.

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), signed by the United States, entered into force in 1970. According to the U.S. Constitution, our international treaties along

with the Constitution itself comprise the "supreme law of the land."

The NPT's Article VI states that: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament..."

In 1996, the International Court of Justice affirmed in essence that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was illegal and stated moreover that the NPT's Article VI obligation was to not merely pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament but to achieve them.

The NPT provides a clear legal and moral basis for planning. Yet, strangely, the DOE nowhere mentioned the NPT in its Federal Register notice or its underlying "Complex Transformation" planning documents.





The public has a key role to play in insisting that the NPT, not the Bush NPR, be used as the foundation for planning the future of the U.S. arsenal and the nuclear weapons complex.

**The public response so far:** The DOE held "scoping" meetings in November/December 2006 at 11 locations around the nuclear weapons complex, including Livermore and Tracy, CA. The DOE received a record-breaking 36,000 comments against the "Bombplex." Overwhelmingly, Americans demanded that DOE include an NPT-compliant plan for the nuclear weapons complex.

We will know for certain whether the DOE listened to the public when the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for "Complex Transformation" is released to the public later this year.

**The next steps:** The DOE web site says that the draft PEIS on "Complex Transformation" will be released in November. Federal law requires that public hearings be held at that point in the National Environmental Policy Act process. We expect that DOE will conduct one public hearing in Livermore and one in Tracy.

The dates for these hearings are uncertain. We have asked DOE not to conduct public hearings during the holiday season. We believe that the hearings may begin soon after the New Year. However, be forewarned and prepared, as we cannot say for certain what the DOE's schedule will be.

The draft PEIS is likely to be multi-volume and about 3,000 pages or so. There will also be an Executive Summary. We will have multiple copies available at our office. As soon as the draft PEIS is released, Tri-Valley CAREs' staff will read it and produce short, reader-friendly analyses of key issues. We will also create "talking points" in advance of the public hearings.

What we are asking of our members and the community is for folks to read as much as they are able — whether that's the entire document, the Executive Summary or just the "talking points" — and

to attend and speak at either the public hearing in Livermore or Tracy. This is your opportunity to influence nuclear policy and the future of the nuclear weapons complex. Moreover, it is your chance to speak for the health, security and safety of your community.

Your voice, your thoughts, and your act of rising to the podium to "speak truth to power" are immeasurably important to the outcome of this process. Each of us has an individual, unique voice. And, together, we are a powerful crescendo and a force to be reckoned with.

### **"Complex Transformation" and the future of Livermore Lab:**

Many of the decisions that are embedded in the DOE's "Complex Transformation" plan will have a major effect on the future of Livermore Lab. In essence, Livermore Lab is the "brain" of the nuclear weapons complex; the location from which new RRW design(s) will spring forth. Thus, the fundamental question of whether Livermore Lab will be "nuclear weapons forever" or may transition into a "green lab" with an increasing civilian science mission is at the core of "Complex Transformation."

Here are a few of the key ways in which Livermore Lab is tied into DOE's nefarious plans —

- **The RRW program and "Complex Transformation."** The DOE calls the Reliable Replacement Warhead the "enabler" for "Complex Transformation." The DOE plans to re-design and rebuild every nuclear weapon type in the arsenal. Livermore Lab has been chosen to design the first in this series of new nukes. If the "Complex Transformation" plan goes forward as envisioned by DOE, Livermore Lab will be locked into an increasingly narrow nuclear weapons future — with all of the attendant local pollution and international proliferation impacts.

- **Plutonium pits and "Complex Transformation."** The DOE plans to use Livermore Lab to "work the bugs out" of the new production techniques it wants to perfect for the new plutonium bomb core factory it envisions for "Complex Transformation."



So, while the full-scale production facility will be built elsewhere, the Livermore Lab will ramp up (instead of decrease) its plutonium activities in order to prototype new pits and serve the new bomb plant. Livermore Lab has already designated space in Building 332 to do this work and has begun assembling the components of a new plutonium bomb core foundry (called L-cast). If the "Complex Transformation" goes forward as planned, the "needs" of new bomb cores will dominate the decision-making over the future of Livermore Lab's plutonium.

• **Site 300 bomb blasts and "Complex Transformation."** The DOE presently has 4 hydrodynamic test sites — Livermore Lab's Site 300, Los Alamos Lab, the Nevada Test Site and the Pantex Plant. The agency has stated that it will consider whether or not to close one or more of these high explosives testing ranges as part of "Complex Transformation." This presents a unique opportunity to advocate that Site 300 be completely converted from bomb testing to beneficial, environmentally friendly uses. Because of the enormous duplication that exists in the nuclear weapons complex, this change can be accomplished without increasing the number of tests at any of the other DOE facilities. Public pressure is needed to assure that DOE will choose to close Site 300 to all further bomb tests,

without ramping up explosive test activities elsewhere.

• **Looking at alternatives to "Complex Transformation."** As noted above, if DOE's vision of "Complex Transformation" is allowed to occur, our community, our country and, indeed, the world will be subjected to "nuclear weapons forever." On the other hand, however, the National Environmental Policy Act mandates that an agency (the DOE in this case) consider "reasonable alternatives" to its proposed plan during the PEIS process. This opens the door for the public to insist that DOE analyze options for the Livermore Lab and the nuclear weapons complex that are far different from what DOE envisions. If the DOE fails to do so, litigation may be filed. Reasonable alternatives can include a "green lab" in Livermore, no RRWs, no plutonium at Livermore Lab, no bomb tests at Site 300 and an overall change throughout the nuclear weapons complex to "curatorship" of the nuclear arsenal wherein scientists and engineers ensure the safety and reliability of U.S. nuclear weapons (but do not seek to "improve" or "redesign" them) until such time as they are dismantled. Instead of a "transformed" and "revitalized" nuclear weapons complex, the DOE should analyze "curatorship" for the short-term and nuclear disarmament as its 2030 plan.

