

# “Consolidation of the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex”

By

Peter D.H. Stockton, Senior Investigator  
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

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# WHO IS POGO?

- The Project On Government Oversight is an independent nonprofit organization that investigates corruption and other misconduct in order to advance a more accountable federal government.

In order to preserve our independence, POGO does not accept any funding from governments, corporations, labor unions, or anyone else who has a financial interest in the outcome of our investigations.

POGO's financial support comes from family foundations and individual supporters.

# Homeland Security: Nuclear Weapons Complex Security

- U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Security at Risk, October 2001
- U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Homeland Security Opportunities, May 2005
- Testimony before the House Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Emerging Threats on Nuclear Security; the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Regarding Future Plans on the Nuclear Weapons Complex; and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
- [www.pogo.org](http://www.pogo.org)

# Methodology Chart



# Types of Sources

- My contacts from previous work in Congress and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Military units that test security
- Congressional staff and investigators
- Current and former DOE security experts
- Other interested federal agencies
- Security guards and other insiders at the facilities

# Nuclear Weapons Complex “Untouchable”

- Nearly all information is classified and access is limited
- Congress is intellectually insecure about challenging the complex – very little independent scientific capacity in Congress
- Protected by powerful Senator Pete Domenici, as well as others who see it as a cash cow and jobs provider for their districts

# U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Security at Risk

- Actually finished on September 11, 2001, but delayed the release
- Revealed that mock terrorists were able to access Category I nuclear materials in tests over 50% of the time
- Revealed that the primary danger at Category I sites is possibility of an “Improvised Nuclear Device” detonating

# Consolidation

- Clear solution to problem is to de-inventory Category I materials from sites that can not be defended or have no national security mission
- Consolidate in more secure facilities in remote areas
- Materials become less vulnerable AND less costly to protect
- Dramatically accelerate disposition of excess Special Nuclear Materials--both HEU and PU

# CASE STUDY: Los Alamos' TA-18

- At the bottom of a canyon and could not be protected
- Used understandable example of one test failure where mock terrorists were able to steal 200 lbs. of HEU with a garden cart from Home Depot
- Leaked to press, forcing DOE to react, and beginning to challenge perception of nuclear complex as a fortress

# TA-18 continued

- Then - Energy Secretary Richardson creates task force to consider removing materials from TA-18 with Stockton (then DOE Special Asst. to Secretary) at head
- Complex came up with every excuse not to change status quo, generally because the Labs believe if they lose Special Nuclear Material it jeopardizes their existence
- Then- Secretary Richardson orders TA-18 to be de-inventoried by 2004
- Bureaucracy slow-rolled until Richardson left office

# TA-18 continued

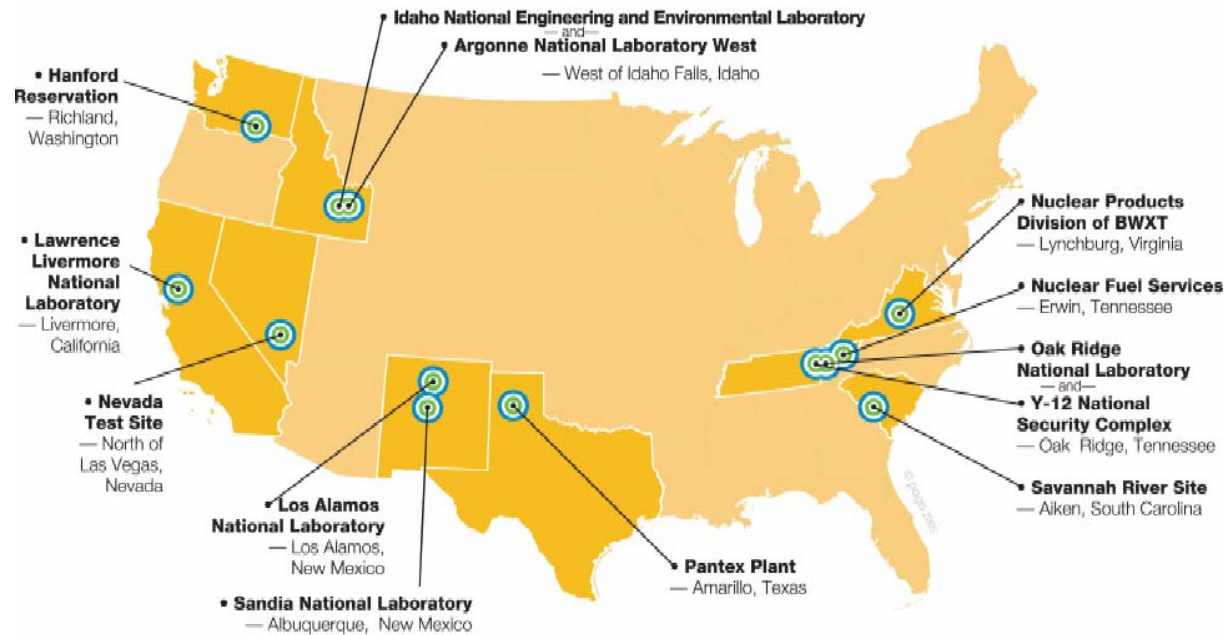
- Stockton leaves DOE and joins POGO
- Release 2001 report as well as a number of news alerts about security failures, largely at Los Alamos
- Run into new Energy Secretary Abraham at a store and begin talking and arrange for meeting to formally discuss our concerns
- He and his staff believed TA-18 was already de-inventoried and so had not paid attention – but the labs had made sure no progress had been made

# TA-18 Continued

- POGO continues campaign of working with interested Congressional committees and offices, DOE Secretary and other parts of DOE, media to keep up drumbeat
- April Fools Day 2004 Abraham again announced TA-18 must be de-inventoried by end of FY2005
- After long series of embarrassing management, security and safety debacles at Los Alamos, the lab was closed down for seven months, putting final nail in coffin
- October 2005 TA-18 finally de-inventoried

# U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Homeland Security Opportunities

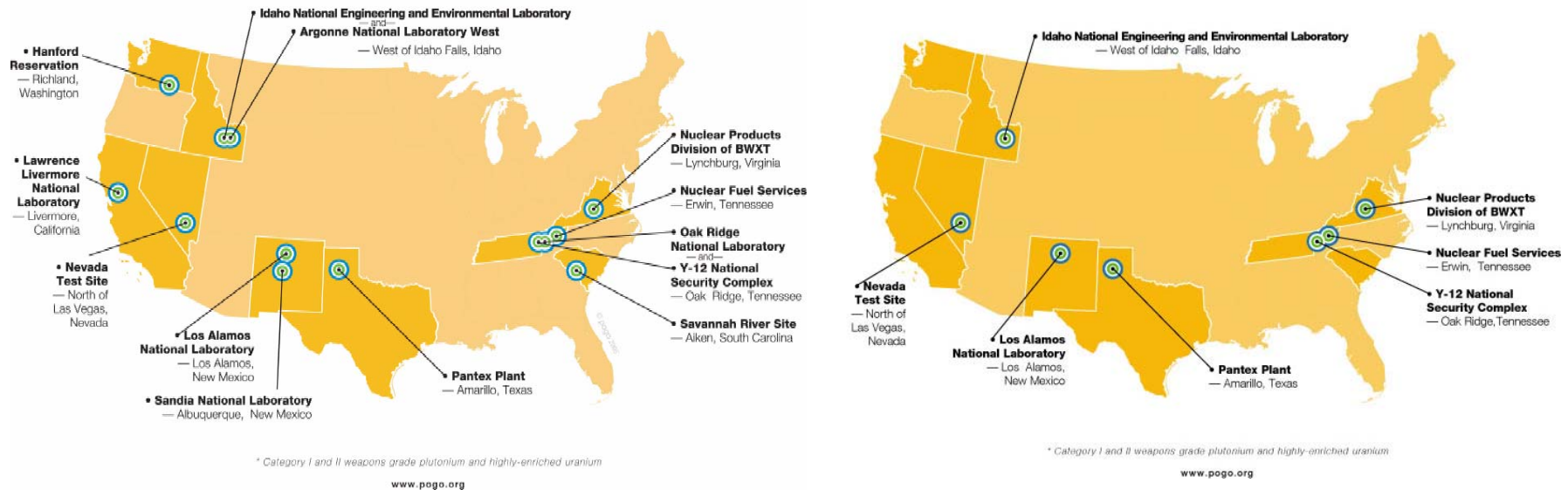
As May 2005, Special Nuclear Materials spread across United States at 13 sites



*\* Category I and II weapons grade plutonium and highly-enriched uranium*

# POGO's Consolidation Recommendations

Reduce number of Category I sites from thirteen to seven by 2008



# Two State of the Art SNM Storage Facilities in U.S.

- The Device Assembly Facility at the Nevada Test Site



- Idaho National Lab  
Building 691



# CURRENT PRIORITY: Lawrence Livermore National Lab

- Currently 7 million people live within 50 miles of Lawrence Livermore National Lab
- Although it was originally built in an unpopulated area, over time it has been encroached upon by urban sprawl, so that there are residential neighborhoods bordering the lab

# Photo of Livermore Today



# Livermore: “It will never happen”

- POGO told by senior DOE officials that while they agree Livermore should be de-inventoried, it will never happen for political reasons
- Livermore Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher states, “In a perfect world, there will be plutonium at Livermore.”

# Livermore continued

- POGO continues campaign from inside, meeting with top DOE officials – pressing the enormous cost savings angle to consolidation and inability to protect site
- DOE responds with idea to protect Livermore with Gatling gun – a ridiculous proposition with schools, ballfields, senior center within “kill” range of such a weapon
- April 2006 DOE announces decision to remove materials from Livermore, but on a ridiculously extended timeline -- 2014

(remember TA-18 example when implementation is put off into the future!!)

# Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex and Oak Ridge National Lab

- POGO to be releasing its third report “U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Y-12 and Oak Ridge National Lab at High Risk” in October 2006