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**Students and Disarmament Organizations to Intensify Efforts
to Make Universities Nuclear-Free**

Santa Barbara, CA (December 21, 2005) – Students and representatives of disarmament organizations throughout California and New Mexico vowed to re-double their efforts to sever the University of California’s ties to nuclear weapons work today, following the Department of Energy’s announcement that the University of California-Bechtel National consortium as the winner of the new management contract for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

“The shift to corporate management of LANL makes anti-nuclear activism much more necessary,” said Kate Flanagan, second-year student at UC Santa Cruz.

The Coalition to Demilitarize the UC, comprised of student groups at seven UC campuses and representatives of six NGOs in California and New Mexico has organized a number of events in recent months to mobilize nationwide opposition to any university involvement in weapons work at LANL. On November 30, the coalition joined with students in Colorado and Texas to conduct the “Universities Out of Bed with Bombs” Day of Action, which took place in three states and at seven university campuses, including rallies at four campuses and call-ins and “fax jams” to university administrators at three others.

According to members of this network, the entity that manages the labs is less important than the work that takes place there. Having reconstituted its ability to produce plutonium pits -- the fissile cores of nuclear weapons -- in 2003, LANL is slated to begin producing as many as 40 plutonium pits a year by 2007.

“A deeper issue is that Los Alamos is ramping up its production of plutonium pits for a new generation of nuclear weapons,” said Will Parrish, coordinator of the UC Nuclear Free campaign at the Santa Barbara-based Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

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Erin Hamby of the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center says that the work of the lab has no place in our institutions of higher education. "Coloradans know the price of pit production. Rocky Flats, the original plutonium pit production facility, left Colorado with a legacy of harmful contamination that will persist for 250,000 years. It is wrong to associate universities, their faculty, and students to this type of legacy," Hamby said.

She added, "It is a mixed blessing. While many Coloradans will be happy to hear that their university system will not be tied to the lab, they also believe that no university should be involved with nuclear weapons research or production." Community members of Boulder, CO have vowed to support the efforts of Californians as they continue to fight to extricate their university system from weapons work at the national labs.

Faculty members of the University of California have also vowed to support student efforts to sever the UC's management of Los Alamos, as well as the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Northern California. Many of them have expressed disappointment upon learning of the victory by UC-Bechtel.

"UC's mission, as one of the world's top universities, is to serve humanity as a whole," said Dr. Urs Cipolat, lecturer on International Law and Global Ethics at UC Berkeley. "Our continued involvement in the making of WMDs stands in stark contrast with our moral mandate. It violates international law. Worse, it prevents progress in addressing the true challenges of the 21st century: pandemic poverty, infectious diseases, and environmental degradation."

In the coming months, the Coalition to Demilitarize the UC will organize educational events and protests on university campuses and surrounding communities, as part of its continued effort to end the UC's involvement in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

The Coalition to Demilitarize Education consists of student groups at University of California, University of Texas, and University of Colorado campuses, as well as the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Rocky Mountain Peace & Justice Center, the Western States Legal Foundation, Tri-Valley CAREs, UT Watch, and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety in New Mexico.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation initiates and supports worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, to use technology responsibly and sustainably, and to empower youth to create a more peaceful world. Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age. It has consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization. (www.wagingpeace.org)

The UC Nuclear Free campaign is resolved, as part of the larger task of ending all nuclear weapons design, research, and production worldwide, to work through education and non-violent direct action to sever the University of California's ties to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) in California and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico. (www.ucnuclearfree.org)

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