



Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience Vol. 11 No. 2 Summer 1998

THREE NATIONS CURRENTLY TESTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS: U.S., India & Pakistan; Stop Testing!

"I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science." -Gandhi

by Louie Vitale, OFM

ATOMIC AGE II

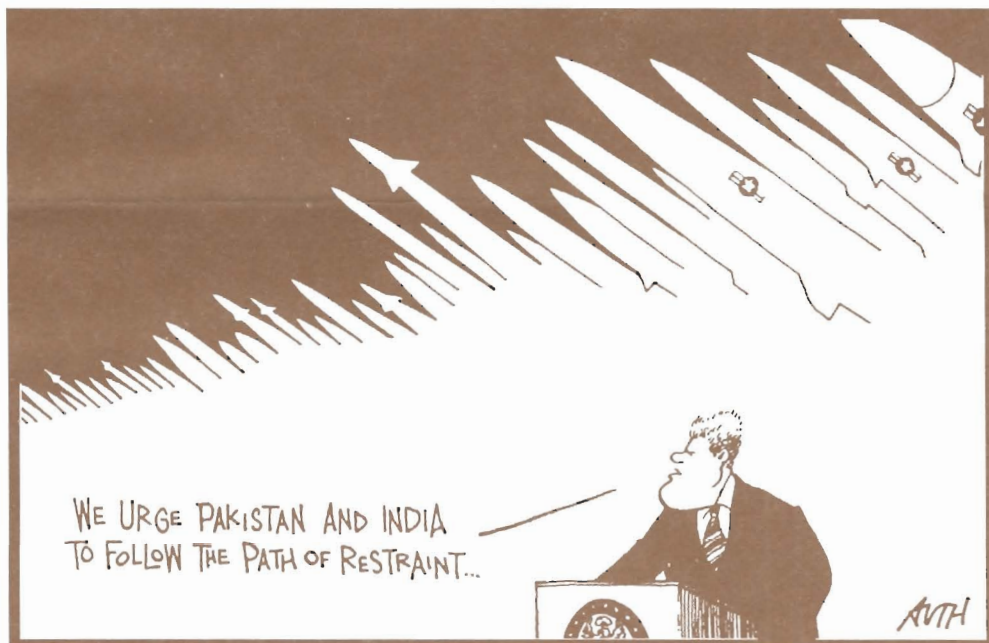
The shock the world received with the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan are a fitting punctuation point as we come to the end of the millennium and the century that marked the opening of the Atomic Age.

The United States opened the era of nuclear weapons with the use of the Atomic Bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. As we are well aware this was quickly followed by the development of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union. In succeeding years the nuclear powers swelled to the major announced powers; U.S., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, France and China. Coincidentally as the United Nations Organization flowed out of World War II these five became the Security Council, basically the big brothers in the new geo-politics. It has long been known that there were other countries who either had "the bomb" or could produce it if needed. India tested a nuclear weapon in 1974—dubbed the "Smiling Buddha". Israel has a known nuclear capability. But the "Nuclear Club" remained the big 5, and in fact focused on the two "Superpowers", the Soviets and ourselves who each amassed tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, well capable of destroying the world many times over. The arms race was primarily conceived of in terms of these

two powers. The safety of the world was considered to be subject to the peril of their interrelationships, and thus the Doomsday Clock proposed by the U.S. Atomic Scientists moved closer or farther from midnight depending on the perilousness of those respective countries. It bore down to 3 minutes to midnight in the height of the Cold War, and in recent years backed off to 17 minutes to reflect the easing of tensions by the two Superpowers. In 1995 it moved back up to 14 minutes, and is now being reconsidered as a result of these new tests.

Those who were concerned during these years to make the world safer, worked at arms

agreements that would bi-laterally lower the number in the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Nevada Desert Experience early on recognized the arms race was fueled by the development of new and more deadly weapons. The trigger to bringing these weapons to operational level was testing them. Drawing a page from the Quakers in the fifties and Ammon Hennacy of the Catholic Worker Movement, it picked up on some initial efforts by Franciscans and others in Nevada and carried on protests at the Nevada Test Site over the past two decades. The thesis was, end testing and (continued on next page)



Appeal to our Supporters;

The Nevada Test Site has four nuclear weapon tests scheduled this year. They have over 3,000 employees and a \$1.5 billion dollar budget. We at Nevada Desert Experience are currently testing peace with two employees, your support, and a \$43,000 budget. We need your financial assistance as we prepare for the year 2000 events. Thank you.

Nevada Desert Experience
P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127

THEIR TEN BOMBS WORSE THAN OUR 10,000?

by John LaForge

U.S. politicians are hissing about Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons tests. "You hypocrite," says Jesus, "first take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye".

When the U.S. tests nuclear weapons—as it did March 25, 1998—they are justified, in the words of Energy Secretary Pena, as "an essential component of the department's program of ensuring the safety and reliability of the (nuclear weapons) stockpile." The U.S. has plans for four more underground bomb tests this year and has been widely criticized for continuing these so-called sub-critical explosions, hydronuclear experiments and supercomputer blast simulations. The March 1998

bomb test was done without any independent or international observers to verify whether they were truly sub-critical.

While U.S. hawks complain about proliferation over there, the Albuquerque *Journal* reports that U.S. "fingerprints" are all over India's bomb. IBM supplied India with its SP2 supercomputer "thousands of times more powerful than the computers used to design all of the warheads and bombs in the U.S. nuclear arsenal." The Los Alamos National Lab hosted 407 visiting Indian scientists from 1994 to 1997, and this was after U.S. technicians taught India how to extract plutonium from reactor fuel and designed and helped build India's plutonium reprocessing system.

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we will end the arms race, at which point we would be well poised to move to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We were delighted when a similar group emerged in the Soviet Union to shut down their nuclear test sites as well. It seemed the closing of the nuclear age might well be in sight. This conviction increased with the dramatic transformation of the Soviet Union in recent years. The Cold War diminished. If the two Superpowers no longer targeted each other with their nuclear missiles, and were in the process of reducing their numbers, perhaps the genie might indeed be put back into the bottle.

France interrupted this hopeful scenario with more tests in the Pacific. But they soon succumbed to what might have been seen as world protest, but perhaps more accurately placed them perched to be players in the Second Atomic Age.

ATOMIC AGE II

The signing of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty seemed to many the end of the nuclear arms race. But the denial that continues to see us as no longer threatened by the specter of nuclear war was severely jolted by the new tests in India followed by the response to the challenge in Pakistan. India did not sign insisting that it was pointless to renounce testing nuclear weapons as long as the major powers, notably the U.S., refused to set a date for the dismantling of their nuclear arsenal (agreed on in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty). If buying into the global power game required nuclear weapons as opening chips, the Indian subcontinent intended to buy in. Indeed, following their recent tests, India made a bid for a seat on the U.N. Security Council.

It is not just a case of expanding the number of countries in the Atomic Club. We have entered a new era. Threatened as world safety was by the posture of the two nuclear Superpowers, there was at least some stability in their mutual awareness of the madness of attack. Despite the many signatories (148 nations) to the Non-Proliferation treaty, there is a rapid proliferation of nuclear powers. Added to this is the weakening on the controls of the vast Soviet arsenal, now in the hands of numerous powers, and often on the market to the highest bidder. The fragility of nuclear stability has been exposed. Many consider this new Atomic Age more perilous than the Nuclear Winter described as the result of a global exchange by the Superpowers.

The nuclear arming of India and Pakistan, whose rivalry has burst into war three times in

recent decades, makes the specter of a hot nuclear war very real. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have never engaged in an actual war. The Atomic targeting has been basically by way of threat. The arsenals aimed to intimidate, in the name of deterrence, while recognizing that this is indeed Mutual Assured Destruction (MADness) if ever carried out. Now armies such as that of India and Pakistan, and the other new nuclear states, wish to pack these weapons into their arsenals for potential use in territorial disputes, in which they have been engaged through the years. This is indeed a different script. It now is simply a question of which arrow you pull out of the quiver for the next attack. Yet, a nuclear exchange in South Asia could result in 100 million casualties.

The long standing "major powers" are very critical, even punitive towards the new testing in the Asian subcontinent, and properly we should be. But there is hypocrisy here. The new Atomic Age notes wider nuclear proliferation, and the weakening of controls on those already armed. Further, it is characterized by much more sophistication in

nuclear weapons development. The U.S. has **not stopped testing**. New weapons development continues. Designs are changed (the B-61-11 "the earth penetrator") and a new bomb results. Under the pretenses of Stockpile Stewardship and Management more money is spent each year on nuclear weapons development than during the Cold War (\$4.5 billion vs. \$3.5 billion). New undertakings such as the National Ignition Facility at Livermore and the Sub-critical tests in Nevada (called sub-critical because they stop short of a chain reaction) are coupled to the new super-computers to continue the development of new weapons.

The United States re-commits itself to first use and retaliation with nuclear weapons (Presidential Decision Directive, 1997). President Clinton has directed that we have to be ready to test again, but that means to preserve our "best resource", our nuclear bomb developers. And how do we preserve them? By enabling them to continue to create nuclear weapons.

ABOLITION 2000

Is there hope in sight? Can we change?



Holy Week Walk participants vigil on Sunday, April 5, 1998 (right) outside Bechtel/Department of Energy Headquarters in Las Vegas before walking (above) 65 miles to the Nevada Test Site.

(Photos by Stevi Carroll)



Can we get the Genie back into the bottle? The nuclear nightmare we are continuing to promote seems almost impossible to overcome. Many governments now reason that they need nuclear weapons (as well as such defense mechanisms as "Star Wars") to protect themselves. But we know that only places us in greater danger. Meanwhile, as in India and Pakistan, it robs the poor of desperately needed economic resources. Seeing this, some nations, such as South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and some of the former members of the Soviet Union have disarmed themselves of nuclear weapons. Even India has long been an advocate of nuclear abolition and still insists it will sign on when the existing nuclear powers set a definite schedule of elimination of nuclear weapons. It is the number one mandate of all nations, and especially the remaining "Superpower" to make that number one on our agenda.

We must take very seriously the calls for abolition. A number of generals and admirals, as well as world leaders have vowed to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Spokespersons such as General Lee Butler, who headed all strategic nuclear forces under George Bush, insist that we were caught up in madness. He insists "that the likely consequences of nuclear war have not politically, militarily or morally acceptable justification. And therefore, that the threat to use nuclear weapons is indefensible". These experienced folk have been joined by ex-nuke designers such as Dr. Ted Taylor and many people of good will to call for the abolition of all weapons in the year 2000. This would mean for the U.S. to work very eagerly with the U.S.S.R. to exercise the zero option. It would mean truly ending nuclear weapons development. It would mean calling on all nations to give up nuclear weapons **after** they see that we really match our words with our actions. In this way perhaps we can put the genie back in the bottle. It is not easy, but it is our only hope in order to save this beautiful planet and all the wonderful creatures who inhabit it.

Nevada Desert Experience is composed of people of hope, hope born of action. We invite you to join us in this commitment to work for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. We will be sponsoring "Millennium 2000: Walking the Ways of Peace" processing onto the Nevada Test Site as the clock strikes the new millennium 00:01 AM January 1, 2000. Join us in this symbolic action (see ad on right), but even more, join us in a pledge to do all we can in the year 2000 to bring about the elimination of all weapons. In the spirit of St. Francis, may we all be "Instruments of Peace".

NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE PRESENTS:

Millennium 2000: Walking the Ways of Peace



DECEMBER 28, 1999 - JANUARY 1, 2000

Mark your calendars and join Nevada Desert Experience in the event of the century! Share in special days of reflection, presentation and action, including a midnight candlelit procession onto the Test Site on the eve of the millennium.

CLIP AND MAIL TO: NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE, P.O. BOX 4487, LAS VEGAS, NV 89127

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s) _____

☐ I am interested in Millenium 2000: Walking the Ways of Peace

☐ Enclosed is a contribution to help with the event.

Suggestions (speakers, workshops, etc.): _____

HIROSHIMA DAY AT LIVERMORE LABS

On August 6 at 6:30 a.m. gather at East and Vasco for a rally and non-violent direct action. For info call the Livermore Conversion Project (510) 832-4347

DESERT VOICES

Franciscan Friars of California
NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE
P. O. BOX 4487
LAS VEGAS, NV 89127-0487

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DIRECTOR NEEDED

Nevada Desert Experience is seeking an Executive Director. Salary negotiable, position open until filled. For job description or information, contact Anne Symens-Bucher, 1500 34th Ave., Oakland, CA 94601, (510) 536-3772, fax (510) 261-1006, e-mail: sbjpic@aol.com

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REACHING OUT TO SO. CALIF. UNIVERSITIES

In mid-October, Cindy Pile, Education Director of Nevada Desert Experience, will be doing a second speaking/preaching tour in Southern California, focused specifically on universities. Twelve Universities are already on the itinerary. If your school is interested, please call Cindy at (510) 261-6120.

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And while U.S. nuclear arms are always said to be "defensive", dire warnings are made about the dangers of similar weapons in South Asia. President Clinton asked others "not to follow down the path of a dangerous arms race." Not only does he still have control of over 9,000 deployed nuclear warheads, but "the U.S. is hard at work on new or modified designs for nuclear arms" (*New York Times*, August 18, 1997).

Last November Clinton okayed the threatened use of U.S. nuclear weapons against non-nuclear, Third World countries. Then in February the President refused to rule out the use of U.S. nuclear attacks against Iraqi territory. This nuclear *ism* is considered fair for the goose but not the gander.

THE NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE PRESENTS:

Alive and in Concert: Jesse Manibusan!

Includes a slideshow and update on the status of nuclear weapons testing. All concerts at 7:30 p.m. unless noted. Admission free, a free will offering will be taken up. Please join us and spread the word! For more information on these concerts or on hosting one in your church, university or local community please call Cindy at (510) 261-6120.

July 10: St. Francis Parish, 860 Oak Grove Rd., Concord, CA

July 11: Our Lady of Grace Parish, 3433 Somerset Ave., Castro Valley, CA

August 28: St. Raphael Parish, 1104 5th Ave., San Rafael, CA

September 11: All Saints Parish, 22824 Second St., Hayward, CA

September 23: 12-1:30 p.m., Dominican College, San Rafael, CA

October 2: St. Bonaventure Parish, 5562 Clayton Rd., Concord, CA

"The American position is hypocritical," said K.R. Malkani, a spokesperson for the Hindu party that governs India. "They are sitting on a mountain of nuclear arms and they are pontificating to India and the world."

Official U.S. condemnation of nuclear tests is like a long addicted chain smoker, his mouth full of cigarettes, lit and fouling the air, who

shouts at children caught behind the garage with a pack of smokes *they got from the house*. The depth of this analogy is unfortunate: Everybody's nuclear weapons tests are self-destructive since they poison the atmosphere—politically and environmentally.

reprinted from the *Nukewatch Pathfinder*

IN THEIR MEMORY: From

St. James Catholic Church,
and at the Nevada Nuclear

*In commemoration of all who died
in the violence of nuclear
weapons detonated on the
peoples of Hiroshima and
Nagasaki 53 years ago;
we deepen and re-
commit ourselves to
make nonviolence a
viable political force
in our day. We conti-
nue to strengthen our
understanding through
reflection and action*



1998 (August 7, 8 & 9, 1998)

From Violence to Wholeness

321 N. H St., Las Vegas, NV

Near Weapons Test Site

Sub-critical nuclear weapon explosions continue to be detonated in the earth at the Nevada Test Site.

Despite the rhetoric of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the reality remains; through the Stockpile Stewardship and Management program, the Department of Energy is constructing new



*aimed at ceasing the
current government
program to proliferate a new
generation of nuclear weapons.*

*We at Nevada Desert Experience invite you to
Violence to Wholeness is a ten-part program in t
by Ken Butigan in collaboration with Patricia Bru
Nonviolence Center.*

ARTWORK BY MEINRAD CRAIGHEAD

SCHEDULE:

Friday, August 7, St. James Catholic Church

4-7 p.m.: Registration

7-9:30 p.m.: Beginning our Journey

Saturday, August 8, St. James Catholic Church

8:30-10 a.m.: The Experience and Dynamics of Violence

10:15-12:15 Nonviolent Social Transformation

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:30 Experimenting with Nonviolence: Organizing
a Group Activity

5:00 p.m.: Dinner

6:30-8:30 p.m.: Creating Communities of Nonviolence

Sunday, August 9, Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site

8:00 a.m.: Prayer Service and optional Nonviolent
Direct Action

Nevada Dese
P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 8912

is constructing new
facilities to continue the
work of the last 53 years—
developing nuclear weapons.

to join us in challenging this momentum. From
the spirituality and practice of nonviolence written
in, O.P. as a project of Pace e Bene Franciscan

(Clip & Mail to address below)

Name: _____

Phone(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ Enclosed is \$40 registration (\$30 if before July 9)

☐ Please send hotel info

☐ I would like sleeping bag space or housing
(we must know by July 25)

☐ Send From Violence to Wholeness workbook (\$20)

Special needs: _____

(Saturday lunch and dinner included)

rt Experience

7, (702) 646-4814, nde@igc.apc.org.