



Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience

Volume 20 Number 1

February 2007

ISSN 1539-9869

April 1, 2007 – Nevada Test Site Rally & Action

Q: Why Witness at the Nevada Test Site?

By Megan Rice, SHCJ

A: Our prophetic ancestors call us to be there in faithful action on behalf of Truth.

Forty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed his soon-to-be life-threatening words of truth, declaring boldly, *“our most powerful weapons are the voices, the feet, and the bodies of dedicated, united people, moving without rest towards a just goal . . . tyrants have been subdued by this form of struggle. . . .”* Regarding the testing and usage of nuclear weapons, he also said, *“I have unequivocally declared my hatred for this most colossal of all evils,”* and, a year before his martyrdom, in 1967, King declared, *“Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind”.*

And so, can we not now come together to Las Vegas on March 26th, with our bodies and spirits to walk the Sacred Peace Walk? **Or come and join the rally at the Test Site entrance on April 1st?** New plans are unfolding to develop and refurbish more powerful nuclear warheads, not to dismantle them, which prompt us as never before, **to put an end to nuclear weapons, before they put an end to us.**

A: We want to cry out for the transformation of the nuclear industrial complex into life-enhancing modes of energy research and production, and invite prophetic scientists and engineers to speak words of new possibilities for the harmonious harnessing of natural resources of our shared home and planet, Mother Earth, for the sake of future generations.

A: We desire to curb the threat of any future war with Iran, and to raise awareness of U.S. nuclear hypocrisy as represented by the existence of the Nevada Test Site and other nuclear facilities in this country.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Complex 2030: A Vision For Nuclear Proliferation
Traveling With the Turtle – Book Review
No More Mushroom Clouds, Nuclear or Not
Sacred Peace Walk Update and Registration Form

A: The Spirit within called many before us.

As far back as 1977, Sr. Rosemary Lynch began her vigils at the Nevada Test Site. She would leave for a day to travel the 65-miles from the Franciscan community on W. Bartlett Ave. in Las Vegas. Close to the entrance of Mercury, NV, Rose would sit, for hours, contemplating the reality around her, pray, and engage curious stoppers-by. Friar Louis Vitale, OFM, Quakers, Japanese visitors, and others came too. They listened and watched, as the workers drove in and out by the thousands, amidst the exquisite Desert beauty. First Nations and down-winders began joining the concerned people vigiling at the NTS. The sacred land was being filled with poison fire of inconceivable levels at the hands of the U.S. Department of Atomic Energy, E.R.D.A., the D.O.E, the University of California, Bechtel, and other corporate entities making a profit from fearsome explosions in and under the Great Basin desert.

Sr. Rosemary Lynch continues her faith-based witness along with a host of others and now she wants to invite you to celebrate her **90th Birthday** at the Test Site. Your gift to her is your help in revitalizing the efforts toward nuclear abolition so that we can end the institution of war and choose life for ourselves and for our Mother Earth!



A: At this time when the threat of nuclearism is resurgent, we recognize that we are all ONE in our oppression under such tyranny. Through our action of faithful witness, let us dispel the myth that nuclearism brings sustainable peace to our world.

April 1st, 2007 – Nevada Test Site Rally & Action
10 am – 2 pm

What tangible difference we make for our world first begins within ourselves. Take this time of reflection and action, take a vacation from your everyday life, to become the change you want to see in the world.

Complex 2030: A Vision For Nuclear Proliferation

by Sarah Harling

Background and history

On October 23, 2006, the National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA), “a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear energy,” announced its proposal for the future of the United States’ nuclear arsenal.¹ Citing the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, a report on the state of US nuclear weapons, the NNSA’s plan, called “Complex 2030,” outlines a comprehensive and aggressive vision for the next 23 years. Some key aspects of Complex 2030 include:

- Dismantling and then “rebuilding” every one of the weapons in the U.S. arsenal;
- Consolidation of all U.S. plutonium stocks in one central location;
- Construction of a new facility capable of producing 250 new bombs per year.

According to initial estimates, Complex 2030 will cost at least 150 billion dollars, and it is possible that the cost may double. When one considers the implications for peace and national and global security, however, the cost becomes immeasurable.

First, construction of nuclear weapons, whether it is framed as “rebuilding” existing weapons or presented accurately as building new ones, is plainly and undeniably a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), of which the United States is a signatory. This means that Complex 2030 is illegal not only under international law, but U.S. law as well, since the Constitution states that “. . . all treaties made . . . under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land.”² In addition to being illegal, weapons development weakens the NPT, which has 187 signatories, the largest number of any disarmament or arms limitation treaty in existence.³ Furthermore, creating new nuclear weapons sends absolutely the wrong message to other countries. It will be seen as a threatening act, and it will move the entire world further into a new nuclear arms race.

Second, plutonium consolidation means plutonium transportation. And that means plutonium traveling on American highways and rail lines. There is always the potential for some sort of human error that might

result in a plutonium spill, and transport vehicles are vulnerable to a deliberate attack as well.

Third, new nuclear facilities are the last thing that we need. 150 billion dollars could and should be used to clean up existing sites of nuclear contamination, to ensure that survivors of nuclear testing and other nuclear disasters receive the best possible medical care, and to develop technology that is beneficial to all of humankind and to our earth.

Grassroots response

Citizen opposition to Complex 2030 has been overwhelmingly negative. In Livermore, California, 53 speakers filled a large room in the community center to register their opposition. Students, from fifth grade through graduate school, parents and grandparents, religious leaders, former lab scientists, retirees, and young people all spoke. Each speaker offered different reasons, but the message was the same: **NO to Complex 2030**. People spoke against Complex 2030 at each of the other hearings (in Albuquerque, Los Alamos, Las Vegas, etc.) as well, and hundreds submitted written comments to the NNSA. Many religious organizations came together to issue a joint statement against Complex 2030, which can be read at: FaithfulSecurity.org/html/action.html#buildup.

What else can be done?

Citizen input for the project is critical. The NNSA is legally obligated to hold another set of public meetings, and will open another public comment period in the spring for the next phase of their operations. Attend hearings, if you are able, submit comments, and encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to do so as well. Policymakers often attempt to keep plans for nuclear proliferation out of the public eye. Don’t let Complex 2030 go forward unnoticed!

One important thing to remember is that Complex 2030 is based solely on a presidential directive, which is itself derived from the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review. Congressional oversight could dramatically change the direction of these plans. Encouraging Congress to take a strong stance on nuclear proliferation, for this project, and for others, can be a powerful step toward creating a world free from nuclear weapons.

Sarah Harling is the Director of Immersions for NDE, and she lives in Oakland, California.

¹ “About NNSA” via: www.nnsa.doe.gov/aboutnnsa.htm.

² The Constitution of the United States. Article VI: Debts, Supremacy, Oaths.

³ “Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).” via: www.un.org/Depts/dda/WMD/treaty.

Do we have your current e-mail address?

If not, send e-mail to

news@NevadaDesertExperience.org

to receive up-to-date alerts and announcements.

And if you want to save paper, we e-mail newsletters.

No More Mushroom Clouds, Nuclear or Not!

by Chelsea Collonge

The “homeless mushroom cloud” has once again settled on the Nevada Test Site, but Nevada and Utah citizens are seeking to make it most unwelcome.

The “Divine Strake” detonation, planned by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) for the Test Site last year, was delayed by citizen and legal action last May after a DTRA official bragged to the press that it would be the first “mushroom cloud above Las Vegas” in years. This 700-ton chemical blast was then slated for Indiana or New Mexico, before officials announced in November that the Nevada Test Site was again the main site in consideration.

Citizens in Utah, Nevada and beyond are vociferously opposing this test for three main reasons:

- 1) the environmental and health concerns of propelling radioactive dust from the Test Site floor, a danger that has finally been admitted by DTRA despite its inadequate soil sampling;
- 2) violation of Western Shoshone rights, which in 2006 were upheld by a ruling of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which ordered the U.S. to desist from harmful activity on Shoshone land; and
- 3) the violent purpose of the test, which Department of Defense budget documents say was designed to yield data that would help war-makers select the proper yield of a “bunker-busting” nuclear weapon to be used against a country like Iran.

No date has been scheduled yet for the blast, although DTRA put together a very hasty Environmental Assessment, comment process, and farcical public meetings (supposedly “hearings”) over the holidays. The main hopes for stopping the test seem to come from three sources:

- 1) a lawsuit filed by downwinders, Western Shoshone and other affected peoples, being led by Nevada lawyer Bob Hager;
- 2) the potential power of governors and congresspeople from Nevada, Utah and Idaho to demand an Environmental Impact Statement, which could take years to complete; and
- 3) citizen mobilization.

Please consider adding your efforts to those of the Stop Divine Strake Coalition, to stop this Infernal Strake once and for all!

Chelsea Collonge is on staff with NDE. She asks you to log on to the NDE website for more information or send an email to info@NevadaDesertExperience.org to get involved.

Watch and Pray

lest we become blind to the mountainous signs of our times
deaf to the thundering crescendo of the stones
crying out in silence.

- Peter Ediger

Book Review

by Kaye Ashe, O.P.

Traveling with the Turtle: A Small Group Process in Women’s Spirituality and Peacemaking

by Cindy Preston-Pile and Irene Woodward, Oakland, California: Pace e Bene Press, 2006, 283 pp.

The third wave of the feminist movement has transformed the way that women understand ourselves and our relationship to the Divine, to others, and to the earth that sustains us. We have been reclaiming ourselves and our past, all the while gaining courage from our foremothers to create a world in which dominance, control, and violence will give way to equality, mutuality, and peace.

The work of freeing ourselves and all from violence and injustice is, however, far from having been accomplished. That’s where *Traveling with the Turtle* comes into play. The authors, well-versed in the literature of feminism and nonviolence, invite us to come together in circles to draw sustenance from our spiritual moorings; heal wounds; join in rituals; and hone our peace-making skills. The turtle is a good companion on this journey, the authors explain, because it symbolizes women’s wisdom, strength, and power to create new life.

The beauty of this book is that it brings together between two covers so many resources: short, provocative readings; guided meditations; rituals; and various exercises and life practice - all designed to foster integrity, compassion and wholeness.

I strongly recommend this book to women who are serious about the spiritual quest and who want to counter the violence that plagues our homes, our neighborhoods, and our world by cultivating peace and loving-kindness.

Kaye Ashe, O.P. resides in Berkeley and is the author of *The Feminization of the Church? To order*

Traveling with the Turtle, see: turtle.paceebene.org or call 702-648-2281. For information on retreats, contact turtle@paceebene.org.

Like bombs exploding
Deep below the surface
Of anyone’s consciousness,
I long to travel deep,
To hear finally
With my heart
What God is asking
Of me
Of us...

God gets to be quite
Pushy these days -
The quiet, whispering
Sound, relentlessly
Still . . . (as with Elijah?)
Why?

Rachel crying:
“You’re killing my baby!”

Refusing to act
Smells of complicity.

- Fr. Jerry Zawada, OFM

Nevada Desert Experience
 1420 W Bartlett Ave
 Las Vegas, NV 89106
 USA
Address Service Requested

Nevada Desert Experience is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible. If you need a receipt for your tax records, please let us know. We are happy to provide receipts for your donations upon request.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

 u.s. postage PAID
 Las Vegas, NV
 Permit # 1009



Sacred Peace Walk : "Many Faiths, One Heart" March 26-April 1, 2007

Ceremonies with: Rev. Alan Senauke, Zen priest, Buddhist Peace Fellowship
 Anne Key, priestess, Goddess Temple Brian Kimmel, Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing
 Fr. Mark Serna, Benedictine priest, and others

Sacred Peace Walk 2007: Many Faiths, One Heart Please RSVP by March 10!

- I am coming on the Peacewalk. I will arrive on _____ via _____.
- I am recruiting sponsors to donate to NDE for each mile of my journey.
- I am able to make a deposit of \$50 at this time (total cost will be on a sliding scale of \$175-125. No one is turned away for lack of funds.)
- I can't make the walk this year, but I would like to *sponsor another walker* for \$_____.
- I am interested in being part of the April 1st Rally (no RSVP required, but please let us know you plan to attend.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Special Needs _____

Mail To: NDE 1420 W Bartlett Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89106

Please join us in transforming fears into compassion and apathy into action in NDE's 2007 Sacred Peace Walk.

NDE's annual pilgrimage to the Nevada Test Site will begin on March 26th as we gather in Las Vegas and prepare for our six-day walk. Amidst the beauty of the desert, the transformation of our spirits will reflect the transformation we wish to see at the Nevada Test Site. We become a nomadic community through shared meals, sacred time together, ceremonies, and the meditative prayer-action of walking. In the quiet of the desert, the inspiration calling us to participate in this journey will become clearer.

On the final day, April 1st, we will gather at the gates of the Test Site with others who join us in a rally and action denouncing current nuclear plans and other warmaking preparations at the Test Site and propose alternatives for the land and industry.

Come celebrate Sr. Rosemary's 90th Birthday, Buddha's Birthday, Mohammed's Birthday, the Full Moon, Palm Sunday, and a Shabbat service!

www.NevadaDesertExperience.org
 (702) 646-4814