



Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience

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Standing Up for Peace and for an End to Torture

Last November, Jesuit Fr. Steve Kelly and Franciscan Fr. Louie Vitale—co-founder of Nevada Desert Experience—tried to deliver a letter opposing the teaching of torture at Fort Huachuca, home of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and school for interrogation. The priests were arrested as they knelt in prayer halfway up the driveway at the Army base in southern Arizona. Eleven months later a federal judge in Tucson sentenced the two priests to five-month prison sentences, which they began serving immediately.

In their trial, Fr. Louie and Fr. Steve declared: “We will keep trying to stop the teaching and practice of torture.” “We have done our part,” they added. “Now it is up to every woman and man of conscience to do their part to stop the injustice of torture.”

A month later, more than three hundred people rallied against torture outside the gates of Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. Three people were arrested during the rally as they tried to enter the base and meet with enlisted personnel and officers to continue a dialogue begun three days earlier about the interrogation techniques taught there.

Betsy Lamb (69), Mary Burton Riseley (65), and Franciscan Fr. Jerry Zawada (70)—NDE community member—were taken into custody at the main gate about 1 p.m. and charged with criminal trespass on a military installation, conspiracy, and failure to comply with a police officer. They were released a few hours later with a summons to appear in federal court in Tucson on December 4 for their arraignment. The three stated, in writing, “We cannot reconcile gates, guns or sentry posts with the Sermon on the Mount... Our simple ritual of approaching the gate of Ft. Huachuca expresses our willingness to undergo

suffering rather than to inflict it, and our longing to bring our country to openness and accountability.”



Mary Riseley, Betsy Lamb and Fr. Jerry Zawada pause for a picture at the Ft. Huachuca vigil, before crossing the line onto the Army base.

The fourth annual vigil at Ft. Huachuca coincided with the annual vigil at Ft. Benning, Georgia, where 25,000 people participated and 11 were arrested as they called to close the infamous Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly known as the School of the Americas).

For more information, please see:

TortureOnTrial.org or SouthWestWitness.org

Please write to Fathers Louie and Steve:

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NDE is hiring a new Coordinator! Please see p. 2

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

NDE EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR

Please let NDE know if your email address has changed!

JOB DESCRIPTION

- * Full Time (or two people at Part Time)
- * help speak to groups about NDE and facilitate workshops with youth
- * outreach with diverse religious groups for our Sacred PeaceWalk
- * help coordinate Spring events in the desert

REQUIREMENTS

- * able to live and work in Las Vegas, NV
- * college graduate
- * able to lead the fundraising effort (training provided)
- * experienced with and interested in nonviolence
- * comfortable with many religions and able to embrace a variety of spiritual traditions

COMPENSATION

- * free housing available in Las Vegas at our St. Francis & Clare Community house
- * salary is negotiable, with health stipend available

APPLICATION

Tell us about your interest as soon as possible, and apply by February 29th, 2008. Interviews can be scheduled to happen before Feb. 29th if we hear from you. The starting date for the position is preferably around May 2008.

Please send your resume and two contacts for references to:

Info@NevadaDesertExperience.org

or by snail to: NDE

1420 W Bartlett Ave

Las Vegas, NV 89106

1. Please tell us about who you are – background and identity, interests and experience.
2. Why do you want to work for NDE? Please touch upon these points:
Describe your experience of the Nevada Test Site. Explain your involvement in the movement for nuclear abolition and/or the peace movement, as well as your knowledge of nuclear weapons issues. Write about your education and/or experience in the field of nonviolence. How does your religious or spiritual path relate to peace and justice?
3. Do you have any questions for us?
4. How did you find out about NDE and/or this job opportunity?

Please contact us for more information!

STAFF CHANGES

NDE says THANK YOU to Sarah Harling, Kamillah Fairchild, Mario Intino Jr, and Chelsea Collonge, who are leaving NDE staff.

NDE welcomes John Amidon as Interim Coordinator of NDE this coming spring, during the national search for a new Executive Coordinator.



NDE Council Update

October 11-13, the NDE Council met in the Bay Area for an extended board meeting to discuss strategy for the future of NDE and the movement to end nuclear testing in Nevada. We explored the topic of countering oppressions with a trainer from Bay Area Nonviolent Communication, who helped us explore the balance between compassionate listening and advocacy for justice. NDE hopes to continue self-education in the area of countering oppressions in order to build a more inclusive and powerful movement.

WAR ALERT

Unmanned bombing drones, tested at NTS, are currently used on overseas bombing expeditions which are being directed from Creech AFB at Indian Springs, NV. This type of plane is called the "Predator," and we are now hearing of a bigger drone called the "Reaper." Please check the NDE website for updates.

Divine Strake By Another Name: Nuclear Weapons Effects Tests at White Sands Missile Range, NM

One month after the Defense Threat Reduction Agency canceled its proposed "Divine Strake" test at the Nevada Test Site, the agency declared in a "Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for DTRA Activities on White Sands Missile Range" that it would conduct an unspecified number of "Hard Target Defeat Tests" in New Mexico.

These tests are referred to in the PEIS as "500-ton Equivalent Tests," and are remarkably similar to the yield and mission of the now infamous Divine Strake Test.

Please see www.NukeWatch.org for updates.



Lawyer Bob Hager Holds Hearing on Divine Strake blast

Robert Hager, a Reno lawyer, went to court in June to try to drive a stake through any future plans for the "Divine Strake" test at the Nevada Test Site 85 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency canceled the test in February. But Hager pleaded with the judge to order the government to provide notice and an opportunity for public hearings if a similar test is resurrected.

Hager also sought the recovery from the government of \$400,000 in attorney and legal fees he claims were racked up forcing DTRA to pull the plug on the Divine Strake experiment. He said the government first postponed the test and later canceled it only after his clients, the Western Shoshone tribe members and others in Nevada and Utah, filed a lawsuit and found fatal flaws in the environmental impact reports.

The judge, who has heard months of arguments since the blast was initially scheduled for June 2006, did not make immediate rulings on those requests. He gave both sides several weeks to file briefs before he decides. But he did agree to hear Hager's experts, who testified that the government failed to adequately study possible health effects of the blast.

Public Hearings, Comments Due

Last winter, the Department of Energy announced a plan called **Complex 2030**, an ambitious proposal to revamp the entire nuclear weapons complex by the year 2030. Now called "Complex Transformation," a revised version of this plan will be released this month in a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Public hearings will be held around the country in February. Please check out our internet site www.NevadaDesertExperience.org for information on how to get involved in stopping this dangerous plan.

On Dec. 3, DOE held hearings in Las Vegas on the proposed **Yucca Mountain** nuclear waste repository. Public comments will be accepted through January 10, 2008. Please join NDE in continuing to protest Yucca Mountain by sending your comments by the deadline to:

EIS Office, U.S. Department of Energy Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
1551 Hillshire Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89134 ~ or via the Internet at <http://www.ocrwm.doe.gov>

Rumors from Washington: Resume Full-scale Testing?

by Chelsea Collonge

The purpose of this article is to assess the likelihood of a resumption of full-scale underground testing. Conclusion: it's very possible.

A *Washington Post* article of January 10, 2002, quoted White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer as saying that the President has not ruled out testing “to make sure the stockpile, particularly as it is reduced, is reliable and safe. So he has not ruled out testing in the future, but there are no plans to do so.” Sen. Harry Reid says that Congress would need to pass legislation in order to resume testing, but I'm not sure about this. To enable the administration's desire for “flexibility,” “Enhanced Test Readiness” has been a budget line item for the past few years. Currently it would take 2 to 3 years for NTS to regain its ability to conduct a full-scale nuclear test. The goal of ETR, which is a “Science Campaign” in the DOE's nuclear weapons budget, is to reduce this time to 18 months.

This year the DOE zeroed out its request for funding for ETR; this sudden change can best be understood in light of the administration's push for the replacement of the entire arsenal by a new warhead that would supposedly not require testing: the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). RRW is being supported by the DOE's “Complex 2030” (now called “Complex Transformation”) plan, to revamp the entire nuclear weapons complex. The goal of this \$150 billion program is to achieve a nuclear weapons production capacity of 125 new plutonium pits (bomb cores) per year by the year 2030. (Coincidentally, the same year that some climate change activists like George Monbiot are arguing must be our target year to achieve a 90% reduction in carbon emissions.)

Complex 2030 named NTS as one possible site for consolidation of all of the nation's plutonium. NTS might also become the site of nuclear weapons dismantlement (moved partially from Pantex) at the Device Assembly Facility (DAF), which was built to assemble bombs for testing. The House Appropriations bill gives \$30 million for this program, and the Senate bill doesn't seem to mention it. Criticality studies at the DAF (moved partially from Los Alamos a few years ago) were predicted to cause the transfer of 11 tons of Depleted Uranium and 2.6 tons of Plutonium and Enriched Uranium to NTS.

Additionally, a 2005 Secretary of Energy Advisory Board Report recommended that the DAF be used to assemble the RRW until a new nuclear weapons assembly plant was built. Complex 2030 named NTS as a possible site of this new bomb plant; however, both Appropriations bills

zeroed out funding for it, and regardless Los Alamos is a more likely target for new pit production as projects are already ongoing there. However, the budget includes millions for “Pit campaign support activities” at NTS.

When it comes to RRW, many in Congress have said they would support RRW only if there were no nuclear testing. Los Alamos and Livermore competed for the winning RRW design, and this May Livermore's design was picked because it is more conservative, with fewer new features, making it less likely to require testing.

Indeed, the whole argument for RRW is that our stockpile is aging, so we need to replace it with new weapons, which the labs believe they can certify without testing thanks to advances in science. The Bush Administration has threatened (in a 4-page statement released on July 27 called “National Security and Nuclear Weapons: Maintaining Deterrence in the 21st century”) that if Congress blocks RRW, then we'll have to resume full-scale testing in order to certify our existing weapons. Deputy Secretary Energy Clay Sell has reaffirmed that the US “reserves the right” to resume testing.

Members of our movement argue that the “no testing needed” RRW is a case of the Trojan Horse, or a Bait and Switch. Bob Civiak with Tri-Valley CAREs argues:

“Some in Congress think that they can allow the labs to develop new designs, but limit the scope of the program. History shows that not to be the case....Once an RRW is developed, it is likely that military planners will require a nuclear test before they accept it into the stockpile.” Civiak quotes NNSA Director of Policy and Planning, John Harvey: “Our goal is to carry out this program without the need for nuclear testing... But there's no guarantees in this business, and I can't prove to you that I can do that right now.” Along with former Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre: “I do believe we should test the new weapons to demonstrate to the world that they are credible.”

Sources:

Civiak, Robert. 2006 Budget Report for Tri-Valley CAREs, 2007 RRW Report for Tri-Valley CAREs. See TriValleyCares.org

Hartung, William and Frida Berrigan. World Policy Institute. “Complex 2030: The Costs and Consequences of the Plan to Build a New Generation of Nuclear Weapons.” April 2007.

Pincus, Walter. The Washington Post. “Warning issued on Nuke Testing.” July 27, 2007.

Rogers, Keith. Las Vegas Review Journal. “Nevada Test Site Facility Might be Used to Dismantle Nuclear Weapons.” June 19, 2007.



Students from the Woolman Semester program in Nevada City, CA, at the Las Vegas Catholic Worker House in September. Teacher Kate Zook Gibbs writes, "During our time at the Catholic Worker we met with members of Nevada Desert Experience after visiting the NTS and the Nuclear Testing Museum. Meeting people who have been actively involved in the nuclear debate for years and hearing their stories was extremely insightful for both the students and faculty."

Catholic Pacifist Quotes

Pope Paul VI 1965: "Let us pray that the world may never again see such a disgraceful day as that of Hiroshima; that men may never again place their trust, their calculations and their prestige in such nefarious and dishonorable weapons."

The Vatican 1976: "The arms race is an act of aggression against those who are the victims of it. It is an act of aggression which amounts to a crime, for even when they are not used, by their cost alone, armaments kill the poor by causing them to starve." "In the eyes of the Church, the present situation of would-be security is to be condemned: (1) In the name of peace, which it does not ensure. Particularly on account of atomic weapons... (2) In the name of natural morality and the ideal of the Gospels: The armaments race (ABC weapons, but also conventional modern weapons because of their capacity for scientific destruction), is against man and is against God. This mad race must therefore be outlawed from the standpoint of ethics, for two main reasons: when the damage caused is disproportionate to the values we are seeking to safeguard it is better to suffer injustice than to defend ourselves. Or rather, than to defend ourselves by such means. Because we still have the right to and duty of active, albeit nonviolent, resistance to unjust oppression in the name of human rights and human dignity."

Eileen Egan provided these quotes. She was a friend of Dorothy Day and a nuclear abolitionist.

A Call to Action Peace and Nuclear Disarmament

By Rep Dennis Kucinich

If you believe that humanity has a higher destiny, if you believe we can evolve, and become better than we are; if you believe we can overcome the scourge of war and someday fulfill the dream of harmony and peace earth, let us begin the conversation today. Let us exchange our ideas. Let us plan together, act together and create peace together. This is a call for common sense, for peaceful, non-violent citizen action to protect our precious world from widening war and from stumbling into a nuclear catastrophe.

At this moment of peril we must move away from fear's paralysis. This is a call to action to replace expanded war with expanded peace. This is a call for action to place the very survival of this planet on the agenda of all people, everywhere. As citizens of a common planet, we have an obligation to ourselves and our posterity. We must demand that our nation and all nations put down the nuclear sword. We must demand that our nation and all nations

1. Abide by the principles of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
2. Stop the development of new nuclear weapons.
3. Take all nuclear weapons systems off alert.
4. Persist towards total, worldwide elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Our nation must

1. Revive the Anti Ballistic Missile treaty.
2. Sign and enforce the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
3. Abandon plans to build a so-called missile shield.
4. Prohibit the introduction of weapons into outer space.

We must speak out now to protect this nation, all nations, and the entire planet and

1. Challenge those who believe that war is inevitable.
2. Challenge those who believe in a nuclear right.
3. Challenge those who would build new nuclear weapons. Challenge those who seek nuclear rearmament.
4. Challenge those who seek nuclear escalation.
5. Challenge those who would make of any nation a nuclear target. Challenge those who would threaten to use nuclear weapons against civilian populations.
6. Challenge those who would break nuclear treaties.
7. Challenge those who think and think about nuclear weapons, to think about peace.

Nuclear disarmament and peace are the signposts toward the uplifting path of an even brighter human condition wherein we can through our conscious efforts evolve and reestablish the context of our existence from peril to peace, from revolution to evolution. Think peace. Speak peace. Act peace. Peace.

NevadaDesertExperience.org
1420 W Bartlett Ave
Las Vegas, NV 89106
USA

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

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Address Service Requested

SACRED PEACE WALK 2008

PLEASE SEND THIS TO: NDE 1420 W Bartlett Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89106

- I am coming on the Sacred Peace Walk.
I will arrive on _____.
- I am recruiting sponsors in this walk-a-thon journey.
- I would like to receive a packet of readings on desert spirituality and walking for peace.
- I am able to make a deposit of \$50 at this time
(total cost will be \$150, with no one 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 a gathering on March 14th and 15th to explore the theme of Environmental Justice.

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Special Needs _____

Calendar 2008

- > **Shundahai Visioning Retreat** Jan 11th-13th in Las Vegas – please RSVP via email to NDE
- > **Pacific Life Community Retreat:** Feb, 29th - Mar 1st at Vandenberg Air Force Base
- > **Joanna Macy & Louie Vitale fundraiser:** mid-March in Berkeley for NDE and Buddhist Peace Fellowship
- > **Environmental Justice Teach-in:** Mar 14th -15th in Las Vegas
- > **Sacred Peace Walk** March 17th -23rd from Las Vegas to NTS, with additional action on 24th
- > **July Desert Witness:** July 16th action @ the NTS remembering Trinity Bomb Day
- > **August Desert Witness** around Nagasaki Day (9th)
- > **Exhibit by Takashi Tanemori, hibakusha and artist,** in Las Vegas @ the Atomic Testing Museum, throughout August



Western Shoshone spiritual leader Corbin Harney passed away on July 10, 2007. NDE honors his decades of work for nuclear abolition and Western Shoshone rights, and treasures his teachings for their ongoing inspiration for the work at hand.