



Desert Voices

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NDE Council Member Arrested For Offering Prayers of Peace

By Marcus Page

Attempting a 24-hour Tax Day protest, six people held vigil at Los Alamos on D.O.E. property. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) security leaders gave permission for only daylight hours, so Mike Butler and I walked to the northern side of West Jemez Road as the sun set on April 14th to continue the vigil on land that was not clearly labeled as D.O.E., county, or private land. Meanwhile, Father Steve Kelly, sj drove one abolitionist back to Albuquerque, ready to return with two others for the next morning's permitted vigil.

The strong lighting at the building housing LANL's management team called LANS (including

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Global Summit for a Nuclear Free World

By Judy Treichel

*We are at a unique moment in history.
The people of our planet now recognize
that our earth is in danger of losing the
life-giving resources that we depend
on for our survival.*

On February 16 and 17, 2008 delegates from around the world gathered in London to discuss nuclear disarmament. Hosted by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the assembled delegates represented the range of nations, from powerful and wealthy with the desire to produce nuclear arsenals; middle powers with valuable and objective perspectives, and representatives from emerging states concerned with basic human needs.

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Sacred Peace Walk 2008— The Beginning

Peace Walk: The Road to Merc**y

By Sarah Fox

I came to the Peace walk to listen. I was working to complete a project I had begun in graduate school three years earlier; a history of the effects of the Nevada Test Site, based on the accounts of ordinary people. While I believed wholeheartedly in the slogan I wore on my t-shirt that first day--- "we all live downwind"--- I felt a veil of distance that kept me apart. I was a historian and a folklorist, an observer by definition. Cancer had not yet visited my immediate family or friends, and so I recognized a dimension to the downwinders' stories that I could not begin to understand, a wellspring of grief so deep I could only see my own reflection on its surface. I set out walking on Tuesday with a handful of strangers, a stack of blank cassette tapes, and 45 copies of my standard release form. I flew home eight days later with my heart broken open, a handful of friends so dear they are family now,

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Nevada Desert Experience Round Up

So much has happened in the last several months that we simply don't have room to report on it all. We also need to thank a number of folks who have worked diligently for NDE, serving our community and contributing to the work of nuclear abolition and a healthy environment.

Some of the last several month's activities not covered in depth in this newsletter include the Pacific Life Community (PLC) Retreat, held in Santa Barbara, CA with a protest at Vandenberg Air Force Base. This event was attended by an enthusiastic group of Catholic and Mormon Workers along with our NDE contingent and folks from the Nuclear Resister. PLC is rapidly becoming an effective community in our ongoing work. Congratulations to all for a splendid weekend of learning, sharing and resistance.

In early March, NDE hosted the Arms Control Center For Non-Proliferation. Col. Klass USAF (ret.) updated us on Iraq and Dr. Catherine Thomasson, President of PSR, gave us an in-depth presentation on Iran. I would be remiss not to mention the wonderful homemade, and deliciously fresh vegetable soup made by Julia of the Catholic Worker.

Fr. Louie Vitale and Joanna Macy did a special presentation, "The Joy of Resistance" in Berkeley, CA. It was a very successful event. Thank you Joanna, Fr. Louie, Alan, Ann and Ming san for making this splendid event happen. On March 19, NDE members participated in a Candlelight Vigil to honor the fallen soldiers and call for the end of the Iraq war. It was a well attended community sharing and vigil at the Lloyd George Federal Building in downtown Las Vegas thanks largely to the efforts of Peter Ediger of Pace Bene and Vicenta Morales.

We need also to mention that Fr. Louie fell and broke his arm. The break required surgery, however Fr. Louie is well on the road to recovery and up and active. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

This is just some of what has been going on along with the Complex Transformation Hearings, Earth, Wind, Fire and Water, An Environmental Justice Teach-In and our featured articles.



*Remembering the fallen
on the fifth anniversary of the war in Iraq,
March 19 Candlelight Vigil in Las Vegas*



Words cannot convey the gratitude of our NDE community for the services of Rev. Hozan Alan Senauke on our Executive Council. We have shared richly, along with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, in his spiritual leadership and treasure his long time support and friendship. Thank you, Alan, for your gift of wisdom and faithful service and we know you will always be with us in our search for peace and harmony in our movements.

Global Summit (continued from page 1)

Conference delegates clearly understood that irresponsible growth-for-profit rather than developing sustainable economic systems, coupled with the fact that vast arsenals of nuclear weapons may destroy both the intended target and the user while devouring needed resources, were rapidly bringing us to catastrophic loss on a global scale. All agreed it was time for change.

The major power states held the greatest level of responsibility for creating the necessary changes. Members of the Middle Powers Initiative provided excellent, objective guidance regarding the rapidly growing international dangers and concluded disarmament must happen rapidly and be permanent. Representatives of emerging states focused on the necessity of both social and economic justice particularly to those at the greatest risk from both new climate threats and the ongoing exploitation by others. The need to de-value nuclear weapons and to provide social and economic justice was seen as a moral and ethical imperative.

Many excellent speakers discussed a variety of important concerns. Some of the primary points included:

Most countries with nuclear weapons claim is that it is safer to have nuclear weapons because it prevents war yet neither terrorists nor nations have stopped warring.

The UN has plans for an International Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The non-proliferation treaty should be strengthened and adopted by all. If those who have nuclear weapons do not actively work towards disarmament, it will fail. All nuclear nations need to participate and make the switch from MAD (mutually assured destruction) to SANE (security after nuclear elimination). All nuclear weapons are in the wrong hands.

Smaller countries believe that “going nuclear” brings them respect and that it is the quickest and most effective way to “level the playing field” but it vastly increases the dangers to all.

The US must be stopped now from setting up new missile bases in other countries – non-nuclear countries. This violates the non-proliferation treaty.

South Africa stopped its nuclear weapons program. They are proof that nuclear weapons can be de-valued. The Ambassador said that “giving up nuclear weapons frees you.”

We must have convincing arguments that national security is good public health, good food, clean water, shelter and sustainable energy.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) must be signed and ratified. The US and UK say that they can now produce new or replacement weapons without physical testing but are unwilling to sign the CTBT before the replacements are done. There will always be new bombs until nuclear disarmament is achieved.

A recommendation was made to establish a nuclear fuel bank internationally and prohibit reprocessing and uranium enrichment so that weapons-grade material is not produced by individual countries.

A successful and growing public campaign is “Mayors for Peace.” Its slogan is: “Cities are not targets.” This involves people where they live and the goal is to pick up a new city a day.

The time is now and action is essential. The US and other nuclear nations must be prevented from building a new generation of nuclear weapons and modernizing their arsenals. This action would only increase international dangers because it would encourage countries now signed to the non-proliferation treaty to withdraw. Possibly other nations would conclude that their only avenue to security from any type of aggression is to be able to show the ability respond with a nuclear strike.

The money saved from building and/or maintaining nuclear arsenals is desperately needed to develop sustainable energy, to adequately address global warming and to help the countries least able to help themselves.

Judy Treichel is a founder of the Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force. Since 1987, when Yucca Mountain, Nevada was singled out as the sole site to be studied for a national high-level nuclear waste repository, she has served as the executive director of the Task Force.

Complex Transformation by Lyla Bartholomae

Behind Complex Transformation terminology are four major proposals. The first labeled the “No Action Alternative” calls for the continued construction of nuclear bombs and will classify the number of new bombs to be built annually. The other proposals, “Distribution Centers of Excellence”, “Consolidated Centers of Excellence”, and “Capability Based Alternative” call for fifty to one hundred and fifty new bombs to be built each year.

The DOE is proceeding without a plan for the future role of nuclear weapons or the future size of the stockpile. It is costly and premature to invest in a major overhaul of the nuclear weapons complex without a re-examination of the role nuclear weapons will have in our future strategy. The next President should, and by law will, undertake that review.

Current plans call for maintaining more than 2000 deployed nuclear bombs two decades after the end of the cold war. The four proposals are inconsistent with current national and international security goals to stop world wide proliferation. The 1968 nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, has committed the United States to implement deeper, verifiable, and irreversible nuclear weapons reductions. Failure to fulfill our obligations and renounce new warhead production erodes our efforts to ensure current and future nuclear states will fulfill their commitments.

The National Nuclear Security Administration should assess an additional alternative; disarmament in compliance with the NPT and not designing new nuclear weapons. The draft SPEIS does not even consider this alternative. This omission of this viable option must be rectified. The final SPEIS should include a fifth alternative: A No Production Alternative.

Under the No Production Alternative, we would continue to operate only those facilities required to achieve the safe, secure and efficient elimination of nuclear weapons and the disposal of their constituent parts. The No Production Alternative would also address the horrendous environmental degradation of nuclear weapon production.

The No Production Alternative is a choice that would begin to fulfill the US obligations for disarmament under Article 6 of the NPT. The No Production Alternative would enhance security for the US by stopping the global momentum toward nuclear proliferation and increase security for the entire world.

Fifty years ago I was cowering under a desk at school waiting to be vaporized for what had been done by my country in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a grandmother, I do not want my progeny under this desk. There are sane and safe alternatives, none of which are presently offered in Complex Transformation. It is time to end nuclear proliferation, our insanity by choice. For the sake of our plant and children’s future, adopt a No Production Alternative!

Lyla Bartholomae, a retired Psychiatric Registered Nurse, an active member of the Las Vegas Chapter of Food Not Bombs and NDE supporter continues her work for nuclear disarmament in Las Vegas, Nevada. The above essay is taken from her statement given on the March 6, 2008 public hearings for “Complex Transformation” in Las Vegas.



Christena Petersen of NDE and Cara Bautista of Peace Action West staff NDE’s informational table at the Atomic Testing Museum for the Complex Transformations Hearings.

Abolitionist Prayers (continued from page 1)

the University of California among other entities) could support our 11-hour demonstration of love and prayers for nuclear abolition. They apparently lease land from the D.O.E. Surrounded by the emergency responders, the Limited Liability Corporations, and the horrifically liable Laboratory we faced the night believing we had a safe, public location claimed by multiple parties. After about two hours of peaceful chants, dances, and silent prayers, four polite men representing the different groups arrived wishing to help us relocate our night vigil.

Despite their empathy for our motives, they contradictorily supported the immorality of LANL's works of war and were silent about the international crimes committed by LANL. Rather, they finally used their voices to end our alleged "criminal trespass" of prayer. As the police drove up at 9:30, I offered the men a final invitation to join our prayers for the nonviolent and safe disarmament of LANL, and requested they redirect their work to convert and clean up LANL. Unfortunately, the power of Goliath prevailed as the police then yanked the meditation bowl from my hand and lifted us from our grounded prayer to transport us back to jail at Ashley Pond.

The next day we pleaded "Not Guilty" to criminal trespass charges, then a day later were bonded out from jail, and expect a jury trial within six months. A conviction can result in a maximum of 364 days in jail or prison and a \$1,000 fine.

Marcus Page is a Council-Member of NDE and a Catholic Worker at Trinity House in Albuquerque, NM. A movie-maker and radio broadcaster, Page has been participating in NDE since 1997. To learn more about this case see at www.Lovarchy.org/LANS

To your right, Gard Jameson presents the keynote address at NDE's environmental justice teach-in, Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. In his hand is an excerpt from the Earth Charter Initiative.

But this time together

*Let's return all the books to Moses, Jesus,
and Muhammad
Let's ask them to teach us their books once
again
Let's listen to all of them once again*

But this time very carefully

*That day all birds will fly
That day all flowers will bloom
That day all children will smile
That day all mothers will be joyful
That day we will get back paradise
for the price of Love*

*Let's not pray for it
Let's do it
That is very easy
Only one step left to be able to:
Let's want it.*

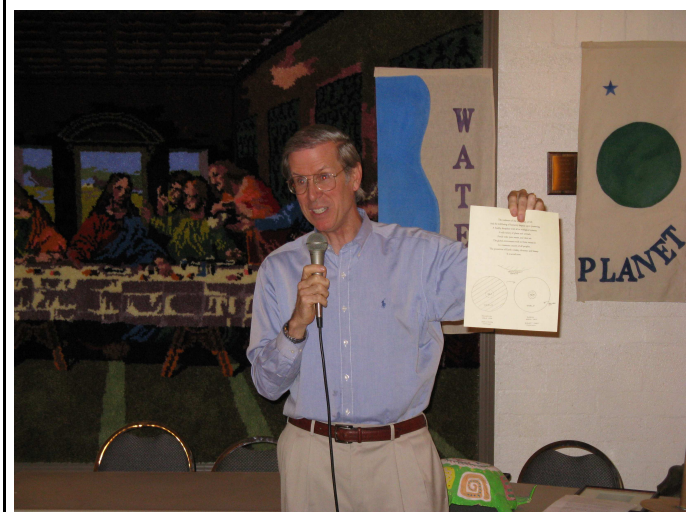
But this time all together

*Let's believe it, not to escape from
hell to paradise
Let's believe it, to return to the owner of both*

But this time all together

*Let's sing the Love hymn
Let's make our God happy
Let's believe god is Love*

By: Hossein Mokhtar



Peace Walk (continued from page 1)

and 45 copies of my standard release form, unsigned. The veil of distance I wore when I set out is clinging to a greasewood bush somewhere on the road to Mercury, and my life, and my writing, will never be the same.

That first day, walking the sidewalks of north Las Vegas, the academic in me worried--- and it is embarrassing to admit it---that I had chosen the wrong year to participate. How many stories could our small group really have? The activist in me worried there were too few of us to make anyone take note. Some hours there were only seven of us, sometimes four, never more than ten. Blink, driving down the highway, and you might miss us. What effect could our small group possibly have on the behemoth military industrial complex, bent on profit and power, that has, for nearly six decades, used the desert of Nevada as a stage for rehearsing the deadliest sort of war, the sort that continues in the bodies of the living for generations after each bomb?

Day after day, we walked the shoulder of the highway, sometimes in silence, sometimes in conversation, sometimes in song. We began to pay closer attention to the undulations of the mountains, the presence of birds, the scattered wildflowers blooming in the roadside gravel. We stopped to inspect pieces of garbage, sometimes fashioning them into art or tiny shrines. We listened to our breath, attended to the emerging blisters, and took note of the changes in the light and the expansive blue desert sky. We shared stories of our wounds and our joys, of the people we knew whose lives had been unalterably changed by this place we were walking to. We cried unashamedly, laughed until we cried again. At night, we built fires and watched the waxing-full Spring Equinox moon arc overhead. And when we finally arrived at the test site's edge, that fictive and permeable boundary of barbed wire and white paint on pavement, I realized that I had fallen headlong into that deep pool of grief and anger, and I dug my bare feet into the redbrown dust and sobbed. Good people surrounded me, and I saw that even here, in this defiled place, tiny wildflowers were blooming. In our small number, we were more powerful than anyone knew, because we had become family, walking in peace, each bearing witness to the stories of thousands whose lives have been poisoned by war.

Each of us healed in profound ways we are only beginning to grasp, and each of us found new rage, and love, and energy, to move forward with our activism. I for one, am still Walking.

Sarah Fox is a writer-historian-folklorist-waitress, who lives near the Salish Sea (Puget Sound) in West Seattle with her partner Ryan and dog Assata. She holds a Masters degree in History and Folklore, and is working to complete a book manuscript on the stories of the Great Basin Downwinders.



Fr. Steve Kelly, sj, kneels and prays before crossing the line at Nevada Test Site on Easter Sunday. Fr. Jerry Zawada, ofm is holding the dog in background. 12 women and 7 men were arrested including "Jesus of Nazareth".

"Today every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate that day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under the sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us."

President John F. Kennedy in his address to the United Nations General Assembly, September 1961



Frank LaMere, member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and nationally known Native American activist addresses the StratCom Conference. "Native people are like the miner's canary. It is just a matter of time before you experience it."

Stratcom: Global Domination and Global Command

By John Amidon

Twelve nations and 28 states were represented at the StratCom conference, in Omaha, Nebraska, April 11-13, 2008, just ten miles north of Offutt Air Force base, the command center of StratCom. Called "the most dangerous place on the face of this earth", the overwhelming information provided by conference speakers left little doubt that this assessment was both very accurate and an extremely dark reality. The U.S. government plans for global domination have advanced dangerously with the current makeover of Stratcom. Its new missions include: "nuclear weapons, cyberwarfare; missile defense; global command and control; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); global strike; space; and combating weapons of mass destruction." Stratcom is now authorized to attack anywhere on the face of the Earth within one hour on the mere perception of a threat to America's national security and is also spying on Americans from above with its satellite surveillance.

The 16th annual space organizing conference started with a protest and rally at the main gate at Offutt Air Force Base. Hosted by Nebraskans For Peace (NFP) and the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power In Space (GN) approximately 200 concerned activists and citizens gathered to learn about StratCom's

expanded role and its growing list of missions.

A particularly interesting panel discussion titled "US Bases Worldwide: Stories of Resistance to Domination" featured speakers from England, Italy, Australia, Germany amongst others. Each speaker's insights added additional information about the complexity of militarization and the plans for global dominance.

Lindis Percy from England noted the war system does not include democratic debate. She felt nonviolent conflict resolution offered the most hope and chance for effectiveness. Denis Doherty of Australia spoke about the 40 U.S. military bases now in Australia. He suggested that "we live where we live" and need to take away our piece of the jigsaw puzzle from the system of global domination. Andrea Licata of Italy spoke of the resistance to the U.S. base expansion at Vicenza, Italy. He felt the worker's strike was an important tool in effective resistance.

Mary Beth Sullivan (GN) and Joanne Sheehan (WRL) addressed the need for envisioning life affirming jobs. The "Converting the Permanent War Economy" workshop discussed the different possibilities for creating both sustainable economic systems joined with sustainable energy. Other workshops included, "Creative Non-violent Disobedience to the Empire", Mission Moon & Mars: US Bases on the Planetary Bodies", Wars of the Future: Military Transformation" amongst others.

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton addressed the conference on Saturday evening, focusing on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the ability of John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev to find a nonviolent solution while the world trembled on the edge of nuclear war.

While the world situation remains grave, conference participants left renewed and refreshed, to continue the work of building sustainable peaceful communities and to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

John Amidon is currently the interim coordinator of NDE.

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Calendar 2008

July Desert Witness

July 16th at the Nevada Test Site
remembering Trinity Bomb Day

August Desert Witness & Teach-In

August 7, 8, 9, 2008

Bridge to Forgiveness

An exhibit by Takashi Tanemori, hibakusha
and Artist at the Atomic Testing Museum in
Las Vegas, August 6—31, 2008