



# Desert Voices

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## **Come to NDE's August Desert Witness 2008 An Environmental Justice Teach-In August 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>**

We all desire to be responsible stewards of our lovely home, Planet Earth. We are aware that we face the shared problems of global warming, water and oil depletion, and ever growing threats from the expanding U.S. nuclear arsenal with its implications for on-going war-making. Nevadans and others join regional indigenous peoples in particular concern for the misuses of the Nevada Test Site and Yucca Mountain located in the heart of this fragile desert land this August in an Environmental Justice Teach-In.

Environmental Justice has many levels of understanding. Nevada Desert Experience as a movement has been focusing on what will promote a healthy, just, sustainable and safe environment in reverence and respect for all people, traditions, genders, religious affiliations, as well as all forms of life as Sacred Creation. The indigenous stewards of the land have been our teachers. We honor their wisdom as we listen deeply to their stories.

*registration form on page 5*

## **Yucca Mountain Project Update**

**Judy Treichel**

**Director of Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force**

After more than twenty years, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) scientific exploration of Yucca Mountain is drawing to a close. The DOE has announced that they will submit a license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), for a construction authorization early this June.

According to NRC rules, if a license application is received, they will take an estimated ninety-days to review it for completeness (not consider its merits). If they believe it to be complete, they will docket it and begin a multi-year process of technical review and formal hearings. It is the position of the State of Nevada, many public interest organizations and others, that the license application should not be accepted or docketed by the NRC.

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## **Global Summit for a Nuclear-Free World Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Turns 50**

**Leslie Klusmire**

*We need to treat nuclear weapons the same way we treat slavery or genocide, there needs to be a taboo. . . Imagine the situation in which we might use nuclear weapons. Are we really prepared to invite the obliteration of the world in this situation? — Bianca Jagger*

On February 16 & 17, 2008 about 200 nuclear disarmament representatives from around the world gathered at London City Hall in Great Britain. I attended the presentation track which addressed the disarmament campaign. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Ambassador Minty (South Africa) said, "You can't say it's wrong to have nuclear weapons and say to your own country that you have to have them. Developed countries are backing developing countries into a corner," thus increasing — not decreasing the nuclear threat. He went on to say, "This is a very dangerous negotiating strategy toward peace and justice. The Nuclear Proliferation Treaty is in serious crisis because dominant countries are not disarming and others are arming in reaction to that. Developing countries must ask themselves, what is the value of treaties? Multilateral imperialism does not enhance security, it increases insecurity." Imploring the US to employ dialogue and diplomacy, Minty cited several tense conflicts where person-to-person contact and conversation was able to defuse violence. "Big countries like to get cooperation by reminding you how dependent you are on them (humiliation). This is very dangerous, evokes anger and contributes to an unsafe world. Taking aid means you are being manipulated." He encouraged developing countries to speak truth to power.

I was deeply impressed by the Scottish peace movement which regularly blockades planes flying terrorist suspects to be tortured in private, secret torture facilities in Eastern Europe. Scotland hosts the most nuclear weapons deployed per capita of any country in the world. This is a dedicated group.

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## New Staffers

NDE has engaged the services of a new Coordinator, Jim Haber who will focus on organizing resistance activities at the NTS and help the staff meet the Council's goals. Jim is a member of the National Committee of the War Resisters League and was the editor of their 2008 Peace Calendar highlighting grassroots, nonviolent organizing and resistance across the Greater Middle East. He is a counselor for the G.I. Rights Hotline, and is an active member of Jewish Voice for Peace.



Jim is also longtime participant in the Catholic Worker movement, mostly in San Francisco. Jon Dennis will also be joining NDE as an Associate Coordinator focusing on building the movement. Jon is a nonviolent, vegetarian Quaker from Kansas who enjoys giving an occasional nū elevator guitar performance and comes to NDE after working on a campaign to end structural violence in housing.

Welcome to you both!



photo: www.thelopez.com

## Thank you John!

NDE is profoundly appreciative of the hard work and skills which John Amidon generously brought to the Bartlett Ave. office at a time of great need: from mid-January through April. He served as interim Coordinator and accomplished mountains in a short time, leaving behind a better organized office equipped with gifts like our multifunction laser machine and many memories of wit and fun, plus new friends, contacts and a summary of suggestions to reflect on as we move into new exigencies to deal with in our changing reality of nuclear resistance. We look forward to his report on the May delegation to Syria and Lebanon in their times of trial. Good luck, John with the Central New York Peace Conference you're organizing in August. Blessings and thanks!

The mission of Nevada Desert Experience (NDE) is to stop nuclear weapons testing through a campaign of prayer, education, dialogue and nonviolent direct action. NDE mobilizes people of all faiths to work toward nuclear abolition and nonviolent social change. We are committed to providing support for communal and personal renewal in the desert tradition. Our immediate attention focuses on ending sub-critical tests and other war-making preparations at the Nevada Test Site and preventing the return of full scale nuclear testing.

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## Yucca Mountain Update

*continued from page 1*

If the license application for construction of a high-level nuclear waste dump is docketed and the NRC begins the licensing process, the people of Nevada and the general public become merely spectators — not participants, in a decision-making bureaucracy that will profoundly affect their health, safety, and well-being. To be an accepted participant or “party” an entity must have complied with steps which began months ago and required legal representation and sophisticated computer capability. Even if the potential party had the resources to accomplish that, they must then file their challenges (contentions) to the license application and the NRC must choose to accept or reject them.

The State of Nevada, as well as some affected Nevada counties and the commercial nuclear industry are preparing to participate in the licensing process should it begin as planned by the DOE. If accepted, the party's attorneys would then represent them in a three to four year, or longer, process involving hearings of multiple panels of NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) judges. The judges can choose to allow members of the public to speak at what are called “limited appearances.” They are not required to do that and they also can choose not to consider anything said by people in limited appearances. Even though the process is established and legal, we cannot help but feel that it is undemocratic and unfair to those who must live with the final results and decisions.

### HERE'S OUR TOP 10 REASONS WHY YUCCA MOUNTAIN SHOULD NOT BE A NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP

1. NUCLEAR WASTE IS DEADLY.
2. YUCCA MOUNTAIN IS IN A VOLCANIC & EARTHQUAKE ZONE.
3. NUCLEAR WASTE MUST COME BY TRAIN THROUGH COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE LIVE.
4. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS NO PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES OR TO REMOVE WASTE IF NECESSARY.
5. ROBOTS WILL “HANDLE” ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE WASTE.
6. YUCCA MOUNTAIN IS WITHIN THE WESTERN SHOSHONE TREATY LANDS AND THEY SAY “NO.”
7. THE AIR FORCE CONDUCTS TRAINING EXERCISES WITH LIVE BOMBS OVER YUCCA MOUNTAIN.
8. THERE IS NO HEALTH OR SAFETY STANDARD IN PLACE FOR YUCCA MOUNTAIN TO COMPLY WITH.
9. IT WILL CONTAMINATE SOME OF NEVADA'S GROUNDWATER.
10. THERE WILL BE HUGE COSTS FOR TAXPAYERS.
11. (FOR GOOD MEASURE)—NUCLEAR WASTE IS DEADLY PRETTY CLOSE TO FOREVER.

## Global Summit *continued from page 1*

Felicity Hill from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom listed ways we can improve the effectiveness of the disarmament campaign. She calls upon the nuclear disarmament community to:

- ◆ "Lift people's spirits and hopes that nuclear abolition can happen. Use more humor and hope. We can't drown out the horror of nuclear weapons — we do need to include that in our education about the issues — but we need to give people more hope.
- ◆ Coordinate globally and work locally. Several other speakers also observed that the peace movement is often uncoordinated and each group does its own thing, making the movement as a whole less effective.
- ◆ Know the difference between outputs and outcomes, and think through and use strategies.
- ◆ Be more interested in changing policy: use language which conveys concerns in the receiver's own language, rather than 'tell' the opposition our arguments."

Speaking for the Arms Control Association, Wade Boese advised focusing on:

- ◆ the possible — not being caught up with ultimate goals, and missing possible chances to effect change
- ◆ champions — be able to spot people who may be open to at least part of your agenda and work with them
- ◆ using simple language — simple concepts rather than esoteric debates about deterrence
- ◆ not allowing decision-makers to detach research from implementation and use issues, and not ceding the technical ground — but encourage decision makers to hire technical experts to investigate claims (example: investigate Bush administration claims)
- ◆ the big picture and making it real for people — what the implications are, e.g. why U.S. weapons cause fear elsewhere, rather than why we should fear weapons gained by others; using declaratory policy; how weapons are being conceived of as being used. We should accept no trade-offs for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which he believes possible with a Democratic administration.

Achin Vanaik of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, Delhi University, India noted that "the biggest problem we (the peace movement) are having is that we aren't focusing on the terrorism in the (United) States. State terrorism is a fundamental problem, not the terrorism by the weak, non-state groups."

Zia Mian, Professor at Princeton University (native of Pakistan) reminded delegates that, "The anti-nuclear movement is a vote for democracy — for making a democratic world.

This was never just about banning the bomb, it is about democracy, peace and justice. The peace movement is largely to blame for this situation. We have taught people that we live in a perpetual Hiroshima, we teach people to be afraid, not to be brave, courageous and fearless. We have an endless cycle of insecurity, mistrust, fear and we (the peace movement) have contributed to this politics and discourse of fear."

Adam Conway of Nukewatch further advised peaceworkers, "Look at ways to make this issue emotionally close to people. Don't be afraid to be ambitious. Think of new ways to make the issue relevant to people, and ask ourselves: Why are nuclear weapons still here? Who needs them and why? How to move forward effectively?"

The controversy about the role of nuclear power facility development on nuclear weapons proliferation was debated among the presenters. Although many peace activists came down firmly against the use and further development of nuclear power generators, Ambassador Minty presented a clear counter opinion from the standpoint of developing countries. He conveyed that many developing countries do not have the financial or other resources to build or deliver basic power needs to their populations and are forced to take offers from corporations willing to build plants in their countries (in the case of South Africa, a pebble-bed nuclear reactor). South Africa rejects the idea that no new countries can enrich uranium. He further conveyed his annoyance at the condemnation from super-powers of this practice. He echoed other developing country representatives saying that the U.S. demands blind obedience from other countries to U.S. wants and desires by reminding them they are dependent on the U.S. for aid and that the U.S. has not refrained from threatening future aid or the use of violence if the developing country does not comply. At the same time, the U.S. does not adequately help with the basic resource dilemmas facing these same countries. This was a consistent message from the 'under-powers' at the conference to peace activists from super-power countries. It was clear to me as peace activist enjoying citizenship in a world-power, that we participate in our own kind of dominance regarding how we advance our issues and in the process (unintentionally) perpetuate the dominant cultural bias by ignoring the voices and real needs of the majority of world citizens.

*Leslie Klusmire is a former NDE Council/Board member (1986 - 1993) who feels deep gratitude to NDE Council & Staff for providing this opportunity. Quotes are paraphrased from her notes. Thanks to Leslie & Judy Treichel for representing us all at the Global Summit.*

## No To: New Nuclear Weapons

## Yes To: Economic Conversion of the Nevada Test Site

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) through its Complex Transformation plan is, for the third time, seeking authorization to rebuild the nuclear weapons complex. There are eight sites that would be involved in the current DOE vision: Savannah River Site near Augusta, Oak Ridge in Tennessee, Los Alamos and Sandia labs in New Mexico, Pantex in Texas, the Kansas City Plant, Lawrence Livermore in California and the Nevada test site. There are literally dozens of facilities proposed to be spread around at these eight sites.

We need a new vision! We need a **Bombplex Transformation**, to dismantle nuclear weapons, manage nuclear weapons materials, and clean-up from the past 65-years of weapons production.

According to the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA), Complex Transformation is their “vision for a smaller, safer, more secure and less expensive nuclear weapons complex that leverages the scientific and technical capabilities of (its) workforce and meets national security requirements.” In reality, Complex Transformation is a plan to spend \$150 billion of taxpayer money to revamp the nuclear weapons complex and allow for production of new warheads, such as the Reliable Replacement Warhead. Investing in a project of this magnitude implies that the U.S. will be relying on nuclear weapons as an integral part of its security strategy for decades to come.

Among the various pieces of Complex Transformation is a plan to build a larger plutonium complex at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, allowing the capability to produce up to 80 plutonium bomb pits each year. A study by the JASON Defense Advisory Group has determined that the current pits have a lifetime of 85 to 100 years. This finding undermines the Bush administration’s argument that our current warheads may not be reliable and need to be replaced. There is no rush to rebuild the nuclear complex. DOE/NNSA has time to wait for a new administration to review U.S. nuclear policy before moving ahead.

The Department of Energy is going ahead with this proposal in the absence of a national debate on the future of U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

There is no need to “transform” the stockpile by building a new generation of nuclear weapons, dubbed the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW).

Complex Transformation is being talked about by the Bush Administration and the Department of Energy as a way *to reduce* our nuclear arsenal. The current nuclear arsenal meets modern safety and reliability standards. Designing and building new warheads for safety and reliability reasons is unnecessary — and dangerous. And certainly not in accordance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

This article has been excerpted from an Action Alert and talk given by John Hadder for NDE in March. *Compiled by the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, Peace Action West, and HOME.* by John Hadder of HOME, Healing Ourselves and Mother Earth, P.O. Box 6595, Reno, NV 89513 . John can be emailed at hadder@gbis.net. John may return to update us on plans for the Nevada Test Site at our August Desert Witness 2008 Environmental Justice Teach-in. See page 5 to register.

# Protect - Heal - Preserve

Newe Segobia's (Nevada's)  
**EARTH, WIND, FIRE, WATER**  
Come together to reflect, learn, share, and act.

Nevada Desert Experience invites your participation in  
our 2<sup>nd</sup> Environmental Justice Teach-in

*August 7-9, 2008*

*At Christ Church Episcopal in Las Vegas  
Maryland Parkway & St. Louis Ave*

Join together with representatives of the United Methodist Board's Peace with Justice Committee from Southern California and the Islands, and other local Interfaith groups, to commemorate the 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945) with a vigil, listening and acting to oppose all war and nuclear weapons at the Nevada Test Site on the evening of Friday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 7 - 10 p.m.

The Teach-in will invite us all into a new awareness of the urgent issues affecting our Sacred Planet, especially the people of the Western Shoshone nation, all down-winders, and the people of Japan, who were so devastated by the first use of nuclear weapons and with whom we will have the privilege of listening and learning. Speakers will focus on:

- The Earth Charter
- The proposed Yucca Mountain Repository: its present status
- The consequences for action in support of those most affected: the stewards of the land, the Western Shoshone and Paiute peoples, and other down-winders
- The very future of this Sacred Planet

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Please Register by July 10<sup>th</sup>. Email <info@nevadadesertexperience.org> or  
mail to: NDE, ATTN: ADW08, 1420 W. Bartlett Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89106

Please Print (sliding scale \$75 - \$20, scholarships available)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check:

I will need hospitality:  Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>  Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

UNLV room:  Shared \$22 each  Single \$44  I prefer hospitality with a local family.

Can you help?

Offer hospitality.  Number of people:\_\_\_\_ I can also transport guests to  Christ Church  Test Site

Carpool to Test Site from and to Christ Church. Number of riders:\_\_\_\_

Carpool to Atomic Testing Museum Saturday, 12:30 p.m. Number of riders:\_\_\_\_

More information will be sent when we receive your registration.



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

**Nevada Desert Experience**  
**1420 West Bartlett Avenue**  
**Las Vegas, NV 89106**

Please visit [www.NevadaDesertExperience.org](http://www.NevadaDesertExperience.org) for the latest news about the Test Site and the nuclear abolition movement.

**REGISTER NOW FOR AUGUST DESERT WITNESS**

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**PEACEMAKERS**

We have assumed the name of peacemakers, but we have been, by and large, unwilling to pay any significant price. And because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total — but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial. So a whole will and a whole heart and a whole national life bent toward war prevail over the mere desire for peace. We take it for granted that in wartime families will be separated for long periods, that men will be imprisoned, wounded, driven insane, killed on foreign shores. But what of the price of peace? "Of course, let us have peace," we cry, " but at the same time let us have normalcy, let us lose nothing, let our lives stand intact, let us know neither prison nor ill repute nor disruption of ties." And because we must encompass this and protect that, and because at all costs — at all costs — our hopes must march on schedule, — because of this we cry peace and we cry peace, and there is no peace. There is no peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war — at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake.

— Daniel Berrigan, S.J.

*Calendar 2008*

**July Desert Witness:** July 16<sup>th</sup> Remembering Trinity Bomb Day, 1945 in the desert. For details, call Megan at (702) 646-4814 or email [Megan@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:Megan@NevadaDesertExperience.org) by July 12<sup>th</sup>, please.

**Book Signing with Retired Colonel Ann Wright:** August 6<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 pm. Col. Wright is co-author of *Dissent - Voices of Conscience*. College of Southern Nevada Bookstore, 6375 W. Charleston Blvd., Building B-west side (Torrey Pines) (702) 651-5606

**Art Exhibit of Takashi Tanemori:** August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 pm. *Bridge to Forgiveness*. Reception honoring Hiroshima Hibakusha and artist Takashi Tanemori at the Atomic Testing Museum, 755 E. Flamingo Road (at Swenson). Exhibit up August 6<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>. (702) 794-5161

**August Desert Witness:** August 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>  
 Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup>, 5-9 pm, Christ Church Episcopal, *Teach-In*  
 Friday, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9 am-4 pm, Christ Church Episcopal, *Teach-In*  
 Friday, 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-10 pm, Nevada Test Site, *Vigil, Remembering & Action*  
 Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup>, 9-11 am, Christ Church Episcopal, *Teach-In Closing*