



Desert Voices

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NDE: Right Place, Right Time

There are many reasons why the work of Nevada Desert Experience and our disarmament allies is vitally important right now. As the many quotes and excerpts on page 2 point out, weapon systems are being developed, and the special status of the Nevada Test Site (NTS) keeps it active and on alert for more, even without full-scale bomb tests. Our focus on Creech Air Force Base and the unmanned hunter-killer airstrikes in Central Asia has been ground-breaking. Ours is the only consistent anti-militarist presence in the Las Vegas area. We keep the memory alive of our government's use of the atom bomb on millions of civilians. When groups and people from other regions come to work on disarmament here, they look to us for hospitality and background.

Working for peace in Las Vegas is extra special. In the neighborhood of the Atomic Testing Museum (ATM), NDE is called to challenge the presentation that the Cold War was inevitable, and the NTS was key in our ascendancy in that battle. At the ATM a video segment and photograph or two mention public opposition to nuclear weapons, but nothing presents the broader connections activists see: the global, environmental problems of war and nuclearism; how US nuclear arms undergird the conventional projection of US military force; and the fact that civilians have been in our cross-hairs—nuclear or otherwise—since before the 20th century. NDE is in conversation with the ATM about creating an installation with more challenging politics.

Page 2 of this newsletter is worth emphasizing. The pieces referenced deserve a full reading. Andrew Lichterman, Jacqueline Cabasso, the United for Peace & Justice quote, and most succinctly the Martin L. King snippet all point to the reality that nuclear weapons can't be considered separately from other military actions. Ban Ki-Moon, Frida Berrigan and the Proposition One campaign point out how imperative it is, to engage in informed and active debate against simple arms-control. Even more, the government's selective support for proliferation must be exposed and opposed because it undermines international law and treaties. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are getting some airplay of late. Unfortunately, "anti-nuclear nuclearists" are promoting them for their own agenda—maintaining US control of weapons of mass destruction (ala "full spectrum dominance") as opposed to eliminating them.

Another related issue NDE will be taking up more is the problem of environmental education provided by the NTS. "Operation Clean Desert" features Dr. Proton and Adam the Atom. The lesson plan is not about irony. To be continued...

All the Buzz About UAVs

Since NDE first vigilled outside Creech Air Force Base in September 2008, demonstrating against Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) attacks, several other groups around the country have taken up our call. The Drone, as UAVs are commonly referred to, has become the icon of Obama's wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The military is responding to the widespread deaths of civilians by these robotic hunter-killers and the outcry against them, but not by reducing the attacks. Rather, they are adjusting their "spin" here and "in theatre." They are also designing smaller missiles, allowing UAVs to carry more of them—not a positive development, even if each one destroys less.

The resource page on the NDE website, **Predators and Reapers** has links to many articles and reports about these weapons. We continue to receive much encouragement to link our work for nuclear disarmament to the need to stop these new weapons from becoming the new arms precipice like the A-bomb before it. The following excerpt from our April action, **Ground the Drones...Lest We Reap the Whirlwind** expresses well our opposition to these tools of war:

With audacity that would confound Orwell, the Pentagon touts the "true hunter-killer role" of these robot "drones." Armed with Hellfire missiles and other weaponry, they have names that suit their lethal uses: the MQ-9 Reaper and the MQ-1 Predator. Such tools can kill but not pacify. By killing civilians, UAV drones do not prevent or eliminate terrorism, but instead incite more violence and retaliation.

Proponents of the use of UAVs insist that there is a great advantage to fighting wars in "real-time" (with a 2-second satellite delay from Nevada to the Middle-East) by pilots sitting at consoles in offices on air bases far from the dangerous front line of military activity. With less risk to the lives of our soldiers and hence to the popularity and careers of politicians, the deaths of "enemy" non-combatants by the thousands are counted acceptable. The illusion that war can be waged with no domestic cost dehumanizes both us and our enemies. It fosters a callous disregard for human life that can lead to even more recklessness on the part of politicians.

The idea that technology can provide a cleaner and safer battlefield is seductive but has been proven a lie. From the catapult and crossbow, through the use of poison gas and airplanes in World War I, the atom bomb, helicopters and napalm in Vietnam to the "smart bombs" of the Gulf War, war has only grown deadlier. Technological advances may reduce the danger of casualties among the military personnel in the short run, but with each advance the number of civilian deaths multiplies and every war of the past century has numbered more children than soldiers among its victims.



Megan and Charlie at the NTS on Hiroshima Day

“What They Said!”...

The International Day of Peace, observed each year on 21 September, is a global call for ceasefire and non-violence. It is a time to reflect on the horror and cost of war and the benefits of peacefully resolving our disputes. This year, I will use this important day to ask governments and citizens of the world to focus on the important issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

<<http://www.un.org/sg/peacedaymessage2009.shtml>>



Above and Left: Codepink Women for Peace joined NDE for our July vigil dates. Above on the strip with Fr. Louis Vitale, and earlier at Creech. Prop One was on hand in July too.

From national governments to local activist groups, the world annually commemorates the destruction of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 by US atomic bombs. A month of events is called for as the threat of nuclear weapons and war has grown substantially since those first attacks and civilians are increasingly targeted by war-makers. Attention needs to grow beyond the atrocities of World War II, and Nuclear-Free Future Month is about both the chronic war plans of strategic deterrence and the acute operations already killing people and peace on a daily basis.

-From the **United for Peace and Justice** press release announcing August as Nuclear Free Future Month. Visit <<http://unitedforpeace.org>>

The illusion that the only role of US nuclear weapons is deterrence—and the use of the word “deterrence” to obscure the many ways nuclear weapons have been used to threaten, to coerce—is likely to grow even more dangerous in years to come. Nuclear weapons now are integrated into a spectrum of high-tech violence where the US seeks “escalation dominance” at every level of military action—and in every region of the world, including the home waters and borderlands of other major powers such as China and Russia. Missile defenses and highly accurate long-range missile systems now under development by the United States that may allow destruction of a far broader range of “strategic” targets with non-nuclear payloads add new, inadequately understood factors to this already dangerous mix.

With the world on the brink of an economic and political crisis of a magnitude and kind unseen since the 1930's, those in power may be willing to roll the dice in ways that were unimaginable during the Cold War.

-Andrew Lichterman, Western States Legal Foundation, from his address outside the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Hiroshima Day 2009 <<http://disarmamentactivist.org>>

“When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

The nuclear weapon states and their strategic allies couldn't effectively demand that these new nuclear weapon states unilaterally disarm. After all, it is the original five nuclear weapon states that, by virtue of their permanent seats on the Security Council, have made nuclear weapons the currency of global power.

If the most powerful military force that has ever existed on the face of the Earth premises its national security on the threatened first use of nuclear weapons, why shouldn't we expect less powerful countries to follow suit? This is simply an unsustainable situation. It is time to throw away the outdated notion of “national” security premised on overwhelming military might, and replace it with a new concept of universal “human” and ecologically sustainable security.

-Jacqueline Cabasso, winner of 2008 Sean MacBride Peace Prize, interviewed by Thalif Deen for IPS News Agency <<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44845>>



Proposition One is a grassroots movement for disarmament of nuclear weapons and the conversion of nuclear and other arms industries to provide for human and environmental needs. Ellen, Jay and Steve (with dog Sophia) visited NDE and demonstrated with us in July. Their bill, H. R. 1653, has continuously been introduced in Congress since 1994. The concept was proven viable by the victory of DC Initiative 37. The Voter Initiative Campaign is being replicated from DC across the entire country.

Visit <<http://propositiononein2010.blogspot.com>>

In May, Mohamed ElBaradei, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned that the number of nuclear powers could double in a few years unless new disarmament is a priority... Right now, however, the American nuclear landscape—little acknowledged or discussed—remains grimly potent. According to the authoritative Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the United States still maintains a nuclear stockpile estimated at 5,200 warheads—of which approximately 2,700 are operational (with the rest in reserve), while the Obama administration will spend more than \$6 billion on the research and development of nuclear weapons this year alone.

-Frida Berrigan, “64 Years Too Late and Not a Moment Too Soon”, August 3, 2009 <<http://TomDispatch.com>>

NDE CALL TO ACTION

Join Nevada Desert Experience in one of our nonviolent direct actions or invite us to make a presentation or prayer-offering to your community or congregation. We are grateful for your prayers and financial contributions too!

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NDE does not share our list; nor do we send lots of e-mail. E-mail is very helpful for our organizing—saving money, resources, and speeding the distribution of time-sensitive news.

Please add me to your mailing list. I want to receive the NDE newsletter, *Desert Voices*, and to be kept informed of NDE events.

Enclosed is a check for:

\$500 \$125 \$65 \$35 \$25 other _____

Contact us for more information about

Sacred Peace Walk August Desert Witness
 Immersion Programs Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

email _____

Check the website or contact the office for a schedule of additional NDE-supported events

Join us to transform fears into compassion & apathy into action.



A Communal Pilgrimage to America's Nuclear Sacrifice Zone

2010 Annual Sacred Peace Walk
Las Vegas to the Nevada Test Site
March 30th to April 5th, 60 miles

We walk in the footsteps of a long legacy of peace walkers and spiritual leaders to draw attention to the nuclear dangers that continue to threaten our sacred planet and the community of life. We come to heal this, the most bombed place on Earth.

Contact the office for details.

By the Pentagon's own figures, the US military uses more fossil fuels than any other single entity. But the Pentagon's figures only take into consideration vehicle transport and facility maintenance.

Yet the US military isn't listed as one of the World Wildlife Fund's "footprint issues." Nor is it mentioned by the Natural Resources Defense Council or Sierra Club as the largest consumer of the "dirty fuels" both lobby against.

-Bryan Farrell, from "Green Camo: Seeing Through the Military's New Environmentalism,"

WIN Magazine, Spring 2009

Published by the War Resisters League



KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE

International Week of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space



OCTOBER 3-10, 2009

Protest, organize, participate!

Hold a local action!



Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
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Announcing the Nevada Desert Experience
2010 August Desert Witness

Overcoming the Nuclear Mindset:

65 Years of Nuclear Weapons Supporting an Empire

August 5 to 9, 2010
Las Vegas, NV

Featuring Joanna Macy

and other activists of spirituality and action

"The most remarkable feature of this historical moment on Earth is not that we are on the way to destroying the world—we've actually been on the way for quite a while. It is that we are beginning to wake up, as from a millennia-long sleep, to a whole new relationship to our world, to ourselves and each other."

-from < http://joannamacy.net >

Contact NDE for details

NDE is Overjoyed to Celebrate

Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service's Twentieth Anniversary

September 25-27, 2009

at Christ Church Episcopal

2000 Maryland Parkway (at St. Louis), Las Vegas

A Celebration of Peacemaking

"Stretching the Imagination: Co-Creating A New World"



Featuring Dr. Vincent Harding, noted historian, and nonviolence advocate. Senior academic consultant to award-winning PBS television series, **Eyes on the Prize**. Author of *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero*.

(702) 648-2281 peterediger@paceebene.org
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To save on resources of all kinds, there is no little return envelope inside. I'm told we'll get fewer checks in response. Prove the nay-sayers wrong! Don't worry, we'll still send you a couple envelopes a year, but don't let that keep you from donating today. Hint: Do it now and you won't forget.

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 upon request.



“People who want to overcome the nuclear menace should give their personal and financial backing to the nuclear disarmament movement. It has been—and remains—an excellent investment in the world’s future.”

-Lawrence Witner,
professor and author of
Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement.

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Lloyd Watson, ¡Presente!

Llwyd (also Lloyd) Watson, friend, long-time radical and movement elder passed away on July 5, 2009 at the NDE Bartlett House. He came to spend the Summer living and working with NDE after being declared cancer-free in June. His death came as a surprise, but we knew he was ready to meet death with the same ease and confidence he had in meeting all the circumstances of his long life as a traveling activist. While based in Oakland, California, Llwyd spent a number of weeks during his last few years with us at Trinity House in Albuquerque.



Although Llwyd barely had a chance to get started with NDE (this time around), we are glad that he made his transition after arriving so close to Shoshone land and Poohabah, where he spent many hours volunteering and living during Corbin's life. The day Llwyd's spirit left his body was also the day we started the first Interfaith Peace Walk from Los Alamos to the Trinity Nuclear Site in New Mexico. It was an arduous journey, so the walkers were glad to have him with them in spirit on the 12-day Walk, even though we all seriously miss his in-the-flesh presence in our lives. As Llwyd has advanced into another world, so must we all, while continuing to work and pray for a joyful end to the nuclear age.

-Chelsea Collonge, NDE National Council

NDE continues to welcome inquiries from potential interns and volunteers to help organize in Las Vegas. Room and a small stipend are included. We have a lovely, if somewhat run down live work house in an enclave with Pace e Bene with a wonderful courtyard and shade trees! Our car runs on veggie oil, and there's an extra bicycle. Potential jobs include office tasks, keeping in touch with supporters, working on *Desert Voices* and conceiving of and attending demonstrations. Experience the desert with NDE. It is powerful and sacred, as the Western Shoshone and others have taught us for millenia. Please call or e-mail for more information.

Anti-Protesting Another Missile Launch



NDE was well-represented at demonstrations against an ICBM test August 23. Drivers coming to view the launch at Vandenberg Air Force Base saw the 3.5 hour vigil that started at midnight, anticipating a 3 am launch (which was delayed until 9). Sr. Megan and Fr. Louis were arrested trying to deliver a powerful letter signed by 160 Japanese opposing the test. No court appearance was scheduled. A dozen people attended the demo.

Excitingly, a sister demo was held Saturday afternoon outside Los Angeles AFB in El Segundo where ICBM tests are tracked. 30 people attended that demo, **the first at LAAFB in many years.** Both bases also relay communications used in UAV attacks. More actions there seem likely.