



# Desert Voices

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## Countdown to...Lots o' Nukes

*Countdown to Zero* is a new documentary that's generating a media hoopla since its principals include well-known government war-makers and "anti-nuclear nuclearists" Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn and George Schulz. (See the Feb. 2009 DV more about "anti-nuclear nuclearism.") The promise of the title is great, but it is misleading in the extreme. We at NDE remain open-hearted towards our opposition. When we cross the line, we get arrested. When war-makers cross the line, we welcome them. But if their motivation undermines the goal of nuclear disarmament, we must remain vigilant to the truth. United for Peace and Justice has created an excellent handout for viewers of this movie. <<http://unitedforpeace.org/downloads/COUNTDOWN%20TO%20ZERO%20-%20UFPJ%20-%20final.pdf>> Bring a few with you to share. It mentions several signs of hope, although *Countdown to Zero* isn't one of them. Some critiques from NDE friends and allies:



Megan Rice & Val Fillenwarth holding the ubiquitous NDE banner (one of many made by Joan Monastero) at the Y-12 action in Tennessee.

"Nowhere in the film are the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and U.S. obligations under the treaty mentioned...The film essentially carries the message of the U.S. national security establishment that the #1 national security priority must be preventing a nuclear attack on the U.S. by terrorist or rogue state forces...I would agree that an important national security priority is protecting the country against a terrorist nuclear attack, but I would also argue that the greatest danger of nuclear weapons comes from the continued U.S. and Russian adherence to its nuclear first strike policies and the related double standard/hypocrisy that actually encourages nuclear weapons proliferation, despite President Obama's abolition rhetoric that is not supported by his actual policies." [by Joseph Gerson, *American Friends Service Committee*; author of *Empire and the Bomb* <via e-mail>]

"The administration's Nuclear Posture Review in no significant way changed the nuclear force structure or use doctrines. The NPR makes it abundantly clear that US national security is founded on the nuclear "deterrent," and that no one in government will seek to reduce the role of nukes in the foreseeable future.

"*Countdown to Zero* is one component of a larger and coherent campaign to stoke up public fears about nuclear weapons for the purpose of extending a near-monopoly on nuclear weapons, and legitimating a more aggressive foreign policy aimed at regime change in Iran and elsewhere. The consensus behind those who funded and produced the film has little to do with disarmament, and a lot to do with stabilizing the American empire." [Darwin Bond-Graham, *Los Alamos Study Group* <<http://darwinbondgraham.blogspot.com>>]

## Drones, Not Droning on Drones

The enormous growth in use of remotely piloted vehicles like the Predator and Reaper by different branches of the security complex creates confusion in how to address them as an activist. When we choose where to apply pressure, we need to articulate why it is a relevant target. Who controls what missions from where? Was a strike close air support for GIs on the ground or miles from any US or "friendly" troops? Whose fault are particular mistakes? What is public and what is secret information? What difference does it make if private contractors are pushing the buttons?

Jeremy Scahill of The Nation Institute and a reporter for Democracy Now! has delved into questions like these more than almost anyone. At the recent Netroots Nation conference in Las Vegas, Scahill made some enlightening points about drones and the privatizing of security and military work. For reference, see also his 23 Nov. 2009 and 4 Feb. 2010 articles in *The Nation* magazine.

Data is hard to come by because much of the "dark" or covert operations budget is scattered, buried and codenamed. Civilian overseers don't get the full picture either. The CIA was thought to control missions in Pakistan (a country we're not at war with, officially), but Special Mission Units and the Joint Special Operations Command blur the distinctions making accountability next to impossible, but also making all points of the spy network meaningful places for coordinated action.

Surveillance and private contractors are cross-over issues. Blackwater (or whatever it's called now), like other private firms on contract to the US government often have more access to information than civilians in high government positions. Holding state secrets could be powerful leverage to keep from losing contracts, or winning new ones despite public outrage.

Rep. Jan Shakowsky (D-Ill.) was on the panel. She introduced **continued on p.3 - Drones, Not Droning on Drones**

"The legal transgressions of the United States with regard to its NPT obligations are legion. In fact, the US has nuclear deals with both India and Israel, despite the fact that neither country is a member to the NPT. These deals, as per the US' non-proliferation requirements, are illegal. Ironically, the US opposes China's recent nuclear deal with Pakistan citing, of all things, the terms of the NPT...Additionally, the Obama Administration's new Nuclear Posture Review, which is praised by the film's producer, actually leaves the door wide open for a first-strike nuclear attack on Iran, which it accuses of NPT violations on par with North Korea, thereby demonstrating a startling lack of truth in the Pentagon's assessment of the Iranian program. The NPR doesn't even mention India, Pakistan, or Israel at all...The film's trailer features scary music, lots of mushroom clouds, and menacing titles like "Rogue Nations" and "Terrorists" over montage clips of Kim Jong Il, Osama bin Laden, flag-waving Iranian crowds and images of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a lab coat. It's clear what the agenda is here." [Nima Shirazi, <<http://www.wideasleepinamerica.com/2010/07/when-truth-is-inconvenient-preview-of.html>>]



(Clockwise from top left): Gensuikyo visitors vigil in Las Vegas. Rudy, of the Western Shoshone Nation and an unidentified,

Japanese, Taiko drumming member of Gensuikyo. Dennis DuVall “trespasstifying” at Y-12. Art above NYC during May 2 peace march. Nuclear Abolition Day graphic by ICAN. Codepink activists outside the General Atomics headquarters in San Diego. Smiles & a great message during opening march of the US Social Forum in Detroit.



## Here & There with NDE

The last issue of *Desert Voices* included adverts for several gatherings that NDE staff and friends were attending. They've all been exceptional opportunities for networking, and all deepened our understanding of the interconnected nature of numerous struggles and campaigns. We don't have space to show all the beautiful images of people and all their creativity. **The Gallery of Galleries on the NDE website is being expanded, so check it out.**



Chronologically, the first big events were the international conference and demonstrations preceding the UN's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York in May. Highlights included close work with the War Resisters League on a panel about the problems of mining, testing, deployment and waste, especially how they effect native and local communities. A project that emerged from the session is to map effected sites and community responses so the extent of the problem is more apparent, and ways for people to address it too. And the march was a lot of fun!

1500 members of the Japan Council Against A & H Bombs (Gensuikyo) came with 17 million signatures on an “Appeal for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World.” 80 Gensuikyo members spent 2 days in Las Vegas, and NDE coordinated their events including an evening reception and joining the weekly LV Thursday peace vigil; NDE provided political, historical and environmental interpretation en route to the Nevada Test Site, the Temple to Goddess Spirituality, and a significant meetup with members of the Western Shoshone Walk/Run underway at the time. Special thanks to Dawn Barlow of the Atomic Testing Museum, Candace Ross of the Goddess Temple, Peter Ediger of Pace e Bene, Johnnie Bobb of Newe Sogobia, and Mark Kelso of the Catholic Worker.

In San Diego, General Atomics (GA) makes the Predator and Reaper drones that are controlled on their deadly missions from Creech AFB near Vegas. Codepink's Nancy Mancias joined local organizers Carol Jahnkow of the San Diego Peace Resource Center and Gabriel Seth Conaway of Activist San Diego) to create an event and action May 18 and 19. High-spirited and colorful best describe the blockade. Some confusion about the entrances to the GA site decreased the blockade's effectiveness, but next time more than one gate at a time will be stopped! See also <<http://www.womensaynotowar.org/article.php?id=5100>>

June 5 was International Nuclear Abolition Day, to keep the issue in the mind's eye following the NPT Review month of May. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) put out the call, and also produced a report about the NPT Review Conference documenting the growing support among governments for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The report is here: <<http://www.icanw.org/files/RevCon2010.pdf>>

Later in June was the US Social Forum in Detroit. 14,000 people enjoyed wonderful hospitality in that troubled, but over-maligned city. Unity and camaraderie were abundant. Participants were interested in issues outside of their own areas of immediate concern. See also <<http://www.war-times.org/>> and click on “Detroit: I Do Mind Empire (USSF Recap).”

Then came the July 4 weekend celebration and action at Oak Ridge Tennessee's Y-12 plant. It's Uranium Processing Facility is enlarging to quadruple the output of nuclear weapons components. Like the NPT conference, this gathering gave participants a sense of vitality in the anti-nuclear movement. It was also a 30 year anniversary celebration of Nukewatch and the Nuclear Resister. Elders in the house were minion, but youth were very present too. A commemorative slideshow traced the history of anti-nuke activism, including the Plowshares movement. The presentation was emotional for many attendees, being reminded of people like Corbin Harney and No Nukes Norb, eliciting sighs and cheers as old actions were brought to life. 37 people were arrested at the Monday action. A good report on the Y-12 action is at <<http://wearewideawake.org>> Click on the July 5 link. Other video clips and images are in the Gallery of Galleries on the NDE website too.

**IS YOUR MAYOR ON BOARD?**  
 Mayors for Peace  
[www.mayorsforpeace.org](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org)

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! Most of our income is from individuals.

## Nevada Desert Experience

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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 work though —saving money, resources, and speeding the distribution of time-sensitive news.

*Nevada Desert Experience is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible. Ask us for a receipt if you need one.*

☞ Check here if you don't want physical mailings from NDE.

☞ Check here if you don't want to receive the NDE newsletter, Desert Voices or be kept informed of NDE events at all.

### Enclosed is my contribution of:

☞ \$500 ☞ \$125 ☞ \$65 ☞ \$35 ☞ \$25 ☞ other \_\_\_\_\_

### Want us to contact you about something specific?

☞ Sacred Peace Walk ☞ August Desert Witness ☞ Nukes  
☞ Immersion or Internship ☞ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

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### continued from p.1 - Drones, Not Droning on Drones

a bill in Congress, HR 4650, the “Stop Outsourcing Security” or “SOS” Act. She hopes people will bring it to the attention of their representatives. She is looking for high level military personnel to work for its passage. Sadly, under President Obama, the problem is deepening with more contractors and more secrecy. We have to keep speaking out, standing up, and educating our friends and co-workers. NDE has new postcards available (see below). Get some, and send them in!

The text reads, “Dear President Obama, Stop killing the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In particular stop remote-controlled Predator and Reaper drone attacks. You may think the deaths of hundreds of civilians (and low-level conscripts) are excusable when trying to assassinate people with “Hellfire” missiles. Actually, the large number of casualties makes the ending of hostilities even harder to imagine. The Sept. 11 attack in 2001 doesn’t make these air-strikes right or wise! Drone attacks do not prevent or eliminate terrorism. They are terrorism! They unite people in outrage and incite more revenge, violence and retaliation. Of course, the problem isn’t one crew or one weapon system, but the wars and occupations as a whole.”



## Vandenberg Witness

Vandenberg Air Force Base in Lompoc, CA continues to be vital for the demonstration of the functionality of US missile systems, the implementation of the robotics revolution, including control of Predator and Reaper drones on kill missions, and the development of anti-ballistic missile systems.

Control of demonstrators has been inconsistent. According to MacGregor Eddy’s blog, “Two trials were held in federal court [on July 15]... All resulted in convictions of trespass. The first trial was for co-defendants Dennis Apel and MacGregor Eddy. The magistrate rejected arguments that free speech is protected

## I’ll Be Back!

by Elisabeth Gustafson



I had the opportunity to stay at the NDE house as an intern for two weeks in July. From the first weekend I spent as an NDE intern at the conference in Oak Ridge, TN, I felt part of a network of incredible activists. It has been truly energizing to work with Jim, Megan and the LV Catholic Workers – people who dedicate endless amounts of time and effort to ending war and injustice. I have a restored hope in the possibilities for social change through collective action.

Since I have been in Las Vegas I have joined NDE in weekly anti-war vigils, at a meeting with one of Senator Reid’s aides, in passing out postcards about UAVs as people exited an Obama event at UNLV, at a vigil at Creech Air Force Base, and to the Sekhmet Goddess Temple.

On the morning of July 16th Sister Megan and I went to the Nevada Test Site to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the first nuclear bomb detonation, the “Trinity” test in New Mexico. We placed three signs leading up to the entrance of the site that said, “Yes to solar energy! Nuclear testing – Never Again.” Wearing similar signs, we crossed the federal property line and tried to walk as far as the parking lot so we could distribute fliers. We walked for a while before a Test Site employee told the police that we were there. We were then held until released with citations. Megan reminded everyone we encountered about the somber significance of the day, and we hope many people saw our hopeful signs as they drove in and out of the site.

in the area selected and defined by Vandenberg...This is the first time an arrest for violating a ban and bar, without leaving the designated protest area, has been prosecuted.”

On Sept. 16, two days after their court date in Las Vegas as part of the Creech 14, Louis Vitale and Megan Rice have a Vandenberg trespassing trial from August, 2009.

To keep up to date on Vandenberg activities and protests, visit <<http://vandenbergprotest-macgregor.blogspot.com>>



## PLEASE SEND NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE A DONATION TODAY!

Summer is dry in the desert. Similarly, donations only trickle in this time of year. We need your help to carry us through to the holidays. Large and small gifts, we're grateful for them all. This mailing includes an envelope, and we hope you use it soon!

Thank you. Blessed Be. Peace and All Good.



Nonprofit Organization

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### ***Our Grief is Still Not a Cry for War!***

*We mourn civilians and soldiers  
because all life is sacred!*

### **Sept. 10 to 14 NDE Desert Witness**

*Las Vegas & Cactus Springs*

- Vigils every morning
- Sept. 11 Day of Solidarity and Remembrance at the Goddess Temple in Cactus Springs (plus pot luck and evening ritual for peace and healing.
- Sept. 13 Evening with Kathy Kelly, Louis Vitale, Ramsey Clark and Bill Quigley
- Sept. 14 Trial Date of the Creech 14

(See Below & Contact us for more details)

*Nevada Desert Experience  
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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

### ***At 65, Retire the Bomb***

Because of organizing for the September trial and events surrounding the Creech 14, NDE is not hosting a gathering for Hiroshima/Nagasaki Days THIS YEAR at the Nevada Test Site.

For a local August 6 gathering, contact Candace Ross at the Temple for Goddess Spirituality; 702-569-0630. Fold paper cranes; discuss peace; watch a dvd; vigil at the NTS.

On August 7, the Atomic Testing Museum is organizing an Obon Ceremony (Japanese Lanterns) at Sunset Park in the evening in memory of all who have died and suffered as a result of war. For more details, contact Dawn Barlow at the ATM at 702-794-5147.

### ***NDE "September" Desert Witness***

**Friday, Sept. 10 through Monday, Sept. 13:** Daily vigils at Creech AFB. Co-sponsored with Voices for Creative Nonviolence and the Creech 14 defendants. Some people will walk from the Goddess Temple in Cactus Springs. Others will drive out from Vegas to stand together. Rides will be arranged as needed.

**Saturday, Sept. 11, In Memory of Civilians and Soldiers. A Day of Solidarity and Remembrance.** Eyes Wide Open-Nevada memorial exhibit will be on display. The Temple to Goddess Spirituality, Peace Bene Nonviolence Service and the Nevada Desert Experience sponsors.

**Sunday, Sept. 12,** still in formation aside from the morning vigil at Creech. Creech 14 defendants may meet to plan for their trial. The NDE Council will be meeting during the day.

**Monday, Sept. 13,** Evening program in Las Vegas featuring Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence and Fr. Louis

Vitale, released July 23 after 6 months in prison for crossing the line at Ft. Benning's School of Assassins (aka the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation). Plus special guests Bill Quigley of the Center for Constitutional Rights and Ramsey Clark, former US Attorney General!

**Tuesday, Sept. 14,** Trial of Creech 14 defendants, Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Ave., Las Vegas, 5th Floor (Regional Court, Department 5): 7:30 am rally at Lewis and 3rd St.; 8:30 am trial scheduled to begin.

**Regarding any of the upcoming actions, contact Jim or Megan: [info@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:info@NevadaDesertExperience.org) (702)646-4814**



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Sacred Peace Walk  
Las Vegas to the  
Nevada Test Site**

**April 18 to 25, 2011**

4/18 Passover Seder; 4/21 Peace Ritual at the Goddess Temple; 4/22 Good Friday Stations of the Cross at Creech; 4/24 Western Shoshone Sunrise Ceremony and Easter Mass at the NTS; Devotional Chanting; , other spiritual and political offerings to be scheduled.

65 mile walking meditation. Major walk days are Tues, Wed, Thurs, & Sat. Part-time "Pilgrims" welcome. This is a walking meditation, a desert healing, a political act of solidarity.

*Desert Voices is edited by NDE Coordinator Jim Haber.  
Uncredited text and images are his responsibility.*