

Desert Voices



The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience

Vol. 8 No. 2 Summer 1995

NPT CONFERENCE

On May 11, at an historic conference 50 years after the nuclear age began, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) talks broke up without a Final Document, and with no agreement on how effectively the Treaty had been implemented, particularly with regard to its nuclear disarmament provisions.

This contradictory result underlies the fundamental tension in the Treaty, and illustrates that indefinite extension of the NPT without more accountability from the nuclear weapon states will be a hollow victory. The nuclear weapons states pledged in 1970 to reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear arsenals, while non-nuclear states promised not to acquire nuclear weapons. While all 176 members of the Treaty value its role in establishing a norm in favour of non-proliferation, they were deeply divided about whether nuclear weapons states have lived up to their side of the bargain at the NPT talks. On the last day of the conference, this split could no longer be papered over: the nuclear weapon states refused to acknowledge their failures to meet their Treaty obligations or commit to disarmament measures, while the non-nuclear countries would not accept a watered-down Final Document containing no specific disarmament pledges. As a result, the Conference could not adopt a Final Statement.

This result is like failing a driving test but then being granted a license in perpetuity. It occurred because the extension decision was taken not on the merits of the NPT or its implementation, but primarily on the basis of the exercise of raw power. Indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT was named by President Clinton as the "highest priority" of U.S. foreign policy. The result - indefinite extension without a vote - came after months of heavy

(continued on next page)

AUGUST DESERT WITNESS 1995

Nevada Desert Experience continues its planning for August Desert Witness 1995, August 4-9, 1995 on the University of Nevada-Las Vegas campus and at the gates of the Nevada Test Site. Hundreds from around the country will come together for this program of prayer, reflection and nonviolent direct action to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A number of prominent speakers and religious leaders from around the country will participate in the weekend program, including Miguel d'Escoto, Terry Tempest Williams, Arun Gandhi, Ched Myers, Richard

Rohr, Dolores Huerta, Arthur Waskow, United Methodist Bishops Leontine Kelly, C. Dale White and Felton May, Rabbis Leonard Beerman and Margaret Holub, Louie Vitale, Rosemary Lynch, Alain Richard, Western Shoshone spiritual leader Corbin Harney, Hanford survivor June Stark Casey, Claudia Peterson, and Alan Senauke of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Jesse Manibusan, cantor Linda Hirschhorn, Rufino Zaragoza and T'shala Vahsen will provide music for the weekend, and liturgical dance director Carla de Sola will conduct a dance workshop. A detailed schedule of events and registration information is located on page 3 of this issue.



Nuclear weapons testing and proliferation issues must still be addressed in the post-Cold War era. As the disappointing results of the NPT conference indicate, the world's nuclear states avoided formulating specific goals that would lead to a cessation of weapons testing and an eventual abolition of nuclear weapons. In the United States, the Nevada Test Site actively prepares for a

resumption of testing with a full compliment of about 8000 employees supported by a more than \$160 million testing readiness budget. Moreover, the Pentagon proposes a new generation of nuclear weapons and com-

puter simulated weapons testing at the national laboratories of Livermore and Los Alamos. The test site remains a focal point and major symbol of an ongoing struggle to rid our nation and world of weapons of mass destruction.

During August Desert Witness we will remember all those who have fallen victim to and survived the effects of nuclear weapons and weapons testing. We will also take a look inward, as a community and as individuals, recommitting ourselves to nonviolence in our relationships with family and friends, and with the earth. Join us for a time of healing, forgiveness, reconstruction, understanding and . . . peace. ■

(NPT, front page)

lobbying, political and economic pressure by the United States, the other nuclear weapons states and their allies. One leading figure in the NPT talks, Ambassador Talleyrad of Venezuela resigned when pressure on his government in Caracas forced Venezuela into supporting indefinite extension; numerous small island states complained of unrelenting heavy pressure to accept indefinite extension; those non-aligned states proposing 25 year rolling extensions of the Treaty talked of "unprecedented" pressure to change their minds.

It would be a serious misreading of the Conference to think that indefinite extension was a consensus decision. Key Middle Eastern, Asian, African and Latin American states did not join the majority of around 110 states co-sponsoring a resolution in favour of indefinite extension. Malaysia said the international community had abandoned an historic opportunity to free the world from nuclear blackmail and safeguard future generations, and that it still believed that a secret ballot, where countries could vote with their hearts, would have resulted in a different outcome. The Philippines said the price they paid for supporting indefinite extension had been too low: their expectations of progress on nuclear disarmament from the nuclear weapon states in return had not been fulfilled. Egypt said indefinite extension while de facto nuclear weapon states like Israel and other countries remained outside [the Treaty], was unacceptable.

The decision to extend the treaty was made palatable to many states because of a weak compromise: a package of measures was adopted along with the extension decision, to strengthen the Review mechanism of the Treaty and establish a set of Principles and Objectives. The Principles and Objectives - first suggested by the South African delegation with input from Canada - called for a programme of action on disarmament and a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by 1996, but like the NPT itself, provided no time frame or enforcement mechanism. From 1997, the NPT Review talks will meet yearly, instead of every five years, but it remains unclear whether the enhanced Review process will bring the necessary leverage on the nuclear weapons states to ensure nuclear disarmament at the swift pace most countries want to see.

In the end, the test of whether the NPT will retain any credibility is whether the nuclear weapon states live up to their own "solemn pledges" to move toward elimination of their nuclear weapons. With the exception of Ireland, Austria and Sweden, the European Union states accepted a lowest common denominator approach pushed by their two nuclear weapon state members, Britain and France. These countries, along with Canada now have an increased responsibility to hold the nuclear weapon states to task.

The NPT Conference did not dismantle a single nuclear weapon or stop production of a single gram of plutonium. The world is not a safer place because of the indefinite extension of the NPT . . .

The nuclear weapon states failed the first test of their good faith after the new "enhanced" NPT was in place by refusing to make any concessions in the Final Document. The next major challenge will be France's decision on nuclear testing. A resumption of nuclear tests in the South Pacific would severely undermine the credibility of the extension decision and the NPT itself.

The chances that a permanent extension of the NPT will be seen as a carte blanche for the nuclear weapon states to maintain and develop their nuclear arsenals are high. The extension decision has effectively endorsed nuclear power and civil plutonium reprocessing, in spite of the proliferation risks these activities pose, forever. The NPT Conference did not dismantle a single nuclear weapon or stop production of a gram of plutonium. The world is not a safer place because of the indefinite extension of the NPT; on the contrary, as diplomats talked, more than one tonne of plutonium was produced, a new nuclear submarine went on patrol off the coast of Britain, the United States moved closer to new tritium facilities to maintain its arsenal at START II levels until 2050, Israel, Pakistan and India remained outside the Treaty, and a controversial shipment of highly radio-

active waste - the first of dozens of plutonium and radwaste shipments over the next decade - completed its journey from France to Japan.

More talks cannot replace real action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. If governments are serious about following their rhetoric at the NPT Conference with genuine political commitment, the next steps must be an end to nuclear testing in all environments, a ban on the production and use of all plutonium and other nuclear weapons-usable material, a ban on the production of all nuclear weapons, and commencement of negotiations on a convention to eliminate nuclear weapons forever, before the next review conference in the year 2000. Anything less will show that the decision to indefinitely extend the NPT was not only a missed opportunity, but an impediment to the creation of a genuine and effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. ■

This article is a compilation of excerpts from a May 13, 1995 article by Stephanie Mills of Greenpeace International, New Zealand, furnished to NDE by Pamela Meidell.

Calendar

July 28-30 - Bay Area Pax Christi will help sponsor the Bay Area portion of the Atomic Mirror Pilgrimage to commemorate the departure of the first atomic bombs to Japan. Call 510-832-3776 for more information.

August 6 - Tri-Valley CAREs, Livermore Conversion Project, the American Friends Service Committee and other groups will sponsor events at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories and the UC-Berkeley campus to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Call Tri-Valley CAREs at 510-443-7148 and AFSC at 510-238-8080.

July 21-23 - NDE will host the Nevada portion of the Atomic Mirror Pilgrimage.

August 4-9 - NDE will host August Desert Witness 1995 on the UNLV campus and at the Nevada Test Site. Call 702-646-4814 for details and see info in this issue.

Desert Voices is the quarterly newsletter of NDE. Articles may be reprinted. Your letters, articles and poetry are welcome. Send them with a self-addressed return envelope to: **Desert Voices, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127. Tele: 702-646-4814, Fax: 702-385-3878.**

Newsletter staff: David Buer, ofm, Anne Symens-Bucher and Jody Hart.

August Desert Witness 1995

August 4-9, 1995 University of Nevada-Las Vegas and Nevada Test Site

Friday, August 4th

REGISTRATION Tonopah Residence Hall 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm
OPENING CEREMONIES 7:00 pm
Welcome by Fr. Louis Vitale, ofm, Co-Founder, Nevada Desert Experience
Keynote Address by Terry Tempest Williams, naturalist, downwinder and author of Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and An Unspoken Hunger
Shabbat Service with Rabbi Margaret Holub
Music by Jesse Manibusan and Rufino Zaragoza, ofm

Saturday, August 5th

BREAKFAST/DISCUSSION 7:30 am
Fr. Miguel d'Escoto, Former Nicaraguan Foreign Secretary and Founder of El Madrono Center for the Spirituality of Nonviolence
SACRED STORIES AND SACRED PRAYER 8:45 am
An interfaith gathering to honor the stories of people affected by nuclear weapons and weapons testing and a time to respond in prayer and hopeful reflection. Special guests include Dolores Huerta, Sunanda Gandhi, Claudia Peterson, Rabbi Leonard Beerman, Virginia Sanchez, Bishop C. Dale White, June Casey, Nozomi Hamada, Corbin Harney, Bishop Felton May and Alan Senauke.
Keynote Address by Richard Rohr, ofm, Founder, Center for Action and Contemplation
Bible Study with author Ched Myers 1:30 pm
Liturgical Dance Workshop with Omega West director Carla de Sola
ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE FOR THE LONG HAUL: 2:30 pm
A Panel of Social Change Agents From Five Nonviolent Movements
Fr. Miguel d'Escoto, Dolores Huerta, Arthur Waskow, Arun Gandhi & Bishop Felton May
NONVIOLENCE PROCESS AND SCENARIO PRESENTATION 4:00 pm
Alain Richard, ofm will lead a group process and nonviolence training followed by a presentation/discussion with Louie Vitale, ofm and Rosemary Lynch, ofm about the scenario for Sunday's nonviolent action at the gates of the Nevada Test Site.
PRESS CONFERENCE AND PEACE MARCH 7:00 pm
Leaders from the various faith traditions and individuals affected by nuclear weapons testing will speak publically about their experiences and continued resolve to work for an end to nuclear weapons testing; a peace march near the Las Vegas Strip will follow.
Music with Linda Hirschhorn, Jesse Manibusan, Rufino Zaragoza and T'shala Vahsen

Sunday, August 6th

Sunrise Ceremony with Western Shoshone Spiritual Leader Corbin Harney 5:00 am
NEVADA TEST SITE GATHERING 7:15 am
Interfaith Service at the Nevada Test Site 8:15 am
with United Methodist Bishop Leontine Kelly and Rabbi Leonard Beerman, Co-Founder, Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race
NEVADA TEST SITE ACTION 9:00 am

August 7-9, 1995

This portion of August Desert Witness will feature bus tours on Monday and Tuesday. Workshops will be held for those not on a bus tour. There will also be an interfaith service and nonviolent action on Wednesday, August 8th. Please write or call NDE for details.

For registration info call 702-646-4814

Dear NDE Friends:

In my three years as the Field Director for NDE, I have stood with many of you in the desert, met you in meetings, and worked with you in person and over the phone to help bring about a truly Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We are still working to achieve this goal. Always as I worked, I felt the presence and support of all of the people who have joined us in the desert over the years. Thank you for your distant and close support, for your prayers, and for hanging in there. As I leave NDE to continue this work in new ways, I take with me many friends and colleagues. We still have much work to do, and I look forward to doing it together.

In this 50th anniversary year of the beginning of the Nuclear Age, I hope that we will all renew our efforts to banish nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. Now that the NPT has been renewed indefinitely and without holding the nuclear weapon states to any binding abolition of nuclear weapons, these efforts can be realized by a Convention on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. I will be working toward this goal with the **Nuclear Age Peace Foundation** as the coordinator of the Nuclear Weapons Abolition Program, and would welcome hearing from any of you.

From July 14 - August 9, 1995, many friends will join me in retracing the route of humanity's first atomic bomb on the **Atomic Mirror Pilgrimage**. I invite any

of you to participate in the actual pilgrimage or to send a letter or gift to the people of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, which we will be glad to carry with us. You can contact me at: Pamela Meidell, Atomic Mirror, P.O.Box 220, Port Hueneme, CA 93044 or call at 805-985-5073 / fax: 805-985-7563.

Thank you for your dedication and your prayers. Many blessings on our continued work together for a nuclear-free world.

Pamela Meidell

Thank you, Pamela!

Nevada Desert Experience would like to sincerely thank Pamela Meidell for her years of service and dedication both as a board member and chair of the Outreach, Strategy & Planning Committee from 1989-1992, and as our Field Director for the past three years.

*We must have no illusions. We must not be naive.
If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice, get
out of ourselves and fight nonviolently for a better world.*

*We must not expect to find it easy;
we shall not walk on roses, people will not throng to hear
us applaud, and we shall not always be aware of divine
protection.*

*If we are to be pilgrims of peace and justice,
we must expect the desert.*

- Archbishop Dom Helder Camara of Brazil

**ATTENTION: EARLY REGISTRATION FOR
AUGUST DESERT WITNESS 1995 HAS BEEN EXTENDED THROUGH JULY
1ST. SEND YOUR COUPON IN TODAY FOR THE BEST DEAL!**

Desert Voices

Nevada Desert Experience
P.O.Box 4487
Las Vegas, NV 89127

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**

An invitation . . .

AUGUST DESERT WITNESS 1995 is the culminating event of NDE's *A Year of Non-violence: Journey of Witness and Remembrance. A Year of Nonviolence* is a campaign to make peace with our past by looking clearly at our nuclear history of the last 50 years, taking responsibility for what we have done, and with the help and guidance of the great spiritual traditions of our planet, healing ourselves and the earth.

During August Desert Witness, we will be standing with the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, humanity's first victims of atomic warfare. We will stand with the people of the Marshall Islands, Muroroa, Kazakhstan, Lop Nur and Novaya Zemlya, all victims and survivors of nuclear weapons testing; with Americans downwinders, atomic veterans, former test site workers and Native American peoples, who through their work and everyday lives have seen and felt the painful effects of nuclear weapons testing. We will all come together in a spirit of peace, healing and hope to realize the words of Dom Helder Camara, "This is the site of the greatest violence on earth, therefore, it should be the site of the greatest nonviolence on earth."

Join us for a gathering diverse in faith and culture and a program of prayer, reflection, remembrance and healing.

NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE is a faith-based organization working to end nuclear weapons testing through a campaign of prayer, dialogue and nonviolent direct action. Inspired by Franciscan spirituality and scriptural values, NDE is an interfaith voice presently engaged in an intensive campaign to bring about a Comprehensive Test Ban.

Nevada Desert Experience
P.O. Box 4487
Las Vegas, Nevada 89127

STAMP

Nevada Desert Experience
presents

August Desert Witness

1995

Commemorating
Hiroshima and Nagasaki

August 4 - 9, 1995

University of
Nevada-Las Vegas &
Nevada Test Site

LOGISTICS

Registration

NDE is offering a package deal that includes food and lodging on the UNLV campus. Rates are less expensive if you register BEFORE JUNE 15TH. A registration fee applies should you wish to take care of your own food and lodging. If you plan on attending the activities for August 7-9, check the box on the return slip and we'll send you registration information. There will be an additional charge for room and board on campus from the evening of August 6th through the evening of August 8th, but no extra registration fee. Contact NDE if you need financial assistance. Please make checks payable to Nevada Desert Experience. Questions? Call NDE at 702-646-4814.

Weather

August temperatures in Las Vegas can reach 110 degrees. Although most of the program will take place in a cool, air-conditioned environment, some events will take place outside, namely the test site action. It is necessary to guard against sunstroke and heat exhaustion. Please wear light, loose fitting clothing. Bring plenty of sunscreen, a hat and a water bottle.

Radiation Concerns

Discussion about radiation exposure at the Nevada Test Site is ongoing, but it is generally agreed that unless there has been a recent (within 72 hours) detonation of an underground nuclear weapon, the danger to your health is minute. The U.S. has maintained a moratorium on underground tests since October 1992. Small children and pregnant women are not advised to go to the Test Site. Specific guidelines will be provided in your registration packet.

Housing

NDE has secured 300 rooms on the UNLV campus. The rates for these rooms are less expensive than most hotels in the area. Two suggestions: 1. Make your reservations early - space is limited. 2. Plan to stay in a double room - it's a better deal! Should you choose to stay in a nearby hotel, call City Wide Reservations at 1-800-733-6644. Ask for space near the UNLV campus.

Food

Meals will be served during the program by the UNLV Dining Service. The Dining Service offers a wide selection of food including an extensive salad bar and other items for those who choose a vegetarian lifestyle. The following meals will be available: Saturday - breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday - brunch. Friday dinner is not included, however there are a variety of restaurants next to the UNLV campus.

Transportation

NDE will not be able to provide transportation to and from the airport. Cab fare from the airport is about \$8.00. Ask the driver to drop you off at Tonopah Residence Hall at the end of Brussels Street on the Tropicana Blvd. side of campus. If you are planning your return flight on Sunday, the program will conclude at the test site by mid- to late morning. If you drive to the event, the UNLV campus is about 2-3 miles east of Las Vegas Blvd. on Tropicana Blvd. NDE will provide buses to the Nevada Test Site. Space will be limited on the buses so we urge those who have cars to use them on Sunday.

Please clip and return to:
Nevada Desert Experience
P.O. Box 4487
Las Vegas, NV 89127-0487

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) _____

Sex: M F please circle
(for housing matters)

FOR AUGUST 4 - 6, 1995

- ☐ Enclosed is my pre-registration payment of \$85.00 (Double room occupancy)
☐ My roommate will be _____
☐ Please assign me a roommate.
 - ☐ Enclosed is my pre-registration payment of \$105.00 (Single room occupancy)
 - ☐ Enclosed is my pre-registration payment of \$40.00 (NO room and board included)
- PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 15**
- ☐ Enclosed is my late registration payment of \$100.00 (Double room occupancy)
 - ☐ Enclosed is my late registration payment of \$120.00 (Single room occupancy)
 - ☐ Enclosed is my late registration payment of \$55.00 (NO room and board included)
- NO REFUNDS AFTER JULY 1ST.**
- ☐ I will need a ride to the test site on Sunday.
Note: Bring \$5 with you to board the bus.
 - ☐ I am considering civil disobedience.
 - ☐ Please send me info about August 7 - 9.
 - ☐ I'd like to take a Test Site tour on the 7th.
 - ☐ I'd like to organize a group from my area.

Groups of 20 or more will receive a discount of 10% per person. Call NDE for details.