

Statement on Behalf of Nevada Desert Experience and Anti-Nuclear Allies in the United States on the Occasion of the 2011 World Conference Against A & H Bombs

by Jim Haber and Mary Lou Anderson

We feel very privileged to be at this conference with everyone. For both of us, this is our first visit to East Asia. The motivation is so meaningful, to join in this great peace-making work. If it were only for ourselves, the expense would be better spent staying close to home, expressing solidarity electronically and not increasing our carbon footprint. We regularly hold signs and demonstrate at places like the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), until recently called the Nevada Test Site, or in Las Vegas, where we live, to make people aware that nuclear weapons continue to threaten all of humanity.

Nevada Desert Experience (NDE) organizes interfaith resistance to nuclear weapons and war. We were important participants in the successful effort to end full-scale testing of nuclear weapons by the United States in 1991. Unfortunately, the ending of the cold war didn't end the nuclear problem, it just made it more invisible and hence harder to confront. There are many ways in which President Obama is showing himself not to be working for nuclear disarmament, despite earlier statements that sounded like a call to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world:

- Marching toward “Full Spectrum Dominance” by the “Global Strike Command” to project US force worldwide in a matter of minutes;
- Developing a nuclear capable remotely piloted bomber;
- Budgeting over \$80 billion to rebuild three major facilities to quadruple the output of new parts for nuclear warheads;
- Resuming and increasing sub-critical and other “stockpile stewardship” tests at the NNSN and other national laboratories;
- Researching a new generation of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and ballistic missile submarines;
- Frequently testing ICBMs that can “launch on warning” in a matter of minutes while issuing bellicose statements against North Korea and Iran for testing inferior, shorter-range missiles that take days to launch and can't even reach the United States itself;
- Pressuring South Korea and other allies to construct military bases (e.g. on Jeju Island) in those countries for US anti-ballistic missile defense units which are actually very provocative, destabilizing, and which promote the global arms race;
- Promoting the lie that we can construct new, safe nuclear power plants even as the disaster of the Fukushima Daiichi meltdown continues to unfold;
- Looking to new weapons systems and technologies, like drones and other robotics, to save us from war and environmental problems exacerbated by earlier weapons systems and technologies.

We will share what we learn here when we return home. Our hope is that by meeting all of you, our voices will travel further than they do now. So we have come here, not for ourselves, but as allies representing allies. Gratefully, we're not alone, and we are happy to bring thoughts and greetings from mutual friends who couldn't be here, just as we're looking forward to bring wisdom from this conference back with us.

We bring greetings from Claudia Peterson of St. George, Utah, who is a member of our National Council. She has attended several of these conferences because of the harmful, even deadly, effects that nuclear weapons have had on her family and friends “downwind” from atmospheric tests 40 years ago in southern Nevada. Claudia asked us to pass on this message:

“I would like the Japanese people to know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Even though I am unable to join you this year at the conference, I am with you in spirit.

“With the terrible events of the earthquake, tsunamis and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident, it is more important than ever that, together we push for a nuclear free world. It has been 66 years since the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the suffering continues. The Downwinders suffering continues also. Our health and environment have been compromised for power and greed. Working together in solidarity we can make changes for good. With our convictions to change the wrongs of the past, we can insure the future for our children and grandchildren.

“My thanks to Gensuikyo for their continued work to help the people of need throughout the world not only with their continued work for a nuclear free world but also for their work with the many other disasters which they have assisted with.”

We bring greetings from Johnnie Bobb, NDE Council member and Chief of the Western Shoshone National Council who some of you met last year while visiting Las Vegas. The meeting of Hibakusha, Shoshone and other American Downwinders remains very poignant and motivational in our hearts.

We also bring greetings from our friend, Jackie Cabasso. She wishes she could be here again this year in her capacity as North America Coordinator of Mayors for Peace, Executive Director of Western States Legal Foundation, Convener of the United for Peace and Justice Nuclear Disarmament and Redefining Security Working Group, and member of the Abolition 2000 Coordinating Committee. Jackie is remembering the victims of nuclear war closer to home this year at the gates to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Recently, Jackie wrote, “Nuclear weapons have threatened human security since they were used by the United States against Japan nearly 66 years ago. In a time of unprecedented global economic, environmental and political upheaval, can we afford to pay for them for another 70 years, hoping they won't be used again?”

In closing we want to thank NDE Council member Janet Chisholm for giving us a charge. Janet was raised watching nuclear tests in Nevada as a child and wanted to be a nuclear scientist. In college she shifted from physics to religion and has become a leading trainer of nonviolence and popular education. She told us to “Listen, learn and come back with new ideas.” We plan to do just that. Peace.

Jim Haber
Mary Lou Anderson

Nevada Desert Experience
1420 West Bartlett Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89106
USA
702-646-4814 office
415-828-2506 Jim-mobile (Japan and USA)
702-572-7249 Mary Lou-mobile (USA)
jim@nevadadesertexperience.org
mlavegas@yahoo.com