



# Desert Voices

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Photo by Amy Hadden Marsh

## 37 Arrests on 2019 Sacred Peace Walk

By Nevada Desert Experience

On Friday, April 20, more than two dozen people were arrested during a peaceful, nonviolent demonstration for nuclear abolition and indigenous rights (to end the occupation of the Western Shoshone Nation's homeland) in the roadway leading to the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS).

Thirty-three people were detained on

NNSS land until the remaining crowd left the roadway, uphill towards the historic Peace Camp. Twenty-five of those arrested were issued written warnings by Nye County, that if they return, the warning will turn into an actual citation with attached court dates. But eight men and women – the “Good Friday 8” – were taken to the Pahrump Jail (1520 E. Basin Ave.,

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## Subcritical Nuclear Tests Raise New Dangers

By Kathy Crandall Robinson

Thanks to Tri-Valley CARE's newsletter, *Citizen's Watch*

On February 13 of this year, Livermore and Los Alamos Labs conducted a subcritical nuclear test in Nevada that breached the steel containment vessel that was supposed to contain it. One month later, on March 12, the decontamination of plutonium in the under-

ground chamber was completed. Soon thereafter, the Trump budget request for the coming year was released. It includes no information about the subcritical release incident but is chock full of funding to conduct more frequent

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## Brought Peace to Me

By Brianna Florian



A peace walk is indeed peaceful. Calm enough to encourage mental storms to brew. What does an addict of pain do? Cook turmoil and pass the plate. Serving dinner requires much effort and the reward is watching people eat.

65 miles of nothing to do other than share thoughts, out loud and telepathically. Both are dangerous. More EM-pactful than the drones and nuclear war we protest. The war is funded by money, yet fueled by Thought. We label ourselves peaceful and label “them” as wrong.

Contradictions never win when both exist.

To have no war, we lose peace.

To lose peace means nothing to fight for.

Nevada Desert Experience's 2019 Sacred Peace Walk brought peace to me, months later. I fought a war during that walk. The demons inside stepped out to walk beside me. A barrier was created similar to the unlawful assembly I was charged with and as powerful as the test site's painted white line.

I was them...we all were. Otherwise, we wouldn't know the difference.

Maybe the lesson here is acceptance. Maybe the only war is against the ego, that truly wants love for its magnificence to create and play.

Maybe death is only an illusion.

## 4 Arrested at Creech AFB



Photo by James Seamus Knight

George Killingsworth, Brian Terrell, Sady Lindberg, and Brianna Florian (Left to Right) perform non-violent civil disobedience at Creech Air Force Base, Indian Springs, NV.

*Arrests cont. from p. 1*

Pahrump, Nevada).

Two of those arrested (Tami Yaron and Robert Majors) had been plucked out of the crowd by Nye County Sheriff's Deputies while on the public side of the white line attempting to enable the prayer service to continue, and therefore received public nuisance charges instead of trespassing charges like the others. They were released at around 11:40 p.m. Friday night on bail.

The other six were booked because the only I.D. they had with them were Western Shoshone Nation permits issued to the non-Shoshone visitors to the NNSS. The Western Shoshone permits allow non-Shoshone persons to be on either side of the white line on the road to Mercury. The Nye County district attorney and court failed to respect the Western Shoshone Nation's jurisdiction over the disputed land.

John Amidon and Charlie

Smith were released on bail Saturday night, leaving the remaining four – Brian Terrell, Mark Kelso, Richard Bishop and Jakob Whitson. The four decided to seek bail after Judge Gus Sullivan declined to release the four on their own recognizance. The four spent more than 72 hours in jail before seeing Judge Sullivan. NDE's Outreach Director Jakob Whitson said from inside the Pahrump Jail on Easter Sunday, about Nye County's nuclear weapons site, "It's a glaring example of unsustainability; our goal is to inform the public and to change national policies, because we hope our witness at the nuclear site speaks in solidarity with the Shoshone way of caring for the land."

The April 19 prayer-action by 55 people was the culmination of Nevada Desert Experience's (NDE) 24th annual Sacred Peace Walk. Officials of the Department of Energy and the Nye County Sheriff's Department were given copies of the

1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, The People's Indictment of the N.N.S.S. of Crimes Against Peace and Crimes Against Humanity, and the Non Proliferation Treaty – all of which are continually violated by the NNSS. In October 2018 Nye County had resumed prosecution of publicly witnessed line-crossing rituals at the NNSS conducted by peace activists. Prior to Friday's line crossing and arrests at the NNSS, a group of over 50 justice activists and faith leaders gathered for a Western Shoshone sunrise ceremony at Peace Camp followed by breakfast and a powerful Nuclear Stations of the Cross reading, hosted by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. The Western Shoshone Nation's Johnnie Bobb had issued Western Shoshone Permits to the entire group, and led the group to a blessing at the Mercury, Nevada

entrance of the NNSS. The Sacred Peace Walkers and friends were surrounded by artists and media makers gathering content for their programs in California and Colorado. The work of the Nevada Desert Experience to create and wage "Nonviolent Social Change for the Planet" continues to actively reconnect personal responsibility for healing human habitat to the rest of the earth's environmental healing. Participants at NDE events agree to abide by a Nonviolent Covenant. The Good Friday 8 received telephone calls and letters from the Office of the District Attorney Nye County stating the attorney's denial of the charges against them. The case was denied, but the Good Friday 8 and others will continue to persevere in having this case heard.



Photo by James Seamus Knight

Sacred Peace Walkers gather for the Nuclear Stations of the Cross with the Western Shoshone Nation Flag, Mercury, NV

*Robinson cont. from p. 1* subcritical tests while enhancing the types of equipment that can be used in their detonation. The accident involved cracks in the fasteners on the containment vessel. It illustrates one obvious danger with these experiments, radioactive contamination. The subcritical test program also creates less obvious risks to national and global security norms and treaties. These dangers are illuminated in the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) budget request for nuclear weapons activities. Tri-Valley CAREs reviewed the NNSA request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, [calling out the] growing budget item, “Enhanced Capabilities for Subcritical Experiments,” along with a plan for an increased “cadence” of subcritical tests. Subcritical tests are explosive experiments conducted in an underground chamber at the NNSS, where more than a thousand above and below ground nuclear tests were detonated before 1992, when the nuclear testing moratorium act was signed into law. Subcritical tests use weapons grade plutonium, but the small amounts involved do not reach a self-sustaining “critical” fission chain reaction, or nuclear explosive yield. Subcritical tests along with the entire nuclear stockpile stewardship program enable the Trump Administration to ratchet up the pace and scope of developing new warheads alongside its plan to also expand production of plutonium bomb cores, called “pits,” for the new warheads. Taken together, these activities that make changes to weapons create pressure to consider resumption of nuclear explosive (i.e., yield) testing in order to certify them. In the context of plans for new nuclear weapons,

it is not surprising that the NNSA is enhancing its subcritical testing program. However, the program is dangerous and warrants more scrutiny.

The ramp up in subcritical testing is called “Enhanced Capabilities for Subcritical Experiments” (ESCE) and it includes developing new diagnostic tools for these tests and more. The NNSA FY20 budget request traces the evolution and projected growth of the ESCE program – and it is instructive. NNSA first notes the justification that “the stockpile is inherently moving



One of two experimental alcoves in the 102 minicomplex during construction. Workers are installing the utilities required to stage and diagnose subcritical tests.

away from the Underground Test (UGT) database through aggregate influences of aging, modern manufacturing techniques, modern materials, and evolving design philosophies” (emphasis added; in plain language this means novel designs and new military capabilities). Then the history is traced back to 2014 when both Los Alamos and Livermore labs, “jointly identified that a capability gap exists.” After further studies in 2016, NNSA claims that it was determined that, “Enhanced Capabilities for Subcritical

Experiments (ECSE) will close this gap.” Further, NNSA notes in its new FY20 budget request that “Data from ECSE will help the certification of the W80-4 LEP and the W87-1 Modification Program,” and that, “to support the program plan documented in the 2018 Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan (SSMP), NNSA places a high priority on developing ECSE.” The W80-4 and W87-1 warheads are both being developed at Livermore Lab and the so-called “evolving design philosophies” are hugely in evidence here. This creates a

total program cost approaching \$1 billion by fiscal 2024. Real money here may equal real trouble.

In addition to the enhanced diagnostics, ECSE and other related operations will be supported by an additional construction and development program, which the budget calls the “U1a Complex Enhancements Project” (UCEP). UCEP will include “an increased operational cadence of subcritical weapons experiments using plutonium” to include 2-3 subcritical

experiments per year. For reference, U1a is the name of the underground subcritical test complex. Two to three tests annually represents a major increase in the rate of subcritical nuclear testing.

Conducting subcritical tests underground at NNSS poses additional specific risks to the global test moratorium and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Subcritical tests are conducted at the same site and exact same shaft and underground facility where fully critical underground nuclear weapons tests were conducted. Subcritical tests play a role in maintaining the readiness of nuclear test site and the ability to prepare for resumption of nuclear explosive tests. We note that some proponents of nuclear weapons are pushing for explosive tests at low-yield, known as “supercritical” tests, which would violate the CTBT and the U.S. observed nuclear testing moratorium. Preparations for subcritical tests look very similar to preparations for what would be a fully critical test in violation of the CTBT and the test moratorium. Increasing the number of subcritical tests and spending large sums of money on a program called “Enhanced Capabilities for Subcritical Experiments,” could easily be viewed as suspect and provocative by other countries. [TriValleyCAREs aims] to “turn down the heat” by reducing subcritical tests that, along with other U.S. activities, are firing up a new global arms race.

*Read more about subcritical test plans in the Fiscal Year 2020 Department of Energy Budget Request, Volume 1 (National Nuclear Security Administration), especially pages 74, 77, 138, 158 and 264.*

NevadaDesertExperience.org  
1420 West Bartlett Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

Presorted  
Standard Mail  
PAID  
Permit # 1  
Jamestown, CA  
95327



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### UPCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS

Call NDE for more info (702.646.4814), or email: [info@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:info@NevadaDesertExperience.org)

**July 26- August 6, 2019:** Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk, Eugene, Oregon to Seattle (Ground Zero)

**July 8-16, 2019:** International Action Camp at Buechel Nuclear Airbase, Germany

**August 3, 2019:** Hiroshima Peace Day, Los Alamos, NM

**August 6, 2019:** Hiroshima Day at Livermore Labs - Tri-Valley CAREs

**August 6-9, 2019:** Fast for Peace with King's Bay Plowshares 7, Brunswick, GA

**Sept. 29-Oct. 5:** 10 Years of Drone Resistance: Creech AFB, Nevada by CodePink

**Oct. 5-12:** Keep Space for Peace Week - International Week of Protest to Stop Militarization of Space

**October 13-14, 2019:** NDE's Justice for Our Desert, Las Vegas, NV

**January 20, 2020:** NDE's Float in the MLK Jr Day Parade, Las Vegas, NV

**April 4-10, 2020:** NDE's Sacred Peace Walk NV

**October 2-5, 2020:** NDE's codeGREEN Las Vegas, NV

October 2 to 5, 2020

Las Vegas Mercury Indian Springs

Come Pray with us opposing nuclear weapons and the robotic (drone) warfare

code GREEN A Vision Beyond The Nuclear Agenda

Education Inspiration Agitation

More Info at [NevadaDesertExperience.org](http://NevadaDesertExperience.org)

*This Nevada Desert Experience will include dance, speakers, workshops and music in Las Vegas, as well as prayer-actions at Indian Springs and Mercury, NV, supporting justice and peace.*