NDE Field Director Sows Grassroot Seeds for CTBT

(Editors Note: Pamela Meidell of Malibu, California has been appointed Field Director for Nevada Desert Experience. Working out of her home in Malibu, Pamela will travel extensively to work with local and regional faith-based groups in mobilizing support for a test ban and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. You can contact Pamela at Box 673, Malibu, CA 90265; (310) 457-7023. As her following report reflects, her first month on the job been busy and rewarding.)

When I accepted the position of Nevada Desert Experience Field Director, I started a new address book and a new journal. The first one is filling rapidly with the names of the many people I met during the Lenten Desert Experience, and continue to meet during my work. I am filling the second one - my field notebook - with observations, reflections, notes, a sort or running commentary on my work in progress. I have turned again and again to my first entry, read by chance in the Pecos Abbey Newsletter: "But I will leave as a remnant in your midst, a people humble and lowly who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord...the Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with a gladness and renew you in his love." (Zephaniah, 3:12,17)

A Remnant People

I believe that those of us who come to the desert are a remnant people, and that we are constantly being renewed in God's love to continue our work together. And now our work is expanding. Those of us who have stood in the Nevada desert at the gates of Mercury need to take the desert to people who may never come to the Test Site, but who nonetheless stand with us in spirit.

Gardens of Peace

For the past ten years, NDE has brought people to the desert to pray, to learn, to witness, to take action. Now we need to help each other bring the vision home and nurture it in our lives. The Episcopalians and the Lutherans symbolized this intention beautifully during their Sunday liturgy in March when Rev. Michael Moller consecrated seeds of corn along with the bread and the wine of the eucharist. Everyone received a handful of corn to take into the Test Site, to hold and pray with, to take home and plant. Some of us took them into the "Pen" and planted them along the fence. Three weeks later, on Palm Sunday, I counted nine plants growing along the north fence. We watered our young sprouts from a canteen and christened them the "Mercury Community Garden." We want to foster such community gardens of peace throughout the country.

The International Context
Our goal is to offer the world the gift of a signed Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995, the year the current treaty is due to be reviewed, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the nuclear age at Trinity, Hiroshima, Nagasaki. To accomplish this task we need a Comprehensive Test Ban.

Internationally we are well on our way. President Boris Yeltsin kept in effect Mikhail Gorbachev's October 1991 announcement of a one-year moratorium on nuclear tests in Russia. On April 6, 1992, the new Prime Minister of France, Pierre Beregovoy, in his first speech to the National Assembly, suspended the French nuclear testing program in the South Pacific for the rest of the year.

Like Gorbachev and Yeltsin before him, Beregovoy invited the other nuclear powers to make similar commitments. Will we accept this invitation?

The United States has already tested two nuclear bombs this year, one on March 26, which measured a 5.5 on the Richter scale, and a second on April 30. Three more tests are in preparation.

The National Scene
Clearly we have work to do in our own country. NDE seeks to unite people of faith around the country on this issue: ending nuclear testing and closing our test site.

(Continued on the following page)

A MODERN FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time, not so long ago, in a desert underground not so far away, lived a fire-breathing dragon. At irregular intervals, this dragon would vent his fury under the earth, belching a flame hotter than the fires of hell, shaking the desert floor, and leaving poisonous water, soil and air in his trail. This dragon, a pet of a people living many miles away in a building called the Pentagon, had a ferocious appetite. In one gulp, he swallowed dozens of schools, several hospitals, and hundreds of houses, leaving many people homeless, uneducated, and without medical care. But worst of all, this dragon swallowed people—men and women, girls and boys. He burned them with his fire, tortured them with his diseases.

This dragon made fantastic promises to his keepers; "I will protect you from all the other dragons out there" he said. "I will deter the other dragons from devouring you. If you keep on feeding me, I will keep on protecting you from all your enemies."

But some people began to ask, "Why are we doing this? Why are we sacrificing our minds, our bodies, our souls, to feed this dragon? Why?"

They said, "We must kill the dragon. Who will kill the dragon? How will the dragon die?"

Some people are talking, "We will kill the dragon with our votes." Others are saying "We will kill the dragon with our prayers." Still others are saying "we will kill the dragon with our reasoning." And some are saying "we will kill the dragon with our protests."

And a whisper rises from deep within many people, saying "The dragon lives inside of each of us. The dragon draws his life from me. The dragon lives on my fears; the dragon feeds on my illusions. The dragon will die when truth dispels our illusions; the dragon will die when love casts out our fear."

Peter Ediger 4-12-92
What You Can Do

1) Write a short, personal letter to your Senators urging co-sponsorship (it’s important they co-sponsor, not just give vague support) of S. 2064 and send it.

2) Become a contact person for your area. Form a local study/action group. Write for information so you can receive resource packets and updates.

3) Write letters to the editor of your local paper urging a testing moratorium and send NDE copies when they are published.

4) Arrange for a showing -- at a house party, church or community meeting -- of Bound by the Wind, a 40-minute video about the international campaign to end nuclear testing, or show The Fertile Desert, NDE’s 12-minute video on nuclear testing (both are available from NDE). Write letters or send petitions to your Senators afterwards.

5) Ask your congregation, diocese, synod, conference, region or national body of your faith to accept the Call to the Churches, and develop steps to implement it.

6) Think of ways to raise this issue in your area and share your ideas with us. We need the fruit of all your imaginations.

7) Pray.

ASSISSI AND LAS VEGAS

Excerpts from a Talk by Hermann Schaluck, Franciscan Minister General

St. Francis was basically inspired by an experience of God as a nonviolent God. That happened in a society which, like in ours, was confronted still with an image of a violent God. St. Francis was born into a society, into a church, which officially was recruiting people for crusading in God’s name to make war in God’s name. I am inspired by the experience of St. Francis of a God who is love, who is compassionate, who is powerless...

I see a direct line between St. Francis back in the middle ages and his way of peacemaking, and our efforts toward peacemaking here in the desert...St. Francis is not dead... There is this line between Assisi in the middle ages and the desert of Las Vegas today.

Bells of Reconciliation

August Desert Witness VIII

Friday, August 7 - Sunday, August 9, 1992

On August 9, 1945, Fat Man, the third atomic bomb in earth’s history, fell on the City of Nagasaki, immolating thousands and destroying the largest Christian community in Japan. The bomb also stilled the symbol of that community—the "Bells of Nagasaki", the bells of St. Francis Cathedral near the epicenter of the blast.

The Reverend Shari Young (Episcopal priest, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco) and Pamela Meidell (Zen student of the Rinza tradition and NDE Field Director) will use the bells of the Christian and Buddhist traditions to help awaken us to the many dimensions and consequences of this event. Please join us for August Desert Witness VIII as we walk with the rhythms of sound and silence to reflect on the theme of reconciliation.

In a retreat atmosphere, we will explore these questions: Can we become still enough to hear the sounds of Nagasaki? What are they saying? How do we listen? How do we respond? What are the sounds of Nagasaki telling us? What are we telling them?

We will invite the stillness of the desert and the deep voices of the Christian and Buddhist traditions to join us and to help us engage in this extended conversation.

The retreat will include prayer, silence, chanting, singing, periods of zazen (seated meditation) and kinhin (walking meditation), small and large group discussions, and time for private reflection. We will conclude with a pilgrimage to the gates of the Nevada Test Site on Sunday, August 9, (the 47th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki) for a liturgy and nonviolent direct action.

The retreat costs $50, and includes meals on Saturday. For more information, please contact NDE’s Las Vegas office at (702) 646-4814 or P.O.Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV, 89127-0487.

NEWS NOTES

ACTION AT LAS VEGAS DOE OFFICE: When the DOE announced the first test of 1992 for March 25, six persons presented a demand to stop the planned test at the DOE office in Las Vegas, requesting that the demand be forwarded to Washington. When they remained in the lobby past closing time waiting for a response, they were arrested for trespass.

Erik Thompson, who refused to sign for OR bond, was sentenced to time served (eight days) in City Jail. Fr. Louie Vitale, pleading no contest, was sentenced to four days; John Stangle fined $120. Trial date for Reinard Kautzen, David Solnit and Peter Ediger, who pleaded not guilty, is being set.


WESTERN SHOSHONE LAND RIGHTS STRUGGLE CONTINUES. Nonviolent resistance to US Bureau of Land Management threats to round up livestock belonging to the Western Shoshone Nation continue at the Dann Ranch in Nevada. For more information contact Western Shoshone National Council, Box 68, Duckwater, NV 89314.

Desert Voices : NDE's Quarterly Newsletter

Your letters, articles, announcements of upcoming events, or poetry and art are welcome. Send them to: Desert Voices, Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV, 89127-0487. Phone (702) 646-4814.

Newsletter Staff: Peter Ediger, Pamela Meidell, Jon and Leslie Klusmire.
FIVE MINUS FIVE, OR FIVE PLUS TWENTY:
The Algebra of Nuclear Proliferation

By Dr. Vladimir Iakimets
Russian Academy of Sciences
Anti-Nuclear Movement, "Nevada-Semipalatinsk"

In the last decade the world has observed the development of two opposite processes: a) the warming of international relations, breaking the walls of distrust, the dying of Cold War attitudes, and the start of the nuclear disarmament race and b) spreading of the know-how of nuclear technology and materials.

It is absolutely evident that behind these processes are the collapse of the Communist ideology from one side and the outdated theory of peacekeeping by the threat based on the concept of nuclear deterrence from the other side.

The question is raised: why are the positive shifts in the relationships between earlier nonfriendly countries accompanied by nuclear proliferation?

The answer to this question is not surprising. The world community had received a clear message: the system of international treaties created during the Cold War is in contradiction with a new situation. Global social, economic and ecological problems as well as problems of multinational and bilateral relations cannot be properly resolved if this system is not reconfigured. The international community will hardly make any progress if just five nuclear powers consider themselves the only authorities for peacekeeping.

Approximately three years are left before the date of the Non-Proliferation Treaty’s expiration. The international community may still use this period to learn the algebra of nuclear proliferation to get rid of the Cold War legacy and to establish a more secure and safe world for our children and future generations. Due to the democratization in the former USSR and efforts of the "Nevada-Semipalatinsk" Anti-Nuclear Movement, the world got the first algebraic lesson. The terrible circle was broken down in August 1991 when for the first time in the history of the nuclear age the largest Soviet Test Site near Semipalatinsk was closed down by decree of the Kazakhstan President N. Nazarbaev. The "Five Minus One" International Conference on Global Disarmament was held in October 1991 to celebrate this remarkable success.

The President of Russia, B. Yeltsin, had learned this lesson and imposed a one year moratorium on nuclear testing in Russia. France was the next nation which announced on April 8, 1992 that it was suspending its program on nuclear testing in the South Pacific atoll, Mururoa, until the end of this year.

Such a development shows that the final target "Five Minus Five" announced by the President of the "Nevada - Semipalatinsk" anti-nuclear movement, Ozhaz Suleimenov, in October 1991 is within reach.

The USA, a great nation of the world, faces a real challenge to learn this algebra also. If both legislative initiatives on imposing a one year moratorium on US nuclear testing (HR 3636 and S2064) pass the House and Senate this summer, and if President Bush does not veto it, then a more secure life for future generations will be possible.

If it does not happen, then the other nuclear algebraic operation will be implemented. Instead of having "Five Minus Five" nuclear test sites, the world will learn the other algebraic operation of nuclear proliferation—addition—because in 1995 about twenty countries may become nuclear powers.

If it happens, no one country as well as no one international organization will be in a position to control this situation.

The Cold War’s End Adds Urgency For a Comprehensive Test Ban

By Douglas Roche, Former Canadian Ambassador For Disarmament (Excerpted from his speech during LDE XI)

The end of the Soviet empire notwithstanding, the immense danger to the world from the proliferation of nuclear weapons has not gone away. We fool ourselves to think that because cuts in some nuclear weapons categories have been made, and more cuts have been discussed, we can forget about the problem.

Even after all the cuts mandated by the Bush and Gorbachev-Yeltsin moves are implemented, the U.S. and Russia will each still have 10,000 nuclear weapons left in 1999. The U.S. still is testing and producing new nuclear models. More Third World countries, as Iraq and Algeria have shown, are joining India, Pakistan, and Isreal in the surreptitious development of nuclear weapons. Because of inertia and the perpetuation of thinking that characterized the Cold War years, the world is missing an opportunity to take a step that until now has been considered impossible: the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons remain a cancer in the global body that has, for the first time, the possibility of achieving a wholeness in humanity. It must be cut out before it destroys the body. And now is precisely the moment to do it. There is no justification for nuclear weapons any longer. They serve no military purpose. They endanger all humanity.

The most perilous of all assumptions is the belief that the Western strategy of nuclear deterrence is essential to our security. Maintaining nuclear deterrence into the 21st century is what will lead to our downfall. Nuclear deterrence is not an aid to peace, it is an impediment to peace. It prevents genuine nuclear disarmament. It maintains an unacceptable hegemony over non-nuclear nations. It fuels the arms race around the world. It spawns a militarism that is choking off development for the poorest half of the world’s population. It is a fundamental obstacle to achieving a new age of global security.

It must be stated, respectfully but truthfully, that it is the United States that is today continuing to drive the global arms race. Not even the end of the Cold War has swayed the U.S. administration from its central policy of nuclear deterrence.

The onus for stopping the nuclear arms race is clearly on the present nuclear powers. With ballistic missile technology expanding rapidly through the Third World, with the division of the world into two classes, rich and poor, becoming more pronounced, with competition for dwindling resources by expanding populations in environmentally-ruined lands now spawning huge migrations and terrorism, it is inevitable that the regional conflicts ahead will employ modernized weapons — including nuclear — unless the leaders of the world come to their senses and instigate a global ban on the production and the transfer of all weapons of mass destruction.
Bound By The Wind Video and NDE XI Tapes Now Available

BOUND BY THE WIND, this highly acclaimed video by David Brown documenting the effects of nuclear testing world-wide tells the story of the international movement working for a test ban. This video should be in every congregation/community. 40 minutes. NDE's special price $15.

A FERTILE DESERT, 12 minute video portraying the campaign of the Nevada Desert Experience to stop nuclear testing. $12.

Audio tapes from the Franciscan Weekend, LDE XI: ($6 each)
Address by Hermann Schaluck, Franciscan Minister General
Address by Doug Roche, Former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament, and panel.

Order Form

Please send me:

____ copies of video BOUND BY THE WIND @ $15 each

____ copies of video A FERTILE DESERT @ $12 each

____ copies of audio tape address by Schaluck, $6 each

____ copies of audio tape address by Roche, panel, $6 each

Name:___________________________________________________________
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Tom Pobraca
2300 Garden
Santa Barbara CA 93105
A CALL TO THE CHURCHES
It's Time For A Nuclear Weapons Testing Ban

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH..."
God saw that it was good...
"GOD CREATED HUMANITY OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND..."
God saw that it was good...
IN 1945 HUMANS CREATED THE NUCLEAR BOMB...
God saw........

In 1945 one nation possessing several nuclear bombs
In 1992 five known nuclear nations possessing 50,000 nuclear warheads.

1995 WILL MARK THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE NUCLEAR BOMB...
1995 WILL BRING THE REVIEW OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY...

Unless the nuclear nations sign a Comprehensive Test Ban and significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals by 1995, signers of the Non-proliferation Treaty indicate they will not renew their pledge against becoming nuclear powers.

IN 1992 NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE MANUFACTURED AND TESTED...
In spite of:
*the negotiations for the reduction of nuclear weapons
*the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union as a "Superpower"
*the expressed will of the international community of nations for an end to nuclear weapons testing
*the expressed will of the U.S. public for an end to nuclear weapons tests.

IN 1992 IN THE UNITED STATES WE EXPERIENCE...
*a severe housing shortage, and housing costs out of the reach of people
*millions without medical care, and medical bills crushing families
*a serious decrease of jobs in the private sector
*-growing discoveries of the effects of radiation in cancers and deaths
*continual revelation of the severe pollution of nuclear facilities.

WE CALL FOR A REDIRECTION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THIS NATION
*away from wasteful spending on weapons and towards human needs
*away from the threat to world stability and towards world harmony
*away from the threat of radiation and pollution and toward health and well-being.

WE CALL ON THE CHURCHES TO LEAD THIS NATION IN REDIRECTING OUR NATIONAL PURPOSE...
*by calling for fasting and prayer
*by urging their congregations to challenge Congress to adopt a test ban
*by supporting those who participate in nonviolent civil resistance to achieve these goals.

GOD HAS GIVEN US CHOICES TO MAKE: "I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSE. THEREFORE, CHOOSE LIFE THAT YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS MAY LIVE."  (Dt. 30:19)

WE SEE THIS AS GOD'S CHALLENGE AND CALL TO THE CHURCH TODAY.
NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE  P.O. Box 4457  Las Vegas, NV 89127 (702) 646-4814
ACTION PLAN FOR AN END TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING

1. Legislation calling for a one year moratorium on U.S. testing has been introduced in both the House (HR 3636) and the Senate (S2064). Write and phone your Congresspersons urging support of the moratorium.

2. Write letters to the Editor of your local paper calling attention to the fact that testing continues in spite of the end of the Cold War. Urge people to express support for the moratorium and a Comprehensive Test Ban.

3. Arrange a showing—at a house party, church or community meeting—of one or both of the following:

"Bound by the Wind" a 40-minute video on the global campaign to end nuclear testing.

"A Fertile Desert" a 12-minute video on the Nevada Desert Experience Campaign to end testing.

(Both are available from the Nevada Desert Experience)

4. Pray for conversion of our spirit and our priorities, personally and nationally:
   *from the fear which builds walls between people and nations to the love which unites us all
   *from the violence which destroys to the nonviolence which heals
   *from investing earth's resources into weapons of war to investing in the productivity which nurtures life
   *from budgeting hundreds of billions for militarization to budgeting for food and shelter, education and health.

Initial Endorsers include:  
8th Day Center for Justice  Pax Christi USA  
Evangelicals for Social Action  Peace Farm  
Institute for Peace and Justice  Sojourners  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  World Peacemakers  
Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office  
New Call to Peacemaking  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

For material and more information, contact:  
Nevada Desert Experience  
P.O. Box 4487  
Las Vegas, NV 89127  
(702) 646-4814

"Almost anything you do will seem insignificant, but it is important that you do it." Gandhi
The Western Shoshone National Council & the Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance call for

Healing Global Wounds

Indigenous Forum and Ceremony

Nevada Test Site/Las Vegas ★ October 2-12, 1992

Stop Nuclear Testing ★ End 500 Years of Injustice


Oct 5: Demonstration at the Test Site Operations Office/Las Vegas.

Oct 5-9: Join European Peace Pilgrimage & Walk Across America for Mother Earth for the 65 mile completion of their 3000+ mile, 8-month walks.

Oct 6-12: Nevada Test Site Encampment.

Oct 10: Native-led Healing Ceremony.


Oct 12: 500 Years Commemoration.

For more information contact:
Western Shoshone National Council
PO Box 140115, Duckwater, NV 89314

American Peace Test
PO Box 26725 Las Vegas NV 89126 (702) 386-9834

Citizen Alert
PO Box 1681, Las Vegas NV 89125 (702) 648-8982

Nevada Desert Experience
PO Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127 (702) 646-4814

LOCAL CONTACT:
HEALING GLOBAL WOUNDS Indigenous Forum and Ceremony
Nevada Test Site/Las Vegas October 2-12, 1992

An unprecedented 10-days of events will take place in Las Vegas and at the Nevada Test Site, October 2-12, 1992 to demand an end to the 500 years of injustice to Native Americans and an end to nuclear testing on native lands. The events will include: an Indigenous People’s triumvirate with indigenous testimony and presentations, indigenous and disarmament workshops, skills sharing, strategy discussions and multi-cultural celebration; a demonstration at the Nevada Test Site Operations Office in Las Vegas, the final 4-day, 65-mile completion of two, 3000-mile, continental Walks Across America to the Nevada Test Site, an encampment in the desert adjacent to the Nevada Test Site, a native-led Healing Ceremony, a Multi-cultural Rally, Mass Nonviolent Direct Action and more. The broadest alliance ever formed for a Nevada Test Site event has come together to plan and organize these activities.

Columbus Day 1992

"Prior to colonization, which began in 1492, we "controlled" 100% of the land and gifts of creation (also known as natural resources). We were 100% of the population. We have been reduced by violence, genocide, ethnocide and attacks against our spiritual ways. Our population is now 1% in the US; less than .5% in Canada."

-Pauline Esteves of the Western Shoshone Nation, Opening Speech from the Turtle Island Delegation to the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement Conference. 1990, Aotearoa (New Zealand).

On October 12, 1992 many governments, educational and religious institutions are planning a "Columbus Quincennial Jubilee" to celebrate the "discovery of America" by Christopher Columbus. When Columbus, looking for India, arrived in the Americas, a rich diversity of indigenous peoples lived in thousands of tribal nations and villages, spoke thousands of languages and dialects, had highly developed culture and spirituality and lived in delicate balance with the earth. The arrival of Columbus marked the beginning of 500 years of invasion, colonization, genocide, ecological destruction and injustice, which continues today.

Indigenous people are leading efforts in all sectors of society to speak the truth about what really took place 500 years ago, to promote respect for the cultures and contributions of those groups whom our history books have slandered or ignored, and to take action to end continuing injustices.

Nuclear Weapons Testing

"We cannot help but see that the United States and other nuclear powers are testing their most destructive weapons on other people's land. We have a map of the world showing how all atomic and nuclear tests have been conducted on the territory of native peoples. We don't need these tests to prepare for destruction that will annihilate the people of the world. We want it stopped. Nuclear oppression against any people cannot be tolerated. The healing must begin now!"

-Western Shoshone National Council

The US is planning to explode at least 7 nuclear weapons at the Nevada Test Site in 1992, despite Russian suspension of nuclear testing and the conversion the primary Soviet Test Site in Kazakhstan to peaceful purposes. Testing at the Nevada Test Site takes place on sacred Western Shoshone land in violation of the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley and ancestral land rights. Nuclear weapons testing, production and the mining of uranium has poisoned Americas air, groundwater, soil and people with the most deadly permanent toxins on earth. Ending nuclear testing is the single most important step towards genuine qualitative disarmament, non-proliferation and the prevention of future military intervention and war.

Please join us in acting to stop 500 years of injustice and continued nuclear testing. For more information contact:

Western Shoshone National Council PO Box 140115, Duckwater, NV 89314
American Peace Test PO Box 26725 Las Vegas NV 89126 (702) 386-9834
Citizen Alert PO Box 1681, Las Vegas NV 89125 (702) 648-8982
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Local Contact: