

## **Vandenberg Space Command dominates the Pacific Why will Fr. Louie Vitale be at the front gate of Vandenberg at midnight Feb 24 /25?**

**Vandenberg Space Command is located in Southern California 200 miles north of Los Angeles.** Poised at the edge of the Pacific, the base routinely test Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. These long range high speed hydrogen bomb delivery systems are tested several times a year landing in the once beautiful Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands. Every three years Vandenberg does an extended range test all the way to Guam.

**If North Korea or Iran test a few missiles world wide hysteria breaks out.** When the US does these routine tests, it does not even make the news except as a routine report. Many peace activists are not aware that these tests occur, much less the general public.

**David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, said, “The US moratorium on nuclear testing remains incomplete as long as we continue testing missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads. Minuteman III missiles are used solely to deliver nuclear warheads.”**

*“The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation seeks the abolition of all nuclear weapons worldwide. The Foundation calls on the United States and all countries around the world to recognize their full obligation to halt all nuclear testing – not only of the warheads, but also of nuclear-capable missiles. The Preamble to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) calls upon the 189 countries that signed the NPT to facilitate “the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.”*

*“The US is demonstrating a stark double standard by condemning missile tests of other nations while continuing to conduct them on a regular basis itself. Continued testing of Minuteman III missiles by the United States sends a provocative message and encourages other countries to pursue their own nuclear weapon and missile delivery programs.”*

Over the decades a dedicated band of Catholic Workers, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and since 1999, the Global Network have held protests at the base. These protests also oppose the Star Wars missile “defense” interceptor launches that also take place from Vandenberg (mostly failed interceptions) and the launch of the polar orbit satellites used to conduct war from space.

**Until 2008 most of the protests were held during Keep Space for Peace Week, Hiroshima day or other days chosen by the peace movement.** In August of 2008 a small protest was held at night at the time of an ICBM launch. The base authorities over-reacted with a heavy armed detachment surrounding the protesters (three women) and trying to intimidate us. Since then launch time protests have been held at Vandenberg of the ICBM launches. Twice there have been companion protests at the Los Angeles Space and Missile center in El Segundo, which tracks the ICBM trajectory. There have been nighttime arrests of Fr Louie Vitale, Sister Megan Rice and myself who have gone onto the base to ask the commander to comply with international

law.

**Sept 21 2011 the USAF scheduled an ICBM night launch to Kwajalein atoll. September 21 is the UN International Day of Peace.** That day is officially recognized each year by the United Nations General Assembly as a day for “commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.” This proposed launch was denounced all over the world, with many nations expressing surprise that the tests were being conducted. This campaign made people worldwide aware that these launches are taking place. The 9/21 launch was postponed.

**These ICBM Minuteman III nuclear capable delivery systems are** the ones that are armed and set in silos in 450 locations around the mid west of the USA. These cold war legacy hydrogen bombs are on hair trigger alert, thus greatly increasing our risk of accident. Each ICBM carries up to 3 to 12 warheads and can travel 5,000 miles in 30 minutes. Once launched they cannot be recalled. (Steven Starr, <http://www.nucleardarkness.org>)

**The launching of these tests increases tensions in the world** and sends a message that the USA disregards its moral obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. This states that the nuclear powers must engage in good faith disarmament efforts. It also violates the 1996 International Court of Justice decision stating that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law.

**The few medium range missiles of the DPRK (North Korea) are used as a pretext for the military build up in the Pacific.** The proposed naval base at Jeju Island, although directed toward China, uses the North Korea missiles as its pretext.

**The expanded Pacific Missile Range Facility at [Barking Sands](#)** is being expanded on Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands. This build up also uses the North Korean “threat” as an excuse.

**The island peoples of the Pacific pay the price of this military build up.** Jeju, Guam, the Marshall Islands, Hawai’i, Okinawa all join in the call for peace in the Pacific.

**On Feb 24 and 25 protests are planned around the world to demand a stop to the ICBM test launch.** In Santa Barbara Daniel Ellsberg and David Krieger will hold a press conference and rally at 11 am on Feb 24 demand at halt. At midnight (11:55 pm Feb 24) at front gate protest will be held at Vandenberg Space Command six miles north of Lompoc in California. In the Los Angeles area a noon protest will be at the Space and Missile tracking center in El Segundo, which is key to the launch. Hawai’i has held many protests against the tracking center on Maui and the expanding Missile site on Kauai. These launches are a world event and a protest can be held at a US embassy or consulate anywhere. email [macgregoreddy@gmail.com](mailto:macgregoreddy@gmail.com) for details about the Vandenberg and El Segundo events.