

VETERANS FAST FOR LIFE/ VETERANS PEACE ACTION TEAMS

P.O. Box 586

Santa Cruz, California 95061

(408) 426-7822

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1987 VETERANS/CITIZENS FAST FOR LIFE AND PEACE

On September 1, Brian Willson, Duncan Murphy, and others begin a 40 day water only fast at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in Concord California. Charles Liteky and others will begin a corresponding fast on the same day on the steps of the Capitol in Washington D.C. Brian Willson issued the following statement about the fast:

The United States continually demands that people in the Third World "cry uncle". When they refuse we call them communists, and thereby justify killing them. We do not see the bodies of the children, the women or the men. Our lives continue pretty much as usual.

As long as killing, directly or through proxy terrorists, continues to be our policy, our resistance as US citizens is tragically inadequate. Many people of faith and conscience are in deep anguish over our policies. Nonetheless, all of us are profoundly complicit so long as we go on leading relatively normal lives while our nation is killing and torturing and maiming.

Some of the key questions for us to ponder are: How do we stop the continuation of killing being conducted in our name? What are the sacrifices we are willing to make in the pursuit of peace and justice? What are the ways of resistance and noncooperation with our lives, our bodies, our money, necessary for us to become a people of peace makers?

Beginning September 1, 1987, members of the Veterans/Citizens Fast for Life and Peace, will fast on water only for 40 consecutive days on the railroad tracks that daily carry munitions from the Concord, California Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) to ships transporting them to Central America and elsewhere. Our fast will occur as part of the on-going nonviolent Nuremberg blocking actions at CNWS aimed at upholding international law.

The 40 day fast will provide a period of time in sacrificial reflection within a resistance atmosphere to atone for our collective complicity in death policies, and to envision resistance actions in response to those policies.

Everyone is welcome to join in this fast. A monitoring physician and a support group will be available. Those desiring to fast on juices, and others choosing to relay fast, are also welcome. I also encourage you to organize your own fast.

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FAST continued

The authorities will be notified of the resistance action on the tracks at CNWS so that they will have the choice of suspending movement of munitions, removing our bodies, or running us over. One truth seems clear: If the munitions train moves past our blockade other human beings will be killed and maimed. We are not worth more. They are not worth less. Let us commit to ourselves and the world that we will claim our dignity, self-respect, and honor by resisting with our lives and dollars, no matter what it takes. This fast, this period of cleansing and deep discernment, will assist in preparing for this journey of liberation.

Sincerely and in Peace,
S. Brian Willson

NUREMBERG ACTION - CONCORD NAVAL WEAPONS STATION

The spirit of the Fast for Life is alive and well at the railroad tracks at the Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) in Concord, California. In June VPAT, with other organizations inaugurated the Nuremberg Actions-CNWS. The purpose of the action, which calls for vigiling and blockading (civil obedience) is to stop the flow of arms and munitions which pass through Port Chicago to Central America and the Far East. We have had a continuous presence at the gates of CNWS since June 10, and plan to remain there until the arms shipments are stopped.

After WWII the Nuremberg Trials spelled out the principle that individuals are responsible for obeying international law regarding human rights even if their governments do not. Furthermore, Article VI, Sec. 2 of the US Constitution obligates us to abide by international treaties to which the US is co-signer. We are asking all citizens to uphold international law and decency, invoking the Nuremberg Charter, to stop the war being waged against the people of Central America.

We invite participation by veterans and nonveterans from all parts of the country in providing a sustained on-going presence of individuals to vigil and/or to put their bodies in the way of trucks and trains that are transporting arms. We ask all participants to commit to nonviolence in spirit and action with the personnel at the base, ourselves, and the communities of Clyde and Concord.

WHO WE ARE

Veterans Peace Action Teams (VPAT) is an outgrowth of the Veterans Fast for Life of September - October 1986, when four veterans - George Mizo, Duncan Murphy, Brian Willson, and Charlie Liteky - fasted on the steps of the US capitol. Their fast, which lasted 47 days, awakened a new spirit of nonviolent resistance to US intervention in Central America.

VPAT, through its activity in the war zones of Nicaragua and its work here at home, is keeping that spirit alive. One of our main goals is to involve veterans in resistance to the militarization of US foreign policy in Central America and elsewhere in the world. We seek to work with veterans groups and other peace and solidarity organizations.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

There is a real danger of peace breaking out in Central America. The five Central American presidents have agreed to a framework for demilitarizing the conflicts in the region. This in itself represents an historic victory, but one which we must vigorously help to defend.

The Arias Peace Plan calls for the **simultaneous** enactment, by November 7, of the following:

- An end to outside aid to all irregular forces in the region, except for relocation or repatriation.
- Institution of, or improvement of, pluralistic, participatory democracy, without outside interference, guaranteeing freedoms of speech and press.
- An end to the use of one country's territory as a base to attack another country.
- An amnesty for irregular forces.
- A call for a cease-fire in all armed conflicts in the region.

Our government's desperate response has betrayed its true motives. Philip Habib, ambassador at large to Central America, resigned when he was denied permission to negotiate towards peace. The administration's line is that Nicaragua cannot be trusted to follow through with democratic reforms, and that therefore aid must be maintained to the contras. **This policy is a direct sabotage of the Arias plan.** The concerns of the administration for democracy in Nicaragua are too ludicrous to be taken seriously. The true fear must lie elsewhere - perhaps that Nicaragua might be successful as an independent nation outside the sphere of US domination?

The best way to struggle for peace in Central America is to intensify our determination to end contra aid - and all military aid to the region. Without an end to contra aid, no peace plan can succeed.

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MAKING CONTACT

Veterans Peace Action Teams	(408) 426-7822
Nuremberg Actions, Fast	(415) 993-7850
Washington D.C. Fast	(202) 546-6362
Veterans for Peace	(207) 797-2770
Vietnam Veterans against the War	(312) 327-5756
Witness for Peace	(919) 688-5094

GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT

We want to tell as many people as possible about our work. To that end:

- We have organized a speakers bureau. Members of both the 1st and 2nd teams are available to share their experience with your church group, Vets group, community organization, etc. You might be especially interested in hearing:

- David Lynn, second team member, is working with the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission. He has been traveling in the war zones to document the effects of the war. He will return to the United States in October and be available for speaking engagements.

- Gerry Condon, national coordinator of the Veterans Speakers Alliance and second team member is beginning a speaking tour in September. Gerry is seeking speaking engagements with veterans groups as well as other groups interested in VPAT's activity. Please contact us if you are interested.

- We have a compelling and informative slide show, produced by second team member John Skerce, that documents the second team's trip.

- A documentary about the El Cedro experience is being produced by Don North and second team members Bob Spitzer and Dave Silk. Don produced *The 10,000 Day War*, a documentary about the Vietnam War, for Canadian Television.

Both the slide show and documentary will be transferred to video and be available in both VHS and Beta with a total running time of one hour.