

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
BRUNSWICK DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 2:17cr22

vs.

MARK COLVILLE,

Defendant.

28 U.S.C. SECTION 1749 DECLARATION OF MARK COLVILLE

My name is Mark Colville, and I make this declaration, under penalty of perjury under 28 USC Section 1749, to explain why I entered and symbolically disarmed the facility protecting, celebrating and worshipping nuclear weapons at King's Bay Trident Naval Base.

INTRODUCTION

1. " God shall judge between the nations and set terms for many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." (Isaiah 2:4)

2. I've come to regard the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy- hammering swords into plowshares- as an essentially inescapable commitment in the attempt to practice Catholic Christianity as a U.S. citizen. According to what I understand to be biblical faith, there is simply no way to worship God authentically without addressing idols, or specifically that with which we have replaced God in the grasping for personal power and ultimate security. Direct resistance to idolatry is a foundational Christian responsibility that finds its origin in the First Commandment given by God directly to Moses: "I Am the Lord your God... You

shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:1-6).

**MY RELIGIOUS FAITH AND CHOOSING KINGS BAY TRIDENT NAVAL BASE FOR
FAITH-BASED NONVIOLENT SYMBOLIC NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**

3. There are four essential elements in the teaching of the Catholic Church that stand out as primary motivations for my actions at Kings Bay on April 4, 2018:

4. FIRST, The primacy of conscience. The Catechism of the Catholic Church avers that God's revelation in the world is most clearly communicated to the conscience of the believer, and that conscientious action must not be restrained by any law, whether it be religious or secular. (see Chatechism of the Catholic Church, Part 3, Section 1, chapter 1, article 6, paragraphs 1785, 1778, 1782, 1788, 2306.)

5. SECOND, in my regular practice of the sacrament of Confession, I learned at an early age that the Church makes an important distinction between sins of commission and sins of omission. That is, sin consists not only in what we do, but even more prominently in what we fail to do. When we know what the right thing to do is, yet fail to do it, we are guilty of sin. When I found out that the Kings Bay Naval Base housed a shrine to nuclear weapons, it was eminently clear to me that to fail to expose the idolatrous nature of that reality would be sinful on my part.

6. THIRD, in my Church's rite of baptism, believers are given the specific mandate to be prophets; this is symbolized by the touching of one's ears and lips by the presiding priest, with the admonition to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to preach it. This mandate moves my responsibility as a believer beyond the realm of non-cooperation with evil and into that of active, nonviolent resistance. Jesus himself provided many examples of how to engage in prophetic action. For example: he overturned the moneychangers' tables in the Temple (an event recorded in all four of the New Testament Gospels) because those tables, located there, were a

powerful symbol of the assertion that God approved of and cooperated with the oppression of the poor. The action Jesus chose as a response was prophetic because it exposed the meaning of the symbol while at the same time pointing toward its conversion. My Plowshares action at Kings Bay did exactly the same thing. In fact, it was an action that would make absolutely no sense apart from the religious faith to which I've been devoted for my entire adult life.

7. FOURTH, in November, 2017, Pope Francis, the worldwide leader of my church, made the following statement about nuclear weapons: "The threat of their use as well as their very possession is to be firmly condemned." This proclamation was a significant shift in the development of Catholic Church teaching on the morality of nuclear weapons. While previously there had been a conditional acceptance of the possession of these weapons (provided that disarmament was being actively pursued), the Pope has now clearly declared that such a condition no longer applies. This placed an additional urgency on me as a Catholic and a U.S. citizen when contemplating what to do about the criminal and immoral behavior going on at Kings Bay.

8. I have been speaking publicly, writing, and taking action on these sincerely held beliefs for more than thirty years, in my vocation as a social justice minister in the Catholic Church. The court can find ample documentation of this in the transcript of my trial in May, 1997, for my part in the Prince of Peace Plowshares action in Bath, Maine. More recently, a significant part of the text of this affidavit has been taken from a written statement that was widely distributed on the internet in January of this year (about three months before my arrest at the Kings Bay Naval Base).

9. Nuclearism in the United States (that is, the governing policies with regard to the building, possession and use of nuclear weapons) has become a compulsory religion, one that demands assent and allegiance, punishes non-participation, and above all requires a faith that is utterly incompatible with the teachings of the Bible.

10. Nuclearism doesn't simply stand apart from Christianity. It refutes all of the basic tenets of Christian faith (beginning with the one that demands I place my ultimate security in God alone), while at the same time claiming that the U.S. has the exclusive right and duty to take up these weapons precisely because we are a "Christian nation" and a chosen people, destined to dominate the world as well as preside over (and survive) its end. These are the perversions by which my country claims the right to build and possess these weapons with the intent to use them, AGAIN. To a Catholic Christian this is, by definition, blasphemy.

11. It follows, then, that the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal is a collection of idols, actively worshipped by a nation that simultaneously claims the mantle of Christ, and allowed to continue to exist largely beyond the reach of either law or moral scrutiny.

12. It further follows that the U.S. Christian has a unique responsibility to smash these idols, as a constitutive dimension of a life dedicated to the liberation of self, church and community from this stockpile of mortal sin that possesses us like a New Testament demon. Idols are not property, nor are they something that the Bible or my church counsels me to avoid, ignore, argue with or vote against. They are to be acknowledged and removed, in a spirit of repentance and with the understanding that nothing less than the worship of God in spirit and truth is at stake.

13. These motivations that informed my decision to trespass onto Kings Bay are plainly evident in the photographs taken at the scene of the missile shrine there. The messages I wrote on those frightening monuments to death - "Idol", "Love your enemies", "Blasphemy", "Resist Evil", "Swords Into Plowshares", "Turn Away From Sin", "Disarm", "IDOLATRY" - speak for themselves.

14. I chose to dismantle an illuminated sign, "Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic", because I believed it only served to mask the reality of the unthinkable destructive capacity and

moral evil that the facility represents. The large iron plaque containing those same words, along with the pagan symbol of a trident (from an ancient god of war), proved to be unremovable, so I poured blood on it as a witness to the sin of murder which it represents.

15. These actions were all intended as a personal commitment to withdraw my complicity with the evil being done in my name at Kings Bay, and as a public call to my nation to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19).

CONCLUSION

16. The existence of nuclear weapons is an ongoing, relentless assault on the human community and the planet itself. As a Catholic Christian, this reality demands my response. The government's prosecution of me has resulted in a significant strain on my family life, as I've been incarcerated in the Glynn County Jail for 5 months, with the prospect of possibly years of prison time to come. At the same time, it is abundantly clear that the government's decision to criminalize my behavior is a direct result of its refusal to subject its own nuclear policy, which is clearly criminal, to legal scrutiny.

Signed this 25TH day of SEPTEMBER 2018 in New Haven, Connecticut at the Amistad Catholic Worker.



Mark Colville