

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

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 2:17cr22

vs.

MARTHA HENNESSY,

Defendant.

28 U.S.C. SECTION 1749 DECLARATION OF MARTHA HENNESSY

My name is Martha Hennessy, 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. In defense of my faith in action I write the following explanation after being charged with felony counts for symbolically disarming our immoral and illegal nuclear arsenal at Kings Bay Naval Base. I am being threatened with prison for following my conscience, or being allowed to retain my freedom if I ignore the primacy of my conscience. As a retired occupational therapist I now work to care for my family and grandchildren as well as volunteering my labor at a Catholic house of hospitality for homeless women. Imprisoning me for my religious beliefs and civic duty to point out government crimes against humanity would prevent my continued positive contributions to my family and society. My country's threat to use nuclear bombs in a first strike

capacity as outlined in the most recent Nuclear Posture Review compels me to follow my conscience and religious beliefs.

ON BEING CATHOLIC

2. I grew up in a large Catholic family in rural Vermont. I was instructed in the teachings of the Church, and through the Catholic Worker movement, co-founded in 1933 by my grandmother Dorothy Day. She was a devout Catholic who is now being considered for sainthood in the Church. The strength of her faith carried her through a lifetime of work in caring for the poor and homeless. She took the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: 35-44 to heart, and literally fed the hungry and sheltered the homeless for decades in New York City. She also opposed all wars that she was forced to witness in her lifetime.

3. I believe that planning and providing for war violates the Catholic Social Teachings that “peace is a value and universal duty founded on a rational and moral social order rooted in God Himself.” As Christians we are called to peacemaking as directed by the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 1-12) and to declare that war is a “defeat to humanity”. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Chapter 11 “The Promotion of Peace”, paragraphs 488 through 515 speak clearly to the obligation of people of the Catholic faith to work for peace. In all sincerity I have attempted to follow this practice found in the teachings of the Catholic Church based on the Gospels to do no harm and to seek justice, as well as by the example set in my family.

4. The influence of my faith has affected many major choices in my life, especially in My professional vocation as an occupational therapist. I worked for 25 years in service to children, the elderly, and veterans of war. I chose this profession because it carried moral integrity in helping people to heal.

5. Over the past ten years I have given talks at many venues around the country in colleges, parishes, and various Catholic peace groups. I speak about the history of the Catholic Worker and Catholic Social Teaching and the practice of the works of mercy today. I was taught that Catholic faith meant living one's life with mercy, caring for the poor, seeing Christ in each other, and working to eliminate war and racism. I oppose the taking of tax dollars from our wages to be used for weapons production and war. This is an industry that violates a basic Christian value; the Golden Rule of doing onto others what you would have them do to you (Matt 7:12). Love of enemy means to offer the other cheek when one is struck and to give to those in need who ask of you (Luke 6:29-30).

6. Since childhood I was taught that all life is sacred, God gave us this beautiful earth to dwell upon and to share in order to take care of everyone's needs. We are instructed by the Pope in his encyclical "Care of Our Common Home" to not destroy God's creation.

7. Pope Francis also tells us: "Conscience is the interior space in which we can listen to and hear the truth, the good, the voice of God. It is the inner place of our relationship with [Holy Mystery], who speaks to our heart and helps us to discern, to understand the path we ought to take, and once the decision is made, to move forward, to remain faithful."

8. As a Catholic I must attempt to address the crying, basic human needs in our country and around the world. I have spoken out in the courtrooms and petitioned senate/congressional offices in Washington, DC, protesting the State's use of torture at Guantanamo, the suspension of habeas corpus rights of prisoners, indefinite detention, and extraordinary rendition. I have petitioned my government with grievances regarding the secrecy and legality of using armed drones to kill people from long distance in the so-called war on terror. I have exercised my

constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and freedom of speech to protest against our nuclear arsenal intended for first strike capacity. I consider these nonviolent acts not as criminal behavior but faith-based responses in an effort to protect the lives and legal rights of others. My nonviolent direct action occurs in a very public way within my community as a means of educating the public, and raising one's voice against injustice in a participatory democracy

9. I also work at a house of hospitality where we provide food, clothing, showers, And phone/mail access to homeless women. When not caring for my family in Vermont I live in community with shared resources as described in Acts 2:44 where we devote ourselves to the teachings of Christ, prayer, and care of each other and the most vulnerable.

10. I have traveled extensively to countries around the world as a citizen diplomat for peace, working with local groups on access to housing, food, and education. Many of these countries have suffered extensive damage to their civilian populations due to U.S. supported ravages of war.

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

11. To truly reveal Jesus in my heart, I must attain acts of mercy and good works. My careful discernment within the context of community, my primacy of conscience and free will in the service to others led me to the naval base at Kings Bay. As in all Plowshares actions from the beginning of the movement, inspiration comes from the Scriptural readings of Isaiah 2:4 to turn swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. The pouring of blood on the Missile Shrine and where the weapons are maintained is a symbolic act of contrition and remorse for shedding the blood of innocent victims when the bomb was used in Japan in 1945. Putting up

crime scene tape over the door of SWFTANT points out the criminality of first strike nuclear weapons. Hammering on missiles is a symbolic dismantling of nuclear weapons. Hanging a banner with the words “The Logical Outcome of Trident is Omnicide” is stating the obvious in that this weapons system has the firepower to destroy all life on earth. Posting a written indictment that claims the United States is responsible for war crimes is asking for justice. The book “The Doomsday Machine” was left at the SWFTANT administration building as documentation of the criminality and immorality of developing and planning to use nuclear bombs.

12. We have religious freedom laws put in place to protect peacemakers from being labeled vandals, criminals, or terrorists. I stepped through a narrow gate that the idolatrous secular world has created with the Kings Bay military base. The government claims a paramount interest in protecting the base and weapons as a “sensitive national security” issue. Many experts believe these offensive weapons bring us more danger. The justification for keeping nuclear bombs leads us down a road to destruction that too many are willing to follow. Few find the constricted road that leads to life (Matt 7:13-14).

13. What was temporarily damaged on the base doesn’t compare to blasting whole modern cities and killing millions of people if or when the purpose and preparedness of the base is carried out. It is near impossible for citizens to emphasize and prove this point in an alternative setting. If one were to cut the lock or fence to a concentration camp, the act of entering such a place would not become more of a crime than the purpose of the lock/fence to protect what is being done on the other side. I did not go to the base with violent intentions to put anyone at risk of harm. I went to expose the nuclear arsenal for what it is, a violation of God’s will for us to

love one another as His has loved us (John 13:34).

14. I entered the base despite the U.S. military's claim that they have the right to use and fence off this particular piece of land to house a project of weapons of mass destruction while claiming this is necessary to defend our freedom and democracy. What goes on at the base is highly secret and protected and keeps the people of the U.S. in ignorance and fear, thus forcing acceptance of the nuclear weapons. The upgrading and maintenance of our nuclear arsenal has violated the Nonproliferation Treaty since the 1970s. It also drains our economy of resources that should be directed toward health care, education, and housing. It is idolatry to convince people that it is acceptable to destroy whole countries and other people when Jesus has called us to the greatest commandment to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31).

15. I went to the nuclear missiles to expose them as a crime against God, humanity, and international law. The State is demanding that I idolize the power of these bombs over my trust in God and love of neighbor. After a lifetime of study and coming to understand my responsibilities within family and community, I went to the navy base inspired by how Jesus went to Jerusalem for His last time, and then on to Golgotha.

16. I pray for mercy and justice to be shown towards me as inferred in both the Gospel teachings and our constitution. I believe God calls me through my willingness to attempt to heal and transform our world, so poisoned, wounded, and desecrated. We went to the very place of the wounds where nuclear weapons are stored and are being prepared for use. Going to the naval base is a way of pointing out our national error and calling for rectification of it.

17. The people of all nations suffer when money is poured into weapons that are used to

defend the interests of a minority that is taking beyond what it needs, and the poor go without fulfillment of basic needs. Jesus tells us to share what we don't need because it belongs to the poor.

CONCLUSION

18. Going to the Trident nuclear missile base is similar to Jesus taking direct action against the moneychangers in the Temple. "Take these out of here and stop making my Father's house a market-place" (John 2:16). Our nuclear arsenal is a theft from the poor, economically and environmentally bankrupt, and legally and morally indefensible. Jesus preached to the poor and most of the world's population remains poor. My Christian faith instructs me not to rely on these deadly weapons but to make visible and practice our dependence on God and love of one another. Despite my fear I entered the military base as an act of faith, hope and love.

Signed this 24th day of September 2018 in New York City Catholic Worker
Maryhouse.



Martha Hennessy