

Activists hold prayer service near test site

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Corbin Harney, spiritual leader of the Western Shoshone tribe, leads a sunrise prayer service Sunday across from the gates of the Nevada Test Site in Mercury.
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MERCURY -- As the sun rose over the Nevada Test Site early Sunday, the sounds of a nearby prayer service punctuated the cool desert air.

To the rhythm of a beating drum and singing, more than two dozen people danced in a symbolic circle, hoping one day they and future generations would live in a nuclear-free world.

The sunrise prayer service partly concluded the anti-nuclear events that began Thursday at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Corbin Harney, spiritual leader of the Western Shoshone tribe, told those present that the test site land belonged to his people.

Harney delivered the same message hours before to actor Martin Sheen and about 180 other people, who were detained and cited for trespassing on the test site.

Nye County sheriff's deputies placed plastic restraints on the activists late Saturday as they crossed a white line on U.S. Highway 95 marking the site.

The nonviolent protesters were there to mark the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima during World War II.

Some 70,000 people died instantly, and an estimated 70,000 more died later from the radioactive fallout.

Three days later, a plutonium bomb dropped on the city of Nagasaki, killing about 80,000 people.

Japan surrendered Aug. 15, 1945, bringing the war to an end.

Similar demonstrations were held at the nuclear weapons labs at Los Alamos in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore in California and the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

On Saturday in Reno, about 40 people gathered outside the federal building for a vigil that consisted of speeches and prayers for Japanese victims.

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings have been credited with helping end World War II and saving the lives of U.S. troops and Japanese civilians during a likely invasion of Japan.