

## **Support Transform Now Plowshares Nuclear Weapons Protesters**

Last July, 2012 three patriots, Greg Boertje-Obed, a member of VFP Chapter 80, Michael Walli, member of Catholic Workers, and Megan Rice, an 82 year old Catholic nun, entered the nuclear weapons factory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee to protest the production of nuclear weapons. They cut several fences, painted some slogans on walls, hammered on a wall making a small hole, and waited for security to arrest them.

They called themselves Transform Now Plowshares referring to the bible verse that says, "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

They believe that the production of nuclear weapons by the United States is immoral and a violation of federal and international law. The production of weapons is a violation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and UN Charter.

**They have been convicted of *felony* charges for sabotage and destruction of property. They are incarcerated awaiting sentencing September 23.**

They face 10-25 years in prison. These are outrageously excessive penalties for a peaceful protest and minor vandalism. It is outrageous that they were denied the right to adequately defend themselves by discussing their motives, or the treaties broken by the U.S. and our violations of international law. It is outrageous that peace activists, who are no threat to the public, are locked up at huge taxpayer expense. This is a travesty of justice!

**You can help by signing the online petition and by writing a letter to the Federal Judge to support a reasonable, lenient sentence that fit's the actual offences committed.**

VFP Chapter 80 is asking for help with two actions. 1) Signing and circulating an online petition calling for the government to NOT PROSECUTE three courageous peace activists and to stop nuclear weapons production. 2) Write letters to the judge requesting JUSTICE in reducing the charges and lowering the sentences.

Learn about Transform Plowshares Now at <http://transformnowplowshares.wordpress.com>

**Sign a petition of support at:**

<http://signon.org/sign/us-1-stop-nuclear-weapons>

**Write to the judge:**

**Suggested "Talking Points" for Letters to the Judge**

1. The charges were unnecessarily severe and did not fit the crimes committed.
2. The potential punishment (10 plus years) does not fit the crimes committed.
3. The prosecution unjustly and unnecessarily inflated a simple case of trespass and vandalism into felonies.

4. Justice demands an adequate defense. But the Defendants were denied the right to adequately defend themselves by discussing *their motivations*, the nuclear weapons treaties broken by the U.S. and our nation's violations of international law.
5. Justice requires distinguishing between peaceful acts of protest and terrorism. Peaceful protest is not sabotage. Civil disobedience is not terrorism.
6. Terrorism is use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce. Terrorism endangers human life.
7. The defendants actions were purely *symbolic*. They engaged in *nonviolent* civil disobedience. They did no significant damage to property or any "war" effort. No one was hurt, killed, or endangered.
8. Their *intent* was to awaken the national conscience and to inform the public by publicizing the waste, and illegality of nuclear weapons. They did not intend to harm the national defense.
9. There is no public safety need to incarcerate these aging peaceful protesters. They are not a threat to society.
10. Our civil liberties are in peril when non-violent, peaceful protesters, exercising their right to petition the government, are convicted of sabotage or when citizens are branded terrorists for opposing the government.
11. We should be thanking these protesters for highlighting the lax security at this very dangerous facility, rather than incarcerating them!

**Ask the judge for justice in the case by...**

1. Using his discretion to issue lenient sentences that better fit the offences actually committed.
2. Using his authority to reduce the charges to fit the crimes committed.
3. Sentencing the defendants to community service since they are not violent, dangerous, or a threat to public safety.

**Send your letter to:**

*US District Judge Amul R Thapar  
c/o Professor Bill Quigley  
Loyola Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice  
7214 St. Charles Avenue  
Campus Box 902  
New Orleans, LA 70118*