

TUESDAY
May 9, 2006[Link To Article](#) [Print Article](#) [Email Article](#)

Article Last Updated: 05/05/2006 09:10:59 PM MDT

There is nothing divine about a bomb test

Barb Guy

The first I heard of Divine Strake was last month. I was standing a few feet from the Nevada Nuclear Test Site where the experiment will happen. Corbin Harney, a Western Shoshone elder, winkingly gave me permission to enter the U.S. government-run, restricted-access site as his guest, since, if you believe the treaty the government signed, his people still own the land. I declined his invitation - I didn't have time to go to jail. Still, he and I stood together, holding hands, our heads bowed in prayer, or in respect for the prayers of others, as a religious service was held in the nuclear dust. This Catholic mass welcomed the Shoshone spiritual leader, a Jewish man wearing a tallit and reading from the Torah, a Mennonite, an Episcopal priest, a Jesuit priest, a Zen priest, a Methodist minister, an elderly nun in microfleece pants and sneakers, a former Marine officer, a hibakusha (Japanese survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bomb), my husband Chris, and me. It was a fine American exercise in people of many faiths coming together, talking through difference, wishing for peace, and petitioning our government.

Divine Strake is the code name for a massive non-nuclear test planned for June 2. An explosion of 700 tons of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil - ANFO - will send a mushroom cloud perhaps 10,000 feet into the Nevada sky. This gigantic experimental blast will use 280 times the amount of ANFO that demolished Oklahoma City's Murrah Federal Building in 1995, killing 168 people and damaging or destroying more than 300 buildings.

Some experts worry the test is a precursor to developing a nuclear bunker-buster bomb. I suppose reasonable people can disagree about whether to test, but Utahns, downwind from so many nuclear tests that were supposed to be safe, yet turned out to be deadly, can be forgiven if they're wary.

After Sept. 11 nearly five years ago, some Americans began to wonder why people in other countries hate us. They don't all hate us, of course, but suddenly many Americans were shocked at the image of ourselves we saw reflected in infuriated eyes. Historically, America has enjoyed international goodwill, never more so than on Sept. 12, 2001. But that has slipped through our fingers.

A strake, by the way, is a metal strap that holds boats or planes together. Odd. But what makes me go nuclear is the use of "Divine" in the name. I've really had it with the Bush administration positioning things like they were ordered up by God. And this isn't the first time. There are at least



Barb Guy

[Opinion](#)
[Bagley Cartoons](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Commentary](#)
[Public Forum](#)
[News](#)
[Contents](#)
[Past Content](#)
[Photos](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Archives](#)
[Utah Politics](#)
[Education](#)
[RSS Feeds](#)
[Tribune in Iraq](#)
[Closeup](#)
[Columnists](#)
[TribTalk Forums](#)
[Weather](#)
[Sports](#)
[Utah Jazz](#)
[Real Salt Lake](#)
[Prep Sports](#)
[BYU Cougars](#)
[Utah Utes](#)

- [Features](#)
- [Film Finder](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Home & Family](#)
- [Health & Science](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Dining Out](#)
- [Outdoors](#)
- [The Mix](#)
- [Faith](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Retail Ads](#)
- [Cars/RVs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Gas Guide](#)
- [Education Guide](#)
- [Bride Guide](#)
- [Utah City Guide](#)
- [Hotel Rooms](#)
- [Grocery Guru](#)
- [Fantasy Sports](#)
- [Advertising Info](#)
- [Utah Journal of Commerce](#)
- [Utah Community News](#)
- [Utah Holiday Guide](#)
- [Extras](#)
- [TribTalk Forums](#)
- [Not in Print](#)
- [NIE](#)
- [Reader Panel](#)
- [Crossword](#)
- [Services](#)
- [Help Desk](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

Advertisement

PAYING TOO MUCH FOR AUTO INSURANCE?

your zip code:

vehicle model:



 **INSWEB**[®]

nine other divine tests on the books, including Divine Warhawk and, to really prove the point, Divine Hates.

Up close, each day, Americans are doing lovely, honorable things, but I wonder how we look as a group from far away. We ignore poor people and people stricken with unrelenting illness and pain, we turn our backs on genocide, and we spend our vast wealth and waste our sharp minds on war. Then we name the effort after deity. As if this experiment is ordained by God. The appalling arrogance, the blind blasphemy, the colossal chutzpah, in essentially naming this test after God!

Could this be why people hate us? We make bad choices. We choose to enrich the already wealthy, making everyone else poorer; we ignore the sick and starving; we invent wars but give them very real death tolls; we ruin the only land the world will ever get; we spend sinful amounts of money to create a better way to wage war; and, more and more, we literally do it in God's name.

The Bush administration acts like God prefers us to other countries. Like God

isn't also God to Iceland and Bhutan and France and Rwanda. With President Bush in charge, we surely look like we think we're special. A little too special for some people.

We see people across the globe possessed by such a religious vehemence that their humanity is ruined. Crazed with bloodlust, they must destroy human life, American life, to prove God is on their side. Americans find this indefensible - that's not how reasonable people behave.

Then why is President Bush's team putting the language of the holy to our war efforts? To imply that God approves of our actions? I can only wonder what God might really think of America's "Divine" projects.

Who would Jesus bomb? First and foremost, no one. If we fail to grasp that lesson, if we keep confusing the unholy with the sacred, our jihad looks a lot like theirs.

Barb Guy writes a regular column for these pages.

Today's Editorials

- [Needless suffering: Ending vision and dental care is not responsible](#)
- [A siren song: Cities should weigh costs, benefits of small school districts](#)

Today's Commentary

- [Thomas: Moussaoui verdict exposes America's soft moral underpinnings](#)
- [Oppenheimer: Political wave in Latin America? No, it's the left vs. the left](#)
- [Bush should end tax cut myth](#)
- [A medical mystery: Why aren't Americans healthier?](#)
- [A realistic idealism](#)
- [Deft demagoguery in Iran](#)
- [Americans still pursue fool's gold of inexhaustible energy](#)
- [We need realistic thinking about energy](#)
- [Abusive president generates 'battered Congress syndrome'](#)

Today's Public Forum Letters

- [The end of the tunnel](#)
- [A refreshing decision](#)
- [Sweet and sour](#)
- [What we need to know](#)
- [Some simple math](#)
- [Teach about freedom](#)
- [Court took right road](#)



Paying Too Much For Auto Insurance?

Start > Drivers > Vehicles > Household

These top companies are ready to compete for you

Company	AIR B
Insurance Company A	
Insurance Company B	
Insurance Company C	
Insurance Company D	

Compare Multiple Quotes

[GET QUOTES >>](#)

INSWEB



To Advertise Online

- ➔ Button Ads
- ➔ Banner Ads
- ➔ Tower Ads

and more!



ADVANTAGE Rate

Get hotel rates, details, info., and more



© Copyright 2006, The Salt Lake Tribune.

All material found on Utah Online is copyrighted The Salt Lake Tribune and associated news services. No material may be reproduced or reused without explicit permission from The Salt Lake Tribune.

Sponsored Links

[Moving Companies](#)

[Gift Ideas](#)

[Bedroom Furniture](#)

[AA Gifts & Gift Baskets](#)

[Patio & Deck Covers](#)

[Moving](#)

[High Performance Auto Part](#)

[Internet Auctions](#)

[Diamond Engagement Rings](#)

[www.tinte-24.de](#)

[Compare Prices](#)

[Paintball](#)

[Nanny Agency Great AuPair](#)

[Si-Mexico Hotels Resorts](#)

[Information Network](#)

[Moving Companies](#)

[Front Page](#) | [Contents](#) | [Search](#) | [World/Nation](#) | [Utah](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Public Forum Letters](#) | [Commentary](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Movies](#) | [Travel](#) | [Health & Science](#) | [Faith](#) | [Archives](#) | [Weather](#) | [Obituaries](#)

[Columnists](#) | [Utah Politics](#) |

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Print Subscriptions](#) | [Reader Panel](#) | [Newspapers In Education](#)

webmaster@sltrib.com

[Privacy Policy](#) | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#)