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# Nuclear Test Restart at Nevada Test Site

From: **Dave Bethke**  
Date: Sun, 6 Apr 1997 16:13:10 -0800  
Subject: Nuclear Test Restart at Nevada Test Site

AP reports that the Energy Department will conduct two underground tests this year using nuclear materials. From a wire service story late Friday --

> Energy Department scientists took pains to emphasize that each  
> of the two underground tests \_ one in June and a second in the fall  
> \_ will involve chemical, not nuclear, explosions. Officials said  
> the largest explosion would be equivalent to 81 pounds of TNT.

> Although small amounts of plutonium \_ about a pound for each of  
> three charges in the first test \_ will be present, the package is  
> designed so that it will not achieve a nuclear chain reaction.

The story added,

> The detonations 980 feet underground are supposed to help  
> scientists determine how parts of a warhead, including the small  
> amount of plutonium, behave under explosive pressure. This  
> information will be used later to develop computer models that  
> simulate actual nuclear detonation.

Also mentioned was Thursday's protest near Mercury where 22 protestors were arrested when they blocked Hiway 95 by chaining themselves to concrete barrels

Tom Cochran of the Natural Resources Defense Council was quoted as saying, "The program they have put together is vastly larger and more expensive than what is needed. It's a program that if it were ultimately successful would also enable them to design new weapons without testing."

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