

# Divine Strake, The Pentagon to set off bunker buster bomb in Nevada

By [Julian Borger](#)

Global Research, April 02, 2006

The Guardian 2 April 2006

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

Pentagon plans in Washington Saturday April 1, 2006

Guardian

The Pentagon is preparing to set off a record-breaking bang, detonating 635 tonnes of high explosives and sending a mushroom cloud into the sky over the Nevada desert. The blast, on June 2, codenamed Divine Strake, is likely to be the biggest controlled conventional explosion in military history, experts said, and is designed to test the impact of bunker-busting bombs aimed at underground targets. The blast comes at a time of rising tension with Iran over its nuclear programme. The US has refused to rule out military action and is considering the feasibility of destroying underground warhead development sites Iran is alleged to have built.

“We have several very large penetrators we’re developing,” James Tegnalia, head of the Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) told US defence reporters. “We also have – are you ready for this? – an explosively formed charge that we’re going to be putting in a tunnel in Nevada ... and that represents to us the largest single explosive that we could imagine doing conventionally to solve that problem.”

The explosive used will be ammonium nitrate soaked in fuel oil – a cheap but potent combination. “I don’t want to sound glib here but it is the first time in Nevada that you’ll see a mushroom cloud over Las Vegas since we stopped testing nuclear weapons,” Mr Tegnalia said.

Ivan Oelrich, a munitions expert at the Federation of American Scientists, said: “I suspect this is primarily a test of their computer modelling abilities, because I don’t know how they could deliver a weapon like this. They are looking at how different rocks respond to shockwaves.”

The White House and the Pentagon wanted to develop a nuclear bunker-buster bomb, but the initiative was blocked by Congress, obliging the defence department to experiment further with conventional explosives.

Mr Tegnalia’s remarks triggered some anxiety in Las Vegas. Shelley Berkley, a Nevada Democrat, told the House of Representatives: “Anytime an administration official starts talking about mushroom clouds and Las Vegas, I want answers.”

The DTRA later issued a statement saying: “All explosives, given the right thermal characteristics, create a cloud that may resemble a mushroom cloud.”

“The dust cloud ... may reach an altitude of 10,000 feet and is not expected to be visible off the Nevada test site,” Major Susan Idziak, a spokeswoman, said. “No adverse impact on the environment or health of exercise participants or local residents is anticipated.”

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006

The original source of this article is The Guardian  
Copyright © [Julian Borger](#), The Guardian, 2006

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Julian Borger](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)