

Own the Weather, Fight from the Heavens The Real Motives of US Space Programme

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*"It's politically sensitive, but it's going to happen... we're going to fight in space... **from** space... **into** space....That's why the U.S. has development programs in directed energy and hit-to-kill mechanisms."*

— General Joseph Ashy, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Space Command, in 1996

"...while we have demonstrated that hit-to-kill works, as we look ahead we need to think about areas that would provide higher leverage. Nowhere is that more true than in space. Space offers attractive options not only for missile defence but for a broad range of interrelated civil and military missions. It truly is the ultimate high ground."

—Paul Wolfowitz, October 2002

As we are busy resisting the US empire-builders on earth, they are extending the frontiers into heavens. Having colonised Afghanistan and Iraq, and established military bases in about 140 of the 189 member countries of the UN, Washington is now going full steam ahead with colonising the space. All this goes on in the name of ‘ Science’ and human welfare, of course.

The Moon and Mars Connections

“The lunar outpost is required to develop and protect potential U.S. interests on the Moon; to develop techniques in Moon-based surveillance of the earth and space...to serve as a base for exploration of the Moon, for further exploration into space and for military operations on the Moon if required”, observed a 1959 U.S. Army study entitled *The Establishment of a Lunar Outpost*, which was later declassified. In a 1989 study written for the U.S.

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Congress by John Collins (*Military Space Forces: The Next 50 Years*) it was observed that the U.S. would need to have military bases on the Moon in order to control the pathway between the Earth and Moon. Collins went on to conclude that with U.S. bases on the Moon, “Armed forces might lie in wait at that location to hijack rival shipments on return.”

The Mars project also have similar objectives. In addition, it involves the development of a nuclear booster rocket that would cut in half the time it otherwise takes to reach the planet. For several decades past, this high-risk technology called “Project Prometheus” had been rejected at various stages of experimentation with sufficient cause. But the Rumsfeld group is lobbying for it with renewed vigour largely because, once developed, the powerful rocket will have most tempting military applications.

Equally important are the economic interests. As space writer Timothy Ferris wrote on December 21, 2003 in a *New York Times* op-ed piece titled *A New Pathway to the Stars*, “Another possible energy source of the future – nuclear fusion reactors burning clean, safe helium 3 – has its own lunar connection. Helium 3, rare on Earth, is abundant on the Moon. When fusion reactors start coming on line, lunar entrepreneurs may stand to make the kind of money their predecessors raked in during the gold rush and the oil boom.” All these fly directly in the face of the United Nations’ “Outer Space Treaty” (OST) – the basic international law on the mapped and unmapped areas beyond planet Earth since 1967 – and the Moon Agreement adopted in 1979. Both these treaties specifically ban war and profiteering in space. The OST stresses “the common interest of all mankind in the ... exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes” and says, “outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation”.¹ But surely legal niceties are not for the richest and the most powerful! As Bruce Gagnon (Coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space) recently observed, “Just as the Spanish Armada and British Navy were

created to protect the “interests and investments” in the new world, space is viewed today as open territory to be seized for eventual corporate profit.”

Star Wars: Versions 1, 2, 3...

For Bush as it was for Clinton, star wars is nothing more and nothing less than a component part of the military programme of globalisation. To see for yourself, just go to www.spacecom.af.mil/usspace and open *Vision for 2020*, a document issued in 1996. It proclaims, in words that slowly unscroll, as in the beginning of the Star Wars movies: *"US Space Command—dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment. Integrating Space Forces into warfighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict."* The document compares the American effort to control space and the Earth below to how centuries ago *"nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests"* by controlling the oceans. It's urgent, declares the 'Vision', because “The globalization of the world economy will also continue, with a widening gap between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots,’”² The view is that by controlling space and the Earth below, the United States will be able to keep those have-nots in line.

This is made even more clear in the 1998 *Long Range Plan*: “Widespread communications will highlight disparities in resources and quality of life – contributing to unrest in developing countries. . . . Achieving space superiority during conflicts will be critical to the US success on the battlefield.” Thus the cold war context of Star Wars is out, and the globalization context is in!

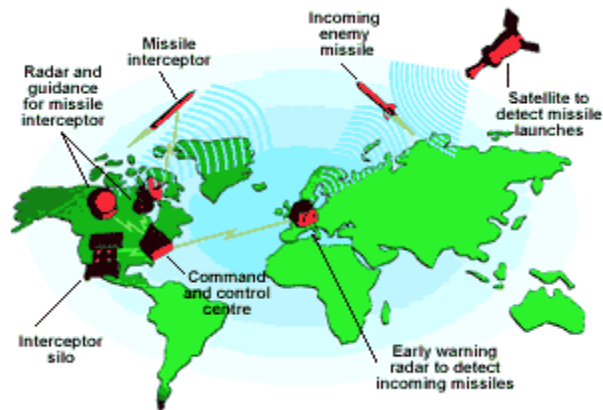
Is it not curious to note that all these preparations were going on during the Clinton era? Yes, it was during Democrat rule that Regan's Star War ambitions were given complete programmatic shape and carried forward in practice. Essentially the two parties are at one when it comes to empire-building –on the earth and in



the heavens³ – differences in stress points being conditioned largely by actual demands of the situation. Just emerging victorious from the cold war, the American state in the 1990s was busy laying the foundations for a new, unipolar world order. The focus was on *long-term preparations*: the Iraq Liberation Act (1998), the Long Range Plan (1996) etc.

Land-based part of the star-wars project

By the turn of the century, Washington came up against immediate threats to its economic and political hegemony and had to take *instant measures* (the ‘War On Terror’). But that did not mean space was being pushed off the Republican



agenda by these urgent military commitments. (See statement of US Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz, above). The continuity since – in fact the steady expansion of – the Regan-Bush “Star Wars” are only too obvious, including the bitter irony that all these offensives are projected as “defensive” programmes.⁴ To gain a better understanding of the whole thing, let us now examine in some detail just one component of the multifaceted space offensive currently in progress.

The HAARP Angels Won't Play

In March 1974, Pentagon revealed a seven-year cloud seeding effort in Vietnam and Cambodia, costing \$21.6 million. The objective was to increase rainfall in target areas, thereby causing landslides and making unpaved roads muddy, hindering the movement of supplies. The work was carried forward without much noise, and one offshoot came to be known as High-

Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP). Based in Gokoma Alaska and jointly managed by the US Air Force and the US Navy, it is part of a new generation of sophisticated weaponry under the US Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). It constitutes a system of powerful antennas capable of creating "controlled local modifications of the ionosphere". Scientist Dr. Nicholas Begich -- actively involved in the public campaign against HAARP-- describes it as:

"A super-powerful radiowave-beaming technology that lifts areas of the ionosphere [upper layer of the atmosphere] by focusing a

beam and heating those areas. Electromagnetic waves then bounce back onto earth and penetrate everything -- living and dead."

*The site
of
HAARP,
Alaska*



Dr. Rosalie Bertell, a renowned space-commentator and activist, depicts HAARP as "a gigantic heater that can cause major disruption in the ionosphere, creating not just holes, but long incisions in the protective layer that keeps deadly radiation from bombarding the planet." Writing in *The Times*, 23 November 2003, he adds that "The methods include the enhancing of storms and the diverting of vapour rivers in the Earth's atmosphere to produce targeted droughts or floods."

Mining the Sky

Scope for profiteering in space is large – and growing. Virginia-based LunaCorp intends to land robotic vehicles on the Moon for missions “funded by corporate sponsors, exclusive television contracts” among other sources. Colorado-based SpaceDev – “the world’s first publicly traded commercial space exploration and development company” – plans to dispatch a device it calls a “Near Earth Asteroid Prospector” within the “next three to five years” to Nereus, an asteroid believed to be rich in minerals. SpaceDev wants to declare Nereus private property and stake a claim to mining rights – in spite of the OST and Moon Agreement. As for state sponsorship, it goes to the credit of Clinton that, starting from 1996, 90% of space shuttles are controlled by private military contractors. Bush on his part started appointing directors of NASA from the military sector. Today TNCs like Lockheed Martin, TRW, Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman are getting billion-dollar contracts almost every month for supplying satellites, missiles, radars etc. The President himself recently came forward to cater to corporate interests by announcing a plan to spend billions of dollars to launch commercial manned missions to the Moon and eventually to Mars. But he found it difficult to sell. As a *Time/ CNN* opinion poll revealed, more than three-fifths of Americans opposed it, preferring instead more funding on education and environmental concerns, reduction in federal deficit, etc. The campaign against “Project Prometheus”, led by scientists like Bruce Gagnon is gaining ground, and the administration has found it necessary to press into service a private agency for building a counter campaign.

It is a complex web of business and military interests, with the one feeding on the other, that constitutes the US space programme.⁵ Weaponisation as a prelude to full-scale space war is currently the last frontier of the military-industrial (some would add ‘scientific’)

complex that constitutes the defining element of the political economy of empire building.

Join the Protest

Washington's space overtures are no less an affront to peace than the aggressions on the ground below : only the latter is naked and immediate, the former – beautifully wrapped-up in an aura of “Science”. In Asia in particular, the impact is onerous. China, the strategic target of NMD (read Nuclear Modernisation and Deployment) in a post-Soviet world, is compelled to augment its nuclear missile stock, generating an Indian retort, which in turn invites a counter-measure from Pakistan . The good thing is that China has been consistent in resisting, often jointly with Russia and other countries, what it calls “Space domination [as] a hegemonic concept”. US allies like Canada have also been quite vocal in demanding an international space force to prevent terrestrial geo-political conflict from spreading into outer space.

Keep Space for Peace

*No Star Wars
No Nuclear Rocket
Fund Human Needs*



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& Nuclear Power in Space

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To sensitise and mobilise people against dangerous space activities, a lead has to come from scientists. In the US and other imperialist countries, they are discharging this responsibility well enough. It is now the responsibility of all peace-loving forces including peace and environment activists to incorporate this issue in the movemental agenda with all the urgency it deserves.

Acknowledgements and notes

We have drawn heavily on works of Michel Chossudovsky, Karl Grossman, Dr. Rosalie Bertell, and others (from www.globalresearch.ca, www.space4peace.org, www.antiwar.com, www.ucsusa.org, etc.). Our only purpose is dissemination of the valuable information and ideas ; no profit motive is involved and we trust the fair use condition is fulfilled. For the wording of the third subhead we are indebted to "Angels Don't Play This HAARP" by Dr. Nick Begich and Jeane Manning and for the fourth, to "Mining the Sky: Untold Riches from the Asteroids, Comets and Planets" by John Lewis, co-director of the NASA/University of Arizona Space Engineering Research Center. The graphic depicting land-based part of Star Wars Project is taken courtesy www.Greenpeace.org. Usual disclaimers apply.

¹ Well aware of the U.S. space warfare plans, other nations of the world arranged for a vote in the UN General Assembly in New York on November 20, 2000 to reaffirm the OST and, specifically, its provision that space be reserved for peaceful uses. Some one hundred sixty-three nations voted for the resolution, titled "Prevention of An Arms Race in Outer Space." Three nations refused to support the resolution: the United States, Israel, and Micronesia. They abstained.

² Another 1996 document— *New World Vistas: Air And Space Power For The 21st Century*— a U.S. Air Force board report, states: "In the next two decades, new technologies will allow the fielding of space-based weapons of devastating effectiveness to be used to deliver energy and mass as force projection in tactical and strategic conflict...These advances will enable lasers with reasonable mass and cost to effect very many kills." However, the report adds, "power limitations impose restrictions" on such-based weapons systems, making them "relatively unfeasible.... A natural technology to enable high power," it goes on, "is nuclear power in space."

³ *Military Space Forces: The Next 50 Years*, a book commissioned by the Democrat-controlled U.S. Congress of the mid-1980s and a wild blueprint for chemical and biological warfare in space, states: "Self-contained biospheres in space accord a superlative environment for chemical and biological warfare. . . . Clandestine operatives could dispense lethal or incapacitating CW/BW agents rapidly and uniformly through enemy facilities."

⁴ During the Reagan/ Senior Bush years the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) was funded at over \$3 billion per year. Following the election of President Clinton, one of his first acts was to declare that Star Wars was dead. In place of SDI Clinton created the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) program and moved the Star Wars funding into BMD. George W. Bush has renamed BMD the Missile Defence Agency (MDA) and in 2003, his funding has exceeded \$7 billion. He has undertaken groundbreaking at Ft. Greely, Alaska following the U.S. pullout of the ABM Treaty with Russia and promises to deploy "missile defence" systems there and at Vandenberg AFB, CA before the 2004 elections. Radar upgrades in California, Cape Cod, Greenland, United Kingdom and new radar construction in Alaska will also be necessary to support the expansion program. His administration has requested \$420.7 billion for the military in fiscal year 2005 (an increase of 7.9 percent above current levels) even as the Congressional Budget Office project a federal deficit of \$477 billion this year. Project Prometheus, the nuclear rocket, is now being developed under the Nuclear Systems Initiative that will spend \$3 billion during the next five years to expand the launching of nuclear power into space.

⁵ Apart from the ideological, even direct personal connections are noteworthy. Cheney is a former board member of TRW, and his wife, Lynn Cheney, only left her long-term board position with Lockheed Martin weeks before the new administration took office. Bruce Jackson, vice president of corporate strategy and development of Lockheed Martin, wrote the Republican Party's foreign policy platform before the last presidential elections. Stephen J. Hadley, an assistant secretary for defence in the administration of Bush's father, left his partnership in the Washington law firm of Shea & Gardner – which represents Lockheed Martin – to become deputy director of the National Security Council under George W Bush.