

Beyond National Missile Defense, Bush Team Envisions Space Weaponization

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It is generally believed that the Bush administration's space military program is essentially about "missile defense." But, in fact, "missile defense" is part of a broader program to make space a new arena of war.

The wider program's blueprint is revealed in the recently released report of the "Space Commission" chaired by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. "Power projection in, from and through space" is advocated for the United States in the report of the 13-member body, formally called the Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization. "In the coming period," states the report of January 11, 2001, "the U.S. will conduct operations to, from, in and through space in support of its national interests both on the earth and in space."

It urges the U.S. president to "have the option to deploy weapons in space." It states that it is "possible to project power through and from space in response to events anywhere in the world. Unlike weapons from aircraft, land forces or ships, space missions initiated from earth or space could be carried out with little transit, information or weather delay."

Plan Recommends Separate 'Space Department'

It recommends a transition of the U.S. Space Command, established by the Pentagon in 1985 to coordinate Air Force, Army and Navy space forces, to a "Space Corps" along the lines of the Marine Corps. Then it would possibly become a fully separate "Space Department"—equal to the Army, Navy and Air Force. Urging "missile defense", it warns of a "Space Pearl Harbor" without it.

The Rumsfeld "Space Commission" report follows a series of U.S. military reports in recent years that call for the United States to "control space" and from space "dominate" the Earth below; reports in which "missile defense" is presented as a "layer" in a broader U.S. space military program.

As the U.S. Space Command's "Long Range Plan" of 1998 declares: "The time has come to address, among warfighters and national policy makers, the emergence of space as a center of gravity for DoD and the nation. . . . Space power in the 21st Century looks similar to previous military revolutions, such as aircraft-carrier warfare and Blitzkrieg."

Space: the Frontier for War Fighting

"Space is seen as a new place to wage war. Already, we are underwater, over-water, on-the-land, in-the-air — and now we want to go to another dimension: space," says Rear Admiral Eugene J. Carroll, Jr. (USN, ret.), vice president of the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C.

"Missile defense doesn't make any sense and everybody realizes that," says Carroll. "The least likely threat we face is some third-rate nation developing an ICBM and launching it at the United States knowing they will get back 50 times what they send. There are all kinds of ways that are cheaper and more reliable — smuggling in a suitcase bomb, for example — to inflict harm and not be subject to instantaneous retaliation."

"You look at the Rumsfeld report and his [Rumsfeld's] statements and the other [military] reports and you have

to realize that they are thinking in terms of militarizing space, of space warfare,” said Carroll.

It is not just rhetoric, he notes. The Defense Department gave the go-ahead in December for development of the Space-Based Laser, a joint project of TRW, Boeing and Lockheed Martin. The Public Affairs Office at the Army’s Redstone Arsenal describes it as having a “lifecycle budget” of \$20 to \$30 billion.

A second space-based laser project underway and in testing is the “Alpha High-Energy Laser.” Built by TRW, it conducted its twenty-second successful test firing last year. Unless a stop is put to it, “We are going into space with lasers,” warns Carroll.

Bruce Gagnon, coordinator of the Global network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, agrees. Missile Defense “is the foot in the door,” he says.

NMD Sets the Stage for Future Space Militarization

Missile Defense has been the “spin” for the space military program because “defense” is seen as an acceptable concept for the U.S. public, he says. Then, says Gagnon, with “a deployment OK” it would be “followed up by the real Reagan Star Wars program that includes space-based weapons.”

Mike Moore, of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in an article on the Rumsfeld “Space Commission” report in the March/April issue of the Bulletin wrote: “The heart of the report lies in the bald assertion that it is time to weaponize space.” The report showed: “Apparently, Rumsfeld will push vigorously for the weaponization of space, soon rather than later,” he stated.

Moore told the press review, Extra!, published by the New York-based media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), that it “amazes” him that other journalists have “missed” the central message of the report.

Thrilled, meanwhile, with the Rumsfeld “Space Commission” report is the official whose legislation got the commission established in 2000, U.S. Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire. In an interview in the new television documentary Star Wars Returns, Senator Smith comments about the United States seeking to “control space” that: “It is our manifest destiny. You know we went from the East Coast to the West Coast of the United States of America settling the continent and they call that manifest destiny and the next continent if you will, the next frontier, is space and it goes on forever.”

Gagnon, whose Gainesville, Florida-based Global network is the lead organization challenging the U.S. program for space warfare, says: “If the House and the Senate allow Bush to carry out this space weaponization plan they will have all created the conditions that will surely move the arms race into the heavens. The aerospace industry will get rich from it, and the taxpayers will get a more unstable world. The people of the world must speak out loudly and clearly if we are to stop this new insanity!” The Global network (www.space4peace.org) is conducting a series of conferences and protests around the world in the coming months including an international meeting in May in Leeds in the United Kingdom and in October an “International Day of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space.”

“If the U.S. is allowed to move the arms race into space, there will be no return,” says Gagnon. “We have this one chance,” he emphasizes, “this one moment in history, to stop the weaponization of space from happening.” Earlier military reports laying out U.S. space military plans include the Vision for 2020 report of the U.S. Space Command. Its cover depicts a laser weapon shooting a beam down from space zapping a target, and the opening

page proclaims the U.S. Space Command's mission of "dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment."

Vision for 2020, issued in 1996, compares the U.S. effort to "control space" and "dominate" the Earth below to how centuries ago "nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests." It stresses the global economy stating: "The globalization of the world economy will also continue, with a widening between 'haves' and 'have-nots.'"

Weapons Contractors Behind Effort

The U.S. Space Command praises corporate involvement in developing U.S. space military doctrine. The Long Range Plan opens by saying that the "development and production process, by design, involved hundreds of people including about 75 corporations" and subsequently lists these corporations beginning with Aerojet and Boeing and including Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Sparta Corp., TRW and Vista Technologies. Some \$6 billion annually — plus monies in the "black" or secret — have been going into U.S. space military activities in recent years. This is expected to greatly increase under the Bush-Cheney administration.

In addition to the new "Space- Based Laser" project, a second spacebased laser already in testing is the "Alpha High-Energy Laser" built by TRW. It conducted its twenty-second test-fire last year.

Aware of the U.S. space warfare program, other nations of the world arranged for a vote in the United Nations General Assembly in New York on November 20, 2000 — to reaffirm the fundamental international law on space, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, and, specifically, its provision that space be reserved for "peaceful purposes."

Some 163 nations supported the resolution titled "Prevention of An Arms Race In Outer Space." It recognized "the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes" and reiterated that the use of space "shall be for peaceful purpose . . . carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries." The measure stated that the "prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security." The United States, backed by Israel and Micronesia, abstained.

Canada and China have been leaders at the United Nations in challenging the U.S. space military plans and seeking to strengthen the Outer Space Treaty by banning all weapons in space (the treaty currently prohibits nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction).

Marc Vidricaire, counselor with the Canadian delegation to the United Nations, in a speech last October 19 stated: "It has been suggested that our proposal is not relevant because the assessment on which it rests is either premature or alarmist. In our view, it is neither." Moreover, he continued, it is clear that technology can be developed to place weapons in outer space, and no state can expect to maintain a monopoly on such knowledge — or such capabilities — for all time. If one state actively pursues the weaponization of space, we can be sure others will follow."

China and Russia Call for Halting Program

In March 1999, at the UN in Geneva, Wang Xiao, first secretary of China's UN delegation said, "Outer space is the common heritage of human beings. It should be used entirely for peaceful purposes and for the economic, scientific, and cultural development of all countries as well as the well-being of mankind. It must not be weaponized and become another arena of the arms race. Space domination is a hegemonic concept. Its essence is

monopoly of space and denial of others access to it.”

In his first address to the United Nations, Russian President Vladimir Putin in September 2000 told the “Millenium Summit that “particularly alarming are the plans for the militarization of the outer space.” In Canada in December, Putin and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien issued a joint statement announcing that “Canada and the Russian Federation will continue close cooperation in preventing an arms race in outer space.”

Highly active on the space military issue, too, has been Kofi Annan who in opening the Third United Nations Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in Vienna in July 1999 declared: “Above all, we must guard against the misuse of outer space. We recognized early on that a legal regime was needed to prevent it from being another arena of military confrontation. The international community has acted jointly, through the United Nations, to ensure that outer space will be developed peacefully.”

“But there is much more to be done,” said Annan. “We must not allow this century, so plagued with war and suffering, to pass on its legacy, when the technology at our disposal will be even more awesome. We cannot view the expanse of space as another battleground for our earthly conflicts.”

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