There has been a recurring theme in our work over the past several years. Many of the people involved in high tech weapons and warfare wear blinders to shield themselves from responsibility for the work they do in the war machine. They delude themselves into thinking they have nothing to do with the bombs that fall in the course of war even though they play a vital role in the chain of events which leads to a lethal explosion. In that line of thinking perhaps only the suicide bomber is really culpable in the world of bomb warfare. If your role was from a distance you are not responsible for the lifeless and maimed bodies and smoking ruins at the end. Even those in the nuclear bomb scheme claim total innocence from any end result. They just practice deterrence.

Weapons designers, war gamers, electronic jammers, cyber world artists, button pushers, pilots even, are no more guilty than the casual observer. Automation hides the effects of war from the individual conscience. Distance keeps one out of harm's way. The argument goes something like this. The more sophisticated an act of war becomes and the more divided up the process becomes the fewer the people who have any culpability. At best there are a few traces of minor guilt. Blink and it goes away. You'd get as much guilt as if you were playing a computer war game at home. Nowhere is the disconnect between cause and effect more apparent than in the world of arms control. Consider the position currently adopted by Washington arms control groups that parse out the war apparatus so that electronic jamming is not considered part of the kill chain. If you zap part of an adversaries system of offense and defensive warfare and follow it up with a boom, one supposedly has nothing to do with the other. There is thus no direct
connection between “zap” and “boom”. It’s like saying that the act of throwing sand in someone’s eyes before punching them in the face is mere coincidence. Admittedly one has to connect a few dots to see the connection but when one does it is plain as day. War vocabulary suddenly includes words like dazzling, spoofing, jamming. It involves electromagnetic pulses and high-powered microwaves and lasers. But in the end it means killing a lot of people all at once.

The Pentagon likes to use new terminology to describe the modern aerospace battlefield. It is “network centric”. It involves a “revolution in military affairs”. It is “transformational”. It results in “shock and awe”. Space weapons are “rods from God”. Spy satellites provide a “God’s eye” view of the war zone. The list goes on.

Permanent War

Just as the system which produces this kind of modern day blitzkrieg is multi layered so is the infra structure which paves the way for its enactment. What President Eisenhower called the “military industrial complex” in his farewell speech in 1961 has mushroomed into “the military, industrial, religious, academic, legal, propaganda complex” of today. A $500 billion annual Pentagon budget is wired into the every aspect of modern American society. The US. has about 5% of the world’s population but spends as much for war as the other 95%. You’d think that fact would shock us into wanting a radical change but instead there are cries for more of everything. Fear and “business as usual” trump any possible new idea or moral impulse. Both major political parties are sold on the program. So what if we’re headed over a cliff. We’ll do it in style, together!

We have begun planning several days of activities to parallel the April 3-6 National Space Symposium. Our program to challenge this local war orgy is listed as an official event of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. GN coordinator Bruce Gagnon and several other out of town activists will be joining us.

On November 4 Doug Gale 82, Barbara Huber 73 and Esther Kisamore 65 were convicted of trespassing for their August 5 action at Peterson AFB. They were completely muzzled in their attempt to present their case. Next year, Sisters Witness against War hopes to have participants in their 50’s, 40’s, 30’s and 20’s joining the action.

We need your continuing support as we go forward. There is still time to keep space for peaceful purposes and as a common heritage, but in order for that to happen radical changes have to be undertaken. There are some beginning signs of dissatisfaction with the current direction of the country. All the elements described above must be engaged if we are to go in a different direction. There is hope but a lot of work remains to be done.

Bill Sulzman