The Australian Connection

Drones, Targeting, Obama’s Pivot

By Dr. Hannah Middleton

There is no official confirmation that the Pine Gap satellite tracking spy base near Alice Springs in central Australia is being used in Pentagon drone strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia or elsewhere. But it certainly has the capability to be so.

Drones are equipped with satellite communications equipment through which they can transmit and receive information, which is essential for their operation. Pine Gap is a satellite receiving and transmitting ground station, which has a footprint covering about one-third of the world’s surface from the Middle East to the far East. The Pine Gap military base in central Australia, controlled by the US and staffed mainly by the NSA, serves as a ground station for US signals intelligence collection satellites. Significantly, Pine Gap controls US satellites that span a strategically important area of the globe: from the Middle East oilfields, across Russia and on to China. The facility certainly has the capability to provide targeting, meteorological data, terrain information and real time footage of events for US drone activities.

The Royal Australian Navy is also planning for drone warfare. Lieutenant Commander Bob Ferry, who runs the Navy’s UAV development unit, has said that the Navy will soon start 300 hours of trials with small Scan Eagle drones. The US flew highly classified Global Hawk spy drone missions from the Royal Australian Air Force base at Edinburgh in South Australia from late 2001 until at least 2006.

Adelaide was initially a transit stop for Global Hawks en route from the west coast of the US to the Al Dhaifra air base in the United Arab Emirates. However, it is widely believed that some flights were surveillance missions of Afghanistan.

In 2004 former Australian Defence Minister Robert Hill told US officials that he intended to announce the flights to the Australian public. The US Air Force opposed the disclosure, demanding all Global Hawk operations remain classified.

While the Australian public was left in the dark, an Aviation Week and Space Technology journalist was given access to a report on a single Global Hawk reconnaissance mission from RAF Edinburgh to southern Japan and back again. The mission was launched just one week after North Korea had conducted a series of failed missile tests.

In late March this year media reported that Australia was planning to allow the US to use its territory to operate long-range spy drones, as part of an increased Pentagon presence in the region. The new base would be on the Cocos Islands, atolls in the Indian Ocean off northwest Australia.

Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith said the key priorities in closer US co-operation were the rotation of Marines through Darwin, greater air access and more use by the US of the Stirling naval base in Perth (West Australia). Significantly, he did not deny the Cocos Islands plan, merely commenting that it was something to be considered “down the track.”

A new, maritime surveillance version of the Global Hawk—the MQ4 Triton—is the favoured option for the Cocos Island basing. The US Navy expects to start flying the first of 68 Tritons on order by 2015. Some will be based on Guam to cover the Asia-Pacific region, while another detachment will fly out of Diego Garcia to monitor the Indian Ocean. The Australian owned Cocos Islands are seen as an ideal location to base unmanned patrol planes to keep watch on the world’s busiest shipping routes and the South China Sea. It is clear that US and Australian planners are preparing for the ability to cripple China economically and threaten it militarily.

The movement of the majority of US military assets to the region, plus growth in military facilities and deployment of
Worshipping the Gods of Metal

by Bruce K. Gagnon

The third test launch of the Pentagon’s military space plane from Cape Canaveral, the X-37B, has been continuously delayed because of engine failures on the Atlas rocket that would carry the experimental craft into space.

Originally set to launch on October 25 the date was reset to November 13 and then further delayed. At the time of publication of Space Alert the launch was still facing delays.

The first flight of the unpiloted space plane lasted 225 days, racing over the Pacific Ocean and landing on a specially prepared runway at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

The second X-37B mission made a touchdown at Vandenberg on June 16, 2012. That mission remained in orbit for 469 days.

The Boeing built X-37B is being hailed as the “successor” to the space shuttle. Analysts though contend the space plane is part of the Pentagon’s effort to develop the capability to strike anywhere in the world with a conventional bunker busting warhead in less than an hour—known as Prompt Global Strike. The “official” purpose of the X-37B program remains classified.

The Pentagon has steadfastly refused to discuss its mission but amateur space trackers have noted how its path around the globe is nearly identical to China’s space lab, Tiangong-1.

“Space-to-space surveillance is a whole new ball game made possible by a finessed group of sensors and sensor suites, which we think the X-37B may be using to maintain a close watch on China’s nascent space station,” said Spaceflight editor Dr. David Baker. Spaceflight is the well-respected magazine of the British Interplanetary Society.

The Washington Times has in the past reported, “The actual expense [of the X-37] is hidden in the Pentagon’s ‘black,’ or classified, budget—is likely to cost more than $1 billion. The launch vehicle alone—a two-stage, liquid-propelled Atlas V rocket—costs as much as $200 million. Ten years of development on the plane—as the project was shuffled from NASA to DARPA and finally to its current institutional home in the Air Force—is likely to have cost hundreds of millions of dollars more.”

The development of new systems like the space plane is one reason that the Obama administration and the Pentagon are eager to reduce nuclear weapons stockpiles in Russia and China in the years to come. As key elements in the expanding US first-strike program, they become even more effective if the US can get its potential rivals to reduce their nuclear retaliatory capability giving the Pentagon an even greater chance of pulling off a successful decapitating attack.

Coupled with “missile defense” (the shield) these military space planes and other first-strike weapons (the sword) make a devastating combination.

In fact at the US Space Command they have been computer war gaming such a first-strike on China set in 2016. The military space plane is the first weapon system used to launch the attack that attempts to take out China’s underground nuclear missiles (about 20 of them) that are capable of hitting the west coast of the US.

After the initial US attack from space China attempts to fire a retaliatory nuclear strike. The US “missile defense” systems currently deployed in Taiwan, Japan, Okinawa, and South Korea—as well as on Aegis destroyers outfitted with interceptor missiles deployed just off China’s coast—take out the remaining Chinese capability.

Thus as the US moves forward with these kinds of global strike systems it becomes more likely that Russia and China will be forced to respond by refusing to dramatically reduce their nuclear weapons and instead develop new technologies to counter the US program.

The American people will be made to cheer future launches of the space plane just as they applauded the dramatic “retirement parade” of the shuttle Endeavor that was pulled through the streets of Los Angeles last October on the way to its museum home.

If the public has been conditioned to worship Gods of Metal it becomes much easier in times of austerity to get taxpayers to fork over funding cut from programs of social uplift to pay for expensive space technology systems.

—Bruce K Gagnon is the coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space and lives in Bath, Maine.
Beyond Bayonets & Battleships:

Space Warfare and US Global Power

By Alfred W. McCoy

It’s 2025 and an American “triple canopy” of advanced surveillance and armed drones fills the heavens from the lower- to the exo-atmosphere. A wonder of the modern age, it can deliver its weaponry anywhere on the planet with staggering speed, knock out an enemy’s satellite communications system, or follow individuals biometrically for great distances. Along with the country’s advanced cyberwar capacity, it’s also the most sophisticated militarized information system ever created and an insurance policy for US global dominion deep into the twenty-first century. It’s the future as the Pentagon imagines it; it’s under development; and Americans know nothing about it.

[The] military first created a manual information regime for Philippine pacification, then a computerized apparatus to fight communist guerrillas in Vietnam. Finally, during its decade-plus in Afghanistan (and its years in Iraq), the Pentagon has begun to fuse biometrics, cyber warfare, and a potential future triple canopy aerospace shield into a robotic information regime that could produce a platform of unprecedented power for the exercise of global dominion—or for future military disaster.

When President Obama took office and launched his “surge,” escalating the US war effort in Afghanistan, that country became a new frontier for testing and perfecting such biometric databases, as well as for full-scale drone war in both that country and the Pakistani tribal borderlands, the latest wrinkle in a technowar already loosed by the Bush administration. This meant accelerating technological developments in drone warfare that had largely been suspended for two decades after the Vietnam War.

As with the Philippine Insurrection and the Vietnam War, the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan have served as the catalyst for a new information regime, fusing aerospace, cyberspace, biometrics, and robotics into an apparatus of potentially unprecedented power. In 2012, after years of ground warfare in both countries and the continuous expansion of the Pentagon budget, the Obama administration announced a leaner defense strategy. It included a 14% cut in future infantry strength to be compensated for by an increased emphasis on investments in the dominions of outer space and cyberspace, particularly in what the administration calls “critical space-based capabilities.”

By 2020, this new defense architecture should theoretically be able to integrate space, cyberspace, and terrestrial combat through robotics for—so the claims go—the delivery of seamless information for lethal action. Significantly, both space and cyberspace are new, unregulated domains of military conflict, largely beyond international law. And Washington hopes to use both, without limitation, as Archimedean levers to exercise new forms of global dominion far into the twenty-first century, just as the British Empire once ruled from the seas and the Cold War American imperium exercised its global reach via airpower.

For a new global optic, DARPA is building the wide-angle Space Surveillance Telescope (SST), which could be sited at bases ringing the globe for a quantum leap in “space surveillance.” The system would allow future space warriors to see the whole sky wrapped around the entire planet while seated before a single screen, making it possible to track every object in Earth orbit.

Operation of this complex worldwide apparatus will require, as one DARPA official explained in 2007, “an integrated collection of space surveillance systems—an architecture—that is leak-proof.” Thus, by 2010, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency had 16,000 employees, a $5 billion budget, and a massive $2 billion headquarters at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, with 8,500 staff-

balance of forces offers two competing scenarios for the continuation of US global power. If all or much goes according to plan, sometime in the third decade of this century the Pentagon will complete a comprehensive global surveillance system for Earth, sky, and space using robotics to coordinate a veritable flood of data from biometric street-level monitoring, cyber-data mining, a worldwide network of Space Surveillance Telescopes, and triple canopy aeronautic patrols. Through agile data management of exceptional power, this system might allow the US a veto of global lethality, an equalizer for any further loss of economic strength.

However, as in Vietnam, history of Vietnam or Iraq, creating the possibility of yet more expensive, draining conflicts, from Iran to the South China Sea.

If the future of America’s world power is shaped by actual events rather than long-term economic trends, then its fate might well be determined by which comes first in this century-long cycle: military debacle from the illusion of technological mastery, or a new technological regime powerful enough to perpetuate US global dominion.

—Alfred W. McCoy is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the lead author of Endless Empire: Spain’s Retreat, Europe’s Eclipse, America’s Decline which is the source for much of the material in this article.
Nationalizing the US Weapons Industry

By Joseph Gainza

“At the end of the day, it’s about business,” Jeff Johnson, a Boeing executive, says about continuing foreign sales of its F-15 jet fighter. Johnson was quoted in a Feb. 2011 Fortune Magazine article titled “America’s Hottest Export: Weapons.” Weapons design, production and sales is about business, and that is a problem.

During the third presidential debate President Obama said the US spends more on its military than the “next ten nations combined.” Actually, in FY 2011 it was more like the next 14 nations combined, not counting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Weapons production is big business, very big business, such big business that even the Pentagon cannot get Congress to cancel an outdated or underperforming weapon system when doing so would lose jobs in the districts of powerful Congress members or result in loss of profit for weapons makers.

President (and General) Dwight Eisenhower, three days before leaving office, warned his “fellow citizens” against the huge and growing power of the “military/industrial complex.” He edited out his original inclusion of Congress in that phrase; too bad as it is more accurate. Today he would need to include the Executive branch, as US diplomats serve as sales representatives for weapons manufacturers around the globe, as was confirmed in diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks. President Obama has made such sales a cornerstone of his economic recovery policy.

US arms manufacturers have two major channels through which they can sell major weaponry to foreign countries: foreign military sales, whereby the Pentagon negotiates a government-to-government agreement, and direct commercial sales, which manufacturers negotiate directly with the purchasing country and must receive a licensure from the State Department. Either way, weapons corporations make a lot of money.

The government also transfers arms to other countries by giving away weapons from overstocked US arsenals for free or at greatly reduced prices. These transfers are managed by the Defense Department.

Loren Thompson, described in the Fortune article as “a veteran defense consultant,” discussing the surge in weapons exports under Obama, says, “It’s about US alliances, it’s about maintaining jobs, and it’s about America’s broader role in the world and what you have to do to maintain that role.” That about sums it up: the demands of Empire combined with the business of arms sales drive the system. They make for a bloated military budget, which sucks resources away from programs to rebuild infrastructure, serve human need, stop environmental destruction, build a carbon and nuclear free energy economy, and put this country on a sustainable path. Empire and corporate profits monopolize all discussion about “national security” as if healthy, educated people, a functioning democracy and a livable planet were not essential to the nation’s future.

Let’s pretend that everyone in the US only cares about the economy, the federal deficit and taxes—listening to the debates it certainly seemed that is how Mr. Obama and Mr. Romney saw it. So, if our only concern is money and jobs then we should be very concerned about the fact that profit for weapons manufacturers has such a large influence on US military, foreign and domestic policy. Why?

According to the Sustainable Defense Task Force, “The Department of Defense (DoD) is one of only a few federal agencies that can pass, or even stand for, the test of an independent auditor. Among this handful of errant agencies, DoD is both the worst offender and the most consistent.”

The Task Force, created by Republican and Democratic members of Congress, quotes the DoD Inspector General as finding that the weaknesses in the Department’s financial system “affect the safeguarding of assets, proper use of funds, and impair the prevention and identification of fraud, waste and abuse.” The Acting Inspector General of the US at the time of the report (June 11, 2010) concurred, saying that these weaknesses “adversely affect the reliability of DoD’s financial data” as well as “the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its operations.” The Task Force went on to say that until the Pentagon gets its financial management in order, something it has not done in over 20 years, it cannot “know how well its expenditures track the national security objectives laid down by the President and Congress.” It reports that the General Accounting Office found that “major weapons programs are suffering $300 billion in cost overruns,” and adds that “the number of weapons programs exhibiting one or more characteristic problems—over budget, late in delivery, less capability than expected—has steadily risen.” This level of mismanagement in the Pentagon suggests corruption is rampant. The revolving door between the Pentagon and plush jobs in the “defense” industry contributes to the suspicion that sweet deals are part of doing business. Is it just coincidence that Boeing’s head of business development for military aircraft, Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kohler, used to run the Pentagon agency that oversees arms exports?

In the capitalist system, a business must increase its sales and profits every year or it loses investors. Weapons makers are no different and so US overseas weapons sales are skyrocketing. As the Fortune article states, “foreign arms sales, once viewed as icing on the cake, are now the focus of the industry’s growth strategy.” This reliance runs in both directions. The chairman of the President’s Export Council, the principal national advisory committee on international trade, is W. James McNerney, President and Chief Executive Officer of Boeing.

While there are complex strategies behind US weapons sales, including the desire of the Empire to have allies take on greater “peace keeping” burdens, the drive for weapons sales is as much about profit as about geopolitical strategy. They feed off each other. Take the profit out of the equation and the justification for huge sales of weapons becomes stark: the needs of Empire require it.

Imperial domination predates the modern military/industrial complex, but, as it is today, the drive for markets and profits in the 19th and early 20th centuries was behind US overseas expansion. General Smedley Butler provided one of the clearest expressions of this when he declared: “I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street.”

Nationalizing the “defense industry” would not get us where we need to be as a member of the global community. But it would reduce much of the pressure for ever-increasing military budgets and perhaps clear the fog, which surrounds military procurement and policy decisions.

If we take profit-making out of the design and production of weapons, fire the hundreds of corporate lobbyists and eliminate their “campaign contributions,” we remove much of the incentive for the US to be the largest arms dealer, accounting for 30% of the world’s weapons exports.

Public ownership could establish a disincentive for the development of weapons systems to replace systems already the most lethal in the world. Nationalizing the weapons industry might also provide a more level playing field for disarmament advocates to persuade our elected officials that the greatness and security of the US cannot be found in the barrel of a gun.

—Joseph Gainza is a founding member of Vermont Action for Peace and lives in Plainfield, Vermont.
US troops, ships and planes in Australia and many other countries in Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, gives the Pentagon the ability to shut down China’s imports of energy and raw materials and to cripple its economy.

This provocative strategy, cloaked by claims of defending “freedom of navigation”, is intended to allow the US to maintain strategic dominance of South China Sea and crucial sea-lanes such as the Strait of Malacca. The US clearly views China’s economic development, expanding investments and growing diplomatic and political influence in the region as a major threat to its own massive investments and domination of resources and markets. And of course, despite the fact that China’s military budget is less than one tenth that of the US, China is providing the “enemy” the US military-industrial complex requires.

Wikileaks has revealed how Australia’s ambassador to the US and former opposition leader Kim Beazley and former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd privately reassured the US that Australia will support them in the event of a war with China.

In June this year the Australian media revealed that the Australian Government’s major military policy document—the 2009 Defence White Paper—including a secret chapter that planned for Australia to fight alongside the US to enforce a naval blockade of crucial sea lanes and how in return Australia might be faced with retaliatory attacks by China on our ports, mines and strategic targets like the US Pine Gap spy base.

President Obama announced a military realignment to Asia and the Indo-Pacific region during his visit to Australia in November 2011. The policy was reaffirmed when at the Pentagon on January 5, 2012 he unveiled the policy document entitled “Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defence.” This policy announcement heralded a deepening and increased importance of the 60 year old US-Australia alliance ANZUS.

US Marines are now rotating through Darwin, the first such permanent basing of US troops in Australia since World War II. The intensified military relationship also includes an increased number of visits by US ships and aircraft, greater US access to Australian military bases, more joint military exercises (for ‘interoperability’ so the Australian Defence Force can work effectively under US orders and with US equipment) and the storage of greater amounts of US military material and equipment in Australia.

The decision was announced after many months of secret negotiations. It will have far-reaching local impacts and foreign policy consequences and yet the announcement was made without debate in Parliament or any consultation with Australians.

In 2011 the Australian Government completed a Force Posture Review, which recommended moving Australian military assets to the north and west of the continent. The reason given was protection of major Australian economic assets, including mineral deposits and offshore oil and gas. Actually the Review recommendations, which are already being implemented, are support measures for the US military realignment that threatens to bring war to our doorstep.

There is much tension within powerful business and political circles in Australia on how to best respond to the dilemma created by our military relationship with the US taking us down the path of conflict with China, which is also our biggest trading partner. However, it is clear that all parties wish to keep the extent of the risk of war with China secret from the Australian people.

—Dr. Hannah Middleton is spokesperson for the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition and founding member of the new Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN). She is also a Global Network board member.

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**Conversion: A Poem in Four Parts**

The commute
provides plenty of time for radio news headlines,
Sandwiched between
unemployment rates and a new American Idol,
Lies a story of US drones.
Unmanned Vehicles
dropping bombs. Again.
More dead in Swat Valley.
bad guys, they say.
Another half million flee.
Families flood into
“hastily erected camps” run by
“overwhelmed aid workers.”
Overwhelmed. Workers
focused on keeping the living alive.
I ache to know who died.
The “collateral damage.”
I want names, ages, photos.
I want to see the photos
of those whose death
is paid for with our tax dollars.
Let me know who was killed;
let me see what we paid for.
Tell me their names.
I want to know their names.

The client
is handsome. Charming.
Addiction has him living a risky
life on the edge.
His kids are on his mind; he aches
to see them.
His angst is palpable.
We sit on the wall
checking in;

his outrage blows open.
He scoops newspapers reporting:
homeless woman dies in park.
“When I lose my name, do I lose my name?” he asks.
“Jeanie was beautiful, kind, nurtured, accomplished.
She had a goddamned master’s degree
Why didn’t they come here, to us,
to learn how much she was loved,
how important she was.
She had a name.
How could they leave out her name?”

The conundrum
drives the ride home.
Do we accept that
we don’t know the name of our sister
who dies homeless in a park?
That innocents are caught
in the crosshairs of war?
Do we really believe that
we need to drop the bombs
we pay our neighbors to make,
to protect our country
our constitution,
our freedom?
to create something called
homeland security?
Meanwhile, a son’s addiction finds no relief

A mother’s illness goes untreated
a shelter overflows with hunger, unemployment, and crises that
overwhelm. Shall we ask
who is secure in this land of the homeless?

Conversion
opens the door.
We mourn the deaths. With the living,
we listen, deeply, in quiet spaces.
We embrace the stories, in all their pain.
We stand in that river of suffering
and find strength.
In awe, we see survival. Inspired,
we dare indulge dreams
that beat swords into plowshares.
For him we will make hospice: with
clean sheets, a bathtub, a nurse’s gentle touch.
For her we will build rehab: with
a gym, a garden, space to dance.
For them, we will create soft circles that
quiet haunting voices, and
supported homes that ease the stress.
With them we will build schools,
clean energy, light rail and bridges that
connect our communities.
We will pay living wages.
Provide full employment.
Build a 21st Century way of life
that disarms violence and protects
each other and mother earth.
And in faraway villages where
bombs have wreaked havoc
our youth will travel to rebuild
and our ships will abandon weapons to carry
nurses and doctors and open hearts.
We will carry open hearts.

—Mary Beth Sullivan is a social worker that
works with homeless people. She lives in Bath, Maine.
Deciphering Annual Spy Satellite Costs

By Loring Wirbel

In the world of highly classified spy satellites and related military-communications satellites, most budget figures are best-guess analyses, since the majority of programs operate from a “black budget,” where every figure of merit is classified. Sources like Jonathan’s Space Report and GlobalSecurity.org give us a pretty comprehensive picture, but the shell games are complicated. For example, the nation’s biggest intelligence agency, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), has a 2012 budget believed to be around $16 billion. It is dedicated to space surveillance, but that number includes satellites, launch costs, and the maintenance of ground stations. Yet the Air Force, in its public budget, subsidizes Delta–4 and Atlas–V launches for the NRO to the tune of $1.4 billion a year. So everything in this realm is a vague guess.

What can be said for certain is that the NRO launched four satellites in 2012 under its own authority, two using an Atlas–V rocket, and two using the Delta–4. Two other large satellite launches in 2012 also had secondary surveillance and covert-communication roles: the Mobile User Objective System MUOS–1 satellite ($600 million), launched on an Atlas–V on Feb. 24, and the Advanced Extremely High Frequency AEHF–2 satellite ($580 million), launched for the Navy on May 4 on an Atlas–V. Launches of the Delta–4 are about $700 million each, while launches of the Atlas–V can range from $2 to $5 billion each. Thus, launch costs in 2012, taking a conservative approach, total about $1.4 billion for the Delta–4 and $8 to $10 billion or more for four Atlas–V launches, or well over $10 billion in total for 2012 launch costs alone.

The four NRO launches in 2012 were NROL–25, launched on a Delta–4 on April 3 and believed to carry a Future Imagery Architecture—Radar (FIA–R) satellite at a cost of approximately $1.2 billion; the NROL–38 “Drake” launch on an Atlas–V carrying the Satellite Data System SDS–18 satellite, which is used to relay low-earth orbit imaging satellite data to ground stations, at a cost of around $1.3 billion; and the NROL–36 launch Sept. 13 on an Atlas–V of a pair of Naval Ocean Surveillance System satellites, estimated at $1.3 billion each, along with 11 sub-satellites or “cubesats.” NROL–36 payload costs thus easily exceeded $3 billion (NOSS–1 data is downloaded to the Buckley Ranger stations).

The fourth NRO flight was a very mysterious one. On June 29, a Delta–4H rocket launched NROL–15 in a pattern that indicated it was carrying a geosynchronous-orbit electronic intelligence satellite called Advanced Orion. But experts say this was a “stealth launch,” and the orbital parameters changed after launch to indicate NROL–15 may have been a polar-orbit imaging satellite. In either case, the cost of the satellite was likely to be at least $1.4 billion.

Thus, we can conservatively estimate the cost of unclassified large payloads in 2012 at $1.2 billion. NRO payloads totaled close to $7 billion. When the $10 billion in launch costs are added, military surveillance and communication space costs in 2012 were likely above $18 billion, perhaps above $20 billion. Keep in mind that the estimated $16 billion annual budget of the NRO includes administrative costs for the agency’s headquarters in Chantilly, VA, as well as maintenance and improvements at ground stations like Buckley, so clearly, there are plenty of budget shell-games going on.

—Loring Wirbel is a member of Citizens for Peace in Space in Colorado Springs and serves on the Global Network’s board.
Sweden & Finland Join NATO’s Militarization in the Arctic North

By Agneta Norberg

My intervention here is about Sweden and Finland, two countries in NATO’s “Partnership for Peace.” The US National Security Directive 866 states: “The US has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. These interests include missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence and maritime security operations; and freedom of navigation and over-flight.”

In November 2009 the US Navy released a paper called “Navy Arctic Roadmap.” The paper refers to the directive quoted above and the roadmap speaks about the intent to “Preserve the global mobility of US military and civilian vessels and aircrafts throughout the Arctic region.” Less than three weeks after unveiling this Arctic strategy, NATO held a two-day meeting in Iceland attended by US/NATO top-military commanders and the NATO Secretary General. They proclaimed that the high north is going to get more NATO attention. (Now that Arctic ice is melting due to climate change and energy corporations can drill for oil) Russia was not invited to send an observer.

Norway has now moved its operational command into the Arctic, the only command centre above the polar circle, and purchased 48 F-35 fighter jets for Arctic patrol. Denmark is said to have plans to establish an Arctic Command, an Arctic response force and military buildup at the Thule airbase in Greenland. The US and Britain are conducting joint submarine warfare exercises under the shrinking Polar ice cap.

Today all countries bordering Russia are members of NATO or in Partnership for Peace, which most people describe as an antechamber to NATO. US military airfields are set up in all Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Hungary. Fighters from the US, Great Britain, Germany, Turkey, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, The Netherlands, Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania and Sweden are training on daily missions close to St Petersburg, Russia. All this is a breach of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. Russia is today totally encircled by hostile installations and some of these are radars, which will serve the dangerous missile defense program. Also for this purpose huge radar installations are installed in northern Norway (at Vardø), Romania and in Turkey.

How does Sweden and Finland fit into this pattern? Both countries have taken part in numerous recent war exercises held in northern and southern Sweden and northern Norway with the NATO countries as well and in the waters in the Baltic Sea.

On the December 15, 2004 the Swedish parliament passed a decision about Sweden’s adjustment to NATO, and the US military’s need for a large training area for their many wars. A large part of Northern Sweden will be opened up for military training of combat vehicles, fighter planes, weapons and drones. At North European Aerospace Test range (NEAT), weapons corporations were invited to test systems of different kinds and join war exercises. The new type of satellite-directed war requires larger areas for training as do weapon systems like AMRAAM (Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile).

The area is ideal because it’s as large as the country of Macedonia. In July 2010, The US Air Force conducted bomb training for a couple of weeks at NEAT and British Royal Air Force was allowed to train almost the entire year 2011. But already in 2002 Israel got permission to train their drones, which later were used in the war on Gaza.

Esrange, the world’s biggest downloading station for satellites, not far from the city of Kiruna, is situated within NEAT. Every state or corporation, which are ready to pay, can buy maps from Esrange over any area on the earth. When in South Korea, I came to know, that Esrange serves South Korean Air Force with maps covering North Korean territory. Another example of Esrange’s role in warfare is the following story: At a lecture in Kiruna, by Bruce Gagnon a couple of years ago about how space is used in modern warfare, one young woman in the audience confessed that she as a student trainee at Esrange, had questioned the practice of downloading maps of Russian territory. She asked why these maps were sent to receivers in the US. She never got a good explanation, she told us.

There is a rather strong resistance towards joining NATO in both Sweden and Finland according to recent polls. The common interests with Nordic nations. The common interests were about air space, sea areas, security in Northern regions, cyber security, training of equipments and troops. “Interoperability” it is called. The reason for this cooperation was said to be the increasing tensions in the Arctic area.

We have to understand these realities and make pressures on the parliamentarians in political parties who proclaim in their party programme that they are against NATO membership. We have to start a serious debate about these dangerous step-by-step developments. Many Swedish and Finnish people still believe we are nonaligned and neutral countries.

We who see the dangerous developments have to work together with other Nordic activists to counter these war preparations and stop it. One step we are planning is to hold the 21st annual Global Network space organizing conference in Kiruna, Sweden on June 27–30, 2013. By bringing key peace movement leaders from around the world to northern Sweden we intend to shine a bright light on these offensive and destabilizing NATO plans for war to control Arctic resources. Please plan to join us.

—Agneta Norberg is vice chair of Swedish Peace Council, a member of the IPB Steering Committee and serves on the Global Network board.
Right: Activists held a protest in front of Bath Iron Works in Maine during Keep Space for Peace Week making the connection between “missile defense” systems onboard Aegis destroyers and US first-strike planning.

Above: Activists in Montrose, California held space week posters during their week peace vigil.

Members of Citizens for Peace in Space in Colorado Springs protest outside of a Space Command facility during Keep Space for Peace Week.

Right: The 100-mile bicycle trip arrives at US NSA spy base at Menwith Hill in England just in time to join the space week protest called “The Faceless Face of US Drones” organized by the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases.
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (England) led a 100-mile bicycle ride during Keep Space for Peace Week that began at the US Star Wars radar base in Fylingdales and ended at the US’s NSA spy base at Menwith Hill. Along the way they held evening teaching programs and vigils in various communities.

Global Network board member Sung-Hee Choi speaks to a protest at South Korean Navy headquarters during Keep Space for Peace Week. Korean activists translated the GN space week poster and linked it to the Navy base fight on Jeju Island.

Above: Members of WILPF in Boston held a drone death walk throughout the city during Keep Space for Peace Week.

Left: GN board member J. Narayana Rao organized a meeting in Nagpur, India where he spoke about the US and India’s Space Command in the context of enormous need and poverty in his country. He and others called for disarmament and development and pressed for India to maintain an independent foreign policy rather than become an appendage of the US.
Close Waihopai Spybase

The Kim Dotcom saga [Internet entrepreneur in New Zealand convicted of insider trading, embezzlement and copyright infringement] has certainly put the New Zealand (NZ) Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and its Waihopai spy base smack bang into the glare of the spotlight.

Not coincidentally this is happening in the same year that the government has got New Zealand back into ANZUS [Treaty] in all but name. NZ has hosted its first visit from a US Defense Secretary in 30 years and he offered to base US marines here. For the first time since the 1980s, American troops have trained here; NZ troops have trained in the US; and NZ warships have taken part in US-led naval exercises. How ironic that all this was happening at the same time as the country was celebrating the 25th anniversary of our nuclear free law.

The public face of New Zealand’s role as an American ally is the NZ military presence in Afghanistan. But New Zealand’s most significant contribution to the global American war fighting machine is, and has been for more than 20 years, the Waihopai electronic intelligence gathering base, located in the Waihopai Valley, near Blenheim. It is controlled by the US, with New Zealand (including Parliament and the Prime Minister) having little or no idea what goes on there, let alone any control.

First announced in 1987, Waihopai is operated by New Zealand’s Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) in the interests of the foreign powers grouped together in the super-secret UK-USA Agreement (which shares global electronic and signals intelligence among the agencies of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ). Its satellite interception dishes download a huge volume of civilian telephone calls, telexes, faxes, email and computer data communications.

It spies on our Asia/Pacific neighbours, and forwards the material on to the major partners in the UK-USA Agreement, specifically the US National Security Agency (NSA). Its targets are international civilian communications involving New Zealanders, including the interception of international phone calls.

Post 9/11 the GCSB and Waihopai now spy further afield, to those regions where the US is waging wars. The code-name for this—Echelon—has become notorious worldwide as the vast scope of its spying has become public. New Zealand is an integral, albeit junior, part of a global spying network, a network that is ultimately accountable only to its own constituent agencies, not governments, and certainly not citizens.

In April 2008 three peace activists were arrested for breaking into the spy base near Blenheim and slashing an inflatable plastic dome covering a satellite dish. In March 2010, a jury in Wellington District Court took only two hours to find school teacher and part-time farmer Adrian Leason, Dominican friar Peter Murnane, and farmer Sam Land not guilty of all charges against them.

Peter Murnane, who represented himself throughout the trial, said the action taken by the group had been successful. “We wanted, in going into Waihopai, to challenge these warfaring behaviours and I think we have done this,” he said. “We have shown New Zealanders there is a US spy base in our midst.”

Waihopai does not operate in the interests of New Zealanders or our neighbours. Basically it is a foreign spy base on NZ soil and directly involves us in America’s wars.

A weekend of anti-war protest at this spy base is planned for January 18–20, 2013. Waihopai must be closed.

—Anti-Bases Campaign is based in Christchurch, New Zealand

Priests and nuns involved in Jeju Island Resistance

Catholic priests and nuns are heavily involved in the resistance against Navy base on Jeju Island. Presently five people are in jail including Catholic and Protestant priests. Over 500 people have been arrested so far. Lately the lead Navy base contractor Samsung has been working 24 hours a day and has brought in Vietnamese workers. Increasingly there are signs that the US and South Korean governments may be planning an air base on Jeju Island as well.
Vandenberg & the Future of US Warmaking

By Andrew Lichterman

Vandenberg Air Force Base is best known as the place where the US tests intercontinental ballistic missiles and launches target rockets for missile defense tests, but there is far more to it. Vandenberg plays a key role in US military operations worldwide, as well as in maintaining the current generation of strategic weapons and developing the next.

Vandenberg Air Force Base occupies nearly 100,000 acres, stretching along thirty-five miles of the Central California coast. It is the headquarters for one of the two US missile and rocket ranges, the other centered at Cape Canaveral, Florida. Vandenberg was chosen for this purpose because satellites could be launched into polar orbit without passing over land and missiles could be launched over open water towards target sites, including US-occupied islands in the Pacific. Converted to a missile launch site in 1957, Vandenberg was the home of the first US nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Atlas. Many of its successors, from the Titan to the Minuteman and the MX “Peacekeeper,” were tested at Vandenberg. In all, over 1,850 missile and orbital rocket launches have taken place there.

Over decades as a satellite launch facility, missile base, and test site, Vandenberg developed an extensive array of ground facilities for tracking missiles and controlling satellites. Today, Vandenberg is the headquarters of the 14th Air Force, the command responsible for providing many space services to the rest of the military. From Vandenberg and other bases and tracking stations in the US and around the world, the 14th Air Force operates satellites that provide surveillance, communications, global positioning data, and weather information to the military. Forces on the ground receive satellite-produced intelligence and weather reports via satellite communications, and navigate and target weapons using satellite-generated global positioning signals (GPS). Shortly before the Iraq war began, Pentagon Briefing Major General Frank J. Biaisdell told the press “We are so dominant in space that I pity a country that would come up against us.”

The Air Force Space Command 2004-2005 Almanac proclaimed that military space applications in the Iraq war included “Global Positioning System-guided bombs; GPS navigation for ground forces; missile warning from Defense Support Program satellites; and communications fed by military satellites communications systems.”

The Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg does day-to-day planning of space missions, drafting tasking orders for the positioning and use of satellites. As one of the main launch sites for satellites and a coordinating facility for satellite tracking and control, Vandenberg constitutes a key element in a global space surveillance and communications network that virtually all elements of the US military have come to depend on. As Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Space Programs Gary Payton told a House committee in 2010, “Our users stretch from the Oval Office to the mountains of Afghanistan. Using protected, wideband, or narrowband communications, the President can command the nation’s nuclear forces, our UAF pilots can fly Predators over Iraq and Afghanistan from the US, and Special Forces teams can call for exfiltration or tactical air support.”

Vandenberg plays multiple roles in the ground-based mid-course interceptor element of missile defense. Target missiles for the program have been launched from Vandenberg for years, with interceptors fired from Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. The first round of operational interceptor missiles has been installed at Vandenberg and at Fort Geeley, Alaska. Vandenberg has four of the initial thirty interceptors. Ground based mid-course interceptors like those at Vandenberg are only a small part of the ambitious US missile defense effort, which is exploring a variety of technologies to destroy rockets in the boost phase, in [deep] space, and after re-entry into the atmosphere. Additional interceptors already are being deployed aboard Navy ships.

Missile defenses will be dependent on an increasingly sophisticated array of satellites to detect launches and coordinate the weapons used to shoot missiles down. Vandenberg is likely to play a leading role in all phases of missile defense, from testing ground and space-based technologies to launching parts of the satellite constellations that missile defense would require.

Minuteman ICBMs, now the only land-based US nuclear strategic missiles, are routinely flight-tested from Vandenberg. The Minuteman is being modernized and the Air Force already has begun planning for the next generation of land-based strategic weapons. The US is hoping to take advantage of continuing advances in aerospace and guidance technologies to place non-nuclear as well as nuclear payloads on long range missiles. The goal is to achieve “prompt global strike,” the ability to hit targets anywhere on earth in [one hour] or less from the decision to attack. In addition to long-range missiles, the US is researching new kinds of weapons with global reach, including gliding, maneuvering reentry vehicles that could carry a variety of weapons and that could be delivered by missile.

After slowing down for a few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the pace of US weapons research quickened again in the new century, fueled in part by two wars. With little public debate, we have resumed a kind of arms race, one that may be considerably more complex, both in the number of participants and in the range and interaction of technologies, than the dangerous first half century of the nuclear age. There can be no doubt who is leading this arms race: the US, with a military budget nearly as big as the rest of the world combined and a policy and practice of preventive war. Those in power have bet all our futures on a strategy of permanent military dominance. Vandenberg Air Force Base stands at its leading edge.

—Andrew Lichterman is research analyst for the Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, California
21st Annual Conference
Each year the Global Network holds its annual space organizing conference in a nation that plays a key role in preparation for high-tech space warfare. Our next conference will be held in Kiruna, Sweden on June 27–30, 2013. Please read the article by Swedish peace activist Agneta Norberg in this newsletter to better understand the growing militarization of the Arctic regions. By bringing key peace leaders from around the world to northern Sweden next June we intend to shine a bright light on these offensive and destabilizing NATO plans for war to control Arctic resources. All are encouraged to send representatives to this important conference.

Cold War Mentality Surfaces
Reporting for the Global Times in November Shu Meng wrote, “Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and fall of the bipolar global political system, the US enjoyed a period of holding absolute hegemony in the world. China’s rise has aroused a sense of crisis in the US. It seems that America's traditional Cold War mentality and zero-sum thinking still remain. Even its means of roping in allies or strengthening military deployments have not changed. However, as the era advances, outdated ideas have to be rejected. Multilateralization is an irreversible process and even a power like the US’s efforts cannot reverse global trends. The US should face this reality. Continuously strengthening military deployments only deepens a sense of tension in the Asia-Pacific region and shadows its economic growth.”

US Activates AvDet in Poland
The military encirclement of Russia continues. A US Air Force Aviation Detachment (AvDet) was activated at Lask Air Base in Poland on Nov. 9, 2012. F-16 and C-130 crews and aircraft will rotate periodically for training from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. The AvDet claims to support Poland’s continued defense modernization and standardization (“interoperability”) with the US and NATO forces. From Russia’s point of view, it is an unfriendly move because F-16 fighters are able to carry nuclear bombs, which are now stored at nine American depots in Europe. American F-16 fighters, launched from the territory of Poland or Lithuania where they are deployed on a permanent basis, would need just 15–20 minutes to reach, say, Smolensk, or only 25 minutes to reach Moscow.

NATO Patriot Missiles to Turkey
Turkey’s foreign minister announced in mid-November that NATO is preparing to give Turkey Patriot missiles for deployment along the Turkish-Syrian border. German troops may soon also take part in the NATO mission in Turkey, the German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported. Within the NATO operation the Bundeswehr will send to Turkey one or two subdivisions servicing the missile systems. The contingent will be comprised of up to 170 people.

Expensive to Launch Satellites
The head of Air Force Space Command worries that tightening defense budgets and looming budget cuts could reduce his critical space and cyber capabilities. Air Force Gen. William Shelton recently warned that producing national security satellites and the costs of launching them are “unsustainable.” Shelton worries about proposals to reduce the cost of space assets, noting, “The satellites we currently employ are clearly technological marvels. They take years to hand build and deploy and are very expensive.” The Pentagon’s costly space warfare infrastructure is catching up with them as the nation deals with growing debt and austerity measures. They worry that public support for social programs is coming into direct conflict with their high-tech war making apparatus.

Drone Pilots are Bored
MIT News reported in November that drone pilots often get bored. “You might park a UAV over a house, waiting for someone to come in or come out, and that’s where the boredom comes in,” says Mary “Missy” Cummings, associate professor of aeronautics and astronautics and engineer systems at MIT. Cummings says such unstimulating work environments can impair performance, making it difficult for an operator to jump into action in the rare instances when human input is needed. She and researchers in MIT’s Humans and Automation Lab are looking for ways to improve UAV operator performance. “The question is: Can you get people to pay attention enough, at the right time, to keep the system performing at a high degree?” This should correct all of you taxpayers out there. This is how your money is being spent — improving the kill chain they call it at the Pentagon.

MD Base in Maine or New York?
The New York Times reported in September that, “After two years of study, a panel of top scientists and military experts working for the US National Research Council has concluded that the nation’s protections against missile attacks suffer from major shortcomings, leaving the nation vulnerable to some kinds of long-range strikes. Philip E. Coyle III, a former national security official in the Obama White House and a former director of weapons testing at the Pentagon, said the panel’s report exposed a system that should be rebuilt from top to bottom, adding that the antimissile complex was geared toward ‘producing and fielding hardware’ rather than actually devising ways to defend against attacks. In its highly technical, 260-page report, the panel recommended an overhaul that would make the antimissile system ‘far more effective,’ including adding new sensors and interceptor rockets, as well as an additional base in Maine or upstate New York from which interceptors could be fired. The nation’s two existing bases are in California and Alaska. The report called the plan affordable, saying it could fit within current antimissile spending — which runs about $10 billion a year — if the military eliminated what the panel described as costly and unneeded systems, like a $28 billion constellation of satellites meant to track enemy warheads.”

Cape Canaveral Gets New Missile Test Facility
A 1950s-era missile-testing complex at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida will be refurbished for the new “Strategic Weapons Systems Ashore” facility, which will conduct all land-based testing of the Navy’s submarine-fired missile systems. Currently, launch systems, fire control, guidance and navigation, and the actual missiles themselves, are all tested at separate locations. The new program will combine them at Cape Canaveral. The state’s Space Florida organization will kick in $5 million to rebuild the site.

Getting Allies to Pay More
Reuters has reported that the US wants more global cooperation in space including joint war games and combined operations with allies, and is pushing for data-sharing deals with France, Japan and other countries. Greg Schulte, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for space policy, said in an interview in June 2012 that it made sense for countries to work together in space given tight military budgets and the increasingly congested and contested nature of space. The US is also working with the European Union to modify its proposed global code of conduct for space to preserve Washington’s ability to defend its satellites, he said. In May the US signed a long-term partnership agreement with Canada that will give the Pentagon access to data from a new space surveillance system Canada is building to track objects in deep space. Shultz said this past spring the US Air Force conducted a military space exercise with Britain, Canada, Australia and other members of NATO, the first international war game for space hosted by the Space Command. “This was a real serious opportunity ... to think about how do we conduct coalition space operations in support of military operations on the ground,” Schulte said.

Expanding Kill Lists
The Washington Post reported in October that, “Over the past two years, the Obama administration has been secretly developing a new blueprint for pursuing terrorists, a next-generation targeting list called the ‘disposition matrix.’ The matrix contains the names of terrorism suspects arrayed against an accounting of the resources being marshaled to track them down, including sealed indictments and clandestine operations. US officials said the database is designed to go beyond existing kill lists, mapping plans for the ‘disposition’ of suspects beyond the reach of American drones. The House Intelligence Committee chair John O. Brennan is seeking to codify the administration’s approach to generating
capture/kill lists, part of a broader effort to guide future administrations through the counter terrorism processes that Obama has embraced.”

**Pax Americana Now Online**
The excellent documentary film Pax Americana & the Weaponization of Space can now be watched on YouTube. Just go to YouTube and type in the film name and it should come up for viewing. The film, created by Dennis Delestrac, has been widely seen in Canada and throughout Europe on public TV. Theaters in Spain and Latin America showed it as well. Delestrac was never able to sign a distribution deal to show the film in the US so it is largely unknown to American audiences. We highly recommend you show it in your community.

**Local Work Against Drones**
Alameda County Against Drones is currently presenting an anti-drone resolution to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in California. If passed it would declare Alameda County to be free from drones, commits the County to all legal means to resist the acquisition and use of drones by any citizen or agency of the County, and instructs the County Counsel to transform this declaration into an Ordinance for Alameda County, banning drones from Alameda County’s airspace to the greatest extent permitted by Federal and state law.

**Space Week Events**
The Global Network began holding Keep Space for Peace Week actions in 2001. Since then, early each October, we invite peace groups and church committees around the world to hold local events to help build consciousness about how space is used to direct warfare on the planet. In 2012 more than 75 local events were held on October 6-13 in a dozen countries. The theme of Keep Space for Peace Week this year was “Satellites: the eyes, ears, and brains of modern warfare.” Whether it is drone warfare or shock and awe attacks, the US Space Command “enables the war fighters” by the use of military satellites that guide the weapons systems to their targets in modern war making. We will never be able to get a handle on the new space arms race until we create and nurture an international consciousness and constituency around this issue. Keep Space for Peace Week gives our affiliates and friends a great chance to work together around the world to bring this important message to the public. We invite other concerned organizations and individuals to consider joining our network of local actions next October 5-12, 2013. Check the GN’s web site for photos from space week actions this year.

**Check Spam Filter**
Increasingly we are hearing from supporters that their Internet provider is dumping our emails into spam filters. So be sure to check your spam filters and tell your system that Global Network emails are not junk. If you’ve recently changed your email address and failed to send us your new address we are unlikely to ever find out. If you wish to get our occasional email reports please send us your new address.

**UK Students Oppose Weapons Corporations**
BAE Systems is the world’s second largest arms company, with 95% of its total sales being military. In October BAE intended to participate in the “Careers Fair” at the University of Essex in the UK but students organized in opposition. They wrote a statement expressing their outrage to BAE’s attendance and sent it to every department at the university. They contacted other organizations planning to attend the fair, asking them to express their opposition and to pull out if BAE attended. A protest was also planned for the day of the fair. BAE decided not to attend the fair due to “health and safety concerns”. Student activist Beth Smith said, “Students across the UK are refusing to let arms companies visit their universities unchallenged. Successes like the one at Essex show just what students can achieve through coordinated campaigning. The movement to kick arms companies off campus is growing and we look forward to more successes like this one.” This fall school term has seen similar demonstrations against military contractors recruiting in Sheffield, Edinburgh, Warwick, UCL, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway and more. In spite of major austerity spending cuts to social programs in Britain the government has decided to boost their spending on space technology by 25% from 2013-2017. A representative of Surry Satellite Technology Ltd said, “The UK space industry is a world leader and has been one of the fastest-growing parts of the economy over the past decade.”

**Canada Joins Obama’s Pivot**
Canada has approached the government of Singapore (and other nations) with a proposal to establish a Canadian military base there as a “logistics facility” that would support the US-NATO “Pivot to Asia”. Defence Minister Peter MacKay has admitted Canada’s “military tempo” is at the highest levels since the Korean War. Because the US is exhausted from the resistance to its occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as from the capitalist economic crisis, Canada has in MacKay’s words, “become a go-to country to meet the global demands of Canadian and US corporate imperialism. The conservative Harper government will not reveal to its own citizens the content of these new basing agreements or exactly how many or which countries it is negotiating with. The Canadian people are overwhelmingly opposed to their role in the occupation of Afghanistan and the growing militaristic position their nation is taking alongside NATO.

**Beale AFB Drone Protest**
Nine activists were arrested in late-October in front of Beale Air Force Base in northern California during a protest against drones. More than 50 people joined the action from all over the region at Beale which is located in a rural area north of Sacramento. Beale is the home of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing with the nation’s fleet of U-2 spy planes and the Global Hawk unmanned reconnaissance drone. The Air Force Space Command radar system called PAVE PAWS, upgraded in recent years for participation in Star Wars, is also located at Beale. These radar play a key role in Pentagon first-strike attack planning that includes the ever expanding “missile defense” program.

**Congress Approves Launch Indemnity**
Space News reported in November that the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill that would extend space launch indemnity through 2014. As Obama increasingly privatizes NASA launch operations the bill would have taxpayers assume liability for launch-related damages that exceed a $500 million threshold, to a maximum of $2.7 billion per launch. The six-line bill next goes to the Senate where it will certainly be approved. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL), supported the bill but rose during floor proceedings to voice a concern. “I am concerned that taxpayer liability exposure is growing at the same time the industry and its associated insurance market is maturing,” Costello said. “I hope that we can begin to address these issues before the next extension is necessary in 2014.”

**Post-Election (cont. from 16)**

Stephen Smith, and the two reached an agreement to transfer “two key space systems” from the Western Hemisphere to Australia. They are a US Air Force C-band space surveillance radar currently based in Antigua in the West Indies and a space surveillance telescope designed and built by the Defense Advanced Research Projects agency (Darpa) that is now located in New Mexico.

US missile interception and space war assets are being deployed to Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Asia-Pacific region to consolidate a global network of first-strike and counter-retaliation capabilities that will be employed for purposes of political blackmail and, in the worst case scenario, for offensive warfare of a dangerous nature never witnessed before. Barring effective organizing to prevent it, the next four years will not be generous to the cause of world peace and disarmament.

—Rick Rozoff runs the Stop NATO web site and lives in Chicago, Illinois
Protecting the Wrong People at Drone Base

By Elliott Adams

Nonviolent activists, in a Gandhian wave, have been arrested a half-dozen times in the past 18 months at an upstate New York military base from which drone aircraft strikes are directed. Now the base Operations Commander has gotten an “Order of Protection,” to guard himself from “assault, stalking, strangulation, criminal obstruction of breathing or circulation, sexual misconduct, [or] forcible touching,” by the nonviolent activists.

Defendant Ed Kinane responded, “Someone forgot to tell the judge that Colonel Earl Evans is the one with all the weapons, the M4 & M16 assault rifles, and even the F-16 fighter jets and MQ9 Predator drones. He is the one who has trained and has a career in force projection, violence and killing. And we are the ones trying to stop the killing of innocent people and babies, trying to stop wars and all killing.”

Seventeen people were arrested on October 25, 2012 that resulted in the “Order of Protection” at the Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, NY. At an earlier arrest on June 28, 2012 fifteen members of the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones were corralled and arrested while walking single file silently toward the base. John Amidon, of Albany, NY maintains, “Clearly this was a preemptive political arrest… This was an attempt to cover up their crimes and to block our first amendment rights of free speech, freedom of assembly and to petition our government for the redress of grievances.” Lawsuits have been initiated against the police based on that arrest.

Coalition member John Hamilton recalls, “In a trial for one of our earlier arrests, Ramsey Clark (former US Attorney General) when testifying, under oath, said that: ‘Drones are being used to commit war crimes. Under international law and Nuremberg principles citizens are required, not just permitted, to stop their government for committing war crimes and even to block the war crimes themselves. International law applies in all courts in the US including this court’ [Dewitt Town Court, near Syracuse].”

Each time Coalition members have been arrested they have been in the process of delivering an indictment that says, among other things, “We, the people, charge the US President, Barack Obama and the full military chain of command, Commander Colonel Greg Semmel, every drone crew, and service members at Hancock Air Base, with crimes against peace and crimes against humanity,… extrajudicial killings, violation of due process, wars of aggression, violation of national sovereignty, and killing of innocent civilians.”

The “Order of Protection” apparently blocks the delivering of any indictment since it says the defendants must “Refrain from communication or any other contact by mail, telephone, e-mail, voice-mail or other electronic or any other mean with Earl A. Evans.” Defendants all say they have never knowingly met Col. Evans and do not know who he is and that he could literally sit down beside one of them in a coffee shop and start a conversation and then call the police and have us arrested for violating the “order.” Violation of the “order” could result in a seven-year sentence.

Ann Tiffany concludes, “It is ironic that on the other side of that fence innocent children are being murdered by drone operators. While on this side of the fence people are being arrested for saying that children are being murdered. Join us at Syracuse as the government continues to try to stop us from calling for prosecution of war criminals and visit us at www.upstatedroneaction.org.”

—Elliott Adams is past president of Veterans for Peace and lives in Sharon Springs, NY. He has been arrested several times at Hancock Field.

Israel’s “Golden Dome” MD System

by Dave Webb

Recent reports that the apparent success of the (heavily US funded) Israeli “Iron Dome” system for intercepting short range rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel vindicates the US-NATO missile offense system could not be further from the truth. Firstly, there is a lot of difference between intercepting relatively slow moving rockets that travel through the atmosphere and ballistic missiles carrying nuclear warheads (and possibly hundreds of decoys) that strike ten times as fast from outer space. The 30% success rate of Iron Dome may well be largely due to the fact that the system attempts to differentiate between rockets aimed at inhabited and uninhabited areas and ignores the latter. But it doesn’t always work and the three Israelis recently killed in a rocket attack in Karat Malachi died after an Iron Dome failed to function. Plus incoming rockets aren’t nuclear tipped missiles loaded with decoys. Even an 80% success rate for a NATO-US ‘shield’ would still mean huge and unacceptable levels of death and destruction.

It will be argued that if enough money is thrown at these systems the technical difficulties can be overcome—but the main problem remains that this reliance on weapons technology results in the likelihood that less effort will be put into diplomacy and analysing and solving the underlying issues. Bigger shields just lead to bigger (and/or more devilous) swords and so on it goes. It’s time the world broke away from that cycle of violence. We have got to consider other ways—we have too much to lose but so much to gain from trying to understand others rather than just wanting to get them out of our way.

The Mundane Nature of the Total Surveillance State

By Loring Wirbel

President Obama visited Colorado almost weekly during the 2012 summer of intense campaigning and unprecedented wildfires. He would usually land at the tactical airfield of Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora. Major media sources never mentioned that Buckley was home to the Aerospace Data Facility, the largest space intelligence base in the Americas—despite the fact that the huge geodesic radomes clustered in two separate fields at Buckley constitute one of the most visible landmarks in the eastern Denver suburbs.

This is not merely a case of self-censorship, though Colorado media rarely bring up the fact that Denver, and Aurora in particular, are unusually dependent on the Pentagon’s “black budget.” Instead, there is a larger and more pervasive tendency among the press and public alike to treat classified surveillance as background wallpaper. It’s OK to mention the continued debate about the Bush and Obama administrations’ support of warrantless surveillance—in fact, on Oct. 29, the day Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast, the US Supreme Court was the only major federal agency to remain open, so the justices could hear complaints about the warrantless spying. But when it comes down to the Earth-based and space-based facilities that actually carry out this surveillance, media and citizens maintain a well-rehearsed silence.

More than 15 years ago, Citizens for Peace in Space in Colorado Springs published a brochure with a Buckley photo on its cover, titled “Hidden in Plain Sight.” This remains an apt motto, not only for Buckley, but for the satellite uplink facilities at Schriever Air Force Base near Colorado Springs that help sustain America’s space network of 24-hour surveillance. The only thing that has changed at Buckley in the 15 years since that campaign began is that civilian employees of the National Security Agency (NSA) and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) now dominate the workers at Buckley. Intelligence analyst James Bamford claims the NSA head count at Buckley now exceeds 850 employees, while NRO employees bring the total to well over 1,000. In public, Buckley is the home of the 460th Space Wing of Air Force Space Command, but it was awarded to Utah in 2009, an ineffective lobbying effort to win this project when it opens.

Northrup-Grumman and Lockheed-Martin.

Stories in Wired and at Cryptome.org have spurred the amateur investigations of a team of Utah-watchers, similar to the citizen archivists who kept a careful watch on Area 51 in Nevada in the 1990s. Meanwhile, federal snooping expansion continues at Buckley, while the president comes, the president goes, and the media do their best to pretend it is nothing but a tactical air force base.

In 2002, President Bush secretly allowed a new form of warrantless surveillance known as FISA Bypass. This allowed the NSA to conduct domestic electronic surveillance around the clock without seeking special permission from the top-secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC). After Congress legitimized this in a series of FISA amendments, the new activity largely put the FISC out of business, or at least made the court more of a rubber-stamp star-chambers court than it already was. As soon as Bush ordered the bypass, the NSA began implementing a previously-planned program called Stellar Wind, in which packet-sniffing equipment capable of reading email and web traffic, was installed in all major telephone switching centers throughout the US.

The second reason for the Buckley boom is related to a $2 billion, 1-million-square-foot facility being built outside Salt Lake City, some 500 miles to the west. Faced with a daunting explosion in information to store and analyze, the NSA asked Congress in 2003 for a protected storage facility, far from either coast, originally called Storage Station Freedom. Colorado made a brief but ineffective lobbying effort to win this post, but it was awarded to Utah in 2009, and subsequently renamed Utah Data Station. Everything about the facility is secret, though it is under construction near Bluffdale, and scheduled to completed in the late summer of 2013.

In April 2012, James Bamford (author of The Puzzle Palace and other books on US intelligence), blew the lid off this secrecy with a front-cover article on Bluffdale that talked about its relation to Buckley, as well as to US space intelligence bases in Georgia, Texas, and Hawaii. Buckley is the primary satellite-intelligence aggregation post. Lackland, Texas (formerly Medina Annex) spies on Latin America; NSA Hawaii on Oahu snoops on Asia; and Fort Gordon, Georgia (code-named Sweet Tea) listens in on Europe and the Middle East.

Bamford also disclosed a new tie between Oak Ridge National Labs in Tennessee, and the Bluffdale-Buckley network. Oak Ridge traditionally had been the site of supercomputers dedicated to research on nuclear weapons. But with the scaling back of the Cold War, many computing resources were re-targeted for use in code breaking and surveillance. The portion of Oak Ridge dedicated to the NSA now resides in Building 5300, otherwise known as the Multiprogram Research Facility. On Nov. 14, 2012, the Titan supercomputer in Oak Ridge’s Building 5700 won the award of most powerful supercomputer in the world; yet intelligence analysts say the secret computing system in Building 5300 dwarfs the capabilities of the alleged “world’s fastest” Titan. The code breaking resources at Oak Ridge are applied directly to “problem traffic” encountered at Buckley, and will be utilized directly by the Bluffdale project when it opens.

—Loring Wirbel is a member of Citizens for Peace in Space in Colorado Springs and serves on the Global Network’s board.
Post-Election: Expect More Drone and Space War

By Rick Rozoff

An estimated $6 billion was spent on the November 6 US federal elections—$2.5 billion on the two major parties’ presidential campaigns alone, $1 billion of that on television ads—and Americans woke up the following morning to discover that nothing had changed. Sadder perhaps if no wiser.

The White House and the Senate remained in the hands of the Democratic Party and the House of Representatives under Republican control. Built-in structural stalemate will continue, with no substantive legislation passed for four more years, surely none beneficial to the American people or to world peace, each party blaming the other for the lack of results. Onward to the next six billion—or ten billion—dollar election.

In the closing words of William Thackeray’s 19th-century novel Vanity Fair, “come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.”

History’s most expensive Punch and Judy show completed, domestic and foreign policy affairs will remain as they are. In fact will grow worse. Especially the second.

Mere hours after Barack Obama’s victory speech in Chicago, an American drone-launched missile killed three people outside the capital of Yemen, adding to a hecatomb of over 3,000 drone killings in that nation, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Libya since Obama entered the White House in January of 2009. His re-election will be interpreted as a mandate to continue and escalate such attacks. Yet more Predator and Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles will be prowling the sky over the Greater Missile East, firing deadly Hellfire missiles at defenseless victims. [On February 8, 2012 The Washington Post ran an article which reported a “Post-ABC News poll found that 77 percent of liberal Democrats endorse Obama’s drone policy”]

In the three televised debates between Obama and his challenger Mitt Romney, the president repeatedly accused his opponent of wanting “to spend $2 trillion on additional military programs, even though the military’s not asking for them,” although he didn’t hint at spending even a penny less than the Pentagon demands. The Defense Department’s baseline budget for next year is $520 billion, over $1,700 for every citizen.

Last year’s military spending, $711 billion with the baseline budget and Afghanistan and Iraq wars added, was the highest in constant dollars since World War II. The US and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization spent over $1 trillion on their defense budgets, approximately 70 percent of world military expenditures in 2011.

With the onerous constraints placed on third-party candidates’ ability to get on the ballot and to gain exposure in the commercial news media, including the presidential and vice presidential debates, only one perspective is provided to the public: That of the Pentagon war machine. A military colossus that is almost daily expanding its presence through the building of military partnerships and the acquisition of bases around the world and beyond Earth into space.

In the months preceding the presidential election the US moved a X-band missile radar battery into Turkey under the auspices of the Obama administration’s European Phased Adaptive Approach missile interception program, cloaked under unconscionable euphemisms like missile defense and missile shield, though in fact the initial implementation of the Ronald Reagan administration’s so-called Strategic Defense Initiative, in popular parlance Star Wars.

The interceptor missile program was endorsed and adopted by NATO at its summit in Portugal two years ago and was announced to have achieved initial capacity at the NATO summit in Chicago last May. It will include the deployment of 48 increasingly longer-range, higher-velocity and more lethal land-based versions of the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptor to Romania and Poland and the permanent stationing of US Aegis class warships - cruisers and destroyers - equipped with the same missiles to the Mediterranean Sea and eventually to other seas like the Black, Baltic, Barents and Norwegian.

Last month US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Spanish Defense Minister Pedro Morenes signed an agreement at NATO headquarters in Brussels to allow the stationing of four US Aegis destroyers at the Naval Station Rota in Spain.

Recent reports detail plans for the US to move X-band radar systems into the Persian Gulf where the US is selling Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile batteries to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and other local monarchies. The systems are also being deployed in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines and perhaps elsewhere in Southeastern Asia as components of what major Russian and Chinese officials have correctly denounced as Washington’s global interceptor missile system.

Late last month the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency conducted what it described as the “largest, most complex missile defense flight test ever attempted” at the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site in the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands and the Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, “resulting in the