Pacific Environment Under Military Siege

By Koohan Paik

In this age of ecological breakdown, pockets of wondrous biodiversity still survive in the vast Pacific Ocean. The Gulf of Alaska teems with a multitude of whale species; Southeast Asia’s “Coral Triangle” boasts 500 species of coral; the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, the Galapagos Islands, and the seven-mile-deep Mariana Trench are still fairly intact. But these marvels may soon be wiped out by unchallenged trends in global militarism. Widespread military exercises, defense-industry profiteering, and base-building (mostly by the U.S.) are wreaking irreversible destruction on coral reefs and other ecosystems, even without active war.

Marine monuments and military range complexes

It is true that, for decades, deleterious war games have taken place on military range complexes spanning from Asia’s east coast to the west coast of the Americas, and points in-between. However, the scale and capacity for destruction has never been as immense as it is now. It’s as if military activities have been suddenly “supersized.” The U.S. Navy estimates that over the next five years, naval exercises in the Gulf of Alaska will kill over 180,000 marine mammals. But most galling is the new, fraudulent manner in which the U.S. has come to gain control of a whopping nine million square miles of the Pacific Ocean—an area double the size of all 50 states. Yet this chicanery goes entirely unmentioned in any media, let alone in Congress. So the American public remains oblivious.

The U.S. started claiming huge swaths of the Pacific about a decade ago, in anticipation of the threat of a rising China competing for finite resources and regional hegemony. The sweeping dominion of the U.S. took the form of “range complexes,” slated for military practice, and “marine monuments,” supposedly intended for environmental protection.

The first marine monument was designated in 2006, just before George W. Bush left office. He designated the Northwest Hawaiian Islands as the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument. Environmentalists cheered this supposedly conservationist move. What they didn’t realize was that, in one fell swoop, without public participation or scrutiny, Bush had also paved the way for militarizing vast tracts of the Pacific.

While banning commercial enterprise, it turns out that a marine monument can easily morph into a military “range complex.” This was the case with Papahanaumokuakea Marine Monument, which overlaps with the Northwest Hawaiian Islands Range Complex. Commercial and indigenous fishing are off-limits, but torpedoes, sonar, and all manner of detonations can blast with impunity. For example, the cyanide discharge from a single torpedo is in the range of 140-150 parts per billion. The Environmental Protection Agency’s “allowable” limit on cyanide is one part per billion. The Pentagon insists that these war simulations are required to ensure military preparedness. But for the whales, turtles, dolphins, coral, sea sponges, snails, anemones, reef fish, sea urchins and thousands of other diverse and rare species, living in a range complex is no “simulation.”

A similar scenario took place when the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument was expanded to include the Marshall Islands, infamous for its atomic-testing legacy. The new status has not stopped missiles and hypersonic aircraft from scattering shrapnel into the Marshalls’ Kwajalein lagoon. Apparently, the real function of the “marine monument” designation is to introduce, without controversy, U.S. jurisdiction over the open seas.

Yet another example is deliciously wild Pagan isle, within the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument in the western Pacific. Pagan is a kind of “Noah’s Ark,” a miraculous habitat for precious populations of birds, snails, insects, plants and animals that are found only there and nowhere else in the world. And yet, now the Pentagon is proposing “full-spectrum” military exercises on Pagan. That would mean year-round amphibious attacks, bombing, torpedoes, underwater mines and other detonations from the air, from the sea, and from the ground, bombing the 18-square-mile island out of recognition. Nearby Tinian Island is also slated for live-fire training. So much for “marine monument” protection. The designation is a fraud.

Base-building and resistance

Base-building is another eccodial activity on the rise. There are already over 400 official U.S. bases throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, client-states, such as Japan and South Korea, have been enlisted to build installations that would effectively encircle China with missiles. New bases are also slated for Jeju Island, Korea; and in Japan’s Ryuku chain—on Okinawa and Yonaguni, only 70 miles from Taiwan. Wherever there are bases, there is perpetual leaching of trichloroethylene and other toxic substances into soil and groundwater.

Islanders determined to protect their homes have not remained silent. On Okinawa, ferocious opposition has significantly delayed the two-decade-old plan to build a U.S. base at lovely Oura Bay. Sadly, the Japanese government has successfully installed dozens of 20-ton concrete blocks atop coral reefs there. However, Okinawa’s anti-base governor Takeshi Onaga has joined the activists on the ground to foil the project by any legal means available.

The equally dedicated islanders on Jeju in South Korea have not been so lucky. A South Korean navy base designed to port Lockheed-Martin Aegis

(See Pacific P 12.)
**U.S. Sending MD to Feudal Monarchies**

By Bruce K. Gagnon

This is what it has all come down to... the U.S. and the corrupt, dictatorial Gulf monarchies meeting at Camp David last spring and agreeing on a plan to flood the Middle East with ‘missile defense’ (MD) systems.

These Gulf monarchies are the essential allies of the U.S. in the world today (in addition to a few other fascist-leaning nations). Together they are destabilizing and creating chaos in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine and beyond. The Camp David meeting is evidence of the desperation and the moral decay of the U.S.A.

Obama announced that he would streamline weapon sales and increase joint military exercises with Bahrain (home to U.S. Navy Central Command and the Fifth Fleet), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as part of an “iron-clad commitment” that the United States will help protect them against their neighbor and rival Iran. The Gulf States claim they fear Iran’s nuclear weapons even after recent successful negotiations to ensure they don’t build any nukes.

In fact Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program several years ago—the CIA has even reported as much as has the IAEA. But truth and reality don’t matter much anymore.

What this new deal with the Gulf States really means is unrestrained U.S. and Arab extremism throughout the Middle East. The plan is to build a region-wide MD system including Patriot and THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) interceptors along with MD radars. It’s also likely that Aegis ship or land-based MD systems will be added to sweeten the pot as well.

The U.S. aerospace corporations will make lots of money from this deal. It’s important to remember that weapons are now the #1 industrial export product of the U.S. When weapons are your #1 export product, what is the global marketing strategy for that product line? Endless war. What does that say about the soul of the U.S.A?

All of these MD systems will be “interoperable” with the Pentagon’s existing space directed war fighting programs. They will all be run through the U.S. military space satellite system. That means the Gulf States will pay for the U.S. to build a region-wide MD system that is actually aimed at Iran, Syria, and Russia and fully controlled by Washington.

MD is a key element in U.S. first-strike attack planning—it’s the shield that is used after a Pentagon sword is thrust into the heart of another nation’s military forces. When the attacked nation attempts to fire a retaliatory strike it is then that the MD systems are used to pick off the remaining military capability thus giving the Pentagon a “successful” first-strike. The whole system works best if you can get real close to the ‘offending nation’ and hit their missiles soon after launch rather than waiting for them to reach deep space—or hit them as they descend from space and approach their targets.

This new Gulf States MD agreement is dangerous, provocative, destabilizing and very expensive. The U.S. has once again betrayed its revolutionary roots against British monarchy as it snuggles up with the Arab right-wing feudal monarchies. Nothing good can come from this dark relationship.

Bruce K. Gagnon is Coordinator of the Global Network and lives in Bath, Maine.

To read the full text of the “Final Declaration from Global Network’s Kyoto International Conference on Space and Peace” August 2, 2015

Go to www.Space4Peace.org

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**Pyraminds to the Heavens, Inc.**
As retired and former members of the U.S. military, we urge U.S. drone pilots, sensor operators and support teams to refuse to play any role in drone surveillance/assassination missions. These missions profoundly violate domestic and international laws intended to protect individuals’ rights to life, privacy and due process.

According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, as of September 1, 2015, up to 6,069 lives have been taken by U.S. drone attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. This figure does not include uncounted lives lost to U.S. drone attacks in Afghanistan before 2015, or in Iraq, Libya, the Philippines and Syria. All were killed without due process. These attacks, which are also terrorizing thousands, are undermining principles of international law and human rights such as those enumerated in the U.N. International Declaration of Human Rights, written in 1948 with the blood of the atrocities of World War II freshly in mind. The United States is a signatory to this declaration.

Those involved in U.S. drone operations who refuse to participate in drone missions will be acting in accordance with Principle IV of the Principles of International Law Recognized in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Judgment of the Tribunal, The United Nations 1950:

“The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him of responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible.”

So, yes, you do have a choice — and liability under the law. Choose the moral one. Choose the legal one.


Endorsers: Iraq Veterans Against the War, KnowDrones.com, Veterans For Peace, World Can’t Wait

For more information or to support this effort: KnowDrones.com, Veterans For Peace, World Can’t Wait
Expanding Ops at U.S. Space Base

By Nigel Day

In both the BBC local TV news and the national BBC TV news broadcasts last May there was an item about RAF (U.S.) Croughton.

The base, although entitled RAF Croughton is, in fact, a U.S. communication base, handling a variety of diplomatic, military and intelligence material, with a co-base at Barford St. John, near Banbury, Oxfordshire.

The item in the programme concerned the planned £200 million developments at the base by the U.S. military, which will turn the base(s) into a major intelligence facility. About 1,500 extra U.S. personnel will be drafted into the base(s), coming from the closure of the old U.S. bases at Molesworth and Alconbury.

The BBC crew visited some parts of the base, spoke to U.S. personnel, visited the bowling alley, had a laudatory comment from the MP for Slough Northamptonshire, and showed some pictures of the communication radomes and digital communication dishes.

The U.S. Croughton base is one of the major communication bases, connected worldwide to other military and intelligence networks. It has many U.S. diplomatic communication roles, military command and control communication links, and intelligence communication functions. It will be providing support to the U.S. AfriCom (Africa Command).

The latest role for the base is, via a high level digital landline installed by BT communicating with Djibouti, to facilitate the control of U.S. armed drones flying from there over Yemen and Somalia, and killing people there.

The military byelaws at the sites have recently been revised.

I am a coordinator of Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and this group is part of a wider group of local peace groups called Oxfordshire Peace Campaign who have for many years organised marches and rallies at U.S. Croughton, to protest and highlight the activities at the base(s). The next march and rally is to be on Saturday 3rd October 2015, during the international ‘Keep Space for Peace Week’. We observe and campaign at the base at other times during the year as well.

The TV news programme was entirely devoted to the supposed benefits to the local community of an expansion of the base(s), supported by a local MP, hotel owner and assorted U.S. personnel. It did point out, briefly, that the role of the base was not entirely known.

I want the opportunity to provide a wider and different perspective about this U.S. base that will soon have an enormous expansion of personnel, increased military and intelligence roles and functions, and is not a benign, bowling alley complex, but a major part of a war fighting machine on our doorstep. I want the opportunity to balance the news report and to give a comment on developments at U.S. Croughton.

Nigel Day is coordinator of Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the UK.

Garrisoning the Globe

By David Vine

With the U.S. military having withdrawn many of its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, most Americans would be forgiven for being unaware that hundreds of U.S. bases and hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops still encircle the globe. Although few know it, the U.S. garrisons the planet unlike any country in history, and the evidence is on view from Honduras to Oman, Japan to Germany, and Singapore to Djibouti.

Like most Americans, for most of my life, I rarely thought about military bases. Scholar and former CIA consultant Chalmers Johnson described me well when he wrote in 2004, “As distinct from other peoples, most Americans do not recognize—or do not want to recognize—that the United States dominates the world through its military power. Due to government secrecy, our citizens are often ignorant of the fact that our garrisons encircle the planet.”

To the extent that Americans think about these bases at all, we generally assume they’re essential to national security and global peace. Our leaders have claimed as much since most of them were established during World War II and the early days of the Cold War. As a result, we consider the situation normal and accept that U.S. military installations exist in staggering numbers in other countries, on other peoples’ land. On the other hand, the idea that there would be foreign bases on U.S. soil is unthinkable.

While there are no freestanding foreign bases permanently located in the United States, there are now around 800 U.S. bases in foreign countries. Seventy years after World War II and 62 years after the Korean War, there are still 174 U.S. “base sites” in Germany, 113 in Japan, and 83 in South Korea, according to the Pentagon. Hundreds more dot the planet in around 80 countries, including Aruba and Australia, Bahrain and Bulgaria, Colombia, Kenya, and Qatar, among many other places. Although few Americans realize it, the United States likely has more bases in foreign lands than any other people, nation, or empire in history.

Oddly enough, however, the mainstream media rarely report or comment on the issue. For years, during debates over the closure of the prison at the base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, nary a pundit or politician wondered why the United States has a base on Cuban territory in the first place or questioned whether we should have one there at all. Rarely does anyone ask if we need hundreds of bases overseas or if, at an estimated annual cost of perhaps $156 billion or more, the U.S. can afford them. Rarely does anyone wonder how we would feel if China, Russia, or Iran built even a single base anywhere near our borders, let alone in the United States.

“Without grasping the dimensions of this globe-girdling Baseworld,” Chalm-
ers Johnson insisted, “one can’t begin to understand the size and nature of our imperial aspirations or the degree to which a new kind of militarism is undermining our constitutional order.” Alarmed and inspired by his work and aware that relatively few have heeded his warnings, I’ve spent years trying to track and understand what he called our “empire of bases.” While logic might seem to suggest that these bases make us safer, I’ve come to the opposite conclusion: in a range of ways our overseas bases have made us all less secure, harming everyone from U.S. military personnel and their families to locals living near the bases to those of us whose taxes pay for the way our government garrisons the globe.

We are now, as we’ve been for the last seven decades, a Base Nation that extends around the world, and it’s long past time that we faced that fact.

The Base Nation’s Scale
Our 800 bases outside the 50 states and Washington, D.C., come in all sizes and shapes. Some are city-sized “Little Americas”—places like Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, and the little known Navy and Air Force base on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. These support a remarkable infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, power plants, housing complexes, and an array of amenities often referred to as “Burger Kings and bowling alleys.” Among the smallest U.S. installations globally are “lily pad” bases (also known as “cooperative security locations”), which tend to house drones, surveillance aircraft, or pre-positioned weaponry and supplies. These are increasingly found in parts of Africa and Eastern Europe that had previously lacked much of a U.S. military presence.

Other facilities scattered across the planet include ports and airfields, repair complexes, training areas, nuclear weapons installations, missile testing sites, arsenals, warehouses, barracks, military schools, listening and communications posts, and a growing array of drone bases. Military hospitals and prisons, rehab facilities, CIA paramilitary bases, and intelligence facilities (including former CIA “black site” prisons) must also be considered part of our Base Nation because of their military functions. Even U.S. military resorts and recreation areas in places like the Bavarian Alps and Seoul, South Korea, are bases of a kind. Worldwide, the military runs more than 170 golf courses.

The Pentagon’s overseas presence is actually even larger. There are U.S. troops or other military personnel in about 160 foreign countries and territories, including small numbers of marines guarding embassies and larger deployments of trainers and advisors like the roughly 3,500 now working with the Iraqi Army. And don’t forget the Navy’s 11 aircraft carriers. Each should be considered a kind of floating base, or as the Navy tellingly refers to them, “four and a half acres of sovereign U.S. territory.” Finally, above the seas, one finds a growing military presence in space.

Almost by definition, the North Pole is not thought of as a global hot spot. It’s an area typically only recognized come [Christmas time]. But as the polar ice melts, the Arctic is becoming a nexus of geopolitical tensions.

The National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, a Pentagon division that provides maps to the spy community, is closely monitoring the situation. New transportation routes and energy reserves are rising to the surface.

And because all the commotion has economic and not just military ramifications, NGA Director Robert Cardillo sees the Arctic as a place that could bring his agency out into the open.

Since taking office last fall, the lifelong intelligence analyst has garnered attention for pulling the curtain off certain geospatial data.

“To me, I think the Arctic is a wonderful place where we should be thinking about our next piece of open code,” Cardillo said in a recent interview with Nextgov. “A great deal of what’s known about the Arctic is unclassified. We don’t have a rich history of classified intelligence collection in the Arctic, because—guess what?—it wasn’t a priority.”

Now it is. President Barack Obama in a May 2013 Arctic National Strategy outlined “strategic priorities” for the Arctic region, that call for, among other things, a greater awareness of activity in the region as well as charts and scientific research to better understand the landscape. That would include NGA’s geospatial intelligence—insights derived from pairing satellite imagery with historical data sets.

“I’m not going to dive into the, ‘Why is the Arctic warmer than it used to be?’ but I know it is,” Cardillo said. “And I know there’s less ice up there now, and I know there’s more ship traffic now. I know there’s more potential for natural resource exploitation then there ever has been before. Those facts have driven state actions. Russia, as one of the claimants for the resources and maritime navigation and control, etc., has made decisions based upon those changing facts. Some of those decisions are military based.”

Some observers compare the situation up North to the 1980s Cold War, no pun intended.

Reprinted in part from Defense One.

**Globe (cont. from p 4.)**

David Vine is associate professor of anthropology at American University in Washington, D.C. His book, Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World, has just been published. This was taken from a larger article on TomDispatch.

**Pentagon’s Satellite Spies Aiming for the Arctic**

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**PLANNED GIFT TO GN**

If you are in the process of estate planning, please consider making a planned gift of a tax-deductible donation in the form of a bequest, donation of stock or other instruments to the Global Network. Your planned gift would be an important contribution to our global movement to stop the militarization and nuclearization of space. Thank you for your consideration.
Snowden Leaks Reveal Massive Pine Gap Expansion

By Dr. Hannah Middleton and Denis Doherty

The U.S. Pine Gap satellite tracking station, 19km southwest of Alice Springs, Australia, was built in 1966 and came on line soon after. A new report by leading espionage experts has revealed that there has been a massive expansion of satellite communications surveillance capabilities by the U.S. National Security Agency and its Five Eyes partners—the Australian Signals Directorate, the UK’s Government Communications Headquarters, Canada’s Communications Security Establishment and New Zealand’s Government Communications Security Bureau.

Whistleblower Edward Snowden described Five Eyes as a “supranational intelligence organisation that doesn’t answer to the known laws of its own countries”.

Australian National University emeritus professor Des Ball said there has been “a fundamental transformation” in the role of the Pine Gap facility from “a highly specialised mission” to a “multi-agency, multi-purpose mega-intelligence centre.

“Pine Gap is engaged in ‘collect-it-all’ surveillance, military as well as civilian, linked directly to military operations, including drone strikes,” he said.

The original “Five Eyes” satellite monitoring project—ECHELON -- has become widely known after European Parliament enquiries into satellite monitoring from 1999 to 2001.

What is Torus?

“We conclude that development work at the observed sites since 2000 has more than doubled coverage, and that adding Torus has more than trebled potential coverage of global commercial satellites,” the report says.

Torus is a new kind of satellite espionage, capable of soaking up calls and messages and data from 35 satellites at once. A Torus dish can monitor 70 degrees of the sky, without moving. It collects all the different facets of modern communications, from Facebook to fax.

Between 2007 and 2013, western spy agencies have built six new Torus antennas in the UK, Cyprus, Oman, Australia and New Zealand.

The Torus interception network complements well-established satellite interception facilities including those operated by the Australian Signals Directorate at Kojarena, near Geraldton in Western Australia, and Shoal Bay, near Darwin.

Pine Gap

Pine Gap is now engaged in foreign satellite intelligence collection as part of the Five Eyes “collect-it-all” surveillance of global internet and telecommunications traffic.

Pine Gap’s secret role in satellite communications interception probably began in the early 2000s and has been supported by the deployment of U.S. Air Force intelligence detachments to the base. A Torus multi-beam antenna was installed at Pine Gap in 2008.

Pine Gap is managed by the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office and is the CIA’s most important technical intelligence collection station in the world. Pine Gap’s original and still most important function is to serve as the ground control station for U.S. National Reconnaissance Office signals intelligence satellites that intercept ballistic missile test telemetry and microwave telecommunications. In addition Pine Gap relays data from U.S. missile launch detection/early warning satellites—the Space-Based Infrared System.

The base also intercepts a very wide range of radio and mobile telephone communications to provide tactical intelligence support for U.S. military operations across the Eastern hemisphere, including drone strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere.

Government secrecy

There have been no official statements about Pine Gap’s new role.

In 2013 then Defence Minister Stephen Smith said the Australian government approves the presence of a capability or function in Australia but this “does not mean that Australia approves every activity or tasking undertaken”.

The Australian government has repeatedly refused to comment on specific disclosures from documents leaked by Edward Snowden. Last year Prime Minister Tony Abbott insisted that Australia would not use intelligence “to the detriment of other countries”.

Public enquiry

Pine Gap’s new functions—from its role with drones to the assault on privacy contained within the “collect-it-all” strategy—must be exposed.

The peace movement has been calling for Pine Gap to be closed down for many years.

Hidden by government secrecy and its isolated location, most Australians know little of its spying and war fighting functions. Many do not even know it exists.

In response there has been a long campaign for a public enquiry into Pine Gap’s functions.

Now the need for an informed, transparent public re-assessment of Pine Gap’s roles is more important and more urgent than ever.

Dr. Hannah Middleton and Denis Doherty are leaders of the Australia Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition and live in Sydney. Hannah also serves on the Global Network’s Board of Directors.
U.S. Imperial Project: Rhetoric vs Reality

By S. Brian Willson

The U.S. loves basking in its social myth of being a country committed to equal justice for all, but it operates in a social reality of being committed to profit for a few through expansion at any cost. It is called “American exceptionalism”. This idea that the U.S. American people hold a special place in the world was first expressed as early as 1630 when Puritan leader John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, sermonized that “the God of Israel is among us...for we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us”.

The U.S. military has intervened over 560 times into the sovereignty of dozens of countries since 1798, and bombed 30 of them since World War II. It has been virtually at war with the world since World War II, building its economy on military spending and the use of military force. Nearly 400 of these military interventions have occurred since World War II! In addition, the U.S. has covertly intervened thousands of times in over a hundred countries since 1947. The U.S. has military ships in every sea space, planes in every air space, Special Forces teams operating in over 140 countries, and controls outer space as part of its proclaimed policy of “full spectrum dominance”. Its propaganda is so extraordinarily pervasive that it virtually controls most of our inner psychic space— our thought structures and parameters of acceptable critical thinking.

Every component of the U.S. government, including its espoused humanitarian efforts such as the Peace Corps, National Endowment for Democracy, U.S. Agency for International Development, the now defunct U.S. Information Agency, among others, operate to further the U.S. agenda for global dominance that requires a selfish pursuit of geo-strategic interests. Policy is guided by a near religious ideology of capitalism and private enterprise.

So, as one can clearly observe, this pattern is overwhelmingly imperial. Why has this happened and what purpose does it perform? Historian William Appleman Williams describes this extremely well in his 1980 book, “Empire as Way of Life”. By the late 1800s, U.S. industrial and agricultural production exceeded the capacity of its domestic consumption. It had to seek expanded markets overseas to assure continued profits for the captains of industry and agriculture. Before Woodrow Wilson became president he was a lecturer at Columbia University where in 1907 he recommended that the U.S. “command the economic fortunes of the world”. He explained: “Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed must be battered down...in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused”.

Growing up in U.S. America conditions us to believe in our exceptionalism. We are insulated psychologically and intellectually from the rest of the world, just as the oceans on our east and west have insulated our country geographically. In the U.S., abiding by the mythology of the “American Way of Life” has, at least until recently, generally guaranteed a comfortable material life for Eurocentric people. There’s a reason for our comfort, however, that becomes visible when we are able to look beyond the illusions of the myth. As early as 1948, George Kennan, head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Committee, authored the following, brutally honest internal document: “We have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population. . . . Our real task . . . is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. . . . We should cease to talk about . . . unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization . . . [W]e are going to have to deal in straight power concepts”. Noam Chomsky has concluded that the U.S. is really only interested in a “Fifth Freedom” (a take-off on FDR’s speech in which he listed four essential freedoms— freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech, freedom of religion)—the freedom to send in the marines when any group of people or a nation interferes with our ability to steal, plunder and murder at will in order to enhance our way of life and profits.

Though the statistics are a little different from Kennan’s 1948 data, the grotesque disparity continues: The U.S. possesses but 4.6 percent of the world’s population but consumes anywhere from 25 percent to nearly half the world’s resources (depending on the resource examined). In essence, the United States can maintain this grotesque disparity only through force or its threat. This is the way our civilization was founded, and to date it knows no other way than arrogance, violence, and theft, while pretending (deluded by) noble “exceptionalism.” To this day it has enjoyed virtual total impunity for the millions murdered and maimed in its path. Our “national security” requires maintaining our insatiable consumption in relation to the remainder of the rest of the world, and to assure the obscene riches flowing to the captains of finance and corporations. Ironically, our collective material consumption is a major political force that enables huge oligarchic profits to continue. And the “captains” of money virtually own the political system to assure business as usual. The “Fifth Freedom” is necessary to assure our system’s plunder enabling a few of the world’s people to forcefully maintain their gross disparity.

So, in essence, in order to preserve our U.S. position of material superiority (insatiable consumption for the masses while guaranteeing exorbitant profits for a few), neoliberal globalism requires what Woodrow Wilson recommended in 1907: that “that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused.” If any political movement, political group, nation or ideology is deemed to be a threat to our “full spectrum dominance”, that threat must be eliminated one way or another. “The doors of the nations which are closed must be battered down”. Thus our beligerence and barbarity continue under the rationale of preserving “American exceptionalism,” the Grand Lie and delusion. It will kill us all and most life on the earth if not arrested. It is incumbent upon us to encourage people to sincerely look at and understand the historical patterns of our national cultural and historical behavior as a pre-condition for attaining our dignity as part of the loving human community.

S. Brian Willson is a Vietnam veteran, trained lawyer, and long-time political activist who now lives in Portland, Oregon.
2015 Global Network 23rd Annual Conference

Coastline view of where the U.S. has deployed the ‘missile defense’ X-Band radar in the Ukawa village in Japan’s Kyoto prefecture.

Prior to the GN conference in Kyoto several of our members took a trip to Okinawa to stand in solidarity with people organizing to stop U.S. base expansions there. They went out on a boat into Oura Bay where the U.S. Marines are building an airfield that will extend two runways into the bay destroying coral reefs and sea life habitat. They held a banner protesting U.S. deployments of ‘missile defense’ systems on bases in Okinawa.

Global Network board convener Dave Webb (UK) reads a statement from our organization opposing the X-band radar deployment to representatives from the Japanese Defense Ministry assigned to the Ukawa village area.
& Asia-Pacific Solidarity Trips

GN members took a three-hour bus ride from Kyoto, Japan to have lunch with Ukawa villagers and posed for a photo afterwards. We told them they are not alone in their struggle to oppose the U.S. X-Band radar base in their beautiful ocean community.

Members of the Global Network held banners in front of the recently opened ‘missile defense’ X-Band radar base. The radar is aimed at China and makes the citizens of Ukawa village a prime target.

Following events in Japan GN coordinator Bruce Gagnon went to South Korea where he attended the August 15 Liberation Day Rally for Democracy & Peaceful Reunification in Seoul. He is standing with two family members of peace and reunification activists who have been jailed for their non-violent political work. They posed in front of a booth protesting U.S. deployments of the THAAD ‘missile defense’ system in South Korea that will be directed toward China.

Dave Webb (UK) presents our annual ‘Peace in Space Award’ to leaders of the Ukawa village citizens group who are opposing the U.S. X-Band radar base in Japan.

During the last 11 days of his trip to the Asia-Pacific Bruce Gagnon went to Gangjeong village on Jeju Island. Here he was carried away by police as people blocked the Navy base construction gate. Protests will continue as the base will become a key U.S. power projection hub as part of Obama’s announced ‘pivot’ of 60% of U.S. military forces to ‘contain’ China.
More $$$ for Military Space?

Defense News reported in September that the U.S. needs to invest more in space operations, which are increasingly critical to military missions, said Maj. Gen. David Thompson, vice commander for Air Force Space Command. “Potential adversaries increasingly understand the level to which the [U.S.] armed forces depend on both space and cyberspace to operate on a global scale,” he said. “Those same adversaries possess or are developing capabilities to disrupt and degrade joint force operations and attack America.” The U.S. “must continue to train, prepare and equip space and cyber forces to confront and defeat anyone who would attack us, and maintain our edge when threatened in these domains,” Thompson said.

China to Launch Celestial Military

China may set up what it calls a “celestial military” to boost its capabilities in strategic space warfare, The Asahi Shimbun reported in September. The space troopers are included in plans to structurally reform the People’s Liberation Army to rival the U.S. armed forces. President Xi Jinping announced the reduction of China’s military strength by 300,000 troops as it further invests in space technology. Global Network member Alice Slater responded to this development by writing: “Now the world will reap the whirlwind because we didn’t take up Russia and China’s [repeated] offer to draft a treaty banning weapons in space, tabled in Geneva in 2008 and again this year where the U.S. blocked consensus on any negotiations. Not to mention the missile proliferation the U.S. has sparked when it walked out of the ABM treaty and started planting its deadly [missile defense] weapons in Eastern Europe and Asia. This is such a sorry turn of events. Civil Society should be demanding a treaty to ban space weapons and missiles. Up till now, we had China and Russia willing and eager to address these issues. The warmonger virus is spreading!”

Space Drones: Persistent Surveillance

Britain’s Ministry of Defense (MoD) will acquire three solar-powered drones that can fly on the edge of space for up to three months. The Zephyr 8 drones being supplied by Airbus Defence and Space will be capable of flying at a height of about 70,000 feet. The months-long flight time gives military customers the capability to conduct persistent surveillance or provide communications relays at a fraction of the cost of satellite orbits or manned aircraft and for significantly longer than other unmanned platforms, company executives said, according to Defense News.

The British are expected to receive the so-called High Altitude Pseudo-Satellites over the next 15 to 18 months. Space Command Base at National Park in Hawaii

Thousands of feet above the Pacific Ocean and a couple of thousand more beyond the cloud layer, high atop a dormant volcano sits the Maui [Hawaii] Space Surveillance System, home of Detachment 3 of the 21st Operations Group, a geographically separated unit belonging to the Air Force Space Command. The detachment is one of three Ground-based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance sites operated by the wing. The others are on Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean, and White Sands Missile Range in Socorro, New Mexico. Located on the 10,023 foot summit of Haleakala, perched on the volcanic crater’s rim, the site is ideal for keeping an eye on what’s happening in space. Capt. Robert Copley, commander of Det. 3, said there are a handful of reasons to locate the three one-meter telescopes his 15-person team controls at this specific point on the island. One reason is the lack of light and environmental pollution on the island and on the mountain, which is in the midst of a national park beginning at around 6,500 feet in elevation. “It’s one of the only Air Force installations operated completely inside a national park,” Copley said.

U.S. Drone Operations in Syria

The CIA and the Pentagon’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) are carrying out a secret drone missile-assassination program in Syria, the Washington Post reported last September. U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity claimed that the drone assassination program in Syria was directed exclusively at “high-value targets.” The extension of the drone killing operation into Syria marks a further expansion of a practice of assassinations that has been found illegal by United Nations agencies and which the Obama administration had previously claimed it was scaling back. It moreover involves the CIA, an agency which by definition cannot claim that its killings are carried out in accordance with the laws of war.

NATO Tighten the Noose on Russia

NATO officials have announced the opening of six new headquarters in a number of member states in Eastern Europe. By the time of the NATO summit in July of 2016, the new headquarters are to be brought into a state of full combat readiness. New headquarters will be opened in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Estonia. The new headquarters will be planning and coordinating military exercises of rapid reaction forces of the alliance, which are another move of the alliance against Russia. In turn, Russia officially announced plans to deploy Iskander missile systems in the heart of Europe—in the Kaliningrad enclave. The complexes are capable of carrying both nuclear and nonnuclear warheads, even though nonnuclear Iskanders can be a deadly threat to European missile defense elements.

WiFi from Space

Five companies are gearing up to provide high-speed global WiFi coverage from space within the next three to four years. The extensive satellite network will require vast numbers of rocket launches which will endanger the ozone layer and significantly contribute to climate change. Rocket exhaust contains ozone-destroying chlorine, water vapor (a greenhouse gas), and aluminum oxide particles. A second area of concern is WiFi itself. WiFi operates using extremely rapid pulses of microwave radiation—the same radiation used in microwave ovens. A parade of studies continue to be published implicating wireless technology in the die-off of forests, the demise of frogs, bats, and honey bees, the threatened extinction of the house sparrow, and damage to the DNA of the human species. “The human body,” says Dr. Gerard J. Hyland, of the University of Warwick, UK, “is an electrochemical instrument of exquisite sensitivity”, noting that, like a radio, it can be interfered with by incoming radiation. If a signal can operate a mechanical device, it can disturb every cell in the human body. Studies show wireless radiation can adversely affect fetal brain development, in addition to causing double-stranded DNA breaks and causing a wide spectrum of illnesses. The five companies seeking to provide global WiFi from space include SpaceX; OneWeb; Facebook; Google; and Outernet.

Drone Pilots Quitting

The U.S. Air Force announced last summer plans to offer drone pilots pay bonuses, amid a massive staffing shortfall. Recruits are now being offered up to $15,000 in annual bonuses if they sign up for five or nine year contracts, according to the Wall Street Journal. The Air Force will also automatically assign 80 flight school graduates to the drone program each year. The measures are the latest in a series of efforts by the Air Force to retain drone pilots, through previous bonuses have done little to curb the chronic problem with high turnover. According to the Pentagon, around 180 pilots are currently graduating annually from the one year dedicated drone training program. However, independent estimates suggest well over 100 drone pilots are lost each year. Pilots say long hours of up to 12 hours a day, six to seven days a week are partly to blame. High stress has also been attributed to the huge staff turnover rate.

Expanding Drone Ops in U.S.

There are 64 drone bases on American soil. That includes 12 locations housing Predator and Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). Public Intelligence, a non-profit that advocates for free access to information, released a map of military UAV activities in the U.S. last June. Some bases might be used as remote cockpits to control the robotic aircraft overseas, some for drone pilot training. Others may also serve as imagery analysis depots. The medium-size Shadow drone is used in 22 bases, the smaller Raven in 20 and the miniature Wasp in 11. California and Texas lead the pack, with 10 and six sites, respectively, and there are also 22 planned locations for future bases. This new map comes almost two months after the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) revealed another map, this time of public agencies—including police departments and universities—that have a permit issued by the Federal Aviation Agency to use UAVs in American airspace. “It goes to show you how entrenched drones already are,” said Trevor Timm, an EFF activist, when asked about the new map. “It’s clear that the drone industry is expanding rapidly and this map is just another example of that.”

Picking a Fight with Russia

Speaking in the Estonian capital Tallinn in late June, U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced the deployment of Abrams tanks, Bradley armored vehicles, heavy artillery and other military equipment—enough to equip 5,000 troops—to Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He also announced the build-up of NATO’s cyberwar capabilities, saying. “We must prepare NATO and our allies for cyber challenges, particularly from Russia.” The day before, Carter spoke at a military-security think tank in Berlin and said that NATO was re-focusing its strategic orientation for a long-term confrontation with Russia. He said the U.S. would contribute bombers, fighter jets, surveillance drones, Special Operations troops and other military resources to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The VJTF, announced by NATO last year, is tasked with intervening militarily against Russia, once called upon, in a matter of days.

Odds & Ends

Space Alert!

Chronicles: Persistence, Longevity, and the Power of Drones

Drones are everywhere. Why? They’re cheap, silent, lethal, and offer long-term surveillance. The U.S. is leading the way with a fleet of 64 drone bases. In recent years, we’ve also had China and Russia willing to fight over the skies. However, the U.S. has decided to focus on cyber warfare, which is a much cheaper option. In conclusion, drones are a deadly virus spreading!"
Russian Countermoves
Russia’s Defense Ministry has announced the installation of new radar detectors on the Arctic Ocean islands, while planning to also deploy jet fighters in the northern region. “We have been talking a lot about building up Russian power in the Arctic. We have new hardware deployed on the islands of the Arctic Ocean,” Russia’s Deputy Commander of Aerospace Defense Kirill Makarov said. “It’s all being done for the Russian Federation to defend its interests across the country, and also promote its interests in the Arctic,” he added. The remarks by Markarov were made just days after Russian defense forces deployed military drones in the Arctic to begin conducting reconnaissance and monitoring flights in the region. The development comes following massive military maneuvers in March [2015] to examine the readiness of Russian armed forces in launching countermeasures against potential challenges in the northern regions.

Pope Francis on Weapons
People who manufacture weapons or invest in weapons industries are hypocrites if they call themselves Christian, Pope Francis said last summer. Francis issued his toughest condemnation to date of the weapons industry at a rally of thousands of young people at the end of the first day of his trip to the Italian city of Turin. “If you trust only men you have lost,” he told the young people in a talk about war, trust and politics after putting aside his prepared address. “It makes me think of …people, managers, businessmen who call themselves Christian and they manufacture weapons. That leads to a bit of distrust, doesn’t it?” he said to applause. He also criticized those who invest in weapons industries, saying “duplicity is the currency of today… they say one thing and do another.”

Poor U.S. Navy
The U.S. Navy has an annual budget of over $130 billion. That’s more than the entire Chinese military or Russian military spend in a given year. Yet somehow, amazingly, the Navy claims its budget is too small. That’s what the Navy told Congress when it asked to spread the cost of new Trident nuclear submarines across the entire Pentagon budget. The admirals argued that the subs were “national assets,” too important to be funded by a single service. Rather than telling the Navy to prioritize spending, Congress set up a special fund outside the Navy’s budget, the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund. The Navy can’t afford the 12 new ballistic missile subs it wants without supplemental funding. According to the Congressional Budget Office, building the new submarines along with the other ships the Navy wants will require a shipbuilding budget 32% larger in the next 30 years. In terms of ships, if the Navy doesn’t get the additional $7 billion or so a year, building the 12 new nuke subs will require the Navy to give up 69 other vessels, including 2 carriers and 17 attack subs.

Lobbying for More War
Former House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-MI) has formed a new pressure group, now active in Iowa and New Hampshire, to serve as the “premier national security and foreign policy organization during the 2016 [elections] debate” and to “help elect a president who supports American engagement and a strong foreign policy.” Roger’s group, Americans for Peace, Prosperity, and Security (APPS), is hosting candidate events and intends to host a candidate forum later this year. The organization does not disclose its donors. But a look at the business executives helping APPS steer presidential candidates towards more hawkish positions reveals that many are weapons contractors who stand to gain financially from continued militarism.

The ‘Deep State’
The New York Times reported in September that a former CIA officer with experience in Turkey wrote a provocative essay this summer about the “deep state.” The phrase refers to a parallel “secret government” embedded within the military and intelligence services, whose purpose is to provide a check on electoral democracy. But Turkey wasn’t the target of the essay, written by Philip Giraldi. He was aiming, as his headline declared, at “Deep State America.” Mr. Giraldi, executive director of the Council for the National Interest called the American deep state of today an “unelected, unappointed, and unaccountable presence within the system that actually manages what is taking place behind the scenes.” The “deep state” metaphor seems to be ascendant as a way to explain present American realities. The writer Peter Dale Scott, professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, last year published a book called “The American Deep State,” which emphasized the role of security contractors, oil companies and financial firms. Meanwhile, Mike Lofgren, a Republican who spent 28 years as a congressional aide before quitting in 2011, has used “deep state” to describe a subterranean cross-party consensus on issues like “financialization, outsourcing, and privatization”—a consensus, Mr. Lofgren has written, from which the public is distracted by above-ground debates over “diversionary social issues such as abortion or gay marriage.”

U.S. Training Neo-Nazis in Ukraine
The presence of U.S. Army soldiers in Ukraine to train government forces is in violation of the Minsk agreement on the Kiev side, Russia’s foreign minister says. Sergei Lavrov made the remarks during a phone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry last spring according to the Russian Foreign Ministry. “Lavrov drew [Kerry’s] attention to the fact that the arrival of [U.S.] soldiers … indicates that Kiev has violated its commitments to withdraw all foreign units, military hardware and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine,” the ministry added. In April about 300 U.S. troops from the Army 173rd Airborne Brigade arrived in Ukraine’s western city of Yavoriv to train the Ukrainian National Guard (neo-Nazi brigades) in their fight against pro-Russia self-defense forces in the country’s eastern provinces.

Global Military Spending
Each year the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute tracks the level of military spending around the world. Global military expenditures in 2014 were an estimated $1,776 billion. The top global spender was the U.S. at 34% of the world total. When you add in the numbers from NATO members (and Asia-Pacific ‘partners’) the U.S.-NATO share of global military spending is well over 50%. In 2014 China spent 12% and Russia 4.8% of the global total. It’s hard to imagine how Russia at 4.8% can be the military ‘threat’ that Washington-Brussels-London like to claim it is.

Japan Space Military Growing
Defense News reported in early 2015 that Japan’s Office of National Space Policy cemented a new 10-year space strategy that for the first time folds space operations into national security strategy, both to enhance the U.S.-Japan alliance and to ‘contain’ China. Under previous plans, Japan’s
Japan’s new policy marks a major shift,” said James based missile early warning capability. “I think eight-satellite constellation, and develop a space-domain awareness (MDA) constellation. The country’s Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) navigation priorities were building out its regional GPS-backup and crushed coral, upon some of the world’s most once-vibrant reefs, now certainly dead. China has also broken its anti-imperialist policy to never build bases on foreign soil, by constructing six installations circumscribing the Indian Ocean—in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar and Djibouti. Let the “base race” begin.

Ecocide, for games and profit

Such fever-pitch tensions are actually viewed by the Pentagon as a window of opportunity. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter recently completed a barnstorming tour of Asia to solidify alliances with nations, in addition to the Philippines, seeking U.S. muscle. This has resulted in an unprecedented onslaught of joint naval exercises for 2015.

Carter’s visit also inspired new war-games partnerships for Japan and the Philippines, and for India and Singapore. Meanwhile, the Philippines is trying to coax Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei to enter a four-way military pact. And for the first time in history, China and Russia are keeping pace by conducting joint military training this year, in the Sea of Japan, as well as the South China Sea. Conservative estimates project that all this turbo-charged saber-rattling will result in a minimum loss of 10 percent of the world’s fish.

And then there is the grandaddy of joint naval exercises—RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific). Part World Cup, part trade show, RIMPAC is the chance for 25,000 troops from 22 nations, 55 vessels, and more than 200 aircraft, to gather every four years in Hawaii. For two weeks, they drop bombs, shoot missiles, set explosions and sink aircraft carriers at the Papahanaumokuakea Marine Monument. And sell a missile or two.

Lockheed-Martin, traditionally a defense manufacturer, has shown its capitalist foresight by moving into the undersea-mining-technology sector. The idea is to profit by selling missiles and destroyers to nations fighting for mineral-rich territories, and then sell the mining technology to whichever nation prevails. Lockheed-Martin wins, both coming and going, while the creatures of the ocean perish either way.

Our oceans, which are already suffering from over-fishing and gyres of plastic, supply up to 80% of our atmospheric oxygen. Our reefs, the essential foundation for all marine life, are already dying due to acidification. Yet war profiteers seem determined to bomb all life out of the Pacific. Such behavior is intolerable. Don’t they know there are no winners on a dead planet?

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**Odds & Ends**

(cont from p. 11)

priorities were building out its regional GPS-backup Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) navigation constellation, advancing its space situational awareness (SSA) capabilities and developing a maritime domain awareness (MDA) constellation. The country will also as much as double its Information Gathering Satellite (IGS) reconnaissance program to an eight-satellite constellation, and develop a space-based missile early warning capability. “I think Japan’s new policy marks a major shift,” said James Clay Moltz, professor at the Monterey, California-based Naval Postgraduate School. “It is also the first document to lay out a set of concrete steps toward ... allowing military activities in space. Compared to U.S. national space policy documents, it is very detailed and lays out a relatively clear vision.”

**NATO into Finland?**

Events in Ukraine have triggered public discussion in Finland about NATO. U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks indicate, not surprisingly, that the U.S. embassy in Helsinki and pro-NATO advocates in Finland have been working for years to reframe the discussion about NATO in Finland and pave the way for Finland’s eventual accession into the military alliance. Aware of public opposition to NATO, another U.S. diplomatic cable from October 2008 deplores the fact that “Many Finns retain a vision of NATO as a bulwark against the Soviet Union—and now Russia—and not more broadly as an alliance of collective defense and common values.” In order to change this “outdated” perception, the U.S. embassy in Helsinki set as its mission to “promote greater understanding of the Alliance” through what it called “NATO tours”. The rebranding of NATO’s mission has been a constant challenge for the alliance ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the threat of which was the official reason for NATO’s existence. Drawing attention to the refusal to acknowledge the history of NATO’s involvement in terrorist operations in Europe during the Cold War, Finnish investigative journalist Bruno Jäntti wrote in Al jazeera that “The public debate on Finland joining NATO has been marked by misrepresentation and historical amnesia.” Jäntti elaborates, “Operation Gladio was the codename for an extensive clandestine NATO operation in Europe that went undetected for decades. It organized underground stay-behind military structures in a number of European countries (including Finland), collaborated with right-wing extremist and terrorist groups and undermined the democratic processes of the states targeted by the campaign.”

**Syrians Believe U.S. Created ISIS**

A recent opinion poll by the BBC across all of Syria found that 82% of those surveyed believe that ISIS, with which the government of Barack Obama is ostensibly at war, is itself a creation of Washington. The poll interviewed Syrians between June 10-July 2, 2015. Also included in the poll’s findings was that roughly half of those surveyed opposed U.S.-led airstrikes on Syria and, not surprisingly, only 21% believe that their lives are better now than when the government of President Bashar al-Assad controlled the entire country. Given such results, it is impossible for the overwhelming majority of Syrians to escape the conclusion that the so-called “war against ISIS” is merely window dressing for Washington’s pursuit of its main objectives in Syria. These consist of the overthrow of Assad—with ISIS, the al Nusra Front and other Islamist militias serving as U.S. proxy ground troops—the tightening of the U.S. grip on the energy-rich Middle East and the weakening and isolation of the main allies of Damascus: Iran and Russia, which are among the next targets for the global eruption of American militarism.
Schriever Picks Up New NRO/NSA Space Role

By Loring Wirbel

Schriever Air Force Base, on the Colorado plains 20 miles east of Colorado Springs, has been home since the 1990s to the AF Space Command’s Space Warfare Center, where war-gaming involving satellites and space weapons is waged. But the 21st Space Wing commanders at the base always dreamed of playing the kind of role in space intelligence that was played by the massive satellite downlink base at Buckley AFB, east of Denver.

Now Schriever has its chance to play a complementary role to Buckley. In early September, Rep. Doug Lamborn announced that Schriever had been chosen to be home of a new joint interagency combined space operations center that would bring the civilian spooks from the National Reconnaissance Office and National Security Agency together with military space agencies like Defense Information Systems Agency. It does not replace the AF Space Command’s Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg AFB in California, but instead allows civilian intelligence agencies to work directly with their military counterparts. The center will begin with 40 military employees and an unspecified number of civilian contractors, and will be funded largely from Pentagon and intelligence “black budgets,” making it difficult to determine how big the center could grow.

It is clear that the center will be quite different from the Aerospace Data Facility at Buckley. Buckley’s main radar field in Aurora is limited by nearby residential and commercial contractor growth, but the Air Force has situated several new radomes east of the base, along the E-470 toll road. There are now more than 15 radomes at Buckley, and several hundred NRO and NSA agents working at the base itself, and for the intelligence contractors along Centre Tech Drive in Aurora.

Schriever has plenty of room for radomes on the open plains, but it is unlikely to gain more than three or four additional radomes to match the four on-site, because the base’s primary purpose is not to download or upload intelligence from satellites. Rather, Schriever is there to carry out space control and space military missions. The new center is likely to emphasize intelligence agency coordination, and any new buildings on the site will likely resemble scaled-down versions of the square, windowless buildings at the NSA’s new massive storage site at Bluffdale, Utah.

Nevertheless, it is pretty clear why the center is being constructed. The Pentagon needs to stretch every space dollar, and has been turning to private satellites in recent years to augment the interception roles of the NRO’s official spy satellites. The military leaders and the intelligence agencies need to find ways of combining missions to carry out snooping duties most effectively. Also, the 2013 revelations of Edward Snowden revealed next to nothing about the NRO, the nation’s spy satellite agency which was the biggest intelligence agency for many years. It would benefit both the warfighters and the spies to shift more work to the NRO, which has avoided public scrutiny, and away from the NSA.

Oddly enough, the biggest mystery involving the Air Force in Colorado Springs does not involve the secret intelligence agencies, but the much more public NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) and its underground base at Cheyenne Mountain. In 2006, NORAD moved out of the mountain and into nearby Peterson AFB, primarily because the underground bunkered city was considered out of date. The Cheyenne Mountain base converted to a skeleton staff for the next nine years. Earlier this year, the Air Force revealed it was moving NORAD back into Cheyenne Mountain. After a contractor dispute between Raytheon and Lockheed, the Pentagon announced in September it was awarding a $700 million contract to Raytheon to upgrade the communications at Cheyenne Mountain.

Why the rush? Apparently, the Pentagon had launched a new study on the dangers of electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from small nuclear weapons. It concluded that there was an unforeseen danger from EMP from sea-based nuclear weapons launched by states such as North Korea or Iran. The Pentagon concluded that AF Space Command communications were in danger unless NORAD and its communication networks were brought back under ground, where the sheer size of the mountain above the nuclear-hardened base would protect against EMP. While all the Air Force space moves in Colorado this year seem tied to a new stampede to improve intelligence and war-fighting, the excuses given for opening Cheyenne Mountain back up to NORAD seem to rely the most on banging the drum over inflated nuclear threats.

Loring Wirbel is a member of Citizens for Peace in Space and lives in Colorado Springs. He also serves on the Global Network Board of Directors.
Sicilians Opposing U.S. Navy Surveillance Plans

By David Swanson

There’s a popular movement in Sicily called No MUOS. MUOS means Mobile User Objective System. It’s a satellite communications system created by the U.S. Navy. The primary contractor and profiteer building the satellite equipment at the U.S. Navy base in the desert in Sicily is Lockheed Martin Space Systems. This is one of four ground stations [others in Australia, Hawaii, and Virginia], each intended to include three swiveling very-high-frequency satellite dishes and two Ultra High Frequency (UHF) antennas.

Protests have been growing in the nearby town of Niscemi since 2012. In October 2012, construction was suspended for a few weeks. In early 2013 the President of the Region of Sicily revoked the authorization for the MUOS construction. The Italian government conducted a dubious study of health impacts and concluded the project was safe. Work recommenced. The town of Niscemi appealed, and in April 2014 the Regional Administrative Tribunal requested a new study. Construction goes on, as does the resistance.

I spoke with Fabio D’Alessandro, a journalist and law school graduate living in Niscemi. “I’m part of the No MUOS movement,” he told me, “a movement that works to prevent the installation of the U.S. satellite system called MUOS. To be specific, I’m part of the No MUOS committee of Niscemi, which is part of the coalition of No MUOS committees, a network of committees spread across Sicily and in the major Italian cities.”

“It is very sad,” said D’Alessandro, “to realize that in the U.S. people know little about MUOS. MUOS is a system for high-frequency and narrowband satellite communications, composed of five satellites and four stations on earth, one of which is planned for Niscemi. MUOS was developed by the U.S. Department of Defense. The purpose of the program is the creation of a global communications network that allows communication in real time with any soldier in any part of the world. In addition it will be possible to send encrypted messages. One of the principal functions of MUOS, apart from the speed of communications, is the ability to remotely pilot drones. Recent tests have demonstrated how MUOS can be used at the North Pole. In short, MUOS will serve to support any U.S. conflict in the Mediterranean or the Middle East or Asia. It’s all part of the effort to automate war, entrusting the choice of targets to machines.”

“There are many reasons to oppose MUOS,” D’Alessandro told me, “first of all the local community has not been advised of the installation. The MUOS satellite dishes and antennas are built within a non-NATO U.S. military base that has existed in Niscemi since 1991. The base was constructed within a nature preserve, destroying thousands of cork oaks and devastating the landscape by means of bulldozers that leveled a hill. The base is larger than the town of Niscemi itself. The presence of the satellite dishes and antennas puts at serious risk a fragile habitat including flora and fauna that exist only in this place. And no study has been conducted of the dangers of the electromagnetic waves emitted, neither for the animal population nor for the human inhabitants and the civilian flights from the Comiso Airport approximately 20 kilometers away.

“Within the base there are already present 46 satellite dishes, surpassing the limit set by Italian law. Moreover, as determined anti-militarists, we oppose further militarizing this area, which already has the base at Sigonella and other U.S. bases in Sicily. We don’t want to become complicit in the next wars. And we don’t want to become a target for whoever attempts to attack the U.S. military.”

What have you done thus far? I asked. “We’ve engaged in lots of different actions against the base: more than once we’ve cut through the fences; three times we’ve invaded the base en masse; twice we’ve entered the base with thousands demonstrating. We’ve blocked the roads to prevent access for the workers and the American military personnel. There has been sabotage of the optical communication wires, and many other actions.”

“The No Dal Molin movement against the new base at Vicenza, Italy, has not stopped that base. Have you learned anything from their efforts? Are you in touch with them?”

“We are in direct contact with the No Radar group in Sardinia. One of the planners of that struggle has worked (for free) for us. We know the other anti-U.S.-base movements around the world, and thanks to No Dal Molin and to David Vine, we have been able to hold some virtual meetings. Also thanks to the support of Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network in Sardinia and Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space we are trying to get in touch with those in Hawaii and Okinawa.”

What would you most like people in the United States to know?

“The imperialism that the United States is imposing on the countries that lost the Second World War is shameful. We are tired of having to be slaves to a foreign politics that to us is crazy and that obliges us to make enormous sacrifices and that makes Sicily and Italy no longer lands of welcome and peace, but lands of war, deserts in use by the U.S. Navy.”

David Swanson is a leader of World Beyond War and lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.
The Perils of Nuclear-Powered Space Flights

By Karl Grossman

NASA has released a study claiming there is a need for continued use of plutonium-energized power systems for future space flights. It also says the use of actual nuclear reactors in space “has promise” but “currently” there is no need for them.

The space plutonium systems—called radioisotope thermolectric generators (RTGs)—use the heat from the decay of plutonium to generate electricity in contrast to nuclear reactors, usually using uranium, in which fission or atom-splitting takes place.

The “Nuclear Power Assessment Study” describes itself as being done as a “collaboration” involving “NASA centers,” among them Johnson Space Center, Kennedy Space Center and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, “the Department of Energy and its laboratories including Los Alamos National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories,” and the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

The study, released in June, comes as major breakthroughs have been happening in the use of solar and other benign sources of power in space. The situation parallels that on Earth as solar and wind power compete with nuclear, oil, coal and other problematic energy sources and the interests behind them.

Demonstrating that solar power can be harvested far out in space, the Rosetta space probe of the European Space Agency (ESA), energized with solar power, successfully rendezvoused last year with a comet 375 million miles from the sun. ESA at the start of this mission explained that it did not have the plutonium power systems that NASA had, so instead it developed high-efficiency solar photovoltaic panels for use in space. And they worked enabling Rosetta to meet up with Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko and send a lander to its surface. Rosetta continues flying alongside the comet.

NASA, too, has a space probe energized with high-efficiency solar photovoltaic panels it developed now on its way to Jupiter in a mission it has named Juno. For decades, NASA insisted that solar power could not be harvested beyond the orbit of Mars and thus plutonium power systems were necessary. This was NASA’s central argument in federal court in 1989 to rebut opponents of its plutonium-energized Galileo mission to Jupiter. Now it has shown it was mistaken. Juno using solar power instead of plutonium RTGs is to reach Jupiter next year.

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, a former astronaut and Marine Corps major general, remains a big booster of using nuclear-propelled rockets to get to Mars. Work on such a rocket has been going on at NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center. NASA on its website says that a nuclear-powered rocket “could propel human explorers to Mars more efficiently than conventional spacecraft.”

Throughout the years, NASA has worked closely with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and after the commission was disbanded its successor, the Department of Energy, on space nuclear programs. And there’s a program at DOE’s Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a “robust fission reactor prototype that could be used as a power system for space travel,” according to Technews World.

This is occurring despite Russia now abandoning its development of nuclear-propelled rockets for missions to Mars, a project it had earlier much-heralded. Reported TASS in April: “Russia’s space agency Roscosmos is planning to shut down works on developing a megawatt-class nuclear propulsion system for long-range manned spacecraft.”

But the DOE has resumed production for NASA of the isotope of plutonium—Plutonium-238—used in RTGs. It is a form of plutonium 280 times more radioactive than the plutonium used as a fuel in atomic bombs, Plutonium-239.

“NASA will be relieved to get this 238 Pu [Plutonium] because it is increasingly anxious about running out. The isotope is not found in nature, so it has to be made in nuclear reactors…NASA now has just 35 kilograms of plutonium product—a small supply that may not match the demands to send missions to Mars, the moons of Jupiter and beyond.” The restart of Plutonium-238 production involves the DOE’s Idaho National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

By Karl Grossman

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“Just like here on Earth there is a tug-of-war going on between those who wish to promote life-giving solar power and those who want nukes,” said Gagnon. “That same battle for nuclear dominance is being taken into the heavens by an industry that wants more profit—no matter the consequences. The Global Network will continue to organize around the space nuclear power issue by building a global constituency opposed to the risky and unnecessary nukes in space program.

The new “Nuclear Power Assessment Study” opens by stating: “Human missions to deep-space locations such as extended missions on the lunar and Martian surfaces have always been recognized as requiring some form of nuclear power.” As of now, “nuclear power systems are expected to be required well into the 2030s at the least.”

Karl Grossman is professor of journalism at the State University of New York/College of New York and author of the book, The Wrong Stuff: The Space’s Program’s Nuclear Threat to Our Planet. This article is part of a larger piece published at Counterpunch.
Hancock Drone Base Gates Closed

On Monday, September 21, members of the grassroots human rights coalition, Upstate (NY) Drone Action to Ground the Drones and End the Wars were arrested for closing the main gate of Hancock Airfield to call a halt to the U.S. weaponized drone program operated out of Hancock, in the Town of DeWitt northeast of Syracuse, by the 174th Attack Wing of the New York State Air National Guard. Hancock is home to “hunter/killer” (the Pentagon’s phrase) MQ9 Reaper drone. The theme of the event was: Drones Kill Children.

Those arrested include Dan Bergavin and James Ricks of Ithaca and Ed Kinane, Bonny Mahoney and Julienne Oldfield of Syracuse, who held signs reading “Drones Kill Children” behind wooden figures of drone victims, including dead and dying children.

This action was held on the UN General Assembly-designated International World Day of Peace, to bring attention to the U.S. weaponized drone program that not only kills and maims human, but also destroys homes, displaces and terrorizes whole communities, and perpetuates endless war.

The Sept 21 event was one of a number of Upstate Drone Action’s persistent nonviolent campaign to expose the Hancock war crimes. On March 19, 2015, Upstate Drone Action shut the main Hancock gate with giant books—the UN Charter, Dirty Wars by Jeremy Sahill, Living Under Drones (NYU and Stanford Law Schools), and You Never Die Twice (Reprieve).

More information on the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the wars can be found at http://upstatedroneaction.org/