By Michael Lujan Bevacqua, PhD

For more than 110 years, the United States has held Guam, an island in the Marianas group in the western Pacific, as an “unincorporated territory”—a colony. Guam is increasingly important strategically, as its location allows the U.S. to project force across east Asia. Guam is often called “the tip of America’s spear,” only 212 square miles, 29% of that land mass is U.S. Air Force and Navy bases.

Since the end of World War II, Guam has been on the United Nations’ list of “non-self-governing territories” with a goal of decolonization and political self-determination. The UN requires the U.S. and other “administering powers” to support the decolonization of these occupied states. Increased militarization and the building-up of bases are detrimental to this goal, as that sidelines the human rights of colonized peoples in the name of national or regional security and strategic interests. But the U.S. has long ignored its responsibility in this regard and is even seeking to dramatically increase rather than decrease its military presence in the Marianas.

Since 2006, the U.S. military has been planning the transfer of thousands of Marines (and their dependents) from Okinawa to Guam. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) outlining its intentions. A coalition of community activists worked together to build public awareness of DOD’s audacious plans, which included increasing the population of 160,000 by another 60,000 and dredging a beautiful coral reef. The catastrophe was clear from the size of the document itself, as the potential environmental “impact” on Guam filled 11,000 pages. Protests, teachings, petitions and lawsuits, and more than ten thousand official comments to the DEIS, most critical, resulted.

Economic downturns in Japan and the U.S., combined with these local efforts, stalled the buildup. When DOD returned with new plans, proposed troop numbers were reduced and their focus was moved north of Guam into other islands in the Marianas Archipelago. Guam is the most densely populated of all the Marianas Islands and the one with the longest history of protests against U.S. militarism. As the northern islands are much more sparsely populated and perceived to have fewer economic opportunities, DOD was certain it would receive a warmer welcome in the islands of Tinian and Pagan. It was wrong.

In April 2015, DOD announced plans that would radically alter the face of both of these islands, and using them for a number of different types of artillery and bombing training that would cause potentially irreparable environmental damage. Half of Tinian would be off-limits to civilians for 16–45 weeks every year for military training, displacing hundreds of farmers and destroying cultural and historical sites. Pagan is known internationally as a near-pristine ecological treasure, but DOD intends to displace its residents and decimate the entire island with bombing and artillery training. An online petition against these plans has garnered more than 100,000 signatures. Local political leaders have joined with community groups to protest DOD’s proposals, and 28,000 people made official comments on the DEIS for Pagan and Tinian by October 2015.

DOD has spent the last 15 years shifting its plans in order to make the buildup sleeker and more invisible to resistant forces. Although critical efforts have emerged over each individual island—Tinian, Pagan, Guåhan—there has been little success in unifying demilitarized resistance. Guam’s colonial status, as a territory that belongs to the United States and is not an equal part of it, weighs heavily, helping to create a sense of apathy over the perceived impossibility of challenging the most powerful military and country in the world.

This military increase is being forced on the people of the Mariana Islands. With no vote for U.S. president and no voting representation in the U.S. Congress, Guam exists at the whim of the U.S. federal government. When the possibility of moving Marines from Okinawa to Guam was first discussed, representatives of Japan and the U.S. met, but no one from Guam sat at the negotiation table. Although the people of Guam may “comment” on DOD plans for their islands, the DOD can and does ignore their comments.

As a final note, Guam, Tinian, and Pagan, like other island bases, provides a good lesson in how militarization works and what must be done in order to counter and disrupt it. Their perceived distance, colonial political status, and smaller size means they are invisible in global politics, to hide the training or activities that are conducted there. When larger, more visible places protest and demand that training be reduced or bases be closed, the U.S. feels safe in moving its forces to “uncontested” places like Guam. For those seeking to dismantle global networks of military power, it is important to keep this dynamic in mind.

Michael Lujan Bevacqua, PhD, is an assistant professor of Chamorro Studies at the University of Guam and a longtime activist for the decolonization and demilitarization of Guam.
Scrap Trident: Yes to Disarmament!

by Dave Webb

This year, the UK Parliament is set to vote on whether or not to replace the British Trident nuclear weapons system at an estimated cost of over £180 billion (£260 billion) and at a time when the Tory government is slashing public spending on vital areas such as education, health and welfare services.

The majority of people in the UK, including the Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn (a vice president of the UK Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament—CND) and other parliamentary party leaders oppose nuclear weapons. Now is an excellent time for a call to scrap them—not replace them. Trident is the only nuclear weapon system the UK has and there are three parts to Britain’s nuclear weapons system:

• the independently targeted warheads, which are the nuclear explosives;
• the missiles that carry the warheads, which Britain leases from the U.S. under the Mutual Defence Agreement and which also provides for an exchange of nuclear materials, technology and information, and
• the submarines, which are often referred to as ‘the platform,’ on patrol 24/7 with the nuclear weapons on board.

It is the submarines that have come up for replacement and Tony Blair started the process in 2006. Parliament then backed the government’s decision to take the first steps to finding a successor and the next phase, due soon, would be to give the final go-ahead. Then the main investment decisions will be taken and construction work can commence and the next phase, due soon, would be to give the final go-ahead. Then the main investment decisions will be taken and construction work can commence and once the contracts are signed, it’s very expensive to back out of them.

At least one of the four Trident submarines is on the seas at all times and it carries around eight missiles with up to five warheads on each and each warhead has the explosive power equivalent to 100 kilotons of conventional high explosives. That’s eight times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, the blast and radiation from which killed an estimated 240,000 people.

Although the UK Trident system has been called an ‘independent deterrent’ by successive governments, each component is heavily dependent on the U.S. The BBC has a policy of not describing underground nuclear tests were carried out at the Nevada Test Site between 1983–1991. Currently, modifications to the warheads are being developed jointly at the UK Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston.

The leased missiles are guided by systems developed by the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is maintained by a joint Draper/General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems facility. It is an astro-inertial guidance system—combining inertial guidance and celestial navigation to correct small position and velocity errors that result from uncertainties in the submarine position and errors accumulated during the flight. GPS has also been used on some test flights, making the whole operation dependent on U.S. satellites.

The missile compartment of the UK Vanguard class submarines that carry the Trident missiles is based on the Pentagon system used on the U.S. Ohio class—but with the capacity for 16 rather than 24 missiles.

Submarine—Dead in the Water?

The advantage of submarines carrying nuclear weapons is that they have been undetectable, so they can be deployed without fear of effective countermeasures. Not any more, however, as the ability of submarines to hide is decreasing rapidly. Methods for detecting submarines have been under investigation for a long time but advances in computer technology and new “big data” processing techniques are enabling sophisticated models to be run in real time to exploit existing detection techniques. These techniques include the use of lasers, infrared and other detectors and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) from space. Satellites can be used to determine subtle undersea disturbances caused by submarines, watch wave patterns on or beneath the surface of the sea, or detect subtle variations in ocean temperature.

So an immoral and illegal replacement of the Trident submarine fleet may well have to be scrapped or changed dramatically in the next few years. However, the odds to change everything are stacked against us—an analysis of the possible outcome of an parliamentary vote shows that there are likely to be 450+ votes in favour of renewal with 123 against and some 60 or so undecided. We won’t let it go by unchallenged though—and CND is organising a national demonstration to protest against Trident on February 27 in London. We are aiming to mobilise the biggest anti-nuclear demonstration for many years at a time that’s crucial to the abolition movement.

The recent election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the opposition by an overwhelming majority of votes has been a long awaited breath of fresh air to British politics. Thousands of disillusioned members have rejoined and thousands more are joining for the first time. Previously, the amazing success of the Scottish National Party (holding 56 out of the 59 parliamentary seats in Scotland) with a very strong anti-Trident policy has demonstrated it can be a vote winning issue. Indeed, the Scottish Labour Party has now voted to scrap Trident. Renewing Trident remains a contentious issue for the Labour Party in England but Labour MPs are now coming round to what is the new majority view of the party membership. In September Jeremy Corbyn was criticized in the media and by some of the senior members of his party when he said he would never push the nuclear button if he was Prime Minister. It caused a stir and resulted in Trident becoming a bigger issue for discussion than it has been for years.

Help us get the message out loud and clear: we don’t want a new Trident, we don’t want the current Trident—and the world doesn’t want nuclear weapons. We are inviting the international community to join us in saying “No” to UK government plans and “Yes” to global nuclear disarmament—the longer these weapons exist, the greater the possibility that they will be used. Together we can abolish nuclear weapons once and for all.


Help support our work! Join Global Network. See page 16!
Fateful Gold Rush in Space Given ‘Go-Ahead’

by Lynda Williams

This past November 25, while U.S. citizens embarked upon holiday festivities, President Obama quietly signed into law the U.S. Space Act of 2015 granting property rights to materials that U.S. companies mine from asteroids, the moon and other celestial bodies. With little public debate or international negotiation, the act unilaterally promotes and empowers the private U.S. space industry to develop and test technologies for exploration and extraction of space resources with tax payer economic incentives and little regulatory oversight.

In addition to granting property rights, the act extends for another ten years the “learning period” for commercial spaceflight companies prohibiting the FAA from imposing any new safety regulations on the industry, the exception being rules that specifically respond to fatal accidents or near misses. The act also extends indemnification for space companies from third party claims in the event of a launch accident which would have expired on December 31, 2016. Space companies must carry insurance to cover $500 million in damages but U.S. taxpayers will cover any costs above that up to $1.5 billion. U.S. private space flight companies such as SpaceX, Blue Origin and Bigelow benefit from indemnity protection and claim that without indemnity the risks are too high to develop the private space industry. Other space faring nations such as the UK also cut liability caps with their private space and satellite corporations in order to keep them operating in their countries.

Experts in Space Law are debating whether the Space Act is in violation of international agreements such as the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) or if the space grab has a dangerous potential for fueling future conflict in space and on Earth. The OST does not allow any nation to claim territorial sovereignty in space and establishes space as a global commons to be shared by all humankind. In accordance with the OST, the act does not allow U.S. companies to own asteroids, only whatever materials they mine from them. The exact wording is: “A United States citizen engaged in commercial recovery of an asteroid resource or a space resource under this chapter shall be entitled to any asteroid resource or space resource obtained, including to possess, own, transport, use, and sell the asteroid resource or space resource obtained in accordance with applicable law, including the international obligations of the United States.” How exactly the U.S. will license asteroid claims or ensure the corporate entitlement to those claims is not spelled out in the Space Act.

With thousands of near earth asteroids containing possibly trillions of dollars’ worth of rare metals such as platinum, the industry celebrated the passing of the Space Act as a green light to start staking claims in space with the backing and protection of the U.S. government and military which is expanding its space war fighting capabilities through the U.S. Space Command. “This is the single greatest recognition of property rights in history,” said Eric Anderson, Co-Founder and Co-Chairman, Planetary Resources, Inc., an asteroid mining startup backed by Google billionaires Larry Page, Eric Schmidt and movie mogul James Cameron. “In the future humanity will look back at this bill being passed as one of the hallmarks of the opening of space to the people,” said Rick Tumlinson, Chair of Deep Space Industries, another start up with deep pockets.

Not everyone in the space business is as eager to celebrate. “Russia and China might consider using this as another example of the economic aggression of the U.S. and going ahead of the international law,” says Frans von der Dunk, a space law professor at the University of Nebraska. In an interview with Bloomberg Law, von der Dunk laid out possible scenarios not covered by any existing law which could lead to serious international conflicts. “What if the company mining an asteroid inadvertently causes a part of that asteroid to get into the orbit of a valuable communications satellite from another nation? Does a liability regime which was not developed for those types of circumstances, apply? Or worse what if an asteroid where to change its original trajectory and starts heading to earth, is there any liability or responsibility involved with that?”

What would happen if a mining company from one nation jumps the claim of another? Who would intervene to resolve the situation? Looking to the future, space mining companies plan to set up factories on asteroids or the moon to manufacture goods or to electrolyze water for rocket fuel, which would very likely involve nuclear powered energy production. There are no laws in place to regulate or mitigate those risks. According to many legal experts, the Space Act is dangerously incomplete and by signing the act into law, Obama may be granting rights and indemnities to U.S. corporations that he doesn’t have the legal right to give.

With hopes of hitting pay asteroid pay dirt, the nation of Luxembourg announced on February 3, 2016, that it will be funding research in space mining and directly investing in companies active in the field. The space race to enable private corporations to mine the heavens is now international.

The rush to profit from mining space puts the very legal framework of international space law at risk. Signatories to the OST can withdraw at any time with one year’s notice. If corporate and military interests lobby for the U.S. to withdraw from the OST in order to claim space territories, what will be the consequences? We have seen the missile defense industry explode after the U.S. withdrew from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) in 2002. If the U.S. withdraws from the OST, which prohibits weapons in space, will it further ignite an arms race in space?

It is yet to be seen how the other 103 signatories of the OST respond to the Space Act and it will surely be high on the agenda when the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPOUS) meets in June 2016 in Vienna, Austria. With growing corporate high stakes in space and the willingness of the U.S. government to unilaterally grant and protect those interests with its military might, it is more urgent than ever for the UN and COPOUS to expand upon the OST and negotiate a space peace treaty like the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

Lynda Williams is a physics faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College and is a Global Network board member. She lives in Sebastopol, California.
Close Ramstein Air Base in Germany

by Reiner Braun

September 26, 2015: it was the day of the biggest protest actions against the U.S. military bases in Germany since more than 20 years, organized and prepared by a network called “Stopp Ramstein” which consists of celebrities from politics, science and the peace movement. (The appeal and more than 7,500 signers at www.ramstein-kampagne.eu). The appeal emphasizes the necessity of a long term campaign which started in September 2015.

Why do we protest? Ramstein is one of the crucial centres of warfare based on German soil: relay station for all drone operations, operation centre for the missile defence system and nuclear weapons on German soil, logistic centre for military interventions and military engagement of the USA worldwide, and finally home base for troops and logistics. All this emanates from German soil and the German government supports it, as it allows this happening in spite of the fact that drone operations are violating international law. Moreover, the air operations in Syria—the newest German military intervention—are coordinated from Ramstein.

Also, Ramstein is the biggest hospital base of the USA and a small city with all “comforts” including McDonald’s. For the Ramstein region the U.S. base is the biggest employer which indispensably puts Ramstein closer to the closure of at least the drone base. The final rally of the human chain should take place directly at the entrance gate of the base.

A big one-week peace camp in the region, where lots of preparations should be done.

The realization of central information events in Kaiserslautern and the surrounding area. To spread information is still one of the crucial tasks.

An open festival for the population in the region.

Until the actions in Ramstein in June get started, there should be many decentralized actions which can even be coordinated nationwide and lots of specific activities in the region.

In 2016 there is the chance to continue to delegitimize Ramstein as part of the NATO war strategy, and politically come closer to the closure of at least the drone relay station. On this way the peace movement will be consistently strengthened with common actions.

To prepare Ramstein means to organize actions now against the German Armed Forces mission in Syria. More demonstrations are necessary as well as more support for the petition against war, which collected more than 10,000 signatures in the first three weeks.

Working groups and other online and offline structures were built in order to prepare the actions in Ramstein. These and more information are available at the website: www.ramstein-kampagne.eu.

An integral part of the protest actions 2016 should be an active international participation. In September Belgian and Swiss peace friends had joined us at both actions. We would be equally happy about the participation of French or Luxembourg peace groups, as well as guests from the Netherlands and the UK. Participants from the USA have already registered.

Ramstein can be closed which means the closure of a crucial base of the international militarism, if all of us act together on a long term and interconnected basis.

Also, Ramstein is a key development for the action-oriented strengthening of the German peace movement, which has grown long in the tooth like many other peace movements, so it can gather new forces for common actions and document clearly: peace needs mass movement—right now!

Reiner Braun, Secretary General of the IALANA, is a member of the Koordination Committee Stopp Ramstein in Germany

Picciotto Kept Longest White House Vigil

Concepcion Picciotto, the 80-year old protester who maintained a vigil outside the White House for more than 30 years, a demonstration widely considered to be the longest running act of political protest in U.S. history, died on January 25, 2016. In the spring of 2015 Bruce Gagnon stopped to greet Concepcion while he was in Washington as he always did when visiting the capital city. Once he home in Maine he wrote the following on his blog Organizing Notes: “I went up to Concepcion and thanked her for her dedication, she quickly said to me, ‘People are such cowards. Talk, talk, talk... we need action.’ I told her that I agreed and thanked her again. She graciously thanked me in return. I walked on—stopping to look back from the middle of Lafayette Park—I could see many people reading her signs and reacting in various ways. Concepcion

(William Thomas who began the White House vigil to be joined by her) long ago achieved one goal of getting their concerns under the skin of people from all over the world. Most importantly the White House, the home of the ‘American democracy illusion’, has been unable to chase away a courageous old woman who suffers from skin cancer and lack of sleep. My heart and deep respect go out to Concepcion. We need more like her.” Presente!
Putin Keeps Eye on U.S. Missile Defense Efforts

Russian President Vladimir Putin demonstrated a detailed understanding of U.S. missile defense plans during a recent interview, avoiding generalities for specifics when discussing a deployment Moscow sees as a direct strategic threat.

“Naval forces that should operate as part of missile defense are deployed in Spain,” Putin said in an interview with Bild, Germany’s top-selling newspaper. “A positioning area has already been created in Romania, another one will be created in Poland by 2018; a radar is being installed in Turkey.”

Over the years, U.S. missile defense plans in Europe have been subject to extensive change and modifications, with complicated timelines for building a network of land- and sea-based radars and interceptors.

And Putin is up to speed on all of it—a sign of how seriously the Russian leader takes U.S. missile defense efforts.

The U.S. and NATO have been developing ballistic missile defense capabilities in Europe for more than a decade, citing the threat of Iranian short-and medium-range ballistic missiles. The Navy recently stationed its fourth and final Aegis-equipped ship in Rota, Spain, part of the U.S.-developed missile shield known as the European Phased Adaptive Approach. It continues to develop ground-based interceptor sites in Romania and Poland.

Russia regards those interceptor sites as a threat to its own missiles, a claim the U.S. disputes.

During the Bild interview, Putin lashed out at the plan, which he said should be curtailed in light of the recent nuclear deal struck with Iran.

“In 2009, current President of the United States Barack Obama said that if Iran’s nuclear threat no longer existed there would be no incentive for establishing the ABM system; this incentive would disappear,” Putin said in a transcript of the Bild interview.

“Apart from NATO’s expansion eastwards, the antiballistic missile system has become an issue in terms of security. All this is being developed in Europe under the pretext of addressing the Iranian nuclear threat,” Putin added.

Shortly after a nuclear deal between the West and Iran was reached in July, U.S. officials rejected Moscow’s position that the agreement eliminated the need for missile defense. They cited Iran’s own ballistic missile program.

During the interview, Putin also lashed out at NATO for expanding eastward in the years since the end of the Cold War. The Russian leader said this violated an understanding between Moscow and the West that there would be no such expansion into Russia’s periphery. [At the time of the collapse of the Berlin Wall former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker promised Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not expand eastward by “one centimeter.” Since that time U.S.-NATO have continued to violate that promise.]

NATO has repeatedly asserted no such agreement was ever made and that all nations have the right to seek their own alliances.

—Reprinted from U.S. military newspaper called Stars & Stripes (January 12, 2016)
The United Nations was established in 1946 after the Second World War to “Save the succeeding generations from the scourge of wars, which twice in our life time has brought untold sorrow to humankind.” The UN visualized establishing a New International Order. But the U.S. and the erstwhile European colonial countries have joined together and instead of a New International Order, they have brought a “New International Disorder.”

The entire 20th Century witnessed wars, aggressions, and assassinations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The imperialist countries formed the NATO military alliance which is being used to indulge in attacks on sovereign nations and committing war crimes which go unpunished. Even the UN is being side tracked as NATO expands its mission as the primary resource extraction service for corporate globalization.

Instead of allowing an alternative social order to capitalism to be developed the U.S. engaged the USSR in a nuclear arms race. U.S. has established approximately 1,000 military bases throughout the world. It was largely responsible for boosting global military expenditures to more than 1.75 Trillion U.S. Dollars.

Lies have been spoken in the governments of U.S. & Britain and also in the UN Security Council about the non-existent nuclear weapons in Iraq. War in Afghanistan, invasion of Iraq, attacks on Libya, and drones attacks in Pakistan, Yemen and other nations have led to the killing of many innocent people.

NATO has been extended up to the borders of Russia violating post-Cold War promises to the former Soviet Union that the western military alliance would not move ‘one inch’ eastward. The U.S.-NATO are today sending troops and heavy military hardware to NATO members Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Georgia all along or near the Russian border. These provocative developments could be the trigger for WW III.

Militarism promised to the Pentagon the capability to target the world. The U.S. refusal to negotiate a ban on weapons in space at the UN has left the door open for continued development of offensive and destabilizing space technologies like the military space plane and Prompt Global Strike systems. U.S. military satellites offer global surveillance to the Pentagon and allow for targeting of virtually any place on Earth.

We call for the conversion of the global war machine so that all life on our spaceship Earth may live and flourish in the years to come. We recognize the need for bold and determined action now to ensure that another world may in fact be possible.

This Final Declaration from our Global Network Kyoto Conference declares our opposition to the dangerous spread of global militarization, on behalf of corporate domination, which cannot be allowed to continue as we see the coming ravages of climate change and growing global poverty. We must all work to realize the UN ideal to “save the succeeding generations from the scourge of wars.” This can only happen with a powerful and unified global movement for peace, justice and environmental sanity.

We call for the conversion of the global war machine so that all life on our spaceship Earth may live and flourish in the years to come. We recognize the need for bold and determined action now to ensure that another world may in fact be possible.

This Final Declaration from our Global Network 2015 Kyoto conference was supposed to run in our last newsletter but was accidentally omitted.
Global Network Grows in South Asia

by J. Narayana Rao

It is time to evaluate the growth of Global Network as an organization, while campaigning for peaceful use of space and prevent an arms race in the outer space as committed by the United Nations in the Outer Space Treaty and Moon Treaty. Working for Space for Peace and struggling against U.S. imperialism supported by NATO go simultaneously.

In Asia these countries have launched satellites and are using space: China, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, South Korea, North Korea and Bangladesh is likely to join shortly. In Asia Global Network has got its presence in India, Japan, South Korea, and with the participation of some delegates from Nepal in the recent GN Annual Conference held at Kyoto, Nepal can also be counted. World Peace Council has got affiliated peace organizations in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. But at present none of these organizations affiliated to WPC are showing interest on space issues.

At the international level I am not aware about the relations between WPC and GN. But the U.S. Peace Council has cordial relations with Bruce Gagnon and it has got a positive opinion about the GN. On my request Tsavdaridis Iraklis, Executive Secretary of the World Peace Council, attended the International Conference at Indore, India in October 2013. Dave Webb from the Global Network also attended and both of them held a series of discussions. Over all the World Peace Council has got a very good opinion about the Global Network and we can build bridges between these two.

In India the growth of Global Network really started in earnest after the visit of Bruce Gagnon and Mary Beth Sullivan in 2006 during Keep Space for Peace Week. They addressed meetings at Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Raipur, Nagpur, and New Delhi. Subsequently when Bruce came to Nagpur to participate in our national conference on “Achieving a Nuclear Weapons and Missile Defence Free Asia” in 2010 in addition to addressing various local meetings of different organisations, he addressed meetings in Bhopal, Agra, Jammu & Kashmir.

Even though I had been in touch with the Global Network even earlier, I was not organizationally involved. For the first time I attended the GN Annual Conference held at Darmstadt, Germany in 2007 and there I was inducted in the Board of Directors in addition to Mr. Sri Raman from Chennai who was a Board Director of GN before me. Since then the growth of GN India started. At present we have got GN support groups in the states of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

In the GN Annual Conference held at Kyoto, Japan in 2015 seven delegates from India have attended. I am regularly trying to connect with the students from different universities and colleges by delivering talks and organizing Annual Essay Competitions at the national levels. But this is not sufficient considering the size of the population and area of India.

For the first time three delegates from Nepal have attended the GN’s Kyoto Conference and I am in touch with many activists there. Two professors have attend the International Conference held at Indore in the year 2013. This shows that the GN is reaching other countries in South Asia. For the growth of GN in South Asia we need more resource persons which can talk on space issues. I am likely to visit Nepal in March 2016.

The Global Network’s 24th Annual Conference, which is scheduled to be held in November 2016 at Visakhapatnam in collaboration with Gitam University, will definitely attract more delegates from various South Asian countries which will help for the growth of GN in South Asia.

J. Narayana Rao is a Global Network Board of Directors member and lives in Nagpur, India. He is a retired national railroad worker.
Will We Ever Stop Our War-Hungry Government?

by Bruce Gagnon

In November of 2015 I joined Global Network board member Dave Webb on a speaking tour to Sicily where the U.S. Navy has constructed a space warfare communications base inside a protected oak nature preserve.

Called MUOS (Mobile User Objective System) the satellite ground station is located just outside the town of Niscemi and will be used to beam communications to unmanned drones and U.S. soldiers in real time while simultaneously linked to similar ground stations in Australia, Hawaii, and Virginia. Activists from all over Sicily have been protesting against the base for six years. In addition to their refusal to have their community used as a base for war making they also have grave concern over the health effects of the electromagnetic radiation emitted from the three massive satellite dishes.

Dave and I were joined in Sicily by long-time GN member Yosi McIntire (Florida) who served as our translator during our two presentations in Ragusa and Niscemi. On the day we arrived in Sicily we learned that a well-known activist had climbed to the top of one of the huge satellite dishes armed with only a carpenter hammer. The U.S. is claiming that Turi Vaccaro did 800,000 Euros worth of damage to the dish during his 30-hours of striking it with his hammer. After he voluntarily climbed down from the dish he was taken to court and given a February trial date.

Dave and I next flew to England where over the coming week we visited three U.S. space warfare bases spread throughout the country. In addition Dave organized three talks for me at universities in Bradford, Leeds, and London.) Our first visit was to the U.S. NSA spy base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire that has been upgraded for participation in ‘missile defense’. We joined GN board member Lindis Percy and others at the weekly vigil at the base during a cold windy rainstorm. Next we joined member Dave Webb on a speaking tour to Sicily where the U.S. early warning radar and missile defense targeting base called Fylingdales way up in the Yorkshire Moors. The half-moon lit sky, and a rare view of the stars, was a welcome sight as rain did not fall on the almost completed Navy base there will port U.S. warships—including the Aegis destroyers built at my hometown in Bath, Maine. Thirteen members of VFP went on the trip—three of us from Maine. For the first week we sat with Gangjeong villagers on Jeju Island blocking the construction gate only to be picked up and carried out of the way by police several times each day. While some wonder if the eight year protest on Jeju would continue now that the base is nearly complete—we repeatedly heard that the protests are more important than ever as the base becomes operational and the visiting warships are aimed at China.

During the second week of the trip our VFP delegation traveled to Okinawa where the U.S. today has 30 bases on the 70 mile long island. One out of every four Okinawans were killed during the American “liberation” of the island from the Japanese in 1945. The Pentagon has had bases there ever since. At two museums we visited I was astonished to see that since 1953 there have been regular protests against U.S. military bases on Okinawa. Imagine building twin military runways out into a pristine bay among the beautiful coral reefs and endangered sea mammals (dugong) feeding grounds. Imagine 3.5 million 10-ton dump truck loads of landfill being dumped into the bay to build the runways.

This story is real, and the plan is to do this on Okinawa at Oura Bay in order to build a new U.S. Marine airfield. Few have heard about this calamity, but for more than 500 days people in Okinawa have been protesting by blocking the gates of the U.S. Marine base called Camp Schwab.

On three occasions our VFP delegation went to the gates of Camp Schwab in order to join the daily human blockades. Most of the people being dragged off by Japanese police for sitting in the road were senior citizens. The women were particularly amazing as they held on to one another and cried aloud demanding that this environmental catastrophe be stopped.

The VFP delegation met with the mayors of two Okinawan cities that will be directly impacted by the new Marine airfield. One evening we were invited to attend an event inside a huge auditorium that drew 1,300 people. At this convocation Okinawan Governor Takeshi Onaga and other leading politicians spoke out in opposition to the construction of the controversial runaway. Gov. Onaga has pulled the airfield construction permit, but the right-wing government in Tokyo, which controls Okinawa, overruled him under the clear direction of U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy (she has repeatedly told the Okinawan people to get over it). Gov. Onaga has gone to the Japanese Supreme Court seeking a ruling that respects their local autonomy. In fact, 80% of the people of Okinawa oppose the new Marine airfield.

(See next page.)
Not only is a looming war with Russia and China causing active resistance around the globe today, it is the U.S.’s utter disregard for local sovereignty and democracy that inflames people against Washington. The bases being built on Jeju Island and in Okinawa are environmental nightmares. The people are watching their life source—the ocean where their food and livelihood come from—being torn apart to satisfy the Pentagon’s demand for ‘one more base.’

The similarities between the resistance campaigns in Sicily, England, Jeju Island and Okinawa are striking. In each case the people are deeply upset that their lands are being used by the U.S. military to support its corporate dominated empire of more than 800 bases. They see their own national governments being compromised by Washington’s demand for ultimate ‘control and domination.’

In the end I repeatedly heard local people ask the questions: What are you going to do when you go home? Will the American people ever begin to stand up and stop their government from taking our lands for its endless war program?

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

VFP delegation joined local activists to block roadway in Okinawa to stop construction of twin-runways at U.S. marine base that are planned on top of pristine Oura Bay.

Sicilian activist Turi Vaccaro spent 30-hours atop this huge MUOS satellite dish. The U.S. Navy claimed he did 800,000 Euros of damage to the dish during his Plowshare action with a carpenter hammer.
Odds & Ends

Planned Gift to GN

If you are in the process of estate planning, please consider making a 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.

One THAAD (Theatre High Altitude Area Defense) missile defense (MD) battery has been deployed on Guam since 2013. The Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency continues procuring THAAD equipment and wants to buy 24 interceptors for a total of $370 million in fiscal 2017. The recently announced U.S. deployment of THAAD in South Korea, within range of China and Russia, has already drawn a sharp rebuke from Beijing and Moscow. It should be remembered that the former Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty between the U.S. and Russia outlawed MD systems because they are highly destabilizing, giving one side an advantage even if they strike first and then use MD to pick off the retaliatory response from the nation being attacked. George W. Bush pulled the U.S. out of the ABM Treaty and Pentagon deployments of MD have been on steroids ever since.

Aegis Ashore Test in Hawaii

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported in December, 2015: A missile fired from a new Aegis Ashore facility on Kauai successfully intercepted and destroyed a target representing a medium-range ballistic missile. It was the first successful intercept test of a missile fired from the new $278 million Aegis Ashore system at the Pacific Missile Range Facility at Barking Sands. The radar system at Barking Sands detected and tracked a target missile launched from an Air Force C-17 cargo jet over the ocean southwest of Kauai. The Aegis weapon system used the tracking information to launch an SM–3 guided missile from Kauai to intercept and destroy the target, the Missile Defense Agency said. Aegis Ashore is a land-based missile defense system nearly identical to the Aegis systems on Navy cruisers and destroyers. The SM–3 missiles, which cost $9–$10 million apiece, use a kinetic warhead that smashes into a ballistic missile, destroying it. The Aegis Ashore system is being installed in Romania and will be deployed in Poland as part of the Pentagon’s ‘missile defense’ encirclement of Russia. Setting up its land version—Aegis Ashore—in Hawaii and linking it with Aegis destroyers would add a permanent missile defense site to the Pacific, for the Pentagon during any war with China or Russia.

Maine Not Selected for MD Site

Reuters reported on January 15 that the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) said it had dropped a site in Redington Township, Maine, from a list of potential U.S. sites to deploy more ground-based missile defense (GMD) interceptors in addition to those now deployed in Alaska and California. The agency said other potential sites in New York, Michigan and Ohio remained under consideration, but stressed that no decision had been made to deploy or construct an additional site. “The (Maine) site presented irreversible environmental impacts, significant constructability concerns, and extensive costs associated with developing infrastructure in a remote area,” the agency said in a statement. Lead contractor Boeing says it will test additional improvements to its GMD system later this year during a first test of the system’s ability to intercept an intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM. On January 29 the MDA conducted a successful non-intercept test, launched from Vandenberg AFB, aimed at demonstrating the effectiveness of a redesigned “kill vehicle,” or warhead, built by Raytheon. The U.S. has been developing the $41 billion GMD weapons system to defeat the long-ranges and high velocities of an ICBM like those based in Russia and China.

THAAD in South Korea Stirs Controversy

A prominent U.S. think tank recently published a controversial report explicitly recommending to Washington the deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system on the Korean Peninsula. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a home for conservative security experts in the U.S.—with a number of its Asia specialists having strong backgrounds on and sympathies toward right-wing Japan. Titled “Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025,” the report was published on Jan. 20 and commissioned by the Pentagon. In it, the importance of a THAAD deployment on the Korean Peninsula is stressed as a means of strengthening regional missile defense capabilities under the U.S. Asia-Pacific “rebalancing” [pivot] strategy. “While the PATRIOT [Air Defense Missile System] defends against lower-tier threats, the THAAD system provides greater reach to strike long-range missiles earlier in flight, and is the only missile defense system with the ability to intercept threats both inside and outside the atmosphere,” the report noted. “No matter how good the excuse, China probably won’t relent in its opposition to deploying THAAD on the Korean Peninsula,” said Cheng Xiaohe, a professor at Renmin University of China. “THAAD’s detection radius goes beyond North Korea into China and Russia,” said Lu Chao, a researcher at the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences.

Global Mercenary Forces

The NY Times reported in late 2015 that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has secretly sent hundreds of Colombian, Panamanian, Salvadoran and Chilean mercenaries to join the Saudi war in Yemen. “Mercenaries are an attractive option for rich countries who wish to wage war yet whose citizens may not want to fight,” said Sean McFate, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. “The private military industry is global now,” said Mr. McFate, adding that the U.S. essentially “legalized” the industry with its heavy reliance on contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan over more than a decade of war. “Latin American mercenaries are a sign of what’s to come,” he said.

ESA News

Space News reported in January that the European Space Agency (ESA) has dismissed Airbus Defence and Space as prime contractor for operations of Europe’s share of the International Space Station, opting to perform much of the Airbus work itself. The decision was made following ESA assurances that it could do much of what Airbus has done without adding personnel or infrastructure. Under the previous space station operations scheme, ESA split the former Airbus contract into three pieces: One for Airbus, which will continue with a much-reduced work package. One for Altec of Turin, Italy, a joint venture launched by the Italian Space Agency and Thales Ale- nia Space Italy. One with the German Aerospace Center, DLR, which has a station operations center in Oberpfaffenhofen.

More Drone Crashes

Washington Post reported in January that a record number of Air Force drones crashed in major accidents last year straining the U.S. military’s fleet of robotic aircraft when it is in more demand than ever for counterterrorism missions in an expanding array of war zones. Driving the increase was a mysterious surge in mishaps involving the Air Force’s newest and most advanced “hunter-killer” drone, the Reaper, which has become the Pentagon’s favored weapon for conducting surveillance and airstrikes against the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and other militant groups. The Reaper’s mishap rate—the number of major crashes per 100,000 hours flown—more than doubled compared with 2014. The aircraft, when fully equipped, cost about $14 million each to replace. The Air Force’s other primary drone model, the Predator, also suffered heavy casualties. An older and less capable version of the Reaper, the Predator was involved in 10 major accidents last year. That’s the most since 2011, when the U.S. military was simultaneously surging troops into Afghanistan and withdrawing ground forces from Iraq.

Russian & Chinese ASAT Tests

Sputnik reported in December that Moscow carried out the first successful flight test of its new anti-satellite (ASAT) missile last month. Russia’s direct ascent anti-satellite missile, known as Nudol, was successfully tested on November 18. In October, China conducted a flight test of its anti-satellite missile, the Dong Neng-3 direct ascent missile. Analysts say anti-satellite missiles could cripple U.S. intelligence, navigation, and communications capabilities that are critical for military operations. Many observers see these tests as warnings to the U.S. that the current U.S.-NATO expansion up to Russian borders and Obama’s ‘pivot’ to encircle China (and the U.S. deployments of ‘missile defense’ near those two countries) has forced a military counter move. Global Network advisory board member Subrata Ghoshroy from MIT concludes, “The U.S. also demonstrated ASAT capability when it destroyed its own satellite [in 2008]. It also demonstrated ground-based ASAT laser capability in 1997 by ‘illuminating’ the MISTY satellite with the MIRACL laser. USSR had ASAT capability for a long time and as we know China as well. We should
demand that the best solution is an ASAT treaty. As is expected, the U.S. is against it.”

Boomers Cost Big Bucks

The AP reported in January: In its blueprint for a stronger Navy, the sea service’s new top boss, Adm. John M. Richardson, is blunt about what he thinks matters most: nuclear punch. Battling terrorists is today’s problem, but in looking toward a farther horizon, Richardson wants a Navy built to counter unpredictable future threats from other countries. No. 1 on his list is a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, known as boomers, that prowl the oceans… The Navy plans to replace the current fleet of 14 Ohio-class boomers with 12 next-generation subs. “This is foundational to our survival as a nation,” Richardson writes in what he calls his design for the future. It also is a gigantic investment, estimated at $100 billion. And it happens to be just one of three efforts by the Pentagon to modernize the U.S. nuclear “triad”—long-range bomber aircraft, new or upgraded land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and new missile-toting submarines. The price tag for these, plus upgraded replacements and replacements, is likely to approach $348 billion by 2024, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

U.S. MD Base in Poland

UPI reported in January that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to break ground this summer on a ballistic missile defense (MD) facility in Poland. The Aegis Ashore MD complex will be located at Poland’s Redzikowa Air Base and when completed in 2018 will complement the Aegis Ashore facility recently completed in Romania. The two land facilities, together with Aegis-equipped U.S. warships based in Spain, are to augment European NATO allies and U.S. forces in the region. The Poland and Romanian MD bases would be aimed at Russia. Two contracts will be awarded soon for the Poland operation. The first is a $100–$200 million contract to build the missile-defense facilities. The second is a $25–$100 million contract to build the offices, housing and other facilities where U.S. Navy personnel will work and live.

Plutonium for Mars Rover

Knoxville News Sentinel reported in late 2015 that Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) has achieved production of 50 grams of plutonium-238. The mass of a golf ball, but it’s considered a milestone in re-establishing a U.S. stockpile of Pu-238 for use as a power source on deep-space missions. ORNL has been developing the capability over the past couple of years with funding that NASA provided via the Department of Energy’s Office of Nuclear Energy. Pu-238, a different isotope from the plutonium-239 used in nuclear weapons, is used as fuel in space power systems known as radioisotope thermoelectric generators or RTGs. The radioactive material produces heat as it decays, and that heat is converted to electricity for tasks on spacecraft. ORNL said the infrastructure is now in place to provide a steady and growing supply of plutonium-238 for future space missions. According to NASA, the next space mission with plans for using an RTG is the Mars 2020 Rover, which is tentatively scheduled for launch in July 2020.

Warfighting Satellite Constellation Operational

Air Force Space Command announced in late 2015 the completion of tests of two missile warning constellations of satellites, SBIRS Geo-synchronous Earth Orbiting satellites and SBIRS Highly Elliptical Orbit sensors. The Full Constellation test event was conducted from Buckley Air Force Base, in Aurora, Colorado. The SBIRS program is managed by the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center at Los Angeles AFB in California. Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, Sunnyvale, California is the SBIRS prime contractor, and Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, Azusa, California, is the payload integrator. Buckley AFB operates the SBIRS system. The SBIRS satellites deliver global missile launch detection capability, supports the Pentagon’s missile defense system, bolsters worldwide gathering capacity and bolsters situational awareness for warfighters on the battlefield.

U.S. Enables Saudi War in Yemen

The Pentagon announced in late 2015 that the U.S. had approved a $1.29 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia, despite widespread evidence of the country’s mass atrocities and war crimes in neighboring Yemen. The U.S. State Department approved the sale of over 10,000 bombs, munitions, and weapons parts produced by Boeing and Raytheon. This includes 5,200 laser guided bombs and 12,000 general purpose bombs. But Raed Jarrar, government relations manager for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), told Common Dreams: “Sending additional weapons to the Middle East will not stabilize the region or put an end to violence and extremism. Supporting proxy wars, interventions, and military occupations will only add fuel to the fire. It’s also illegal under U.S. and international law to transfer weapons to human rights abusers, or to forces that will likely use it to commit gross violations of human rights,” Jarrar continued. “There is documented evidence that such abuses have been committed by almost all of U.S. allies in the region.”

New Mine the Sky Law Signed by Obama

Language in a new commercial space law that grants companies rights to resources they extract from asteroids and other solar system bodies provides them with some certainty, but they acknowledge that the law is likely not the last word on the issue. In November President Obama signed into law the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, the final version of a commercial space bill approved by the House and Senate. Most of the bill is devoted to issues regarding commercial space transportation, including extensions of third-party launch indemnification and restrictions on regulations regarding safety of commercial spacecraft. One section of the new law, though, that received a large amount of attention is...
Global Warming’s Unacknowledged Threat—The Pentagon

by Gar Smith

During the November 15 Democratic Presidential Debate, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders sounded an alarm that “climate change is directly related to the growth of terrorism.” Citing a CIA study, Sanders warned that countries around the world are “going to be struggling over limited amounts of water, limited amounts of land to grow their crops and you’re going to see all kinds of international conflict.”

On November 8, the World Bank predicted that climate change is on track to drive 100 million people into poverty by 2030. And, in March, a National Geographic study linked climate change to the conflict in Syria: “A severe drought, worsened by a warming climate, drove Syrian farmers to abandon their crops and flock to cities, helping trigger a civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people.”

The Pentagon occupies 6,000 bases in the U.S. and more than 1,000 bases in 60-plus foreign countries. According to its FY 2010 Base Structure Report, the Pentagon’s global empire includes more than 539,000 facilities at 5,000 sites covering more than 28 million acres.

The Pentagon has admitted to burning 350,000 barrels of oil a day (only 35 countries in the world consume more) but that doesn’t include oil burned by contractors and weapons suppliers. It does, however, include providing fuel for more than 26,000 armored vehicles, thousands of helicopters, hundreds of jet fighters and bombers and vast fleets of Navy vessels. The Air Force accounts for about half of the Pentagon’s operational energy consumption, followed by the Navy (33%) and Army (15%). In 2012, oil accounted for nearly 80% of the Pentagon’s energy consumption, followed by electricity, natural gas and coal.

Ironically, most of the Pentagon’s oil is consumed in operations directed at protecting America’s access to foreign oil and maritime shipping lanes. In short, the consumption of oil relies on consuming more oil. This is not a sustainable energy model.

The amount of oil burned—and the burden of smoke released—increases whenever the Pentagon goes to war. (Indeed, human history’s most combustible mix may well prove to be oil and testosterone.) Oil Change International estimates the Pentagon’s 2003-2007 $2 trillion Iraq War generated more than three million metric tons of CO2 pollution per month.

Yet, despite being the planet’s single greatest institutional consumer of fossil fuels, the Pentagon has been granted a unique exemption from reducing—or even reporting—its pollution. The U.S. won this prize during the 1998 Kyoto Protocol negotiations (COP4) after the Pentagon insisted on a “national security provision” that would place its operations beyond global scrutiny or control. As Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat recalled: “Every requirement the Defense Department said they wanted, they got.” (Also exempted from pollution regulation: all Pentagon weapons testing, military exercises, NATO operations and “peacekeeping” missions.)

According to recent exposés, Exxon executives knew the company’s products were stoking global temperatures but they opted to put “profits before planet” and conspired to secretly finance three decades of deception. Similarly, the Pentagon has been well aware that its operations were wrecking our planetary habitat. In 2014, Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel identified climate change as a “threat multiplier” that will endanger national security by increasing “global instability, hunger, poverty, and conflict.” As far back as 2001, Pentagon strategists have been preparing to capitalize on the problem by planning for “ice-free” operations in the Arctic—in anticipation of U.S.-Russian conflicts over access to polar oil.

The Pentagon’s role in weather disruption needs to become part of the climate discussion. Oil barrels and gun barrels both pose a threat to our survival. If we hope to stabilize our climate, we will need to start spending less money on war.

Gar Smith is co-founder of Environmentalists Against War and Editor Emeritus of Earth Island Journal. This is reprinted in part from a larger article that ran at CounterCurrents.org

Hawai'i: “Belligerent Occupation” by U.S.

by Jon Olsen

Before I read Koohan Paik’s profound but discouraging article (given that subject matter, how could it not be?) “Pacific Environment Under Military Siege” (Space Alert #32, Fall 2015), I had thought that the ONE good thing that Bush Jr. had done as president was to create a new national ocean park called the Marine National Monument northwest of the Hawaiian Islands. I had thought it was a good step forward and showed a sense of stewardship for that region of the Pacific.

So, as a long time former resident of Hawai'i, I was shocked, dismayed, and astounded to learn that it remains open for military exploitation. What colossal arrogance to conduct warfare against Mother Nature and the bounty of life! Ecocide is the name for it! Other than that, the words fail me, which does not happen often.

David Vine’s well-researched article on the enormous spread of U.S. military bases worldwide [in the same edition] correctly states that their presence does not secure, but rather endangers local populations. For instance, when the Japanese Empire attacked Hawai'i, they did not bomb Moloka'i or Kaua'i, but Pearl Harbor on Oahu because that is where the concentration of U.S. Navy ships were. That logic remains. Hawai'i today has over 100 military installations occupying a large percentage of the land mass. These have been imposed on Hawai'i since the alleged “annexation” (sic) in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, and subsequent plebiscite of 1939 allegedly achieving “statehood”.

However, and this will no doubt come as a surprise to most, recent superb legal and historical research by Hawaiian scholars has conclusively demonstrated both of these maneuvers to be illegitimate, in the manner that a forged power-of-attorney claiming to have your signature cannot legitimately convey your property against your real will. While control over Hawai'i and its government forcibly occurred in 1898 against the strenuous objections of the resident population, sovereignty never did pass to the U.S. The present non-violent national liberation movement in Hawai'i is both broad and deep.

For those who regard a return to full sovereignty as fantasy, look at the recent example of Lithuania, similarly “annexed” fraudulently by the USSR in 1940, an action just as adamantly opposed by their citizens as was the case in Hawai'i. In both cases, the proper designation is “belligerent occupation” not “annexation.” Regardless of the wisdom of the Lithuanian government’s current geo-political alignment [with NATO], they are now correctly regarded as a sovereign independent country. Hawai'i’s turn is next!

Jon Olsen is author of Liberate Hawai'i!: Renouncing and Defying the Continuing Fraudulent U.S. Claim to the Sovereignty of Hawai'i. He lived in Hawai'i from 1965 to 2001. Jon currently lives in Jefferson, Maine.
the part about space resources. That section states that U.S. citizens shall have rights to any resources they extract from asteroids, moons or other bodies, “including to possess, own, transport, use, and sell” those resources. This new law runs counter to the United Nation’s Moon and Outer Space Treaties that state that the celestial bodies are the province of all humankind and cannot be owned by any nation, company or individual.

U.S. Again Rejects Space Weapons Ban

In early December the United Nations General Assembly approved a Russian-led resolution calling for nations to refrain from being the first to deploy weapons into outer space, in spite of U.S. resistance and European silence on the proposed measure. The resolution was first drafted by Russia in 2014, but was rejected by the U.S. that year, and then again in 2015. The draft was approved by a recorded vote of 122 in favor to 4 against (Israel, Ukraine, United States, Georgia), with 47 abstentions. The initiative calls on nations to refrain from being the first to place military weapons in outer space, thereby preventing a new and potentially devastating arms race between the world’s leading space-faring nations—Russia, China and the U.S., who are all working on space weapons. Europe, which has a multi-national space program of its own, has consistently abstained from taking a position on the Russian proposal. The U.S. maintains that Russia’s resolution does not adequately define space weapons, and ignores an entire class of ground-launched space arms—such as anti-satellite missiles. The resolution is nonbinding, but calls for negotiations held at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to put forth a legally binding international treaty preventing weapons from being deployed in space, and calls on all states to adopt national commitments to the resolution.

Waihopai Spy Base Protest in New Zealand

An annual protest has drawn a colourful crowd to Marlborough to protest against mass surveillance. About 60 people from across New Zealand gathered in Marlborough on January 20 to take a peaceful stand against Waihopai Station, southwest of Blenheim.

The day began with a march through the centre of Blenheim, with one marcher dressed as Uncle Sam and another wearing an oversized mask in the likeness of Prime Minister John Key.

Green Party co-leader and intelligence spokes-
person Metiria Turei spoke at the march about the Government Security Communications Bureau. “The GCSB has acted illegally. Our spy agencies are being used for political purposes like helping ministers get international jobs, New Zealanders in the Pacific are being spied on and the SIS lacks a proper compliance system,” Turei said. “We cannot let their arrogance erode our civil liberties away.”

The protest moved to the Waihopai spy base where six police officers took shifts standing in the 30 degree Celsius heat between the protesters and the spy base. Anti-Bases Campaign spokesman Murray Horton said the spy base was controlled by the United States, adding even New Zealand’s prime minister knew little about its operations. “Five Eyes is the reason for the existence of both the GCSB and Waihopai ... Its satellite interception dishes intercept a huge volume of civilian telephone calls, email and computer data communications,” he said. The collection of private information was anti-democratic and destructive, he said.

Aros Diodi travelled from Coromandel to help raise awareness at the protest. “People need to know: It’s like a big secret,” she said.

There were about seven people from Marlborough at the protest. “Marlborough does not get in behind this the way it should,” Horton said.

One man jumped the fence to give police a close-up view of his placard, but there were no arrests. “We will keep coming here as long as that [spy base] is still there. So book the overtime, boys,” Horton said to police at the protest’s conclusion.

—This article reprinted from The Marlborough Express in New Zealand

Orbital debris is “junk” from past space launches that is circling Earth. Humans have been launching objects into space for more than 50 years. Today more than 25,000 pieces are tracked to make sure they don’t hit satellites or the International Space Station. Some scientists predict that if we don’t begin to look at Earth orbit as an environment that needs protecting the ever increasing amount of space junk could at some point make it impossible to launch a rocket from Earth—we’d be entombed to the planet. Image courtesy NASA.gov.
Global Network 24th Annual Conference in India

The Global Network's 24th annual space organizing conference will be held in Visakhapatnam, India on November 18–20, 2016. The conference will be entitled “International Conference on Peace on Earth & Space and for Global Security and Human Development.” The conference will be held at GITAM University and will be co-sponsored by the Gandhi Institute of Technical & Management Studies in Visakhapatnam and the Centre for Cultural, Educational, Economic & Social Studies in Nagpur.

Under the leadership of GN board member J. Narayana Rao organizing meetings are already underway by the Indian co-sponsors. The conference will feature five plenaries on these general topics: Global situation since the end of the Cold War including NATO expansion and the U.S. military encirclement of Russia and China; Nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in space; An evaluation of the United Nations and its failure to prevent wars and its promise of fair global development; The need for an Asian Union for Peaceful Co-Existence and Development; and the role of youth in creating peace & development.

The Global Network encourages interested members and friends to come along for this important event. India is becoming a major economic and political force in the world and students who will be attending this conference are quite eager to meet with peace workers from around the globe.

Further inquiries can be addressed to GN board member J. Narayana Rao jnrao193636@gmail.com (Phone) 09421703511. Registration Fee: Foreign participants $50 (USD) and Indian Participants INR 300. Boarding and lodging for all the three days will be provided. Visakhapatnam is connected by airlines from New Delhi, Bombay, Chennai and Hyderabad.

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Fifteen Arrests at California Drone Base

Beale AFB (Marysville)

Seven peace advocates were arrested here at a drone operations center about 7:30 a.m. on December 15—after blocking the road for 30 minutes. This was only 14 hours after eight other arrests took place at Beale Air Force Base/Wheatland Gate. That makes 15 arrests at the Air Force drone center in less than two days.

The 15 arrests were a result of activists attempting to deliver a letter to the base commander calling for an end to drone warfare, and explaining how the military contributes to climate change.

Hundreds of peace activists have been arrested at Beale AFB over the past three years protesting the use of killer U.S. drones, which have murdered thousands of women and children around the world.

Protestors held a 36-foot “red line” in sympathy with climate change activists around the world participating in “red line action.”

Demonstrators called for “Peace for the World, Healing for the Climate” and an end to drone attacks and all wars for oil that cause death, suffering, and environmental devastation, including climate change.

Those arrested were Barry Binks, Shirley Osgood, Michael Kerr, Mauro Oliveira, Chris Hanson, Flora Rogers, Catherine Hourcade, Pamela Osgood, Sharon Delgado, Susan Pelican, and Jane Kesselman. (A couple were arrested both days.) All activists hail from Sacramento, Marysville/Yuba City or Grass Valley/Nevada City.

In the letter to the base commander, activists charge the “U.S. military is the single largest user of petroleum in the world, emitting a massive amount of greenhouse gases, and is the main enforcer of the global oil economy. Yet the Pentagon has a blanket exemption in all international climate agreements.”

In the letter, activists also noted:

“With the recent disclosures by new whistleblowers and former drone operators, we know that drone strikes are 1) not as effective as our government claims they are, 2) killing thousands of innocent civilians, 3) creating more enemies than they are killing, and 4) damaging the health & morale of our military personnel.”
Cuba Conference Opposes Foreign Bases

by Dennis Apel and Lindis Percy

The Symposium for the Closure of Foreign Military Bases is a gathering of concerned citizens from around the world and is held in Guantanamo, Cuba. The fourth annual gathering was held this year from November 23 through 25. The conference was attended by well over 200 people from 33 countries. The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space sent two representatives; Lindis Percy from the United Kingdom and Dennis Apel from the United States, both of whom presented at the conference.

Throughout the conference it was clear that Cuba is taking the lead in the movement to eliminate military bases belonging to the U.S., the United Kingdom and France which are located in countries other than their own. The United States leads the three with over 800 military installations on foreign soil (even the Pentagon does not know how many U.S. bases there are!). The U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo is possibly the most notorious detention centre in modern times which still holds 170 people, many of whom have been victims of torture and indefinite detention without charges.

When Obama took office, the prison held 242 detainees, down from a peak of about 680 in 2003. Today, with little more than a year remaining in his presidency, it still holds 107 detainees.

Dennis’s presentation gave an overview of the mission of the Global Network as well as the impact of the U.S. Army base on Kwajalein Island in the Marshall Islands, including the history of above-ground nuclear testing after World War II and the continued testing of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles whose warheads land in the lagoon at Kwajalein Atoll after launch from Vandenberg AFB in California.

Lindis gave a presentation which included the activities and local impact of the significant U.S. military base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, UK. Menwith Hill is a ground relay station for 33 satellites which are operated by the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office, on behalf of the National Security Agency. The base has many roles including intelligence gathering and surveillance, intelligence led warfare (drones) and an important component of the U.S. Missile Defense system (offensive system).

After the formal presentations, the microphone was open to other voices and Dennis’s daughter Rozella (at 16 years old, the youngest participant at the conference) gave a moving and impromptu appeal for using non-divisive rhetoric in our discussions, especially with our opponents. Her comments were well-received.

Other presenters included Silvio Andrés Platero Vrola, President of the Cuban Movement for Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples, María Do Socorro Gomes, President of the World Peace Council and Dr. Nancy Acosta Hernández, President of the Provincial Assembly of People’s Power.

Much was discussed during the conference regarding the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo which is the oldest foreign military base belonging to the U.S. government, having been established in 1903.

Since the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the Cuban Government has consistently protested the occupation of this 45-square-mile U.S. Base on their soil and have initiated annual votes in the United Nations for its closure. 2015 was the first year that every member country in the United Nations (except the United States and Israel) voted to call for the closure of the Base.

A comprehensive Declaration from the Conference was read at the end—see http://www.wpc-in.org/?q=node/132 for a more detailed report of some of the speeches given.

Other groups represented at the conference included Code Pink and Witness Against Torture who along with the Global Network comprised about 80 of the more than 200 delegates. It was a wonderful conference with so many excellent speeches. We met many interesting people. It was so good to be with people from different countries with shared concerns.

We were entertained by dancers and musicians, comprehensively informed about Cuba by two excellent tour guides on our coach journeys to Guantanamo Province; including the history, culture, resources, friends of Cuba, the blockade by the U.S., the way of life and future with regards to the tentative thawing of relations with the U.S. We visited several museums and learned about Fidel Castro, the Revolution, as well as Raoul Castro and the future of Cuba. It gave us a fascinating insight into the politics, philosophy and aims of this society. It was a privilege to represent GN—thank you. We have much work to do.

Dennis Apel works with the Guadalupe Catholic Worker and organizes protests at Vandenberg AFB in California. Lindis Percy is a long-time peace activist and helps organize protests at the U.S. NSA spy base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, England. They both serve on Global Network boards.
Important Book: The Devil’s Chessboard

by Bruce K. Gagnon

A new book called The Devil’s Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA and the Rise of America’s Secret Government by David Talbot (Harper Collins Publishers) is a must read.

The book chronicles the life and times of former CIA director Allen Dulles who began his intelligence career during WW II helping German and Italian Nazi operatives escape from the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal. During Hitler’s genocide of Jews in death camps, Dulles helped to keep the story hidden for as long as he could. Prior to WW II Dulles served as a corporate lawyer who represented international banking and industrial clients, many of whom became leaders in Hitler’s fascist regime.

Following the war Dulles worked overtime to help Nazis escape via ‘rat lines’ to the U.S., South America, Franco’s Spain, and other places. Dulles knew where the Nazis had hidden the vast wealth they stole from Jews and the European countries Hitler conquered. After the war was over Dulles and his Nazi partners used many of those funds in their anti-Communist program—always aimed at destroying the former Soviet Union and potential left-wing political movements in Italy, Greece and throughout the rest of Europe.

Dulles was a major promoter of Richard Nixon who was used to help end the remaining influence of President Franklin Roosevelt’s ‘New Dealers’ in the American government. Talbot writes: “By turning the table on New Deal officials… who had long wanted to prosecute these high-level [American] Nazi collaborators, the Dulles group ensured their own legal protection. By seizing the investigative momentum, Republicans like Dick Nixon… called ‘Allen Dulles’s mouthpiece in Congress,’ made sure that the Dulles circle would never have to answer for their wartime actions.”

It was Dulles and his CIA team that pushed President John Kennedy into the Cuban Missile Crisis fiasco. Kennedy eventually woke up and saw the danger of Dulles to the nation. Kennedy fired Dulles who then became a major player in the assassination of JFK. Ironically, Dulles convinced Kennedy’s successor Lyndon Johnson to appoint him to the Warren Commission that was charged by the new president with investigating the Kennedy killing. As would be expected the commission report was a whitewash.

Dulles was a chief architect of the corporate ‘deep state’ that currently runs the U.S. government and many other nations around the world. It thus should be no surprise that the U.S. is now in league with fascist regimes in places like Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, Japan, South Korea, Honduras and other such compromised governments around the globe.