(May 9, 2019) As an international delegation to the Russian Federation of 24 individuals, we have visited Moscow, St. Petersburg, and three cities in Crimea (April 25–May 9).

We came to learn, to listen, and to build a bridge of friendship through citizen diplomacy. We have had daily important meetings with Russian journalists, activists, academics, ordinary citizens, and gained firsthand information and historical perspective. The Russian people met us with warmth, openness, and generosity.

We came because we are alarmed by the U.S. demonization of Russia and the NATO provocations which have created a world of increasing military confrontation, with the U.S. even threatening the first-use of nuclear weapons.

Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991 US/NATO has encircled Russia with bases, so-called ‘missile defense’ systems, escalating ‘war games’ right on its borders, and with warships increasing military operations in the Black Sea.

Numbers don’t lie. Russia is a country of just 144 million people, with average income of $400 a month, or $13 a day. Their annual military budget is $60 billion and decreasing. The U.S. military budget is $800 billion and increasing. The U.S. has more than 800 bases encircling the world.

The Russian people love their country with a warmth and depth of love that is difficult for Americans to comprehend. It is a love born of centuries of history, culture and religious faith, and a love born of the suffering and sacrifice of the repeated defense of their Motherland. On Victory Day, May 9 in St. Petersburg, we walked in solidarity with 1.2 million family members and survivors of the 1941–1945 defense of the former Soviet Union when Americans and Russians were friends and allies against the German fascist invasion and occupation. (It should be remembered that 28 million Soviet citizens lost their lives during the fight against the fascists.)

Our message is a call to end the demonization of Russia, remove US/NATO warships from the Black Sea, end the escalating war maneuvers on Russia’s borders, and build bridges of diplomacy and friendship.

Our 24-person study tour delegation included people from the US, England, Nepal and Russia. We met in Moscow and then journeyed to Crimea and St. Petersburg. Our friends from Nepal have created a GN chapter in Kathmandu and have been trying to get Visas to our annual GN conferences for the past three years. This time they finally made it. This declaration was written with input from several members of the group under the direction of John Schuchardt from Massachusetts.

Global Network Russia Study Tour Declaration

by Cynthia Heil

My jet-lagged body was slow to recover. Four flights in 27 hours without sleep to return from Russia, but wow! It was worth it!

I participated in the Russia study tour/delegation organized by the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. We spent five days in Moscow attending morning discussions with Russian historians, activists, experts in Russian-US politics, which, sadly, included talks about the increased tension between our countries, another Cold War, and hopes that it won’t escalate into a hot nuclear war. A highlight was meeting some leaders of Russia’s Veterans for Peace organization. That’s right; as it turns out, Russians don’t want war any more than we do. The U.S. has not experienced war directly since our Civil War; Russians went from their 1917 Revolution into World War II without much of a break. The former Soviet Union (USSR) lost 28 million people in WWII. I was not aware of much about the USSR’s role in WWII, its horrific losses, and about the USSR troops pushing the Nazis back to

(See Yank p. 3)
Citizen Diplomacy, conversion of the MIC & Advocacy

By Bruce K. Gagnon

Our Global Network study tour to Russia (April 25–May 9) was a success. We had 24 participants from the US, England, Nepal and Russia. They were primarily GN members with a good mix of Veterans For Peace members as well. The trip took us to Moscow, Crimea and St. Petersburg for five days in each place. We learned so much, saw incredible sites, met many wonderfully kind people, and were regularly moved to tears. (Be sure to see the two-page picture spread further into the newsletter.)

We had excellent guides in all the stops we made in Russia and were so impressed with Leonid Ilderkin (a political refugee from Ukraine now living in Russia) that we invited him to serve on our Board of Advisors. Leonid was with us in Moscow and Crimea and was a great source of historical and contemporary political analysis for all of us. Our primary guide in Crimea, Tanya Bukharina, was a treasure.

We were in Moscow during Orthodox Easter Sunday, in Simferopol, Crimea on May Day where we marched in their celebratory parade with our No to NATO banner, and in St. Petersburg on May 9 (Victory Day) to remember the 28 million Soviet citizens who died during the Nazi invasion and occupation during WW II. The several mile march through the heart of the city was joined by 1.2 million citizens, many of them carrying photos of their beloved who died and/or survived the fascist onslaught of their nation.

In St. Petersburg alone well over 500,000 citizens died during the 900 day siege—either from starvation or directly at the hands of the Nazi invaders. It was astounding to come home and weeks later hear the U.S. and its European allies celebrating the defeat of the Germans. This is what the western demonization of Russia has led to—an unfair rewriting of history!

Space Force

Also, in recent weeks we’ve seen the evolution of Trump’s ‘Space Force’ proposal in Congress. The bill to create the new separate military service arm for space is presently before committees in the House and Senate. It appears that the bill will likely pass (with some changes) despite the fact that the Democrats control the House of Representatives and have the power to shut it down. But leading Democrats, including Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash), are steering the bill through Congress making the point that ‘Star Wars’ was around long before Trump—thus supporting the ‘Space Force’ would not indicate support for the president’s agenda. How about that as a copout!

This of course is something we’ve been saying for years—both mainstream political parties in Congress support the idea of U.S. ‘exceptionalism’ and military empire. Both parties (with a few exceptions) carry water for the aerospace industries that will profit from moving the arms race into space.

There can be no doubt that the link between ‘Space Force’ and the current drive to privatize space for resource extraction is real. Don’t forget that when Obama was in office, he signed a bill to allow U.S. corporations and wealthy individuals to make land claims on planetary bodies in violation of United Nations Moon and Outer Space Treaties that say celestial bodies are the ‘province of all human kind’.

Conversion for climate

Recently I was invited to be one of three keynote speakers at an international disaster relief academic conference at the University of Florida in Gainesville (where I lived for 10 years before moving to Maine in 2003). It was quite a good learning experience and my talk about the connection between climate crisis and the Pentagon’s massive carbon boot print was well received. I called for the conversion of the military industrial complex to useful production such as offshore wind turbines, commuter rail, tidal power, solar power and the like. I also called for the conversion of the Pentagon into the ‘Natural Guard’ to be used for rescue, recovery and reconstruction after destructive weather events.

Here in Maine we’ve been working on these conversion efforts for many years at the Bath Iron Works naval shipyard. (Read Lisa Savage’s report here in the newsletter about recent events to widen support for our campaign in Maine.) I’ve been happily involved in helping to organize what has turned into a dynamic and growing statewide effort.

During the early days of the Iraq war I heard a Pentagon spokesman on C-SPAN TV one evening say that the U.S. would not do ‘treaties’ anymore because they would limit the imperial surge and regime change wars that have been non-stop in recent years. George W. Bush pulled out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) with Russia. Trump has withdrawn from the Iran Nuclear Deal and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Agreement (INF) with Russia. All of this increases the possibility for war—including nuclear exchange.

Our study tour to Russia was all about citizen diplomacy—the idea is to build a bridge between the peoples of the west and Russia. But as one Russian citizen told us while there, “It takes both sides to build a bridge of communication.”

This is the crucial work that must be done today if we are to avoid WW III and climate catastrophe. I hope you will help the Global Network continue our citizen diplomacy and advocacy efforts. Our resources are slim and I hope you will send in a 2019 membership donation today to enable us to keep going. Thank you and best wishes always.

—Bruce K. Gagnon is Coordinator of the Global Network and lives in Brunswick, Maine. He was trained as an organizer by the United Farm Workers Union.
A Yank in Russia (cont. from p. 1)

Germany, the date of surrender 9 May 1945 in Berlin. Could the Allies have won WWII without the USSR? Maybe, but it would have certainly taken countless more time and lives.

On 9 May each year, Russians honor their loved ones who served in WWII by carrying photos of them in the Immortal Regiment march. For this event, our group was in St. Petersburg, where we were invited to join the marchers. Over one million people marched several miles past fairy-tale-like palaces and indescribably gorgeous Russian Orthodox churches to the Hermitage Museum. Walking back to our hotel, we noted virtually no trash in the streets—a testament to the pride and respect Russians have for their home. Imagine a U.S. march without tons of litter left behind! This was the case in all the places we visited—no graffiti, no trash.

Between our Moscow and St. Petersburg visits, we spent five days in Crimea. Crimea became a part of Russia in 1783. In contemporary times, its history gets rather complicated, especially when hearing the events from the people who lived them as opposed to reading a narrative from a Western source. Rather than regurgitate what we’ve heard in the West, I’ll recount what the Crimean people we met told us about the history of their beautiful peninsula lounging on the many shades of Black Sea blue. They told us that Premier Khrushchev assigned Crimea to Ukraine when he was head of the USSR during the 1950s–60s for administrative purposes only—budget, etc. When the USSR broke up in the early 1990s, Crimea remained with Ukraine until the 2014 Ukrainian ‘revolution.’ Many stressed that the new, right-wing government installed after the coup cracked down on Russians in Crimea, to the point of forbidding them to speak Russian. A group of courageous Crimean people, determined to avoid the bloodshed taking place in Kiev, worked for a referendum vote to determine whether Crimea would remain in Ukraine or return to the Russian Federation. In March 2014, we were told, 86 percent of eligible voters turned out, and 96 percent voted for Crimea’s return to Russia.

Our delegation had the good fortune to meet some of the people who worked for the referendum during a meeting at the 35th Battery Museum in Sevastopol, Crimea, on 4 May this year. As Nazis advanced on Sevastopol in 1942, Russian sailors and soldiers retreated to the 35th Battery; up to 30,000 were killed by the Nazis.

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We met with a 93-year old WWII USSR veteran who shared his stories and perspectives with us. He’s worried about climate change and said the future of our children depends on our actions now. This meeting was in Yalta, now a rocking resort town.

What we saw in Crimea, traveling by bus through Simferopol, Sevastopol, and Yalta, was prosperity with striking hotels, foodie restaurants, thriving retail businesses, and people, after all the war and strife they’ve endured, with a vibe of peace and a joy for life. There were no troops, no sense of occupation, probably because there was none.

In fact, that positive vibe was felt everywhere we visited. The Russian people have endured war with its death and destruction, and economic uncertainty and insecurity, for decades. All they want now is to enjoy their homeland, families, and lives, just like us, giving us a great deal in common. If world governments won’t lead Earth’s nations toward peace, we, the people, must do it for our children.

—Cynthia Heil is a retired Federal employee and member of Veterans For Peace. She lives in Asheville, North Carolina.

LETTER TO EDITOR

Last year Rocket Lab was looking at Kodiak as a potential first site in the U.S. for its second launch pad (the first being in New Zealand) but instead selected Wallops Island in Virginia. The Alaska Aerospace Corporation (AAC) has been working with Rocket Lab on the New Zealand launches. I doubt Rocket Lab has given up on locating its third launch site in Kodiak sometime in the future because the AAC has been talking of sub-leasing some of the state, public land out at Narrow Cape to space launch customers and people in Kodiak are not happy about it. Without telling the Kodiak public, the AAC leased out some property at the Kodiak launch site to Space-X to put two of its dome covered tracking radars.

In fact, the Space-X radars in Kodiak helped track the ‘Dragon’ spacecraft to and from the International Space Station, but not a word about that in our Alaska news—I read it on Space-X’s website. I asked about the Space-X radars at the AAC’s public meeting in Kodiak a couple months ago and was told that yes, the AAC sub-leased land to Space-X for the radars.

Also, Vector Space now has a concrete launch pad out at the Kodiak launch site on the scenic outlook cliff above Fossil Beach and across the road from the launch tower and is planning a launch in August. Things are now gearing up out at the Kodiak launch site in preparation for the Israelis coming and the testing of the ARROW-3 ‘missile defense’ interceptor this summer. The AAC is being tight-lipped about it when asked, but a C-5 [cargo plane] was at the Kodiak airport recently, so possible it was bringing in the ARROW-3 missile or launchers.

Carolyn Heitman
Kodiak Island, Alaska

GN board member Will Griffin stands in the St. Petersburg cemetery where mass graves for more than 500,000 residents of the city were made. Many died from starvation during the Nazi occupation of the city. Few in the west know this story. In all about 28 million Soviet citizens perished during the WW II fascist invasion of their nation.
India’s “Successful” Anti-Satellite Test

by Subrata Ghoshroy

In early April of 2019 India successfully test-fired an interceptor rocket that shot down a live satellite. India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, then triumphantly declared that India was now the fourth country to acquire the ability to shoot down satellites, after the United States, Russia, and China.

The test’s success clearly demonstrates the advancement of India’s military capabilities in outer space.

In terms of technological prowess, hitting a satellite with a rocket is considerably less difficult than intercepting a long-range missile with another missile—often described as ‘hitting a bullet with a bullet’. For one, by their very nature, satellites are inherently highly vulnerable, because all space-faring nations precisely know the trajectories of satellites.

So, what was the point of conducting such a test?

One can only think it was done for other reasons, having nothing to do with the mechanics of testing the nuts-and-bolts of a new technology.

One clue to the reasoning behind the test may lie in its interesting timing, which just happened to occur only weeks before the start of India’s nationwide parliamentary elections—and it should be noted that Modi wasted no time before calling a press conference to announce the success of the test and brag about how India had now joined the exclusive club of nations that possess such capability.

The need to test was arguably motivated by the seemingly poor electoral prospects of a prime minister who desperately needed a win; when Modi was elected to office five years ago, he was hailed as a leader who could bring economic prosperity to millions of people. Instead, he has fomented religious bigotry and pushed neoliberal economic policies that are playing havoc with the lives of uncounted farmers and working people across the country.

And from a larger perspective, the test was a reckless act that should be widely condemned. Creating more space debris in an orbit already filled with detritus is extremely dangerous for all space missions, especially the manned International Space Station and satellites in low-Earth orbit. Indeed, the U.S. space agency NASA has strongly condemned the Indian test, noting that it generated about 400 objects of space junk. (Although most of them are likely to burn up, a couple dozen pieces might pose a threat to the International Space Station, NASA said.)

Do as I say, not as I do. Ironically, when it comes to condemning the needless creation of potentially dangerous debris in space, the U.S. government (although not NASA) might be accused of the pot calling the kettle black.

It could be argued that India is merely following in the footsteps of major space powers like the US, Russia, and China, which conducted similar tests not so long ago. In particular, China’s 2007 test was widely condemned because of the huge amount of debris it generated.

And as if that were not bad enough, in addition to firing missiles to shoot down satellites, these countries have each reportedly tested their own version of a new anti-satellite mechanism: ground-based lasers. (I, myself, was present during an early U.S. test of the basic technology in 1997 in the desert of New Mexico, where the U.S. Army—which did not acknowledge the nature of the test—used a very low-power laser to “illuminate” a dying satellite. While it did not destroy the satellite outright, the test demonstrated how easy it would be to temporarily knock a satellite out of commission, merely by over-saturating the satellite’s sensors.)

Ironically, the U.S. has the most to lose if such anti-satellite weapons technology becomes widespread among the various military powers, for the simple fact that the U.S. has the most satellites in orbit and therefore the most to lose.

Is “Star Wars” coming back? Unfortunately, while the 1967 Outer Space Treaty prohibits nuclear weapons, it does not ban weapons in space, nor does it ban ground-based anti-satellite weapons. And while the landmark Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty of 1972—signed by President Nixon and Soviet leader Brezhnev—indirectly banned any space-based testing and put restrictions on anti-satellite testing, President George W. Bush unilaterally withdrew from the treaty in 2002. The U.S. currently seems hell-bent on weaponizing space, in the false hope of capturing the proverbial ‘high ground’. In what may seem to be almost surreal re-tread of the past, Michael Griffin, who was once a senior member of the much-discredited Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative in the 1980s, is now the Under Secretary of Defense for technology. He said he wants to test a ‘space weapon’ in 2023, and asked for $300 million in the 2020 Pentagon budget for directed energy research.

At the same time, the present administration is moving forward with its plans to create a “Space Force.” And successive administrations have blocked for many years the consideration of a treaty called “Prevention of an Arms Race in Space” (PAROS), causing Russia and China to counter U.S. moves in space and missile defense systems, exacerbating tensions between the great powers.

~ Subrata Ghoshroy is a research affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Program in Science, Technology, and Society. For many years a senior engineer in the field of high-energy lasers, he was also a professional staff member of the House National Security Committee, and later a senior analyst with the Government Accountability Office. He is on the Advisory Board of the Global Network. Reprinted in part from Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.
**RAND Corporation calls for ‘break up of Russia’**

The American RAND Corporation (headquartered in Santa Monica, CA), the largest near-government center for strategic intelligence, has published a new report on Russia. During the cold war, RAND participated in the development of a strategy of long-term competition that exhausted the resources of the Soviet economy. Russia has the largest land border with the Arctic Ocean. As the ice melts due to climate crisis the western oil corporations want control of that vast area. The RAND Corporation study calls for the ‘balkanization’ of Russia—breaking it up into smaller nations so that the oil corporations can get control.

This is why the U.S. keeps saying they want regime change in Moscow. Ukraine is just a sideshow the US-NATO created to excuse major military escalation along Russia’s borders. Missile defense launch sites have been built in Romania and Poland and a new U.S. base in Poland will serve as a regional supply hub for Pentagon war making material. War games along the Russian border by US-NATO are escalating each year. Russia, according to the experts of RAND, is a long-term threat (because Moscow won’t surrender its sovereignty). Therefore, the American military must prepare for armed conflict with Russia.

The report calls for these measures:

- Increase energy production in the US, which will lead to a drop in the cost of energy in the world and, accordingly, reduce the revenues of Russia.
- Introduce economic and financial sanctions.
- Increase American gas imports to Europe to take business from Russia.
- Encourage the emigration from Russia of educated youth and skilled workers.
- Supply Ukraine with lethal weapons.
- Promote the ‘liberalization’ of Belarus.
- The expulsion of Russia from Central Asia, while very expensive, is a card that must be played in due time.
- Undermining the international image of Russia will continue with the use of all available tools—a boycott at international forums, sports events, fake news campaigns, etc.
- Move US-NATO bombers closer to Russia.
- Increase the deployment of additional tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and Asia which will provoke additional Russian air defense spending.
- Increase deployment of new U.S. ‘missile defense’ systems in Europe.
- Develop new types of weapons for submarines that could attack Russian submarines.
- Increase NATO’s presence in the Black Sea. Russia will have to strengthen its defenses at its bases in Crimea.
- Increase NATO war games in Europe, which can be interpreted as a demonstration of the readiness to invade the territory of Russia.

The RAND study can be found at: file:///C:/Users/Bruce/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/RAND_RB10014.pdf

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**Defending Assange**

For the first time in U.S. history, a publisher of information has been indicted under the Espionage Act. The Justice Department (DOJ) announced they were bringing 17 Espionage Act charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. This is in addition to a previous charge of conspiring to crack a password to a DOD computer. All of these charges stem from WikiLeaks’s decision to publish information provided to it by whistleblower Chelsea Manning. This trove of documents contained information about U.S. war crimes and general misconduct. In publishing these documents, WikiLeaks worked with a variety of international news outlets, including the New York Times, The Guardian, Der Spiegel, Le Monde and Al Jazeera. There is little question that publishing this information was in the public interest.

Espionage Act prosecutions against whistleblowers who give information to the media used to be a rarity. However, during the administration of Barack Obama, this practice became the norm. The Trump Administration has further cemented our authoritarian new normal with their Espionage Act indictments against whistleblowers Reality Winner, Terry Albury, and Daniel Hale.

Charges have never been brought against a publisher under the Espionage Act, because it has long been accepted that such a move would be unconstitutional. As the New York Times explain:

> Legal scholars believe that prosecuting reporters over their work would violate the First Amendment, but the prospect has not yet been tested in court because the government had never charged a journalist under the Espionage Act.

Though he is not a conventional journalist, much of what Mr. Assange does at WikiLeaks is difficult to distinguish in a legally meaningful way from what traditional news organizations do: seek and publish information that officials want to be secret, including classified national security matters, and take steps to protect the confidentiality of sources.

These indictments against Assange are both an unprecedented attack on press freedom and an attempt to silence those who would expose U.S. governmental misconduct.

—Reprinted in part from Defending Rights & Dissent

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**NOTE TO OUR MEMBERS**

**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.

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**Save the Date**

**Keep Space for Peace Week**

Oct. 5–12, 2019
The Expansion of NATO, Communications, Intel Networks & Space Tech

by Dave Webb

This year is the 70th anniversary of NATO. Originally established as a military alliance of North Atlantic states to deter the Soviet Union, it has continued to grow despite the demise of the USSR in 1991. Now the military activities of the U.S. and NATO along Russia’s western borders is dangerously ratcheting up international tensions. NATO’s membership has grown from 12 to 29 and many other states are connected in some way. For example, Sweden and Finland, traditionally neutral and previously distancing themselves from military blocs, both joined NATO’s ‘Partnership for Peace’ in 1994 and have now taken part in numerous NATO exercises.

Another NATO partnership, the ‘Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council’, was formed in 1997. It involves 21 countries in Europe and parts of Asia—including 12 former Soviet republics and three former Yugoslav nations. Since 1994 NATO has also developed relations with seven countries on the southern Mediterranean rim through its ‘Mediterranean Dialogue’ and in 2004 launched ‘Istanbul Cooperation Initiative’ with four countries in the Gulf region, with interest from Saudi Arabia and Oman.

In addition, NATO has agreements with others through ‘partners across the globe’, including Afghanistan, Australia, Colombia, Iraq, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Pakistan and Donald Trump has also told far-right President Jair Bolsonaro that he could support Brazil becoming “a NATO ally”. NATO even signed a joint declaration of cooperation that he could support Brazil becoming “a NATO ally”. NATO even signed a joint declaration of cooperation with the UN in 2008, it clearly sees itself as a global military force.

At its 2016 Summit in Warsaw, NATO decided to enhance its military presence in Eastern Europe. A “NATO Enhanced Forward Presence” of four multinational battlegroups, with around 15,000 troops and 3,500 military vehicles, have been deployed to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. The Baltic region is also a focus for the Atlantic Resolve military exercises which, since 2014, have involved moving U.S. based units to Europe and on to Baltic and Eastern European locations. The latest exercise began in January when an armoured combat team from Kansas arrived by sea in Belgium, then moved on to Poland. By mid-February units were distributed throughout Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

The U.S. and NATO have also been developing military bases in Europe to support ‘missile defence’. The 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon welcomed Obama’s European Phased Adaptive Approach as part of the NATO BMD architecture. There are now radar sites in Turkey, the UK and Norway, four ship-based Aegis interceptors systems hosted in Rota, southern Spain and ‘Aegis Ashore’ sites in Romania (now installed) and Poland (due in 2020) with a Central Command at Ramstein AFB, Germany. Russia has continually expressed concern about the system and its effect on global nuclear security. Accusations from both sides has led to both withdrawing from the INF Treaty and talks on the New START treaty are jeopardized.

Meanwhile, NATO and Allied Exercises continue. In 2017 NATO conducted 108 exercises, and Allies held 162 national and multinational exercises and NATO planned for 106 exercises in 2018, with Allies leading another 180. One of the biggest and the largest since the Cold War, Trident Juncture, involved some 50,000 personnel, 10,000 vehicles and 250 aircraft from 31 NATO and partner countries operating in Norway, the Baltic Sea and the airspace of Finland and Sweden.

Cyberwar & COMINT

Cyberwar and communications are major areas of interest to the military. In 2009 the U.S. rejected Russian proposals for a treaty to address the ‘emerging battleground’ of cyberspace and instead focused on expanding its cyberwar and surveillance networks. NATO has 25 centres called ‘Strategic Communications Centres of Excellence’ one of which, a “Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence” operates in Tallinn, Estonia. NATO’s biggest cyber warfare exercise, Cyber Coalition, took place in 2018 in Tartu, Estonia—about 30 miles from Russia’s border and the Baltic is recognised as a major theatre in a cyber warfare arms race.

In 2018 NATO held a joint intelligence, surveillance & reconnaissance exercise called Unified Vision, involving 17 NATO members alongside Finland and Sweden. They form part of a communications intelligence (COMINT) community that began in 1949 with the ‘Five Eyes’ of US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, whose intelligence agencies monitor governments, embassies, trade organizations and individuals. Over the years a number of third parties have joined to form an extensive global surveillance system which includes the FRA (the Swedish National Defence Radio Establishment) which has powers to intercept communications into and out of Sweden. Documents released by Edward Snowden in 2013 reveal that the FRA provides the NSA with a “unique collection on high-priority Russian targets such as leadership, internal politics, and energy.”

Many other European States also share intelligence information and/or provide communications infrastructure to help form a global data gathering system. A huge amount of surveillance data from various sensors is also being collected by drones flying inside or outside of a war zone. A geolocation platform called GILGAMESH can be attached to a drone and used to locate the SIM card or handset of a particular target. This allows information about its precise location to be fed via satellite to the USAF base at Ramstein and on to the US. An Autonomous Real-time Ground Ubiquitous Surveillance Imaging System has also been developed by DARPA and BAE Systems for use on Reaper drones. It allows the monitoring of every moving thing in a 100km area and 12 different targets can be tracked for several hours. Operators obtain detailed views in over 100 windows from 368 cameras while also maintaining a broad overview – thus an entire town can be observed by one Reaper.

The quantity and variety of data has grown so much that it cannot be interpreted by the human brain alone. Artificial intelligence (AI) methods are needed to process it and to turn it into information and suggestions for action. The Maven project involves the analysis of drone footage using AI algorithms provided by Google. However, there has been a reaction resulting in a petition signed by over 4,000 Google employees and even some resignations over this collaboration. So, awareness of the consequences of these technologies is growing.

The U.S. and NATO systems are encircling the globe, in space and on the ground, connected by satellites and fibre optic cables. Space technology is used for communication, global positioning, surveillance, reconnaissance and the command, control and targeting of missile and drone operations and the U.S. is forming a space alliance to share data and operations. In 2017, 13 nations, two intergovernmental organizations (the European Space Agency and the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites) and more than 60 commercial satellite operations joined Space Situational Awareness (SSA) data-sharing agreements with U.S. Strategic Command. Trump’s “Space Force” is another recognition of the military importance of space – the aim is space domination and global control.

The Global Network opposes these provocative actions of the U.S. and NATO and supports groups around the world building awareness and resistance at the bases and elsewhere. This year “Keep Space for Peace Week” is focussing on NATO, please join us with a local event during October 5-12!

—Dave Webb is the Convener of the Global Network’s two governing boards. He is also Chairperson of the UK’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He lives in Leeds, England.
Preventing Finland from Joining NATO

by Will Griffin

The US/NATO forces wrapped up a joint exercise in Finland called Bold Quest 19.1, conducted in April and May. It’s part of a larger effort to convince Finland to join NATO, which most people in the country oppose. Despite the outcome, the U.S. intends to build stronger “interoperability” with Finland and Scandinavia while targeting Russia. Finland shares a large border with Russia and has a history of fighting against the Soviets in WW II alongside Nazi Germany.

If Finland does not join NATO, the U.S. will continue to build interoperability with them anyway. So what does interoperability mean? According to NATO’s website, interoperability is defined as:

NATO’s interoperability policy defines the term as the ability for Allies to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives. Specifically, it enables forces, units and/or systems to operate together and allows them to share common doctrine and procedures, each other’s infrastructure and bases, and to be able to communicate. Interoperability reduces duplication, enables pooling of resources, and produces synergies among the 28 Allies, and whenever possible with partner countries.

Without the fancy lingo, interoperability is a code word for accessibility and control over another nation’s military capabilities, resources, and information. The U.S. and NATO use the term as if it represents an equal relationship between nations, to “act together.” In actuality, the U.S. controls NATO and any other nation that shares information and thus gives up sovereignty. NATO countries, and non-NATO countries, who follow this ‘interoperability policy’ are under the U.S. umbrella of full-spectrum dominance. When the U.S. says jump, interoperability says how high?

The Military Exercise in Finland

Bold Quest 19.1 was a “multinational joint fire interoperability demonstration and assessment event sponsored and facilitated by the United States Joint Staff.” The Joint Chiefs of Staff reported, “Approximately 2,200 troops, civilians, and contractors from the U.S. and 14 partner nations, including Finland, [participated]” in this exercise, with “about 700 of those being Finnish Defense Forces.” Bold Quest was conceived in 2001 with four nations plus the US. Today, it consists of 18 partner nations and NATO Headquarters.

Why would Finland be used in 2019 as the location to conduct training exercises for the U.S. and NATO?

NATO is quite clear when it comes to issues surrounding Russia and Finland:

In the current security context of heightened concerns about Russian military and non-military activities, NATO is stepping up cooperation with partner countries Finland and Sweden, with a particular focus on ensuring security in the Baltic Sea region. The includes: regular political dialogue and consultations; exchanges of information on hybrid warfare; coordinating training and exercises; and developing better joint situational awareness to address common threats and develop joint action.

Some history of Finland and NATO relations:
- Finland first participated with NATO in 1996 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Since 2002, Finnish soldiers have been in Afghanistan.
- Finland is one the most active ‘partners’ with NATO, contributing to missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Finland is one of five countries (known as ‘Enhanced Opportunity Partners’ under the Partnership Interoperability Initiative) that make significant contributions to NATO operations and objectives.

NATO for what?

NATO was created to contain the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, so why does NATO exist? How about sharing the costs of a large military empire and finding new customers for U.S. weapons? But the main reason that often gets left out of peace circles is that NATO provides a way for the U.S. to make unilateral decisions. The U.S. can invade any nation on Earth, drag its NATO buddies along, and not have to deal with the United Nations Security Council. Avoiding international law is America’s doctrine. The U.S. is the rogue state of the 21st century.

I leave you with the words of Finnish Peace Committee activist Kerstin Tuomala who has warned before that if Finland joins NATO, they’ll be on the same losing path as before:

“We who are now old and have lived during the Cold War, have a very strong belief that it is possible to live in peace and mutual cooperation with our big eastern neighbor. We have also seen, that for a small country, it is much more secure to rely on diplomacy and dialogue—not in raw force. Every time Finland has had aggression with Russia, we have lost, but negotiating we have won peace and security. That is not told in the NATO or military tales, where they lie that our independence has been won by guns. It is not true.”

—Will Griffin is an Iraq & Afghanistan veteran and a Global Network board member. He lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and recently represented the GN at events in Finland.
Members of our delegation held Russian and American VFP flags along with several members of Russia’s VFP chapter. An agreement of mutual support was signed between the Russia VFP chapter and the Maine VFP chapter. The Russian chapter was formed about 20 years ago and in the early years they sent their members to the U.S. for annual national VFP conferences. After the US-NATO war that broke Yugoslavia into pieces the Russian VFP members could no longer get Visas into the US, thus they could not attend VFP annual conferences and were largely forgotten by their American counterparts.

Inside the very moving Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow hangs this painting of American and Soviet soldiers, then WWII allies. The Cold War ended that short-lived friendship between our two nations.

Also in the Moscow WW II Museum this dramatic white statue of a mourning woman with a dead soldier was in the middle of a huge nearly empty hall.

While in Crimea we visited the 35th Battalion Museum near Sevastopol where more than 30,000 Soviet soldiers and sailors retreated to this outpost and were killed by the fascists during the Nazi drive to occupy the region during the war. The guide inside the museum said most of these Soviet boys were not heroes, they were just human beings. The purpose of the museum is to remember their spirits. When we came out of the last part of the tour we were crying and held this banner as Russian media filmed our exit from the museum.

(Right) Mary Beth Sullivan (Maine) and Sally Warrick (Florida) stand in Red Square in Moscow as scaffolding (on the right) was being erected for the May 9 remembrance of the victory over fascism during WW II.
While in Yalta, Crimea some of our group met with several Soviet-era veterans. In this photo Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran Will Griffin (Pennsylvania) poses with 93-year old WW II veteran who spoke to us about his strong desire for peace with the west and also told of his deep concern about climate change.

We later learned that 1.2 million citizens joined the May 9 march through St. Petersburg. Most of the people carried photos of their relatives who died or survived the harrowing invasion and 900-day siege of St. Petersburg (then called Leningrad) by the German fascists. All over Russia on May 9 similar marches were held—not to celebrate but to remember.

On May 1 in Simferopol, Crimea we were invited to march in the celebratory May Day parade through the city with thousands of local residents. Here we posed for a photo outside our hotel along with our two guides Tanya and Leonid before heading to the parade.

Following our participation in the May Day parade in Simferopol we were invited to a conference that gave us a chance to hear from local leaders and four members of our delegation also spoke. Afterwards the Global Network board convener Dave Webb (UK) signed a peace, friendship and cooperation agreement with Yan Epshtein, Director of the Crimean NGO called the Black Sea Association for International Cooperation. This NGO supports the 175 ethnic groups in Crimea to ensure their unique cultures are not lost. During the May Day parade many different costumes were worn representing the many distinct cultures in Crimea.

On May 9 (Victory Day) we were invited to join the ‘Immortal Regiment March’ through the streets of St. Petersburg. Some members of our delegation also carried photos of their relatives who were involved in the WW II battle to defeat the Nazis.

On May 1 in Simferopol, Crimea some of our group met with several Soviet-era veterans. In this photo Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran Will Griffin (Pennsylvania) poses with 93-year old WW II veteran who spoke to us about his strong desire for peace with the west and also told of his deep concern about climate change.

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First Protest from Space

Many imaginative protests about the militarisation of space have occurred, not the least of which is from a citizen-scientist space exploration group, the Autonomous Space Agency Network. On April 12, 2017 they launched a weather balloon carrying an image of a tweet directed at President Trump. The launch was timed to commemorate the 56th anniversary of the first human space flight by Yuri Gagarin and in solidarity with the anti-Trump March for Science. The message said: “Look at that, you son of a bitch”—a reference to Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell who once said that when you view the Earth from space, you develop a “global consciousness... an intense dissatisfaction with the state of the world, and a compulsion to do something about it. From out there on the Moon, international politics look so petty,” he said. “You want to grab a politician by the scruff of the neck and drag him a quarter of a million miles out and say, ‘Look at that, you son of a bitch.’”

‘Space Control’ planned at Kirtland AFB, N.M.

The Air Force Research Laboratory’s (AFRL) Space Vehicles Directorate conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for its new Space Control Laboratory in June at Kirtland AFB in New Mexico. “This new laboratory will be a major addition to AFRL’s research in advancing our programs in space situational awareness, command and control of space systems, and survivability of space assets,” said Colonel Eric Felt, director of the Space Vehicles Directorate. The AFRL is the primary scientific research and development center for the Air Force. AFRL has a workforce of more than 11,000 personnel. “This is a space control technology building,” Felt said. “Space control starts with space domain awareness, making sure we know everything that is going on in space. From there, it goes to making sure we can protect ourselves in space, protect our assets that are up in space. The next generation cutting-edge capabilities that our nation needs are going to be developed here. And if we do need to perform offensive operations in space, we will be working on those components as well.”

Big Aerospace Merger

Raytheon and United Technologies have announced a merger. For Raytheon, the agreement provides exposure to the commercial aerospace sector through UT’s unit, which produces everything from jet engines to cockpit controls, airplane seats and cabin interiors. UT, in turn would gain footing in the cyber-security and military industries. The new company, to be called Raytheon Technologies will be based in the Boston metro area, is expected to have around $74 billion in sales this year.

NATO Protest in London

The next NATO summit, December 3-4, will be held in London. Let us prepare protests in London and everywhere. Let us prepare an international counter summit: we will show the alternatives to war the weekend before the summit. We will hold a big demonstration which combines peace and disarmament with many other movements. We all are victims of the NATO war machine. The NATO summit will decide the plans for NATO after the end of the INF treaty. New nukes in Europe—we say no. We see the danger of new land-based missiles in the center of Europe. We want a Europe free of nuclear weapons. We want disarmament for social and environmental purposes. The NATO summit will enlarge the confrontation with Russia, we want friendly relations with Russia on the basis of a policy of common security. We want peace. This means we must overcome the strongest military alliance of the world. NATO must be abolished. By Kristine Karch and Lucas Wirl (Co-Chairs of the international network “No to war—no to NATO”) www.no-to-nato.org

Israeli Missile Tests in Alaska

Breaking Defense reported in April that the U.S. and Israel have completed a unique joint missile defense exercise in Israel. Not only did the U.S. deploy its high-end THAAD system to Israel for the first time, but the two nations integrated the American weapon into the Israeli missile defense network and tested the combined US-Israeli defense in multiple scenarios. “The [THAAD] system was integrated as an equivalent of the Israeli Arrow,” said the Israeli missile defense commander, Brig Gen. Ran Kochav. This summer, it’ll be the Americans’ turn to play host, with the Israelis bringing the upgraded Arrow-3 to the Kodiak range in Alaska for a test against live targets. The Alaska tests had been originally planned for 2018, but was postponed to allow further work on the Arrow-3 upgrade.

Trump Drone Kills

The UK Independent reports Donald Trump has scrapped a policy requiring U.S. intelligence officials to publish the number of civilians killed in drone strikes outside active war zones. The rule was introduced by Barack Obama in 2016 in an attempt to improve transparency and minimize non-combatant casualties during operations against terrorist targets. Human rights groups described President Trump’s decision to revoke executive order 13732 as “shameful” and “deeply wrong”, while security experts suggested it was an attempt to conceal deaths from drone strikes carried out by the CIA.

Pushing Nuclear Power in Space

In early 2019 Forbes magazine printed a report from a space nuclear power conference held at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington. The Nuclear and Emerging Technologies for Space event was a gathering of people from NASA, National Laboratories, industry, and academia to discuss space nuclear power and propulsion to make ‘further space exploration possible, safe and economic’. Proponents claim that future space missions, especially for establishing colonies on the Moon or Mars, ‘need new energy systems to power larger facilities and spacecraft’. Nuclear energy in space has come in and out of fashion over the decades. For the last 50 years, NASA has used radioisotope electric propulsion systems and radio thermal generators (RTGs) to power long missions far from the Sun—claiming that solar would not work. The nuclear industry’s next big step is to seek nukes for space mining colonies. These would provide kilowatt and megawatt power systems for their resource extraction operations.

China Angry Over Pentagon Space Report

A new U.S. intelligence report portraying Moscow and Beijing as trying to bring warfare into the heavens has drawn the ire of China, which insists that space is not Washington’s “private property.” The report—which comes amid Donald Trump’s cosmic endeavors such as the establishment of the Space Force—fans worries of U.S. dominance being challenged everywhere, including space. Russia and China “view space as important to modern warfare and view outer-space capabilities as a means to reduce U.S. and allied military effectiveness,” the report claims. “I want to make it clear that outer space belongs to all mankind. It is not exclusively owned by any one country and especially not the private property of the US,” Chi-
nese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, referring to the latest paper by the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). “For many years,” the spokeswoman stated, “China, Russia and other countries have been working hard and trying to reach an international legal instrument to fundamentally prevent the weaponization of or an arms race in outer space.”

**Congested Orbits a Growing Problem**

SpaceX received approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its ambitious constellation of thousands of broadband satellites. The FCC is worried, however, what the dramatic expansion of man-made objects in low orbit will mean for the growing problem of space junk. The FCC gave SpaceX permission to launch 11,943 mini-satellites to form the expansive Starlink broadband network, designed to provide worldwide high speed internet access by ensuring that at least one satellite is always above the horizon for anyone on Earth. “One of the issues that we have with the space junk problem,” Alice Gorman, an internationally recognized leader in the field of space archaeology and senior lecturer at Flinders University, told *Sputnik* earlier this year, is that “we don’t know precisely where a lot of objects are. When you try to model these millions of bits of stuff circling around the Earth in order to make space safer for functioning satellites, it’s just so complex; it’s a really difficult task,” she explained.

**Astronomers Worry**

Amateur sky watchers have started sharing images of those mounting clusters of satellites in night skies, igniting a uproar among astronomers who fear that the planned orbiting clusters will wreak havoc on scientific research and trash our view of the cosmos. “This has the potential to change what a natural sky looks like,” said Tyler Nordgren, an astronomer who is now working full-time to promote night skies. And SpaceX is not alone in filling the skies. Other companies, such as Amazon, Telesat and OneWeb, want to get into the space internet business. Their ambitions to make satellites nearly as plentiful as cellphone towers highlight conflicting debates as old as the space age about the proper use of the final frontier. While private companies see major business opportunities in low-Earth orbit and beyond, many sky lovers fear that space will no longer be “the province of all mankind,” as stated in the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.

**Climate and Cape Canaveral**

*Gainesville Sun* has reported that at the Kennedy Space Center, both NASA and the Air Force have become increasingly concerned about the looming impact of rising seas on its critical launch complexes. Initial concerns that erosion was eating away the coastline at Cape Canaveral were voiced after Hurricane Floyd in 1999. “We saw that we were starting to see some really serious erosion along our shoreline in the vicinity of launch complex 39 A and B,” said Don Dankert, program manager for Kennedy Space Center’s shoreline restoration project. “Our number one priority was to protect our inland launch structure from storm surge and over wash.” Using a congressional appropriation in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, NASA was able to rebuild about a third of the inland dunes in the most critically eroded area. Other military bases will also experience weather related impacts around Florida. Those include MacDill Air Force Base near Tampa, Patrick Air Force Base in Brevard County and several Coast Guard stations. How much money taxpayers afford to sink into protecting U.S. military bases worldwide from climate changes? The U.S. has more than 800 military bases worldwide.

**Spaceport in Georgia?**

Cumberland Island National Seashore is a crown jewel on the Atlantic Coast. The island has nearly 20 miles of natural beach, marshes and maritime forest, and acres of precious coastal wilderness. Unfortunately this national treasure is at risk. Camden County Commissioners have asked the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to allow them to build a spaceport to launch commercial rockets over the seashore. If allowed the health of Cumberland Island’s unique historic and natural resources, the safety of visitors, residents and wildlife on the island, and the impact of rocket debris and fuel contaminants to the coastal waters will be problematic. The FAA has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in which they recommended issuing Camden County a license to build and operate the proposed spaceport.

**Women Rise in MIC**

*Politico* has reported that from the executive leadership of top weapons-makers, to the senior government officials designing and purchasing the nation’s military arsenal, the United States’ national defense hierarchy is, for the first time, largely run by women. The CEOs of four of the nation’s five biggest military contractors—Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and the military arm of Boeing—are now women. And across the negotiating table, the Pentagon’s top weapons buyer and the chief overseer of the nation’s nuclear stockpile now join other women in some of the most influential national security posts, such as the nation’s top arms control negotiator and the secretary of the Air Force.

**Trump wants the Stars**

In the spring of 2019 the White House Press Office announced, “The U.S. will seek to land on the Moon’s South Pole by 2024, establish a sustainable human [mining] presence on the Moon by 2028, and chart a future path for Mars exploration.” The release went on to document the creation of a Moon-to-Mars Directorate which will begin with an “Exploration Mission-1" as a “foudational unserswing mission around the Moon” by 2020 which will precede the manned landing.

**Tech workers push against war machine**

Declaring to chief executives that they refuse “to become war profiteers,” a group of Microsoft workers in early 2019 demanded the company cancel a contract with the U.S. Army that they say would “help people kill” and turn warfare into a “video game.” Their open letter addressed to Microsoft CEO got over 100 employee signatures on its first day. At issue was Microsoft’s $479 million contract to supply the military’s Integrated Visual Augmentation System (IVAS) program with augmented reality headsets. It’s for a platform that the government says is intended to “increase lethality by enhancing the ability to detect, decide, and engage before the enemy.” Technology giant Google faced similar criticism from workers last year for its work on drone and artificial intelligence (AI) technology with the U.S. military. Following the outcry, Google announced it would not renew its contract on the Pentagon program known as Project Maven.

**MD testing off Scottish coast**

The U.S. 6th Fleet held naval war games off the coast of Scotland in May. Called ‘Forlormible Shield’ these exercises were used to improve ‘interoperability’ in a live-fire ‘missile defense’ tests, using NATO command and control reporting structures. Captain Jonathan Lippis, from the Navy 6th Fleet, said, “The range here provides a great opportunity to integrate the forces of the alliance, the members of the task force, the water space and the air space that we need to execute this fight.” Nine nations participated by sending ships, including Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
Protesting the CANSEC arms fair in Canada’s capital

by Tamara Lorincz

The largest arms fair in North America took place at the end of May in Canada’s capital. CANSEC is a two-day exhibition organized by the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI) that attracts over ten thousand military leaders, government officials and industry executives from around the world to Ottawa. This year, about 100 peace activists disrupted the fair by blocking the two gates with their signs “Arms dealers not welcome!”

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the mass demonstration against the first arms fair in Ottawa called ARMX. Richard Sanders coordinated the 1989 protest under the umbrella Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT). Thousands of people marched to the entrance of ARMX and almost 200 people were arrested. City council then banned future arms fairs from municipally-owned property. ARMX later evolved into CANSEC and was moved to the private EY Centre located on outskirts of the city.

Several peace groups organized this year’s CANSEC protest: COAT, Pacific, Raging Grannies, NoWarPaix, Ottawa Quakers, ALBA Social Movements Canada and Ceasefire. Members of the local Extinction Rebellion chapter came with their signs “Business As Usual = Death.” The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and the Nobel Women’s Initiative also endorsed and participated in the protest.

Peace activists were able to get right to the front entrance and unfurled a banner “Weapons Fair: Not in our name, Not with our money” before police pushed them outside the gates. At the entrance, American weapons giant Lockheed Martin had their corporate logo prominently displayed and Swedish defence company SAAB parked one of their Gripen fighter jets. Lockheed Martin and SAAB want to sell their fighter jets to the Canadian government as it plans to replace the fleet for the Royal Canadian Air Force in a contract that is worth at least $19 billion.

Canada’s Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan was scheduled to open the arms fair with a morning keynote address, but protesters blocked cars preventing hundreds of delegates from arriving on time. Police allowed protesters to block cars with their banners for thirty seconds and then allowed cars to pass for thirty seconds. Delegates were confronted by placards and chants “Shutdown CANSEC!” Despite repeated requests, the Department of National Defence has refused to make public the text of this year’s speech by the Defence Minister.

Last year in his speech at CANSEC, the Minister boasted about Canada’s new defence policy Strong Secure Engaged (SSE) and how the Trudeau government has dramatically increased the military budget. Under SSE, the federal government is going to spend at least $553 billion on the Canadian Armed Forces over the next two decades to buy new fighter jets, attack helicopters and armed drones, build warships, and recruit more soldiers to maintain “high-end warfighting.”

In his 2018 speech, the Defence Minister expressed appreciation to CADSI for influencing the SSE and gloated about strengthening ties between the federal government and the defence companies. He said, “You [CADSI] have been integral to the development of our defence policy, and you are essential in helping us implement it.” This year, the Canadian public has no idea what accolades or assurances the Defence Minister has made to the arms industry.

CADSI is the national industry association of more than 900 defence and security companies that produce weapons systems, components and services in Canada. Approximately 60,000 Canadians are employed by these companies and they generate $10 billion in annual revenues of which 60% comes from exports. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Canada is ranked 16th highest for arms exports and 14th highest for military spending in the world.

The federal government’s latest report, Exports of Military Goods, reveals that Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom are two of the largest importers of Canadian weapons. Under a defence agreement with the United States, the Canadian government is prohibited from disclosing any information about arms exports to the U.S. It is clear that the U.S. is the largest importer of Canadian arms. There is a grave lack of transparency and accountability in Canada’s arms exports regime. Moreover, Canada still has not signed on to the Arms Trade Treaty.

At the CANSEC 2019 protest, peace activists condemned the sale of light-armoured vehicles (LAV) from the General Dynamics plant in London, Ontario to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Under Canada’s export controls, Canadian companies are not permitted to sell weapons to countries that have a “persistent record of serious violations of the human rights.” Yet, the Canadian government approved a $15 billion sale of LAVs to KSA, which has imprisoned human rights activists and assassinated journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The Kingdom cruelly oppresses women and is engaged in a brutal war against Yemen. Protesters held signs “Trudeau: Support Women’s Human Rights, Stop Arming Saudi Arabia” and “Export Peace, Not Weapons.”

For thirty years, peace groups have tried to stop the arms fair and to raise awareness about Canada’s complicity in the contemptible global arms trade in bold and creative ways. At the 2010 protest, the Raging Grannies sang a song “Condoms for CANSEC” and held a banner “CANSEC, Not CANSEX, Yes!” In 2015, Homes not Bombs held a ten-hour vigil and led a die-in outside the arms show.

Next year, the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space will be partnering with Canadian peace groups and World Beyond War to have a major demonstration against CANSEC and to hold an international peace conference entitled NoWar2020 #: Divest, Disarm and Demilitarize: Conversion for a Peaceful, Green & Just Future. Come to Canada’s capital in May 2020 and help us #CancelCANSEC!

For further coverage of CANSEC 2019, please see the excellent Spirit Wrestlers blog by Koozma Tarasoff, a Doukhobor pacifist based in Ottawa who maintains the web site www.spirit-wrestlers.com.
Lawmakers on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) are expected to approve a trimmed version of the Pentagon’s proposal to sweep space-related personnel into a new component of the Air Force.

Under a deal reached in June by Reps. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., and Mike Rogers, R-Ala., a bipartisan amendment will be added to the annual defense authorization bill during committee markup. The resulting “Space Corps” would be “smaller and more focused” than the bill during committee markup. The resulting “Space Command,” he said, another sticking point in ongoing talks between the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

The HASC deal anticipates a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff for space, according to a senior Republican committee aide, who said that the GOP was “very gratified with where things currently stand.”

Bringing a space force another step closer to reality, the HASC deal echoes the response from the Senate Armed Services Committee, which in late May also approved a trimmed version of the Trump administration’s proposal.

But not everyone is convinced. In mid-May, the House Appropriations defense subcommittee rejected funds for a new space force, instead approving $15 million “to study and refine plans for the potential establishment of a Space Force.” In their report, the House appropriators said the Trump administration’s proposal “leaves many unanswered questions and lacks important details and supporting analysis to justify the proposed size, scope, cost, roles, and authorities for the new military service.”

Senate appropriators have yet to weigh in on the Space Force debate.

Smith cautioned that the partisan political environment in Washington could intrude on the debate. He said that he “hopes Democratic members understand” that Space Force is not “President Trump’s idea.”

“Don’t think of this as, ‘if you’re for the Space Force, that means you 100-percent support President Trump,’ ” Smith said. “We were talking about this long before the president even knew Space Force could possibly have existed. He grabbed onto it. But this isn’t about him.”

“This isn’t about whether we’re going to support one of his proposals or give him a win—I don’t care about that,” he continued. “I want to organize our space assets in the most efficient, effective way possible.”

As for what the new component will be called — Space Force? Space Corps? — that remains up for debate.

—Reprinted in part from Defense One.

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Canadian Conservative Pledges to Join BMD

by Ed Lehman and David Gehl

In his first speech on foreign policy May 7th Canadian Opposition Leader, Andrew Scheer, said a Conservative government would join a U.S.-led global missile defence coalition. Previous Conservative and Liberal governments chose not to join Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) despite strong urging from Canada’s military industries and the Canadian Armed Forces. Previous governments were swayed by an active peace movement; especially in Quebec. Scheer’s speech was made in Montreal to the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. The corporate audience was composed of military lobbyists. The cost of a ticket to the event was not revealed.

Canada joining the BMD is not wise. BMD is predicated on NATO’s idea of First Strike, a delusion that one country can attack another with nuclear weapons and then using a defensive shield protect itself from retaliation.

What Canada should be talking about in the current federal election is the alternative to a NATO-based militarized economy instead of having BMD squander our future and involve us in nuclear space wars that threaten all life on the planet. (Canadians will vote on October 21st).

—Gehl and Lehman lead the work of the Regina Peace Council, in Saskatchewan, Canada

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Space Force to bring capitalism to final frontier?

The current President of the United States has prompted a new conversation in the hallowed halls of NASA: What will be the actual role of the U.S. Space Force?

A FOIA request filed in August of 2018 reveals that beyond just plans for a more militarized space, NASA is deeply dedicated and invested to the privatization and commercialization of the final frontier.

In recent years, as funding to NASA and scientific discovery has been cut in favor of military applications, the names of private companies like SpaceX and Virgin have moved to fill the void. Where once space exploration was imagined to be a collective endeavor funded by democratic mandate, space has now gone the way predicted in 2001: A Space Odyssey: It’s a new venue where airlines can hock space flights, telephone companies can upcharge for inter-planetary phone calls, and Coke can sell Space Coke.

Space appears to be a goldmine for whoever can tap its commercial potential. However, nowhere in the report does it suggest that NASA or the U.S. government profit from this goldmine. They’re only role, it seems, is to assist and allow other people to make the profits.

Not only is it NASA’s role to help maximize the profits of companies like Boeing, Northrup Grumman, and SpaceX, it is apparently the role of NASA to convince the world that hyper-capitalism is the most effective economic model [for space].

From its odd beginnings, the Space Force has always been imagined as a tool that, above all else, will protect profits in outer space.

—Reprinted in part from MUCKROCK by Matthew Guariglia.
Maine activists link militarism & climate

by Lisa Savage

Weapons systems are often sold to the public as the best or even only way of addressing national security. Those of us who disagree see the irony of the military’s massive carbon footprint at a time when most people, especially young people, recognize that climate change is the most urgent threat to our collective security.

The Conversion Campaign in Maine calls for our state’s industrial capacity to be used to address climate change through building sustainable energy solutions. Specifically, we are calling to convert the General Dynamics’ Bath Iron Works shipyard from building destroyers to building solar power systems, offshore wind turbines, tidal power, or light rail.

In the midst of growing climate disruption, with our national government doing little to protect future generations, the Conversion Campaign is a crucial opportunity to bring together all sectors of our community—left, right, activist, mainstream, business, religious—to speak as one voice for the preservation of the Earth and a sustainable future.

Peace and justice groups across the state have joined with environmental activists, including Maine’s Youth Climate Strikes leader, to carry forward this demand.

Civil resistance amplifies our message. In April, twenty-five of us were arrested blocking the street outside the shipyard as a carbon belching warship was ‘christened.’ In late June, another 22 were arrested for blocking another Aegis destroyer ‘christening’ at Bath Iron Works. Supporters of the campaign have rallied, protested, marched, held news conferences, written op-eds, blogged, and tweeted about the Conversion Campaign, and even the corporate press has begun to cover our efforts.

Peter Neill of the World Ocean Observatory calls our Conversion Campaign “applied optimism” in a time of growing despair. There is a strong sense that, if we let the conversion opportunity pass, it may soon be too late to act on climate in a meaningful way.

—Lisa Savage is a public school teacher and leads the Maine Natural Guard. She lives in Solon, Maine.
NATO was created to contain the Soviet Union which no longer exists. US/NATO military bases, war games, and weapons have been deployed to Russia’s border in Eastern Europe. The continuing development of ‘missile defense’ systems and the planned deployment of space weapons are creating a new arms race and expanding warfare to the heavens.

Tensions are rising and a nuclear WWII could start in a flash. In such a war, space technology would be instrumental in directing all military operations.

Hold a local event during ‘Keep Space for Peace Week’ to call for the de-escalation of US-NATO war preparations near the Russian border and a return to serious disarmament negotiations. #NoToNATO

International Week of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space

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Space Law Conference Scheduled in India

International space law is a subject presently thoroughly dominated by leaders of the aerospace industry who are more than eager to privatize space to the benefit of corporate sponsors and wealthy individuals.

The aerospace industry has established space law departments at various universities around the world and are busy trying to rewrite United Nations space law that was established by the Outer Space Treaty and the Moon Treaty.

Both of these treaties state that celestial bodies and their resources are “the common heritage of mankind and that an international regime should be established to govern” their extraction.

Currently no such international agreements exist. In fact, during the Obama administration a bill was passed and signed into law giving U.S. corporations and individuals the legal authority to make land claims on the moon and asteroids. This could surely cause conflict in the future.

What is sorely needed at this time is a body of legal experts who wish to explore this celestial privatization issue from the point of view and interests of all humankind. We are now lucky to have such an opportunity as a conference is being organized in Visakhapatnam, India on October 12-13, 2019 at the Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU). This conference is being co-sponsored by the Global Network (GN).

GN Advisory Board member Aruna Kammila, Assistant Professor at DSNLU, is organizing the conference which will be entitled “International Conference on Super Powers Domination in Outer Space and Global Sustainable Development.”

Ms. Kammila writes, “The people of our planet must consider the question of the kind of seed one carries from earth into the heavens. The essential objective of this conference is to give a stage to exhibit emerging issues and challenges in outer space and a contemporary analysis based on legal, political, economic as well as the scientific aspect in order to ensure peace and security in the international sphere with concern to outer space.”

Among the speakers scheduled to attend the conference will be History Professor Peter Kuznick from American University in Washington DC and Bruce Gagnon, Coordinator of the Global Network.

If interested in attending this important event please contact the GN office at 207-607-4253.

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