

Space Weapons and World Empire

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This pathbreaking article was first published by GR in 2002. In the word of University of Toronto Professor John Valteau, "It is the right time to speak out for a civil world order and reject the threat of techno-tyranny."

VISION for 2020 is a mission statement of the U.S. Space Command which was published in 1997.¹ Since 1997, it has been joined by further documents fleshing out more details of the plan, such as a "Long Range Plan". (Note the date, 2020, which gives a time scale for our concerns.)

Vision for 2020 sees outer space under the unilateral control of the United States and filled with weapons able to maintain this control and also able to attack the earth below. The stated purpose is "dominating space" to "protect U.S. interests and investment" (perhaps not so very lofty). This involves "control of space", meaning "access to space, freedom of operations within space, and an ability to deny others the use of space", and also "global engagement", which is "the application of precision force from, to, and through space" as "an active warfighter" with "space-based earth strike weapons". Apparently, then, we are all meant to live not only under constant U.S. surveillance, but under constant threat of violence from a blanket of space weapons — most of us would consider this an indignity too great to be supported.

To what end? The purpose already quoted makes that quite clear: namely, the forceful control of the first whole-world commercial empire. This is driven home by what *Vision for 2020* calls an "historic perspective", which states that "military forces have evolved to protect national interests and investments" and "during the rise of sea commerce, nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests. During the westward expansion of the continental United States, military outposts and the cavalry emerged (sic) to protect our wagon trains, settlements and railroads", and so on. It goes on to say "the emergence of space power follows . . . these models" (i.e. of former empires and of genocide).

This is only to confirm, in a surprisingly frank way, what has become the common worldwide understanding of the intense U.S. pressure to impose the neo-liberal agenda and structural adjustment on third-world nations (and us), namely to facilitate the classic imperial aim of seizing the resources and exploiting the labour of less developed countries, where possible with the help of puppet governments. The otherwise curious pattern of often heartless U.S. interventions, overt and covert, is also most plausibly interpreted in this way, as is the refusal to countenance the rule of law in international matters, and the rejection of cooperation in confronting ecological imperatives. No surprises here, just a reminder that the 'globalisation' fights, the environmental concerns, the civil rights dismay and the

present focus on the military threat are really all part of a single apprehension of threatened tyranny — tyranny threatened, one has reason to hope, not by most people of the U.S.A., but by a corrupt ruling class acting on behalf of a corporate and financial elite which is able to 'buy' political power.

Note the problem of controlling such an empire when one colony or another is restive. Nuclear weapons are of limited value, because they are too powerful for most occasions. Their actual use will be too disruptive of the Empire (and will probably have adverse collateral effects on current 'friends' and maybe even the homeland). And bodybags quickly become unacceptable to a citizenry not fully identified with the imperial aims.

But imagine space with a blanket of orbiting surveillance equipment and space weapons such as particle-beam and laser devices, rocket and missile launchers, devices to disable electromagnetic equipment or to control the weather locally, and so on. With this, it would be possible to apply force locally and instantly, to choose just that level of pain deemed appropriate, and to do so with impunity. It would mark the end of local sovereignty and much of human dignity.

The role of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) project can be seen, in this light, primarily as a stalking horse: a relatively benign-sounding excuse (after all, 'defensive', and anyway certain to be ineffective) for abrogating an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that would otherwise stand in the way of the bigger plans.



All is not lost yet. There seems, at last, to be a growing awareness among U.S. citizens of what has been going ahead in their name. One sign of this is the current bill HR3616 presented to Congress by Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), which would prevent the U.S. Administration from proceeding to develop or put in place space weapons; other U.S. NGOs are pushing for a new international treaty banning all weapons from space. Although the events of September 11 helped the Bush Administration to forward its space agenda initially, the travesty of the Afghan "anti-terrorism war" is making people start to question the direction of U.S. policy. There will certainly also be worldwide opposition to the imposition of U.S. military domination of space, as the intention becomes widely recognized.

Canada has a vital role to play. For many years Canada has worked toward banning all weapons from space, playing a leading part in the General Assembly resolution on the subject (November 1999) and repeatedly proposing in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) the convening of negotiations to add such a codicil to the Outer Space Treaty (1967) (which forbids only weapons of mass destruction). Thus our credentials are good, and our partnership in NORAD and NATO must give us some weight. Now is the time for our country to be more vocal. Also adaptable: if the project is being derailed at the CD, then the campaign has to become more public. The Canadian public will give full support, and there

may be nothing else so important for the future of Canada and the world as such an initiative.

It is the right time to speak out for a civil world order and reject the threat of technocracy.

Notes

1. See www.spacecom.mil/_private/about_space.htm and also www.noos.ca for more details.

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