

25TH GLOBAL NETWORK SPACE CONFERENCE IN HUNTSVILLE INTRODUCTION

My name is Will Griffin; I'm a member of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, as well as a member Veterans For Peace who helped sponsor this event, both nationally and locally from the Savannah, Georgia Chapter 170. I am on the steering committee of the U.S Task Force to Stop THAAD in Korea and Militarism in Asia and the Pacific, which also sponsored this event. Also, I am the creator of The Peace Report, an online news source for antiwar & nonviolent news for peace and justice. My Facebook just reached 60K likes last night, and my videos have over 16 million views.

Now, this conference will have guests from all over the world. We have speakers from 7 countries and 16 states joining us today to build an international citizens movement to keep space for peace.

This year's conference is titled, "*U.S. Missile Defense and the Weaponization of Space*". The Global Network's main goal is to stop the militarization of space. So, since "Missile Defense" is in the title this year, I'd like to briefly go over some Missile Defense history (or Anti-Ballistic Missile history, the 2 terms are interchangeable) so we can all begin this conference on the same track. I'll also be going over the history of the Global Network. They line up very well. I'll go through each history in chronological order.

First, let me define Missile Defense: *it is a system, weapon, or technology involved in the detection, tracking, interception, and destruction of attacking missiles.* Both the United States and the Soviet Union began developing these technologies back in the 1950s.

But it wasn't until 1972 when both parties signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, or ABM treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, each party was limited to just 2 ABM complexes, each of which was to be limited to 100 anti-ballistic missiles.

Then in 1983, President Reagan began the famous Strategic Defense Initiative Organization to assess the feasibility of missile defense systems. It became known as the "Star Wars Program". Coupled with Reagan's increased military budget, the missile defense industry became a booming business.

11 years later in 1994, The Clinton administration redesigns Reagan's Star Wars program to become the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, and reorients the program to focus on theatre missile defense. Theatre Missile Defense is to deploy nuclear and conventional missiles for the purposes of maintaining so called "security" in a specific region, or theatre.

Later and still under Clinton, the Senate passes the "National Missile Defense Act of 1999", which defined the mission of the BMDO. It states, "*It is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective National Missile*

Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate) with funding subject to the annual authorization of appropriations and the annual appropriation of funds for National Missile Defense”.

This was March 16. The next day on March 17, the House of Representatives commit the United States to deploy national missile defenses.

In 2002, President George W. Bush withdraws the U.S. from the ABM Treaty. In this process, 31 members of Congress sued the Bush administration in federal court, claiming the withdrawal is unconstitutional. Obviously, it failed. Also, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld redesigns the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization to the Missile Defense Agency which continues today. This change provides the MDA greater bureaucratic independence, as its director reports directly to the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, & Logistics.

In 2008, a NATO summit agrees to join the U.S. MD system to cover Europe.

The next year in 2009 reaching a new administration, President Obama announced the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), which will be executed in 4 phases.

PHASE ONE- begins in 2011, and deploys the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system to southern Europe to address BM threats.

PHASE TWO- begins in 2015, and deploys land-based SM-3 MD interceptors in Romania, expanding coverage of BM threats. Also, the Aegis Ashore in Romania is declared operational.

PHASE THREE- being in 2018, and deploys land-based SM-3 MD in Poland, improving coverage of BM threats. Also, Aegis Ashore deploys to Poland.

PHASE FOUR- begins in 2020, and deploys land-based SM-3 MD in the Middle East, enhancing coverage of BM threats.

While the European Phased Adaptive Approach was being implemented under the Obama administration, MD systems were being deployed to the Far East, in Asia. In 2013, the U.S. deployed the land-based THAAD MD system to Guam. THAAD stands for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense. THAAD is made up of 5 components, but only 2 are controversial: the interceptor and the radar. The interceptor for obvious reasons, but the radar can servile

And just a few weeks ago, the THAAD MD system was deployed to South Korea.

Now, I've said the word "defense" several times now. But I want to make it clear that these Missile "*Defense*" systems are not in any way defensive. If anything, they are destabilizing. Missile Defense systems undermines deterrence and attempts to give one side an advantage, a nuclear first strike capability. This makes

it easier for someone like Trump to push the button. Nuclear warfare is indeed a top-tier threat to humanity in the early 21st century.

The THAAD issue in South Korea, the most recent MD deployment, highlights the fact of this. The controversy surrounding THAAD in South Korea began with just the announcement back in July of 2016.

The THAAD system has been said it is intended to protect South Koreans and U.S. troops from North Korean missiles, but it has done nothing but increase tensions in the region. Now that THAAD is deployed, tensions have escalated and the region is becoming more destabilized. State actors like China and Russia are stepping in, stating their concern for their own national security. One of the components of THAAD, the radar system, has the potential to conduct surveillance over China's ICBM's, which totally undermines deterrence.

With tensions so high in the Asia Pacific region, the Korean Peninsula is now ground zero for the new global arms race. This new race is much more dangerous than during the height of the Cold War and it is directly because of these so-called Missile "Defense" systems. ~~That is why we are all here today.~~

North Korea is surely not going to halt their missile programs. Russia feels threatened from the encroachment in Eastern Europe. The menacing behavior of the United States around the world is only making other countries feel threatened and in return will keep their nuclear stockpiles leaving no room for nuclear disarmament.

Almost all international and political experts acknowledge the threat of nuclear weapons. Even the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has moved the famous Doomsday Clock forward to just 2 1/2 minutes to midnight. Midnight means we're all dead BTW. It hasn't been this close to midnight since the early 1950s when the Cold War began. Then, the clock was at 2 minutes to midnight. This past Jan, the Doomsday Clock scientists published their annual report and stated,

"The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce risks of disaster must be taken very soon. In 2017, we find the danger to be even greater; the need for action is more urgent. It is two and a half minutes to midnight, the clock is ticking, global danger looms. Wise public officials should act immediately, guiding humanity away from the brink. If they do now, wise citizens must step forward and lead the way."

The Global Network's intention is to discuss these issues to ignite education and organizing in order to build an international citizens movement. In fact, this is the 25th annual Global Network conference.

The Global Network was created in 1992 and every year since they hold an annual conference, usually in a different country each year, to help educate the public on the issues of space militarization.

Bruce Gagnon, the coordinator of the Global Network, told me the story of how he first got into space issues. In 1982, a million people marched in New York City at an anti-nuke rally. Bruce was later at the press conference where he heard a general get asked, "*There are a million people marching against nuclear weapons in NYC, what do you think of that?*" The general replied, "*I think that's great so many people are out in the streets protesting, because while the people are in the streets, we [the military] are up in space.*" This story really showed me that the peace movement is behind on many issues, especially space issues. While the peace movement is focused on Point A, the military is focused on Point Z. Space is the next military frontier, and the peace movement needs to begin focusing their concerns in space.

It is absolutely imperative for us to keep our ears and eyes open today. The Global Network has much to offer and we have much work to do. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "*We have guided missiles and misguided men.*" With Trump launching 59 tomahawk missiles two nights ago, Dr. King was right.

This gives us even more reason to do what the Global Network keeps reminding us to do: KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE

THANK YOU
Will Griffin