Militarization of fragile Pacific leaves destruction and death

by Koohan Paik-Mander

While recently visiting Honolulu, I attended two events: the congressional town hall meeting about Red Hill [polluted local water from leaking military fuel storage tanks], and sign-holding at Pearl Harbor (my sign read, “CLEAN UP RED HILL NOW!”).

I have to admit, the experience of being on Oahu was chilling. Because, it is here that toxic decisions are made that impact our beautiful Pacific for generations. You see it all around you. Just pause, look behind the edifices, adjust your eyes to the shadows, read between the lines. This is how to glean clues on the classified plans now underway for war with China. They are affecting us all.

They say the Red Hill tanks can’t begin draining until the end of 2023 at the earliest. Congressman Kai Kahele pointed out a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act that says that drainage depends upon the military’s ability to provide fuel for war by alternative means.

In other words, the purity of our drinking water is not as important as the Pentagon’s assessment of warfighting capabilities.

Right now, two alternative fuel storage facilities are being built. One of them is on pristine Larrakia land in northern Australia. The other is on Tinian, one of the lovely Northern Mariana Islands.

We never hear about opposition overseas to construct these fuel tanks, nor the grievous cultural and environmental impacts, nor the fact that during any conflict, it is the fuel storage facility that is targeted by the enemy first, filling the skies with billows of black smoke for days.

Holding my sign at the Pearl Harbor base gate, I notice a Korean flag in the distance. My first thought was that it must be a Korean restaurant. Then, I saw shimmering water beyond. Apparently, I was on the harbor banks and the flag was actually attached to a docked warship. Its steel radar equipment peeked up from behind buildings.

It was the Marado, the gigantic amphibious assault ship—as large as an aircraft carrier—but even more treacherous, because when a vessel that gargantuan plows into a reef, crushing everything on its path before lumbering onto shore to release battalions of troops, robots and vehicles, it is simply stomach-turning.

I thought of the Marado berthed, just last month, at the new navy base on Jeju Island, Korea. The base is built atop a wetland, once bubbling with pure, freshwater springs—home to eighty-six species of seaweeds and over 500 species of shellfish, many endangered. Now paved over with concrete.

I thought of the Marado conducting “amphibious exercises by forcible entry” at Kaneohe Bay, on Oahu. I thought of it ravaging Chulu Bay on Tinian, where, in 2016, environmentalists forced the cancellation of a Valiant Shield war maneuver because it coincided with the nesting of endangered turtles. When I visited Chulu Bay, it reminded me very much of Anini Beach on Kauai, except that, unlike Anini, it was wild and biodiverse and without multimillion dollar beachfront homes.

No one would allow such a thing on Anini where celebrities live. But because Chulu is invisible—which is also why it has continued until now to be so kaleidoscopically wild—it and so much of the Pacific have become fair game for unbridled military ecocide.

A weaponized Pacific is a dead Pacific. And a dead Pacific is a dead planet.

—Koohan Paik-Mander had this Op-Ed published in the Honolulu Star Advertiser newspaper on July 4, 2022. She serves on the Global Network’s board of directors and lives in Honokaa, Hawaii
We must step away from this deadly path we are on

by Bruce K. Gagnon

Some time ago the Global Network joined a national/international legal strategy to request that the U.S. FCC (Federal Communications Commission), which supposedly regulates space launches, begin to seriously create binding rules on launch companies. NASA (and some other agencies) has been critical of FCC for having no real regulations as tens of thousands of launches are increasingly causing serious contamination on Earth and to our ozone layer. In addition these unregulated launches are creating dangerous crowding of available orbits. NASA worries about mounting space debris problems.

The FCC has refused to acknowledge the legal procedural request and essentially dared our lawyers to ‘take the FCC to court’ which would cost billions of dollars. Thus a new strategy is desperately needed.

The space orbital parking lot is filling up and the U.S. does not want regulations because they seek to fill the places in orbit - mostly with military or dual-use satellites now being used for surveillance and targeting - before other nations can get there.

One idea that has emerged is to make greater effort to get space-faring nations like India, China and Russia to increase their calls for international monitoring and regulation of Earth orbits because they will be soon be excluded from finding parking spaces in orbit.

This is a difficult undertaking as we’ve seen the U.S. for more than 25 years reject all efforts by Russia and China to get Washington to seriously agree to a global ban on weapons in space. Through both Democrat and Republican administrations, the U.S. and Israel have done all they can to block serious negotiations at the United Nations on new space treaty development. Instead, the U.S. and its NATO allies propose ‘non-binding rules of the road’ for space which would offer a weak solution.

But we will not be discouraged. In 2019 the Global Network co-sponsored a space law conference in India that was attended by 200 law students from 20 law schools across that nation. Dr. Aruna Kammla, the law professor who organized that conference, has asked the GN to once again co-sponsor a similar event to be held in Hyderabad, India on October 14-16. At that event she will draw students and professors again from throughout India, and international speakers, to discuss many of the thorny space-related topics that are reported on in this edition of Space Alert. Please contact me if you have any interest in attending this important conference.

Ukraine

We are living in a tragically difficult time as the U.S.-NATO wage a proxy war in Ukraine aimed at forcing ‘regime change’ in Russia as President Biden declared just a few months ago. Members of Congress from both parties continually vote to send massive amounts of tax dollars to Ukraine (up to more than $50 billion so far just from the U.S.). Washington and Brussels have repeatedly said that the war in Ukraine ‘will be a long war’ necessitating on-going funding from the U.S.-UK-EU while the economies of these nations suffer blow-back from sanctions on Russia.

In 2019 the Rand Corporation (famously known for the Vietnam war-era ‘Pentagon Papers’) created a study for the Pentagon entitled ‘Overextending and Unbalancing Russia’. The study essentially states that Ukraine will be used to destabilize and help to bleed Russia’s economy in order to force regime change. In other words, the U.S.-NATO will fight Russia to the last Ukrainian.

But why? What is all this really about?

Most know that the Obama-Biden administration in 2014 orchestrated a coup d’état in Kiev, overthrowing the elected president and installing right-wing and Nazi forces into the new government. The U.S.-NATO immediately set up training bases in western Ukraine where ultra-nationalists predominate. Special Forces troops from Ft. Carson, Colorado were rotated to the base in Ukraine to train the nationalists. They were then sent to attack their fellow citizens in eastern Ukraine by constant shelling of those living in the Donbass region—right along the Russian border. Since 2014 more than 14,000 Ukrainian citizens have been killed by their own Kiev government along with about 35,000 wounded.

Throughout all these years there have been no howling calls from the west to stop this despite repeated attempts by Moscow to secure western support to end the attacks. Russia has pleaded with the west for security guarantees that would stop NATO expansion eastward and removal of new U.S. missile launch bases in Romania and Poland. The U.S. has refused. Russia and China could fire first-strike attack nuclear-capable cruise missiles into Russia in a matter of minutes. A real Cuban missile crisis in reverse.

At the very time the war began in late February (what Russia calls a Special Military Operation) the U.S.-NATO began a war game called ‘Cold Response’ along the Norway-Russia border in the Arctic region. Russia has the world’s largest border with the Arctic and due to climate change the Arctic ice is melting. Western resource extraction companies wish to ‘drill-hady-drill’ up in that region. Thus the effort to bring regime change to Moscow (and the breakup of Russia into smaller nations) would allow western corporations better opportunities to control the Arctic and Russia’s vast resource base.

Have we not noticed that most of the wars the U.S. starts anymore are actually resource wars? How could it be that Ukraine is really any different?

Over two decades the U.S. has engaged in horrifying wars with Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Provoking a war with nuclear-powered Russia brings the world to the brink of disaster.

At the same time the U.S. is openly declaring that China is an ‘existential threat’ to the west and Pentagon spokespeople have been threatening war and calling for regime change in Beijing. Imagine that—simultaneous wars with two nuclear powers, Russia and China. This threat coming from Washington-Brussels who limped out of Afghanistan after 20 years of brutal occupation.

The New York Times surprisingly reported on June 25 that the CIA and allied intelligence and military personnel were inside Ukraine and directing the war. So it is more than a proxy war—the U.S.-NATO are actually running the war against Russia.

Sadly the peace movement across the west is divided over Ukraine. The western corporate media has done a ‘good job’ of non-stop promotion of the U.S.-NATO war and further demonizing Russia. But for me, and I am just speaking for myself here, there could be nothing more insane than to continue along this terribly dangerous strategy of repeatedly poking the bear and the dragon. Instead I believe our collective time and meager resources should be focused on preventing WW 3 which could quickly move into space and go nuclear. Surely we can all agree that we don’t want either of those things to happen. But it very well could if the U.S.-UK-NATO continue on this same deadly path.

—Bruce K. Gagnon is the coordinator of the Global Network and lives in Brunswick, Maine.
For Heaven’s Sake—
Examining the UK’s Militarisation of Space

by Dr. Dave Webb

I have been working on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) with Peter Burt from Dronewars UK on a new joint publication called For Heaven’s Sake: Examining the UK’s Militarisation of Space. It was launched in June and looks at the UK’s emerging military space programme and considers the governance, environmental, and ethical issues involved.

The UK’s space programme began in 1952 and the first UK satellite, Ariel 1, was launched in 1962. Black Arrow, a British rocket for launching satellites, was developed during the 1960s and was used for four launches from the Woomera Range Complex in Australia between 1969 and 1971. The final launch was to hoist Prospero, the only British satellite to be placed in orbit using a UK rocket in 1971, although the government had by then cancelled the UK space programme. Blue Streak, the UK ballistic missile programme, had been cancelled in 1960 and space projects were considered too expensive to continue. Fifty years on and things have changed.

Space is now big business—the commercial space sector has expanded and the cost of launches has decreased. The UK is treating space as an area of serious interest. The government has also recognised that space is crucial for military operations. So, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) now has a Space Directorate, which works closely with the UK Space Agency and is responsible for the military space policy and international coordination. UK Space Command, established in April 2021, is in charge of the military space programme and is closely linked with U.S. Space Command and U.S. Space Force. While the UK typically frames military developments as being for defensive purposes, they are also capable of offensive use.

The Royal Air Force (RAF) operates the National Air and Space Operations Centre (NASOC), with responsibilities which include space surveillance, and has seconded personnel to commercial sector operators such as Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd and Virgin Orbit to help gain further insight into space operations and to influence future developments.

In September 2021 the government published a National Space Strategy aimed at developing the space economy and protecting the UK’s interests in space and in February 2022 the MoD published its Defence Space Strategy, outlining “how Defence will protect the UK’s national interests in space in an era of ever-growing threats”. The strategy announced a portfolio of programmes for developing space assets and infrastructure and some £6.4 billion has been allocated over the next ten years for various space programmes including:

- Upgrading the UK’s Skynet military communications satellites network.
- Developing a network of small satellites for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and, possibly, target selection.
- Developing and enhancing command and control of space assets.
- Developing Space Domain Awareness (SDA) capabilities for detecting, tracking, and identifying objects in orbit.

As mentioned in previous GN newsletters, the UK government has also awarded grants, nearly £40 million, to enable the launch of small satellites from the UK and to develop several ‘spaceports’ in Scotland, Wales and England.

The UK Space Agency currently supports the development of 3 of the 7 proposed space launch sites:

- SaxaVord Spaceport (previously Shetland Space Centre)—Unst, Shetland Islands.
- Space Hub Sutherland—Sutherland.
- Spaceport Cornwall—Newquay Airport, Cornwall.

Lockheed-Martin is developing their SaxaVord Shetland Space Centre for vertical launch operations and the first vertical small satellite launch from the UK is planned for next year. Virgin orbit is also planning to use Spaceport Cornwall for horizontal launches for Welsh start-up company Space Forge this September.

Although many of these launches may be for commercial companies, space use has evolved into a fuzzy military/commercial collaboration and Alexandra Stickings, a space policy and security analyst at the Royal United Services Institute in London, believes that the Shetland and Sutherland spaceports will need military contracts to be viable. She said “I am of the opinion that the proposed spaceports would need the MoD as a customer to survive as well as securing contracts with companies such as Lockheed” and the military will want to diversify their launch capabilities “so the Scottish locations could provide an option for certain future missions.” She also warned that: “There is also a possibility that if these sites become a reality, there will be pressure on the MoD to support them even if the cost is more than other providers.”

One of the issues fuelling concerns by local residents over spaceport operations is the environmental impacts. The GN has recently been highlighting these in our newsletters, videos and webinars. The launching of rockets is producing environmental problems, polluting the ground and the atmosphere with fuel and exhaust fumes. Considerable amounts of CO2 are also released by the development and manufacture of rockets and from producing, storing and burning of rocket fuels.

There is no agreement so far on what constitutes responsible behaviour with regards to humanity’s presence in space, and the field of space ethics needs further urgent work—‘ground rules’ need to be established before the commercial and military exploitation of space moves ahead without regard to environmental and ethical factors.

To address some of the gaps in current space policy, the report makes the following recommendations:

(See Heaven’s Sake 12)
The billionaire space race is killing Earth: Rockets will never be environmentally friendly

by Will Lockett

We know we must be living through a revolutionary time in history when billionaires are the ones pushing the frontiers of space rather than the government. Access to space has never been so cheap and widely available, allowing for blue sky ideas like space tourism, Mars missions, NASA moon bases, and the development of copious numbers of satellites to become viable. Moreover, these new-age rockets can be powered by carbon-neutral fuel, meaning we are now capable of exploring the heavens without damaging the Earth. Right? Well, a recent study has shown that even these revolutionary “do-gooder” rockets are harming our precious planet. But how? And how will this affect the space race?

Let’s get something out of the way first; to develop an understanding of the environmental harm posed by the space race, we need to know which rockets use which fuel, and how much carbon they emit.

Firstly, SpaceX (Elon Musk’s company). Their Falcon 9 rocket uses kerosene fuel and emits around 425 tonnes of carbon dioxide per launch, along with water vapour, soot, and nitrous oxides (NOx). Their upcoming Starship also runs off methane, and will produce a whopping 2,683 tonnes of carbon dioxide per launch, along with even more water vapour, soot, carbon monoxide and NOx. Both kerosene and methane can be manufactured as carbon-neutral biofuels, but SpaceX doesn’t do that yet.

On the other hand, Blue Origin (Jeff Bezos’s company), is very different. Their rockets (both New Shepard and New Glenn) run on pure hydrogen and oxygen. This means that when they launch, they only produce water vapour and NOx. But hydrogen takes a lot of energy to refine, so most sources have a huge carbon footprint. Contrastingly, green hydrogen is a healthier alternative to regular hydrogen, given the environmental benefits involved in refining with carbon-neutral power. Yet sadly, Blue Origin does not use green hydrogen, meaning that even though their rockets don’t emit any carbon during launch, they still have a sizable carbon footprint.

So if someone tells you that these new-age rockets are carbon-neutral, you can politely remind them that they aren’t yet, and the fact that they aren’t yet should be raising eyebrows. If it is so easy to save thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions, why aren’t they? Well sadly the most likely answer is cost. To have the cheapest launch costs they are turning to dirtier fuel that throws a lot of carbon in our precious atmosphere.

However, a recent study has shown something astonishing. While each individual launch emits enormous amounts of carbon, that isn’t actually a problem, as launches are so infrequent (for now) that they are only a drop in the ocean compared to our total carbon emissions. The real issue is all the other emissions that are so high in the atmosphere.

We know what carbon monoxide, NOx, carbon dioxide, and water vapour do in the lower and middle atmosphere. But very little is known about what they do in the upper atmosphere, as our typical emissions never get that high, and none of those gases occur naturally up there. Rockets have pumped literal tonnes of the stuff into the exosphere, and this study finally figured out their massive effect on the globe.

So what did they find these emissions were doing? Well let’s start with water vapour. We often forget that water vapour is the most potent greenhouse gas, locking in an incredible amount of heat, because clouds (which are made of water vapour) dissipate pretty quickly. But water vapour turns into fine ice crystals in the upper atmosphere and dissipates slowly, staying up there for much, much longer than it should, and trapping heat in our already warming world.

It’s the same story with carbon dioxide. But because atmospheric density is far lower when you’re that high up, their emissions can cover a much larger area and can have a much more significant effect than carbon dioxide in the lower atmosphere. This means that even if a rocket uses carbon-neutral fuels, it might not offset the carbon-driven climate change the rocket produces.

Then there is carbon monoxide and NOx. Carbon monoxide reacts with oxygen and other gases, messing up the atmospheric composition. This effect is magnified in the upper atmosphere, as the lower density means a single gramme of it can screw up a much larger volume of gas, causing more harm. But NOx is also reactive and is a very potent greenhouse gas. Yet again, because the upper atmosphere doesn’t mix much with the lower atmosphere, this horrific gas stays up there for far longer, causing much more damage.

But the study also pointed out that this abundance of greenhouse gases will affect how the different layers of the atmosphere mix. This is because they trap more heat in the upper atmosphere, their effects can be devastating and far-reaching. This makes a fairly compelling argument that even if a space company claims to use carbon-neutral fuels, they could still be causing significant damage to our precious Earth.

The space industry is currently undergoing massive growth. This means that every government, rocket manufacturer, and satellite provider wants to launch more rockets every year. Right now, the environmental impact of these launches is relatively minimal as there are so few launches each year. But if we let the space tourism market take off, the Mars colony blossoms, and new space stations flourish, then the number of launches will need to increase exponentially. This study has shown that the atmosphere might not be able to take such a monumental increase in launches.

If you consider that we aren’t yet on target to keep climate change to only 1.5°C, then it is easy to see a future where the space industry, and therefore the new age space race, has to be massively restricted to save the planet.

So don’t believe the hype. Every rocket harms the environment, even the carbon-neutral ones and hydrogen ones. We are only just understanding how these upper atmosphere emissions are changing our planet, but so far, it looks like it is definitely for the worse, and on a widespread scale. Could this put a pause on Musk’s Mars ambitions, or Bezos’s space station plans? Possibly. I at least hope they are discussing how to mitigate these problems, but looking at their track records, I very much doubt it. Instead, the burden falls on us, the public and the government organisations that regulate these space companies, to ensure that reaching for the heavens doesn’t cost the Earth.

—Will Lockett is a journalist passionate about cutting edge technology, space and fighting climate change.
Pentagon plans for assault Starships

The US military wants to use Elon Musk’s spaceships to deploy a “quick reaction force.”

Landing a rescue force at a US embassy in Africa threatened by a Bengazi-style siege is just one of the potential military uses for Elon Musk’s Starship vessels, according to an internal military report made public in June. The document pertains to the 2020 cooperative agreement between SpaceX and the US Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), but remains a wish list as the Starships are nowhere near ready for actual operations.

That TRANSCOM had partnered with SpaceX back in October 2020 was public knowledge, as the US military actually announced it at the time. Officially, the Defense Department was public knowledge, as the US military report made public in June.

“Embassy Support,” envisions “rapid theater direct delivery capability” from the US to an embassy in Africa, potentially involving a “quick reaction force.” The mere demonstration of such ability “could deter non-state actors from aggressive acts toward the US,” the military said.

While SpaceX has not commented on the story, TRANSCOM spokesperson John Ross told the Intercept the military believes a rocket-deployed rapid reaction force would be “possible within the next 5-10 years.”

The Starship is still in its experimental phase. The first-ever successful landing of a prototype only took place in May 2021, after a series of tests that ended in fiery explosions. In addition to technical challenges, Musk is also dealing with the federal bureaucracy and the process of getting permits for launching tests from the SpaceX facility in southern Texas.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) gave SpaceX preliminary environmental approval. Even then, the FAA license would cover only ten launches a year. Moreover, the authorities are concerned SpaceX lacks “a strong safety culture,” according to a FAA report leaked in June 2021.

Bruce Kent Presente!

It is with great sadness, but deep gratitude for his life and gifts, that Bruce Kent’s family announced his death, on 8 June after a short illness. He would have been 93 on 22 June.

At the time of his death Bruce was a Vice-President of CND [UK’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament], a Vice-President of Pax Christi, and Emeritus President of the Movement for the Abolition of War.

After national service in the Royal Tank Regiment and a law degree at Brasenose College, Oxford, Bruce Kent was ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Westminster. Between 1958 and 1987 he served in several London parishes, as secretary to Cardinal Heenan, and as the RC Chaplain to the University of London.

It was his Christian faith that brought him to reject nuclear weapons as fundamentally immoral because, even without their use, nuclear deterrence itself depends on a willingness to commit mass murder. As a leading spokesperson for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the 1980s, Kent became well known as a formidable opponent of Margaret Thatcher’s defence policy at a time when public opposition to the acquisition of Trident, and Cruise missiles, was escalating.

With his warmth and wit, Bruce Kent was a popular speaker with audiences of all ages from primary schools to pensioners’ groups. His commitment to innumerable peace and human rights campaigns over many decades included the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, for the reform of the United Nations, and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (which came into force in 2021). He was always actively concerned about the welfare of prisoners, especially those maintaining their innocence, and prison reform.

Among his heroes was Franz Jägerstätter, the Austrian farmer who was executed in 1943 for refusing to fight in Hitler’s army. As recently as 15 May, Bruce Kent took part in the annual ceremony in Tavistock Square, London, to honour conscientious objectors throughout the world.

He was an Honorary Fellow of Brasenose College, and in the past year was awarded the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism.

He was also very supportive of the work of the Global Network for many years.

Bruce Kent is survived by his wife, Valerie Flessati, his sister Rosemary Meakins, sister-in-law Ruth Kent, and their extensive families.

Bruce Kent (center) with his wife Valerie (left) and Dave Webb (right)
With the Rocket Nuri, South Korea heads for Space Imperialism

by Choi Sung-hee
The Rocket Nuri and its implication on the military

On June 21, 2022, South Korea succeeded in launching her first homemade rocket named Nuri. The Nuri was launched in the Naro Space Center, Goheung County, South Jeolla province of the mainland. A performance verification satellite was delivered to orbit 700 km from the Earth. South Korea became the 7th nation in the world to secure the ability to deliver a 1,500kg satellite to the low orbit of 600-800 km.

Some conservative media used words such as ‘space war’ in their headlines, meaning South Korea is ready to compete in space development. Four days later, news reported South Korea military’s high expectation of launching micro military satellites of around 100 kg, using the technology applied to the rocket Nuri which used liquid and kerosene for its fuel. Such micro-satellites would fill the ‘surveillance gaps’ of the 425 project which the military is working on to secure its own surveillance ability against North Korea. It is the project to introduce five military satellites (each 800kg) and to launch them consecutively by 2025, loaded on a rocket of Space X, a US corporation. Now, the military expects that they can also use the rocket Nuri beside the solid propelled space vehicle.

In July 2020 when the US lifted the ban on South Korea’s use of solid fuel in missile-making, Kim Hyung-jong, a deputy director of National Security Office, then, expressed the vision for South Korea to retain many low orbit military satellites’ and stated that ‘the ROK-US alliance cooperation would expand in earnest into the space.’ The US missile restrictions on South Korea were completely lifted in May, 2021. Four months later, the South Korea navy succeeded in the test launch of SLBM (Submarine-launched ballistic missile) from the newest submarine Dosan Ahn Changho. The navy has also much concern with the operation of the sea-based satellite interception system.

In 2021, Maj. Gen. DeAnna Burt, a Deputy commander of the U.S. Space Operations Command, U.S. Space Force, joined the Seoul International Aerospace Symposium hosted by the ROK air force, held in connection with the Seoul International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition 2021 and emphasized the cooperation between the ROK-US and expected continuous cooperation on the development of the Nuri and Korea’s military satellites.

For whom is the ‘New Space’?

It is known that around 300 corporations joined the development of Nuri whose launch success is considered as the landmark for South Korea’s space development. “The New Space” has been the term to indicate the direction of South Korea’s space development. The term commonly indicates the direction of space development from the government-led to the civilian-led. And it is the revision of the Space Development Promotion Law which institutionalizes such direction. The revised bill was resolved in the National assembly plenary session on May 29th followed by its passage during the cabinet meeting of the Yoon Suk Yeol government. The revised bill will be enforced from this December.

According to the press release by the South Korea Ministry of Science and ICT on June 7th, titled, ‘Arrangement for the Institutional Foothold to Secure the Competitiveness of the Space Industry, in the Age of New Space,’ the revised bill is to “foster the space industry more structurally and to expand the participation of civilian corporation.” It says that the bill “introduced the contract method for corporations to appropriate profits.” The Ministry is to prepare for the report on the preliminary feasibility study this August for the designation of space industry cluster.

Jeju is actually one of those sites threatened by the vision of New Space. While the National Satellite Integrated Operation Center will complete construction this fall, a launch test of civilian rocket succeeded in Jeju this March after several tests. The 3.2-meter length rocket made by a Perigee Aerospace Co. is a product from the aspiration of the New Space: smallness, mass production, and effectiveness. Its launch was supported by the KAIST and Won Hee-ryong, a former Jeju Island governor who is now the Minister of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Technology. He once said, “Closest to the equator in South Korea, Jeju is the best place for the possible scope angle to launch projectiles to space.”

It is noticeable that many South Korean politicians and corporate personnel mention Space X as a model for the ‘New Space.’ But it should be remembered that Space X was very close to the US security organizations in its origin and its Starlink system is now being used in the Ukraine war. South Korea’s first military-exclusive communication satellite was made by Airbus, a European multinational company, and launched by the Falcon 9 rocket of Space X at Cape Canaveral Space Force base in Florida in July 2020.

South Korea, the first country in the world which commercialized 5G, plans to build a 6G communication network ahead of other nations, by securing its own projectile technology and satellites. Last year, she joined the US-led Artemis project which Russia refused to join saying it looks like a space-version of NATO. South Korea, which plans to use a nuclear-powered battery for a landing module to the Moon in 2030 sends her first moon-probe this August. The probe will also be loaded in the Falcon 9 of the Space X.

Despite the Outer Space Treaty which is “for the peaceful purpose,” and “for the benefit of all peoples,” South Korea is shamelessly heading for space for corporate profits and military superiority. The products would be used for US domination and imperial destruction and exploitation. The only hope to stop the apocalypse of the Earth is people who are awakened.

—Choi Sung-hee lives in Gangjeong village, Jeju. She joined ‘no Jeju navy base’ struggle more than 10 years ago. She is a South Korean advisory board member of the Global Network.

People hold protest banners at a rocket launch ceremony in Jeju on Dec. 29, 2021. People claimed that the rocket launch would accelerate ecological system destruction, the climate crisis, reckless development and the militarization of space. (Photo by the protest team)
In Ukraine, Diplomacy Has Been Ruled Out

by David Barsamian and Noam Chomsky

David Barsamian: Let’s head into the most obvious nightmare of this moment, the war in Ukraine and its effects globally. But first a little background. Let’s start with President George H.W. Bush’s assurance to then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not move “one inch to the east”—and that pledge has been verified. My question to you is, why didn’t Gorbachev get that in writing?

Noam Chomsky: He accepted a gentleman’s agreement, which is not that uncommon in diplomacy. Shake-of-the-hand. Furthermore, having it on paper would have made no difference whatsoever. Treaties that are on paper are torn up all the time. What matters is good faith. And in fact, H.W. Bush, the first Bush, did honor the agreement explicitly. He even moved toward instituting a partnership in peace, which would accommodate the countries of Eurasia. NATO wouldn’t be disbanded but would be marginalized. Countries like Tajikistan, for example, could join without formally being part of NATO. And Gorbachev approved of that. It would have been a step toward creating what he called a common European home with no military alliances.

Clinton in his first couple of years also adhered to it. What the specialists say is that by about 1994, Clinton started to, as they put it, talk from both sides of his mouth. To the Russians he was saying: Yes, we’re going to adhere to the agreement. To the Polish community in the U.S. and other ethnic minorities, he was saying: Don’t worry, we’ll incorporate you within NATO. By about 1996-97, Clinton said this pretty explicitly to his friend Russian President Boris Yeltsin, whom he had helped win the 1996 election. He told Yeltsin: Don’t push too hard on this NATO business. We’re going to expand but I need it because of the ethnic vote in the U.S.

In 1997, Clinton invited the so-called Visegrad countries—Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania—to join NATO. The Russians didn’t like it but didn’t make much of a fuss. Then the Baltic nations joined, again the same thing. In 2008, the second Bush, who was quite different from the first, invited Georgia and Ukraine into NATO. Every U.S. diplomat understood very well that Georgia and Ukraine were red lines for Russia. They’ll tolerate the expansion elsewhere, but these are in their geostrategic heartland and they’re not going to tolerate expansion there. To continue with the story, the Maidan uprising [U.S. orchestrated coup in Kiev] took place in 2014, expelling the pro-Russian president and Ukraine moved toward the West.

From 2014, the U.S. and NATO began to pour arms into Ukraine—advanced weapons, military training, joint military exercises, moves to integrate Ukraine into the NATO military command. There’s no secret about this. It was quite open. Recently, the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, bragged about it. He said: This is what we were doing since 2014. Well, of course, this is very consciously, highly provocative. They knew that they were encroaching on what every Russian leader regarded as an intolerable move. France and Germany vetoed it in 2008, but under U.S. pressure, it was kept on the agenda. And NATO, meaning the United States, moved to accelerate the de facto integration of Ukraine into the NATO military command.

In 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky was elected with an overwhelming majority—I think about 70% of the vote—on a peace platform, a plan to implement peace with Eastern Ukraine and Russia, to settle the problem. He began to move forward on it and, in fact, tried to go to the Donbas, the Russian-oriented eastern region, to implement what’s called the Minsk II agreement. It would have meant a kind of federalization of Ukraine with a degree of autonomy for the Donbas, which is what they wanted. Something like Switzerland or Belgium. He was blocked by right-wing [Nazi-led] militias which threatened to murder him if he persisted with his effort.

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Space Week in October
The Global Network’s annual Keep Space for Peace Week will be held October 1-8 this year. We urge members and supporters to hold public activities during the week to help increase public concern and political mobilization around increasingly dangerous space issues. Be sure to help share the links to our web site and our YouTube page during space week as they each contain many excellent resources.

NATO seeks to expand into the Pacific
The NATO summit in Madrid was a turning point in Asia’s ‘security architecture’ due to the attendance of Japan and South Korea, as this risks bringing on “a new Cold War, an Asian NATO, or a region split into hostile blocs,” security experts warn. As nonmember states of NATO, Japan and South Korea’s participation sends a dangerous signal to the world that NATO, renegeing on its promises, seeks to expand beyond a European security mission. NATO’s eastward expansion has been blamed as the root cause of the Ukraine crisis, which has no immediate solution in sight and is intensifying. The first NATO summit attended by the leaders of Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, even as observers, casts a shadow on the globe and already-worsening geopolitical tensions.

Changes in GOP?
The hawkish wing of the GOP is losing its battle over the war without escalating a nuclear confrontation with Russia. They have been attacked by opponents on both sides of the ideological spectrum as neo-isolationists and worse, but their message may be resonating with a war weary American public skeptical of Washington’s leadership on this and other foreign policy fronts. Questions remain, however: can this movement transcend partisan politics, i.e., a future Republican takeover of Congress and the White House? What about the issue of China? Does the New Right have the capacity of working with equally committed groups in the middle and the left, despite the polarizing politics of our time?

A Middle East NATO too?
Jordan’s King Abdullah II said he would support the formation of a Middle Eastern military alliance linked to NATO. Speaking to CNN in June, Abdullah said that Jordan sees itself as a partner of NATO. The king added that Jordanian forces fought “shoulder-to-shoulder” with the alliance for decades. “I’d like to see more countries in the area come into that mix,” Abdullah said. “I would be one of the first people that would endorse a Middle East NATO”. Abdullah’s remarks came following reports that revealed a U.S. plan to establish an air defense alliance in the Middle East between a number of Arab states and Israel. Joe Biden is expected to discuss the plan with a number of Arab leaders during his visit to Saudi Arabia in July. Speaking to Israeli lawmakers in June, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said that the “Middle East Air Defense Alliance” is already underway.

Always expanding NATO
Defense One reports: NATO will grow its quick reaction force nearly tenfold, to “well over 300,000” troops, to better protect the alliance’s eastern front in response to Russia’s war in Ukraine. NATO leader Jens Stoltenberg announced in late June. “These troops will exercise together with home defense forces, and they will become familiar with local terrain facilities and our new pre-positioned stocks, so that they can respond smoothly and swiftly to any emergency,” Stoltenberg said. “Together, this constitutes the biggest overhaul of collective defense and deterrence since the Cold War.”

Space National Guard?
AP reports: About 1,000 Air National Guard troops who are assigned to space missions are mired in an identity crisis. Torn between the Air Force, where they have historically been assigned, and the military’s shiny new Space Force where they now work, their units have become orphans, according to commanders, as state and federal leaders wrangle over whether to create a Space National Guard. For federal authorities, the issue is mainly about the money. A Space Guard, they say, will create unneeded bureaucracy and cost up to $500 million a year. They argue it’s too high a price to slap a new name on a patch for an airman doing the same job at the same desk as a year ago.

U.S. bases in Norway
On June 3, 2022, a majority in the Norwegian Parliament approved a bilateral Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement with the U.S. government, which the conservative Norwegian government had signed on April 16, 2021. The agreement allows the creation of four permanent U.S. military bases on Norwegian soil: one in the south-east (Rygge), one in the south-west (Sola), one in the mid-north (Evnes), and one west of that (Ramsund). Some of these are not far from Russia, the official justification for the bases.

Cut the Pentagon budget
Summer is the season when Congress deliberates the administration’s federal budget request for the coming fiscal year - a much anticipated opportunity for the Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex (M-I-C-C) to siphon more of our tax dollars into Pentagon coffers. So we’re making it clear from the start: reject further increases to Biden’s already enormous Pentagon budget proposal! Military spending increased sharply under Trump. But with the U.S. war in Afghanistan over, logic would dictate that a sizable portion of the current trillion dollar Pentagon budget could be responsibly repurposed to provide real human needs security for the American people. Yet rather than roll back this profligacy, Biden has proposed a topline FY2023 Pentagon budget up $30 billion from this year and higher than Pentagon spending at the heights of the Vietnam and Korean wars.

ASAT attack would trigger WW3
An attack against a spacecraft could usher in the next global war, Dmitry Rogozin, the head of Russia’s national space agency Roscosmos, said in April. “One must keep in mind that the destruction of a foreign spacecraft means World War III. It’s a casus belli, and there’s no doubt about that,” Rogozin said, using a Latin term for a formal legal reason to start a war. Russia is threatening to carry out an ASAT test as a warning to Washington’s decision to stop conducting anti-satellite (ASAT) missile tests. Announcing the move, Vice President Kamala Harris called the destruction of satellites during such tests “reckless and irresponsible” because it leaves dangerous space debris. The Roscosmos chief, however, argued that the U.S. is now “pretending to be doves” because it had already conducted all its necessary ASAT tests. “This move should, therefore, be strictly viewed as propaganda,” he said.

Stoltenberg speaks a rare truth
NATO has been preparing to face off Russia since 2014, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on June 29. “We actually prepared for this possibility for a long time,” he said at a news conference capping a second day of a NATO summit in Madrid. “It’s not as if NATO suddenly woke up on the 24th of February and realized that Russia was dangerous. The reality is that we also have been preparing for this since 2014 because that’s the reason why we have increased our presence in the eastern part of the alliance, why NATO allies have started to invest more in defense,” Stoltenberg went on to say. (It should be remembered that the Obama-Biden administration orchestrated a coup d’état in Ukraine’s capital Kiev in 2014. They installed right-wing and Nazi forces in the new government.)

From the G7
Brazilian journalist Pepe Escobar reports: At the Bavarian Alps, the G7 promised to find “ways to limit the price of Russian oil and gas”: if that doesn’t work according to “market methods”, then “means will be imposed by force”. A G7 “indulgence” would only be possible if a prospective buyer of Russian energy agrees to strike a deal on the price with G7 representatives. What this means in practice is that the G7 arguably will be creating a new body to “regulate” the price of oil and gas, subordinated to Washington’s whims: for all practical purposes, a major twist of the post-1945 system. The whole planet, especially the Global South, would be held hostage. Meanwhile, in real life, Gazprom is on a roll, making as much money from gas exports to the EU as it did in 2021, even though it’s shipping much smaller volumes.
NATO rolls the dice

At the conclusion of the late-June NATO summit in Madrid, Spain, the members of NATO, including most European states as well as the United States and Canada, adopted a strategy document outlining plans to militarize the European continent, massively escalate the war with Russia, and prepare for war with China. The document pledges to “deliver the full range of forces” needed “for high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors.” It’s a dangerous and provocative riverboat gamble.

Sky Project for Ukraine

The Defense Post reports: An international group of private and government entities are jointly developing a mobile air-defense system for Ukraine. The two-stage initiative, dubbed “Sky Project,” will upgrade Ukraine’s air defense by revamping the country’s command center—which includes 45 mobile monitoring centers collecting information on incoming missiles—followed by the interceptor, which counters only 20 percent of its targets. The Sky Project is modeled on Israel’s Iron Dome system. San Francisco-based JustAnswer and Liviv IT Cluster Administration are co-developing the air defense system in partnership with the Liviv Military Administration, Ukraine Air Command, West Software Association of Japan, itSMF Japan, and others.

Russia kicked out of Arctic Council

High North News reports: What was once the ‘Arctic 8’ at the Arctic Council has now been reduced to seven as the non-Russian member states see no other opportunities than to continue cooperation about the High North without Russia. “The Arctic Council is history after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. What remains is the question of what the new forum can and should do. With Russia out of the Arctic cooperation, The Arctic 7 is very well equipped to bring both its research as well as its political engagement one step further,” a spokesman said. (Russia has by far the largest land border with the Arctic. It seems a bit unrealistic, especially as the Arctic ice melts due to climate crisis, to plan for ‘coordination and cooperation’ without Moscow involved.)

Cyber Command ‘tells the truth’

U.S. Cyber Command specialists have been deployed to Ukraine and conducted offensive operations against Russia, its commander said in early June. “We’ve conducted a series of operations across the full spectrum; offensive, defensive, [and] information operations”. In an interview with Sky News, four-star general Paul Nakasone, who heads both the Cyber Command and the NSA out of Fort Meade, Maryland, claimed the difference between Russian and U.S. information warfare is that Moscow lies while Washington tells the truth. U.S. intelligence officials though admitted to NBC News in April that they have leaked intelligence to the media about the conflict in Ukraine that was either “not rock solid” or was outright made up on multiple occasions, in order to win an “info war” against Russia. The misinformation was part of an effort to “undermine Moscow’s propaganda and prevent Russia from defining how the war is perceived in the world,” they said.

$624 million for more Stinger missiles

Raytheon Corporation was awarded a $624 million U.S. Army contract to produce 1,300 Stinger missiles. The contract includes provisions for engineering support, as well as the test equipment and support needed to address obsolescence, modernize key components, and accelerate production. “We’re aligned with the U.S. Army on a plan that ensures we fulfill our current foreign military sale order, while replenishing Stingers provided to Ukraine and accelerating production,” said Wes Kremer, president of Raytheon Missiles and Defense. “The funding will be used to enhance Sting er’s producibility in an effort to meet the urgent need for replenishment.”

MD system retreat in Hawaii

Honolulu Civil Beat reports: Hawaii’s Congressional leaders back off Missile Defense System. The project received criticism from both the military and residents, but Hawaii’s federal delegation kept advocating for it—until May. After years of arguing in favor of a nearly $2 billion missile defense radar—first on Oahu, then on Kauai—Hawaii’s congressional delegation is backing away from the project. U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono was a longtime advocate for the proposed Homeland Defense Radar—Hawaii, which would identify and classify missile threats to the islands. Hirono, who previously called it her “top priority,” twice pushed to restore funding for it that the Pentagon had removed from its budget. However, Hirono’s office said she has changed her position. Other congressional representatives from Hawaii now also agree.

Ukraine selling western weapons

Space War reports: Western countries have been ramping up weapons and ammunition shipments to Ukraine as Kyiv fights off a Russian invasion, but arms trade experts warn some of the lethal assistance could end up falling into the wrong hands. Ukraine claims its month-long defense by revamping the country’s local defense system in partnership with foreign companies is history after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. What remains is the question of whether this military assistance could end up falling into the hands of Russian-backed separatists in the Donbas region.

Carving up space

Consortium News reports: Satellites help run the internet and television and are central to the Global Positioning System. They enable modern weather forecasting, help scientists track environmental degradation and play a huge role in modern military technology. Nations that don’t have their own satellites providing these services rely on others. For those that want to develop their own satellite infrastructure, options are running out as orbits fill up. Inequity is already playing out in access to satellites. In the not-so-distant future, the ability to extract resources from the Moon and asteroids could also become a major point of difference between the space haves and have-nots. As policies emerge, there is the risk that these inequities become permanent. At the current rate, the major space players are rapidly occupying geostationary and low Earth orbits, potentially monopolizing access to important satellite capabilities and adding to space junk.

Orbital exclusion and increasing debris

Space Daily reported: Rajeev Suri, Chief Executive Officer of Immarsat, the world leader in global, mobile satellite communications, issued a stark warning in May that unmanned space sector expansion could exacerbate environmental damage, stifle innovation and undermine the long-term capability of satellites to help combat climate change. Mr. Suri highlighted three primary areas of concern: (1) Mega-constellations are talking about tens of thousands of new satellites during this decade - satellites with an expected life of only five to ten years. The resulting debris creates hazards not just in a particular orbit, but for anything passing through that orbit. (2) The environmental challenge is not well understood. The journal Nature noted that satellite re-entries from one of the mega-constellations alone could deposit more aluminum into Earth’s upper atmosphere than is deposited through meteors, becoming the dominant source of high-altitude alumina. This would risk reflecting solar radiation in an uncontrolled manner, which senior scientists have said could create severe consequences for the environment on Earth. (3) There is the issue that is politely known as ‘orbital congestion,’ but which I, a bit more directly, call ‘orbital exclusion’.

Stop the return of U.S. nukes to Britain!

CND reported in May that the UK was quietly added to a U.S. Department of Defense list of NATO nuclear weapon storage locations in Europe earmarked for upgrade. It’s believed that the location in question is the U.S. Air Force base at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk - located just 70 miles from London. 110 nuclear warheads were stored at RAF Lakenheath until they were removed in 2008 following persistent popular protest. It remains unclear if these free-fall B61 gravity bombs have already returned to Britain, but their reintroduction must be opposed! If allowed, the UK will become the sixth European NATO member to station U.S. nuclear weapons. Currently Germany, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey ‘host’ U.S. nukes.

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 can be an important contribution to our movement to stop the militarization and nuclearization of space. Thank you for your consideration.
Rocket launch sites popping up all over

by Lisa Savage

When you hear the phrase “public-private partnerships” what do you think of—maybe corporate branding on public university research centers, or billionaires raking in taxpayer-funded subsidies? Both of these associations would be true of an increasingly evident manifestation of such partnerships: the construction of multiple rocket launch sites around the planet.

Promoters don’t like to call these rocket launch sites. They prefer the public relations value of calling the sites “spaceports” which sounds much more appealing and, not by coincidence, much less military.

In capitalist countries, new launch site construction is always sold as a good way to create jobs. Because sites are necessarily distant from population centers, they’re proposed in communities where jobs for wages are typically scarce. People in places that have already built launch sites, however, found the promised jobs never materialized. A crew of specialists arrive to handle the occasional launch while the only permanent jobs are a few for security guards and custodians.

Space Alert! has previously reported on sites in Indonesia, Guyana, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It should be noted that it is common for nations to use launch sites located in other nations, so enticements like a decade of free internet service are used to persuade economically depressed countries to host a site. What follows is an overview of what we know about proposed launch sites and local resistance to their toxic fallout.

SaxaVord in Unst, Shetland has seen some evidence of a planned launch site including reports of an environmental impact statement that is unavailable online. Shetlanders have shown themselves to be vigorous advocates for environmental conservation in the past, and it’s likely many would oppose a rocket launch site in the island northernmost in Scotland.

Last winter, the Welsh Government released a National Space Strategy for Wales citing job creation in high-skilled technology professions and monetary rewards for locales identified as Cardiff, Newport, Port Talbot, Broughton, Llanbedr (Gwynedd), Aberporth, and Radnorshire. The profiteers included numerous companies specializing in missile technology and military training: Raytheon, Qinetiq, Qioptiq, and Airbus Defence and Space. (For a more in-depth review of launch sites in the UK, see Dave Webb’s article on page ??).

Less than half of the 20 “spaceports” listed by the United States Federal Aviation Administration have seen rocket launches so far. These are scattered around the nation including sites in Florida, Virginia, Texas, Kodiak (Alaska), and New Mexico but there are many more locations proposed.

Michigan is one of many states where groups are working to develop rocket launch sites. In August of 2021, the state hosted a North American Space Summit to bring together rocket profiteers and investors. Investors at the summit were told that building commercial rocket launch sites could be a “space gold rush” with the chance of creating next-gen Silicon Valley tech profits. But no such sites in the U.S. have been profitable yet. Pentagon watchers theorize that the reason the U.S. military is using grants to encourage the construction of many sites right now is to gain an advantage in bargaining down the price of launching from them.

Still, many Michigan residents are opposing a plan to put a rocket launch site at the edge of Lake Superior. And voters in the state of Georgia recently rejected a plan for Camden County to purchase land to launch commercial rockets. Opponents who forced the referendum expressed concerns about environmental harms and safety risks.

Where I live in the U.S. we recently organized to oppose the creation of a public-private partnership called the Maine Space Corporation. A bill was rushed through a public hearing without notice and passed by the lower house of the Maine legislature without a roll call vote. Why the urgency? To create a public structure that allowed private corporations and public universities to apply for grants from the federal government in order to develop sites. One of the aerospace companies involved already had extensive contracts with the U.S. military [to test hypersonics]. Another claims to be operating in a purely educational realm with close ties to the state’s university system. Any profits derived from using future launch sites will, of course, be privately held. So far no launch site has been constructed, and commercial fishermen successfully imposed a moratorium in a proposed location at the municipal level. Needless to say, we will monitor future developments closely and spread the word via our website notoxicorockets4me.org.

The lands of indigenous people continue to be invaded and colonized by for-profit and military launch sites over community objections. In Texas, the Comecrudo Tribe has filed suit citing the American Indian Religious Freedom Act on the grounds that it is violated by the closure of public beaches during SpaceX rocket testing. Comecrudo ceremonies on sacred days must be conducted at the beach. Joined by environmental groups, their suit says such closures also violate the Texas Constitution and names the county and the Texas General Land Office as being in violation.

Kati Rocket Lab in New Zealand was sold to indigenous people whose land it is on as a purely civilian facility and launch site. Lockheed Martin Corporation now runs Rocket Lab and the peace community in NZ is protesting this betrayal as military technology is now hoisted from the launch site.

As launch sites proliferate, so do launches. The rapid growth of new satellites which join older objects already in orbit plus a lot of non-functioning junk has implications for climate, the ozone layer, wildlife exposure to disruptive sound pollution, and toxic fallout here on Earth.

—Lisa Savage is a retired school teacher and currently is the part-time social media coordinator for the Global Network. She lives in Solon, Maine.
Caitlin Johnstone: Ukraine Crawling with CIA & Co

by Caitlin Johnstone

The New York Times reported on June 25 that Ukraine is crawling with Special Forces and spies from the U.S. and its allies, which would seem to contradict earlier reports that the U.S. intelligence cartel is having trouble getting intel about what’s happening on the ground in Ukraine.

This would also, obviously, put the final nail in the coffin of the claim that this is not a U.S. proxy war.

In an article headlined “Commando Network Co-ordinates Flow of Weapons in Ukraine, Officials Say,” anonymous Western officials inform us of the following through their stenographers at the New York Times:

“As Russian troops press ahead with a grinding campaign to seize eastern Ukraine, the nation’s ability to resist the onslaught depends more than ever on help from the United States and its allies—including a stealthy network of commandos and spies rushing to provide weapons, intelligence and training, according to U.S. and European officials.

Much of this work happens outside Ukraine, at bases in Germany, France and Britain, for example. But even as the Biden administration has declared it will not deploy American troops to Ukraine, some C.I.A. personnel have continued to operate in the country secretly, mostly in the capital, Kyiv, directing much of the massive amounts of intelligence the United States is sharing with Ukrainian forces, according to current and former officials.

At the same time, a few dozen commandos from other NATO countries, including Britain, France, Canada and Lithuania, also have been working inside Ukraine.”

The revelation that the C.I.A. and U.S. Special Forces are conducting military operations in Ukraine does indeed make a lie of the Biden administration’s insistence at the start of the war that there would be no American boots on the ground in Ukraine. And the admission that NATO powers are so involved in operations against a nuclear superpower means, we are closer to seeing a nuclear exchange than anyone should be comfortable with.

This news should surprise no one who knows anything about the usual behavior of the U.S. intelligence cartel, but interestingly it contradicts something we were told by the same New York Times not three weeks ago.

“American intelligence agencies have less information than they would like about Ukraine’s operations and possess a far better picture of Russia’s military, its planned operations and its successes and failures,” the New York Times told us earlier this month. “U.S. officials said the Ukrainian government gave them few classified briefings or details about their operational plans, and Ukrainian officials acknowledged that they did not tell the Americans everything.”

It seems a bit unlikely that U.S. intelligence agencies would have a hard time getting information about what’s happening in a country where they themselves are physically located.

Moon of Alabama theorized at the time that this ridiculous, “We don’t know what’s happening in our own proxy war” line was being pushed to give the U.S. plausible deniability about Ukraine’s failures on the battlefield, which have only gotten worse since then.

So why are they telling us all this now? Well, it could be that we’re being paced into accepting an increasingly direct role of the U.S. and its allies in Ukraine.

The other day Antiwar’s Daniel Larison tweeted, “Hawks in April: Don’t call it a proxy war! Hawks in May: Of course it’s a proxy war! Hawks in June: It’s not their war, it’s our war!”

This is indeed exactly how it happened. Back in April, President Joe Biden told the press the idea that this is a proxy war between the U.S. and Russia was “not true” and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said “It’s not, this is clearly Ukraine’s fight” when asked if this is a proxy war. The mainstream media were still framing this claim as merely an “accusation” by the Russian government and empire spinmeisters were regularly admonishing anyone who used that term on the grounds that it deprives Ukrainians of their “agency.”

Then May rolled around and all of a sudden we had The New Yorker unequivocally telling us that the U.S. is in a “full proxy war with Russia” and hawks like U.S. [Democrat] Rep. Seth Moulton saying things like, “We’re not just at war to support the Ukrainians. We’re fundamentally at war, although somewhat through a proxy, with Russia, and it’s important that we win.”

And now here in late-June we’ve got war hawks like Max Boot coming right out and saying that this is actually America’s war, and it is therefore important for the U.S. to drastically escalate it in order to hand the Russians “devastating losses.”

So, the previously unthink-
Elon Musk’s satellites for the war in Ukraine

by Manlio Dinucci

Elon Musk, the richest man in the world whose wealth nearly doubled in the two pandemic years, offered $44 billion to buy Twitter, which he said would become “the platform for free speech across the world.” Elon Musk also owns SpaceX, an aerospace company based in California.

SpaceX makes rockets and satellites to build Starlink, a broadband Internet system that once is completed will cover the entire world. SpaceX has so far put 2,500 satellites into orbit with rockets carrying 50 satellites at a time and plans to place 42,000 Starlink satellites in low orbit occupying 80% of this space.

Starlink was presented as a commercial satellite system but has fundamental military applications. In fact, satellites in low orbit transmit signals at a much higher speed than those in geosynchronous orbit around the equator. The US Army and Air Force fund and test Starlink to use its military capabilities. For example, last March, the US Air Force reported that conventional and nuclear dual-capacity F-35A fighters had carried out data transmission using Starlink satellites at speed 30 times faster than traditional connections.

SpaceX’s Starlink satellites are already being used by the Ukrainian military to guide drones, artillery shells, and missiles into Russian positions. This is confirmed by General James Dickinson, head of the US Space Command, who declared to the Senate that “Elon Musk’s Starlink demonstrates in Ukraine what the mega-constellations of satellites can do.”

Elon Musk’s SpaceX is part of the group of ten largest commercial satellite operators collaborating with US Space Command at the Vandenberg Space Force base in California.

—Manlio Dinucci (CNGNN—Associazione per un Mondo senza Guerre, Italy)

Odds & Ends (cont.)

U.S.-Aussie space war collaboration

New developments at the U.S.–Australian satellite intelligence base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs gives the Pentagon an unprecedented capability to detect Chinese space vehicles and potentially destroy them. These military space technology developments make Australia more closely integrated with U.S. offensive capabilities in space. The head of the U.S. Space Command, General James Dickinson, has said Australia was a “critical partner” in efforts to improve space domain awareness and monitor Chinese space operations. He said, “This is the perfect location for a lot of things we need to do.” China can be expected to build more missiles with the ability to target Australian and U.S. forces in the region in response.

Biden request $27.6 Billion for space war in FY2023

ConverAction Magazine reports: As home to the world’s largest commercial satellite operators collaborating with US Space Command at the Vandenberg Space Force base in California.

More research into the environmental effects of space operations, both short and long term, on earth and in space, is needed.

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Download a copy of the report at https://cnduk.org/resources/for-heavens-sake-examining-the-uk-s-militarisation-of-space/

—Dr. Dave Webb is the board convener of the Global Network. He was the recent past chair of the UK’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and lives in Leeds, England.
Two Voices: Sweden and Finland in NATO

by Agneta Norberg (Women for Peace Sweden and Global Network board of directors)

In secrecy and in great haste, Sweden and Finland, two longtime nonaligned countries, on June 29th 2022, have been accepted as members in the world’s biggest military nuclear powered warmachine, NATO. TV’s broadcasts of the war in Ukraine has been helpful in creating a heated anti-Russian atmosphere in both these countries.

Sweden has been nonaligned for 213 years, since 1809, and kept Sweden out of wars. And now NATO, which from the beginning was a pact with no standing armies, is building up a gigantic standing army in Europe with hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Swedish young men and women will be forced to serve in wars in the future, in countries they might not have heard about.

According to NATO’s Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, “NATO is planning the greatest overhaul of its collective deterrence capabilities” since the Cold war ended. The new NATO plan is a “groundbreaking change of course” not only for war with Russia but also challenges posed by Beijing to our ‘western security, interests and values’. New York Times on June 25th reported that US troops and troops from many other countries are in secret inside Ukraine. NYT reports scores of CIA and Special Forces from UK, Canada, France and Lithuania are active in the country.

The future is bleak to say the least. But we have to roll up our sleeves and do whatever it takes to go against this madness and against the war hawks in the government which sad to say are Social Democrats.

The Left party in Sweden, will hopefully attract more votes in the election this autumn. It is the only party in Sweden which goes against this murderous policy.

by Lea Launokari (Women for Peace, Finland)

Finland’s application for membership was handed over to the Secretary General of NATO on May 18, 2022. This was led by haste, one-sided outreach and polls. Turkey’s Erdogan had initially blocked processing of Finnish and Swedish NATO applications but in the end agreed to their membership.

Our Social Democratic led parliament seem not to take in account that the security situation in Finland will deteriorate. The long border between Finland and Russia is becoming the border of confrontation. Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto and Minister of Education Li Andersson have promised to promote peace in NATO. Totally absurd.

NASA wants nuclear reactors on the Moon

The US space agency is funding fission power systems through Project Artemis.

NASA would like to have nuclear reactors for lunar and planetary expeditions, the US space agency said in June, announcing three contracts for developing concept designs by the end of the decade, in partnership with the Department of Energy. Military-industrial behemoth Lockheed Martin is one of the companies involved, along with the nuclear producer Westinghouse.

NASA hopes to have a design for the “fission surface power system” ready to launch by the end of the decade. John Wagner, director of the DOE’s Idaho National Laboratory, called the project “a very achievable first step toward the US establishing nuclear power on the Moon.”

Three 12-month contracts are each worth $5 million and will fund initial design concepts for a 40-kilowatt fission power system, with a requirement to last at least 10 years in the unforgiving environment of the moon. If successfully demonstrated on the lunar surface, the reactors could be used for the eventual mission to Mars, NASA said.

In addition to Lockheed Margin and Westinghouse, the third contractor will be a Texas-based outfit called IX. It is a joint venture between spacecraft designer Intuitive Machines and X-Energy, developers of an experimental pebble-bed reactor.

“Developing these early designs will help us lay the groundwork for powering our long-term human presence on other worlds,” said Jim Reuter of NASA’s Space Technology Mission Directorate.

Fission systems are relatively smaller, lighter and can provide “continuous power regardless of location, available sunlight, and other natural environmental conditions,” the space agency said. NASA also hopes to get “critical information” from the nuclear industry that could lead to developing atomic propulsion systems for deep space exploration missions.

The contracts are part of the Artemis program, a US initiative to return to the Moon—and put the first-ever woman and person of color on the lunar surface. It was named after the twin sister of Apollo, the Greek deity whom the initial US moonshot was named after. Initial schedules called for the first landing to take place in 2024, but last year NASA said it was no longer on track to achieve that, citing lack of funding.

In March, NASA announced a plan to land humans on Mars by 2040. Less than a week later, it had to cancel a test of the Artemis I spacecraft due to technical problems.

GN YouTube channel

Each month, GN board member Will Griffin (Iraq & Afghanistan war veteran) has been making a video depicting a different aspect of the new U.S. effort to ‘control and dominate’ space. He’s putting them on our YouTube channel, which can be found on YouTube at ‘GNspace4peace’. If you click on the ‘Subscribe’ button, you’ll get a notice each time a new video is posted. You can help by sharing the links to these videos so that more people can watch and learn. Thanks.
Australian moves inside China’s exclusive economic zone

by Bernard Keane & Clinton Fernandes

When Australia sends vessels into the South China Sea, is it a brave assertion of freedom of navigation or about gathering intelligence?

As more dangerous interactions between Australian and Chinese military forces occur in the South China Sea, it’s important to explore what the legal basis is for Australia’s activities—and what neither the government nor the media reveal about them.

Defence Minister Richard Marles says Australia is acting in accordance with international law when conducting naval and aviation activities in China’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Just so—there is no doubt that EEZs around the world are international waters.

EEZs encompass waters extending up to 200 nautical miles (approximately 340 kilometres) from a country’s shores. Under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a coastal state has the right to regulate economic activities (such as fishing and oil exploration) within its EEZ. China has ratified the convention, established its own EEZ, and also recognises those of other states.

But the United States has not ratified the convention—the only major maritime power to not do so. However, it says it will act in accordance with its provisions. And it established its EEZ within 200 nautical miles of its coast and also recognises the EEZ of other states.

But it also says it has the right to conduct military and intelligence-collection activities within any country’s EEZ. China disagrees. It says it respects freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, but does not respect the right of foreign governments to conduct military and intelligence-collection activities within its EEZ.

More to the point, the three major regional maritime powers friendly to Australia—India, Indonesia and the Philippines—agree with China.

For example, in April last year, the US 7th Fleet carried out a freedom-of-navigation operation in the EEZ of Quad partner India. India objected, saying the convention “does not authorise other states to carry out in the EEZ and on the continental shelf, military exercises or manoeuvres, in particular those involving the use of weapons or explosives, without the consent of the coastal state”.

So what benefit do we get from upholding the US approach to EEZs, especially given the potential to upset key regional powers we want on our side? An expert from the US Naval War College who testified before Congress in 2009, said if it accepted the position of China, India, the Philippines and Indonesia on EEZs, the US would be forced to conduct military operations from more than 200 miles offshore.

That would significantly reduce the range of US sensors and missiles, making intelligence-gathering much harder and making it much more difficult to deploy US marines and their equipment in amphibious assaults. America’s ability to project naval and air power would face limitations not only in the South China Sea but also in other EEZs such as the Persian Gulf. Its ability to use the world’s oceans as a medium of manoeuvre and global power projection would be threatened.

This approach has consequences. China has begun to conduct intelligence-gathering and presence operations in other countries’ EEZs, including Australia’s, justifying its behaviour by saying that it would not do so if Australia adopted its own position on the sovereignty of EEZs. Australia can have no complaint if China adopts the very behaviour we’re engaging in.

The real nature of the dispute over EEZs is rarely, if ever, made clear by the Australian government. The presence of Australian vessels and aircraft in the South China Sea is always explained in vague terms as about “freedom of navigation”, without saying what that actually involves—dropping sonobuoys to identify Chinese submarines and ships in order to destroy them at the start of hostilities. Instead, Australian vessels and aircraft are portrayed as innocently exercising their rights under international law in the face of a belligerent power.

Australian media rarely deviate from the government line. In foreign media, however, it is relatively normal to note that there is a fundamental dispute between the US and China over what conduct is permissible in EEZs.

Australians deserve to be told what the objective is: to uphold America’s desire to project power in every EEZ in the world, not just the South China Sea. Otherwise they will continue to be misled if or when a clash occurs.

—Professor Clinton Fernandes is in the Future Operations Research Group at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. Bernard Keane is Crikey’s political editor. Before that he was Crikey’s Canberra press gallery correspondent, covering politics, national security and economics.

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Canada to Spend Billions on NORAD

by Yves Engler

The Liberals are intent on funneling ever more of our collective resources to bolster the US Empire, spending lavishly to “modernize” Canada’s chief bi-national military accord. In June Defense Minister Anita Anand announced the government would spend $4.9 billion to upgrade the North American Aerospace Defense Command. The federal government said it will devote $40 billion to NORAD over 20 years, but it may be far more than that noted David Pugliese in a story headlined: “Cost to modernize NORAD set at $40 billion, but will final tally be higher?”

The media and government framed the announcement as strengthening Canada’s defenses. According to the *Globe and Mail* report, “the Canadian government has pledged $4.9 billion over six years to help upgrade North America’s air defenses, addressing the growing threat posed by hypersonic missiles and advanced cruise missile technology developed by Russia and China.” But it’s absurd to present NORAD as a defensive arrangement. Its lead actor has 1,000 international bases and Special Forces deployed in 149 countries. Rather than protect Canada and the US, NORAD supports violent missions led by other US commands. In 1965 NORAD’s mandate was expanded to include surveillance and assessment sharing for US commands stationed worldwide (United States European Command, United States Pacific Command, United States Africa Command, etc.).

The Pentagon has put satellites into space to enable first-strike ballistic missile defense (BMD). While Paul Martin’s Liberals claimed to oppose BMD, they granted “full cooperation by NORAD in missile defense work,” explained Richard Sanders in *Press for Conversion* report on the subject. In 2004 Ottawa formally permitted the US BMD system to use data from NORAD’s “Integrated Tactical Warning/Attack Assessment.”

It’s called “missile defense” because it’s designed to defend US missile sites after they launch offensive operations. US-installed missile defense systems in Romania, Poland and Korea, for instance, are designed primarily to stop opponents’ missiles following a US first-strike. US space-based missile defense interceptors able to eliminate Russia’s early warning satellites without warning puts that country on edge. This ratchets up the arms race and the likelihood of nuclear war.

NORAD has also drawn Canada into US belligerence in other ways. Canadian NORAD personnel were put on high alert when the US illegally blockaded Cuba in October 1962. This transpired even though Prime Minister John Diefenbaker hesitated in supporting US actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

During the 1973 Ramadan/Yom Kippur/Arab–Israeli War NORAD was placed on heightened alert. Washington wanted to deter the USSR from intervening on Egypt’s behalf.

NORAD systems offered surveillance and communications support to the 1991 war on Iraq. It monitored the region and provided information to launch US Patriot surface-to-air missiles. NORAD ballistic missile warnings were also sent to Ottawa and Canadian units in Bahrain.

NORAD also supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The same can be said for US bombing in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, etc. Thousands of Canadian military personnel assist NORAD’s operations. One hundred and fifty Canadians are stationed at NORAD’s central collection and coordination facility near Colorado Springs, Colorado. Hundreds more work at regional NORAD outposts across the US and Canada and many pilots are devoted to the Command.

A Royal Canadian Air Force general is the vice commander of NORAD and runs the entire command when the US commander is absent. In discussing the two countries’ most significant bilateral military accord, Ann Griffiths explains, “NORAD brings the Canadian military more deeply within the US defense establishment than any other ally. The United States quite simply, would not entrust such responsibilities to the military of any other close ally, not even Britain.”

NORAD makes Canada a junior partner to US militarism. If Canada was truly a force for good in the world, a peacekeeper and adherent of a rules-based international order, Ottawa would withdraw from NORAD, rather than spend billions more strengthening it.

—Yves Engler’s latest book is *Stand on Guard for Whom?: A People’s History of the Canadian Military.*
Europeans react to sanctions and war

On June 20, around 70,000 Belgian workers protested in Brussels against inflation and the rising cost of living. Belgian inflation hit a record 9 percent in June, Reuters reported. According to a Euronews report, a “number of placards and banners on the day of action did criticize Belgium for enforcing EU sanctions against Russia.”

At the Brussels’ cost-of-living protest, some on strike insist there is too much emphasis on war and not enough on diplomatic negotiations. Some involved in the protest expressed their frustrations regarding rising inflation when wages have continued to stay the same. A middle-aged man complained to the Press TV that “they have money to send to Ukraine for sophisticated weapons which costs a lot but they say they don’t have enough money to support us.”

On June 26, thousands protested in the Spanish capital of Madrid against the NATO summit which was to take place from June 28-30. Demonstrators said an increase in defense spending in Europe urged by NATO was a threat to peace, read a Reuters report. A protester told Reuters, “I am fed up (with) this business of arms and killing people. The solution they propose is more arms and wars, and we always pay for it. So, no NATO, no (army) bases, let the Americans go and leave us alone without wars and weapons.”

Analysts pointed out that the current economic recession and high inflation in Europe are a result of a series of factors including sanctions on Russian energy, devoting too much in terms of resources to NATO, and loose monetary policies adopted amid the global pandemic. The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) did a survey on the Russia-Ukraine conflict among approximately 8,000 people between April 28 and May 11. The research showed that there is a split when it comes to long-terms goals. Europeans are “divided between the ‘Peace’ camp (35 percent of people) that wants the war to end as soon as possible, and a ‘Justice’ camp that believes punishing Russia (25 per cent of people) is a more pressing goal,” according to the ECFR.

“In all countries, apart from Poland, the ‘Peace’ camp is larger than the ‘Justice’ camp. European citizens worry about the cost of economic sanctions and the threat of nuclear escalation. Unless something dramatically changes, they will oppose a long and protracted war. Only in Poland, Germany, Sweden, and Finland is there substantial public support for boosting military spending,” according to the ECFR.

Claudio Salvatore in Italy told the Global Times that Democrats in Europe are “leading us to an economic and military confrontation with the Eurasian countries. Through the ever-expanding NATO, they wage wars in every country to take control. They call it freedom and democracy, but it’s just another form of imperialism.”

― Information for this article came from various media outlets around the globe