Space Alert!

Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space

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Stop the Offshore Rocket Launch in Jeju!

By Choi Sung-hee

This year marks the 10th year from the completion of the Jeju Naval Base construction in Gangjeong Village. During this time, the militarization of Jeju Island has primarily proceeded under the guise of the space industry. Key examples include the completion of the National Satellite Integration Operations Center—which operates all of South Korea's low-Earth orbit satellites - in 2022; the completion of Hanwha Systems' Jeju Space Center in December 2025; and the opening of Contec Asian Space Park, Asia's largest private ground station, in April 2026. The Jeju Provincial Government has actively promoted the space industry under the pretext of creating future jobs and has brought in Hanwha Systems, a weapons manufacturer, as a key partner.

Hanwha Systems, a subsidiary of the arms contractor Hanwha, is involved in all aspects of South Korea's satellite development, including military reconnaissance and small satellites. It also manufactures naval combat systems. Declaring its intention to "make Jeju an outpost for the space industry," the company aims to establish the entire space industry cycle in Jeju, encompassing AI-based satellite production, launch, control, and satellite imagery services. The company has formed partnerships with Israeli arms manufacturers and is complicit in the massacre of Palestinians. It views the ROK-U.S. alliance as the foundation for sustained profits and pursuing projects to introduce and enhance AI systems within the ROK-U.S. combined military framework. In short, Hanwha Systems is South Korea's Palantir, and its parent company, Hanwha, positions itself as South Korea's SpaceX.

Hanwha Systems has built a space center capable of producing 100 small satellites annually on the site of the former Tamna University within the Jeju mid-mountain Groundwater Special Management Zone, 15 minutes car distance from the Jeju navy base, under preferential treatment from the Jeju Provincial Government. Furthermore, a joint maritime launch by the military, Hanwha Systems, and the Jeju Provincial Government is scheduled to take place off the southern coast of Jeju this May, while the launch platform entered the navy base on February 10th. According to a media report in February, the launch was originally scheduled for April 22 but has been repeatedly postponed for unspecified reasons. It is reported that this launch will carry satellites developed by Hanwha Systems. But the military, stating that the launch is "related to military capabilities." is not providing further details. A total of 7 to 10 launches are expected to take place by the end of next year. The fact that the military, Hanwha, and the Jeju Provincial Government are all remaining silent regarding the specific details of the launch serves as proof of just how dangerous this launch is.

This launch is referred to as a solid-fuel space launch vehicle test. In 1979, the U.S.-Korea Missile Guidelines were established, which restricted South Korea's missile development. Following several revisions, the restrictions on the use of solid fuel were lifted in July 2020 and the Guidelines itself was completely removed on May 22, 2021. South Korea's first and second solid-fuel space launch vehicle tests were conducted in the mainland, in 2022. And the third test, carrying a Hanwha Systems satellite, took place in the waters south of Jeju in December 2023. This proves that the fourth solid-fuel space launch vehicle test, scheduled to take place in May off the southern coast of Jeju, is not merely intended to send satellites into low Earth orbit but is also a cover for a missile launch test.

On February 23, 2026, 19 civic groups in Jeju issued a joint statement demanding an explanation from the Jeju Provincial Government regarding the offshore rocket launches. Additionally, the People Opposing Space Militarization and Rocket Launches, the Jeju Green Party, and the Jeju branch of the Justice Party conducted a petition drive calling for the halt of the launches. As a result, 883 organizations and individuals from both Korea and abroad signed the petition for a week starting April 13. Much gratitude to everyone who signed the petition and shared around it! On April 20th, 15 Jeju organizations held a press conference at the Jeju Provincial Government and subsequently delivered the petition to the provincial government. The statement claimed that the space industry, including offshore launches, is not a future growth industry but rather "a means of incorporating regions into war infrastructure." It expressed deep concern over the adverse effects, such as the Jeju offshore launch transforming Jeju—the 'Island of Peace'—"into a military stronghold," threatening "local ecosystems and the lives of residents" and "global peace." Moreover, sea-based launches in South Korea are conducted without a system in place to assess their impact on the marine environment.

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GN Coordinator's Report: Tough times ahead

By Bruce K. Gagnon

These are tough and frightening times as we watch the US and NATO continue to talk about control and domination of the planet and space beyond. As the global economy suffers in these moments one has to wonder if Trump really meant it not so long ago when he said that due to the costs of endless war$ Washington won't be able to afford Medicare and Medicaid. The states will have to fund those programs he snorted.

As a resident in Maine, I can promise our state has no chance of being able to cover those programs and the many others being dumped on the states. It's becoming ever clearer that the ruling oligarchs (with the advent of AI and other labor destroying high-tech) want to 'thin the herd' and get rid of the 'useless eaters' as they call us at the World Economic Forum.

Trump's Golden Dome space war program will cost trillions – especially now that he wants to add Canada and even Europe to the boondoggle. We know that the aerospace industry is drooling at the thought of the money they can grab. Whose hide will those funds come from?

We don't really need to have a deadly arms race in space. China and Russia have been going to the United Nations General Assembly for many years introducing a new treaty to ban all weapons in space. It's called PAROS – Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The non-binding resolution passes overwhelmingly at the General Assembly with the US and Israel voting no. Then it is sent to Geneva for negotiation at the Permanent Conference on Disarmament but again the US and Israel have been blocking it. I say close the door to the barn before the horse gets out. Seems like common sense.

As I write this Trump and Netanyahu claim that they must take Iran apart before they can end their latest imperial war of choice. Israel wants Lebanon, all of Palestine, Syria, and more across the region. At the same time, we've learned about zionists moving into Argentina (300,000 of them) and Tel Aviv just bought the national water system of Argentina. In addition, Israeli citizens are moving into Crete, Peru, Ecuador, Thailand and many other nations. Why?

Elon Musk and his high-tech buddies are eager to move capitalism into space because, as the Mars Society declares, 'the Earth is a rotting, dying, stinking planet'. The US and some allies (to help pay for it) intend to build a nuclear-powered base on the Moon in a challenge to China and Russia as the Earthly competition for power moves into the heavens.

Musk is recruiting volunteers to take a one-way trip to Mars to begin his nuclear-powered mining colony on the red planet. The rockets to take these eager beavers to Mars would also be nuclear-powered, they claim.

The long inept Department of Energy (DoE) labs across the US have a tragic history of polluting water, air and workers with radioactive leaks as they fabricate space nuclear devices that have been launched since the 1960's. Imagine the toxic mess they would create by pushing nuclear power into space in such an aggressive way.

The bloody Ukraine proxy war on Russia goes on and on. Trump is not funding it as much but still happy to sell Ukraine weapons paid for by the European Union. The latest hand-out from the EU to the corrupt dictator Zelensky is 90 billion Euros. That at the very time European economies are collapsing like a house of cards in a hurricane. It's truly insane.

But there has long been a desire in Europe to take down Russia. For over 500 years Russia has been repeatedly invaded by Sweden, France, Germany with help from other nations including the US. Why? Because Russia has a vast resource base and much of Europe starves for resources. They were getting quite cheap supplies of natural gas from Russia via the Nordstream pipeline but the Biden administration had it blown up. Then the US began selling LNG gas to Europe at 3-4 times the cost of what they had been paying Russia. Hatred of the big bad bear can make Europeans cut off their own arms and legs.

I'm sorry to be so direct and to the point – but haven't we reached the place where telling the truth is what is most needed these crazy days?

I've been holding my protest sign on a street corner for the last several years 2-3 times every week along with a handful of other faithful friends. I'm constantly researching and posting information I find on my blog Organizing Notes. I also post this info on many social media platforms I subscribe to. I do interviews anytime I am asked. I am trying to do my share. I hope it helps. I won't ever stop.

On July 1, 2025 I became a grandfather for the first time. My grandson Gio (Giovanni) makes me more determined than ever to protect the future generations and the natural world that I love so much. I'm not volunteering for the Mars trip. I'm staying here for the duration.

Keep paddling!

~ Bruce K. Gagnon has been the Coordinator of the Global Network since 1992. He was trained as an organizer by the United Farm Workers Union. He lives in Brunswick, Maine.

(cont. from p. 1)

Last September, the Jeju Provincial Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korea Aerospace Administration regarding the KPS (Korean Positioning System) development project, with the aim of transforming Jeju into a space industry cluster similar to those in South Jeolla Province (launch vehicles), South Gyeongsang Province (satellites), and Daejeon (research). However, "it is a scheme that exploits the future of the majority of the people. It destroys water and soil environments—the lifeline of local residents—and undermines the foundations of peace, human rights, and democracy by making the local economy dependent on space and arms companies."

As of this writing, the date of the sea launch remains unknown. Recently, the Jeju Provincial Government has responded that there are no issues with the administrative procedures for the offshore launches and that it intends to proceed with them. Not only in Jeju but around the world, the military, arms manufacturers, and governments are joining forces, increasing militarization under the guise of 'space industry.' We must continue to monitor and resist these developments to protect the lives of the people and democracy. For the whole statement and petition, see https://savejejunow.org/statement-stop-the-joint-military-hanwha-systems-jeju-provincial-government-sea-launch/

~ Choi Seong-hee has joined the struggle against the naval base and the militarization of Jeju Island. She works for the South Korean group, People Opposing Space Militarization and Rocket Launches and is an advisory board member of GN.

Pulitzer Prize for Gaza photo

Congratulations to the Palestinian photographer Saher Alghorra who won the Pulitzer Prize for *Breaking News Photography* with his compelling photos from Gaza. This photo, taken on March 4, 2025, just before Israel violently broke a six-week ceasefire deal, is described as follows: "Tamer Hassan al-Shafei's family sat down to break their daily Ramadan fast in the charred remains of their home, overlooking the ruins of Beit Lahia, in Gaza.

The Islamic holy month, during which observant Muslims fast until sunset, fell during a fragile ceasefire in the war. It was a humble meal, not the usual Ramadan spread. Meat and other luxuries were out of reach because of the shortage of food entering Gaza. He, his wife and his children ate cheap basics — hummus and falafel — instead."

China's satellites help Iran

By Chetuya Chinagolum

China does not need to send a single bullet to Iran for Tehran to win this war.

In warfare, the question is not so much about the fancy weapons you carry, but whether you can see your targets.

China understands that the survival of the Islamic Republic is integral to the survival of the multipolar order; thus, it has successfully migrated Tehran onto its BeiDou Satellite Navigation System.

Located 21,000 km above the Earth, this system has proven to be an "All-Seeing-Eye" fixed firmly upon the Middle East, effectively turning the state of Israel into a glass house for Iranian missiles.

Every hidden silo, every command-and-control node, and every "secret" facility within the Israeli interior is now rendered for the IRGC with the terrifying clarity of a high-definition Netflix series.

Every military base Washington embedded in the Middle East (locations previously believed to be invisible to Iran) now appears like a luminous, glowing avatar on a digital map.

Chinese satellites, acting as the ultimate high-ground observers, map every convoy, every carrier strike group, and every air defense radar.

This data is "televised" directly to the tactical displays of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Washington now finds itself fighting a ghost that can run through walls, an environment where even their troops are not safe in their hotel rooms.

Beijing has already gifted Iran all that it needs to win this war. As long as BeiDou remains anchored 21,000 km above the Earth, America cannot be said to be fighting a war, but rather rehearsing its exit as the global superpower.

When has it ever been otherwise?

By Tom Cordaro

A note from Tom: This article took shape weeks before the start of the latest war in the Middle East. Any semblance between what I wrote, and current events is purely coincidental and completely predictable.

The shock, anger, and profound sadness we feel at the unending horror show emanating from the federal government under President Trump is usually described in the progressive media with phrases like "unprecedented in our history" or "not who we are." I remember early in Trump's first term seeing a photo of an elderly woman at a demonstration holding a sign that read, "I can't believe I am still protesting this sh*t!"

Under the Trump regime, many of the progressive gains of my lifetime have been disassembled: voting rights, fair housing, the right to food, healthcare, and education. White progressives like me have lived with the illusion that support for these basic rights was baked into the system and was now settled law (if not uniformly and justly applied).

In some progressive circles, there exists a belief that our current existential crisis represents a break with the "normal" progression of ever-expanding freedom and equality embodied in the "American ideal." If this is our starting point, I am not sure we will ever find a way out of our current predicament. This overly optimistic belief about ourselves may make it more difficult and perilous for us to respond to the signs of our times. If we want to respond faithfully to our current crisis, we need to face the truth about our past.

I was born one year after the armistice was signed that ended combat operations in Korea (though there is no formal peace treaty.) The way this conflict ended (did not end) set the tone for US foreign policy going forward. I am 71 years old, and I can remember less than 10 years of my life when the US was not at war (declared and undeclared) somewhere around the world. I also cannot remember a time when our nation was not at war with itself. (Members of the Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z cohorts – anyone born after 1965 – have never known a time when the US has not been at war overseas and at home.)

As of this writing, the US is involved in seven publicly known military engagements across five different wars. For the US, war is not a break or a fracture of the normal order; it is our standard operating procedure. The Trump administration is just the most extreme example of what the US has been engaged in since its founding. From the genocide of native peoples to slave auctions and slave patrols, to Japanese internment camps, to mass deportations of Mexican in Operation Wetback, to extrajudicial killings of brown and black people by the state, violence and oppression have always been a part of our nation's DNA.

Trump and MAGA do not represent a break from the past; they represent the counterrevolutionary forces that want the US to return to the good old days of white supremacy and privilege – especially for the corporate oligarchy — a time when women and communities of color were kept in their place. They may have a more realistic understanding of US history than many progressives and liberals.

This year we are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the day when the British North American colonies declared their independence from the Empire. Maybe this would be a good time to re-examine our understanding of our national narrative. Let's begin with the basics: What does it mean to be a citizen of this country?

To answer this question, we may need to discard the notion of an "American ideal." There is much to commend the notion of a perfect state or endgame that we strive for. However, this belief often glosses over an important truth: The US has always been and always will be a work in progress.

What it means to be an American is always changing (check out Bad Bunny's Super Bowl performance – as he pointed out, America stretches from Chile to Cuba to Canada.) What the MAGA crowd fears is change. What they fear is being left behind in the shifting terrain of our national identity. MAGA wants to stop change and turn back the clock, but change is the lifeblood of this nation, giving it vitality, ingenuity, and resiliency.

Our challenge is to create an ever-expanding circle of concern that insists that no one be left behind. Expanding our circle of concern also means embracing the idea that our national identity is not fixed, but evolving, adapting, and ever renewing. To be a citizen of this country means always changing and adapting while holding fast to the civic principles and values that allow us to continue to "form a more perfect union."

Maybe, in place of the notion of an "American ideal," we can embrace the notion of "America the Great Crucible." I am not talking about a melting pot where every European immigrant community is stripped of its uniqueness to create a white superman. A crucible is a place of severe testing: a place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development.

It is in that crucible that we are made. The US is not a prize to be won. It is not a birthright to treasure. Being a citizen of this country is not a privilege or entitlement; it is the greatest challenge and adventure that anyone can embrace.

In his 2015 address to Congress, Pope Francis spoke of four US Americans who embodied the fundamental values and enduring spirit of the people of this country: President Abraham Lincoln, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton. It should be noted that two of these people were assassinated by fellow citizens, and Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. spent time in US prisons for "disturbing the peace." The hermit monk Thomas Merton found ways to resist the racism, poverty, and wars of our nation.

I believe that only in the crucible of this country could such heroes be formed. They became heroes by taking up the challenge of living authentically and with integrity in this crucible. I believe that only this crucible, with its contradictions, dismal betrayal of its values, and its addictions to violence and greed, could produce resisters like Phil and Dan Berrigan, Malcolm X, Fanny Lou Hamer, Dolores Huerta, and a host of women and men who took up the challenge and adventure of being a US American.

Social progress requires tireless effort, not passive waiting. As Dr. King reminds us, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle." This is what it means to embrace the challenge of the crucible of this country.

I have no clue what we should do next. I only know that we will never figure it out until we begin to let go of some of our cherished ideas and long-held assumptions. We might need to leave the certitudes of our comforting ideologies and theologies and enter the wilderness, a liminal space with few signposts or roadmaps.

But, as Thomas Merton reminds us, "You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope."

Welcome to the crucible!

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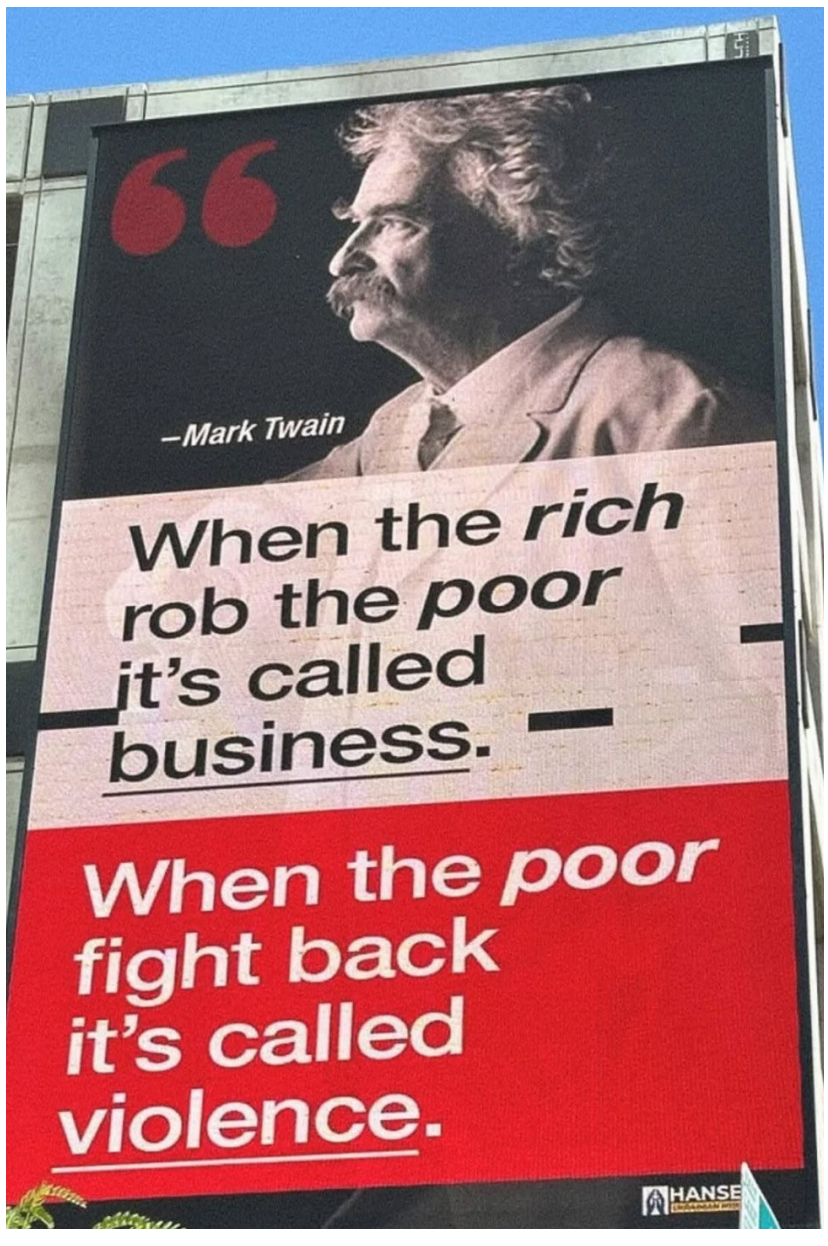


Environmental harms of U.S. Space Programs

By Lisa Savage

Many in the U.S. have now seen the documentary EARTH'S GREATEST ENEMY about the Pentagon's extensive harms to climate and environment. Made over the past several years, its focus did not include Space Force (created in 2019) or NASA which purports to be a civilian space program. But it very well could have.

How do space programs harm Earth's climate? Let me count the ways.

Rocket exhaust emits CO2, water vapor, nitrogen oxides, and black carbon (soot) which contribute to both warming and to atmospheric chemistry changes. Black carbon injected into the stratosphere is highly effective at trapping heat. This can produce radiative forcing which the MIT Climate Portal describes as, "what happens when the amount of energy that enters the Earth's atmosphere is different from the amount of energy that leaves it: solar radiation entering the atmosphere from the sun, and infrared radiation exiting as heat."

Some rocket propellants and motors release chlorine and aluminum oxide particles that deplete stratospheric ozone or catalyze reactions that destroy ozone. Ozone recovery, which has been on pace since the Montreal Protocol of 1989 phased out the production of known ozone-depleting substances, is thus slowed.

Re-entry heating of reusable stages and debris produces nitrous oxide and metal vapors that further alter upper-atmosphere chemistry. Growth in launch frequency – for example, SpaceX launching 10,000+ satellites in an unregulated race to control access to low-earth orbit -- concentrates these effects in the stratosphere and mesosphere. Emissions in space persist longer than surface emissions and have more impact on ozone and radiative forcing.

And that's when things go according to plan. What about when they don't? In March, 2026, a Starlink satellite developed what the company called an "anomaly on-orbit," spraying debris into the stratosphere 560 km (348 miles) above Earth. The same type of accident occurred with another Starlink satellite in December, 2025. Researchers watch and hope to avoid the catastrophe of Kessler Syndrome, a cascade of satellite collisions that could render things like cell phone service and GPS inoperable while producing lots of toxic debris above our heads.

Indirect effects of space programs on climate include what happens on the ground prior to launches including manufacturing, transport, test firings, and methane venting. These produce emissions that drive global warming and the extreme weather events happening ever more frequently.

What about environmental concerns other than climate? Nuclear power and payloads in space also pose grave environmental threats. GN's Karl Grossman revealed in a 2020 article: "On January 28, 1986 the Challenger blew up. It was on its next mission—in May 1986—that it was slated to have a plutonium-fueled radioisotope thermoelectric generators aboard." As for a nuclear accident not averted, "in 1954... a satellite powered by a SNAP 9-A radioisotope thermoelectric generator fueled with plutonium failed to achieve orbit, broke up in the atmosphere as it came crashing back down to Earth, its plutonium dispersing as dust extensively on Earth." Human health researchers such as Dr. John Gofman, a former associate director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, have pointed to the SNAP 9-A accident as causing an increase in lung cancer on Earth.

Ground water is also at risk where manufacturing of solid rocket engines occurs. According to researcher Elaine Cimino, "Solid rocket motors ... use ammonium perchlorate, aluminum powder, and polymer binders — an energetic mixture that burns at extreme temperatures and cannot be shut down once ignited. Static fire testing anchors that combustion in place, producing dense plumes of gases, particulates, and chemical residues. Those residues do not disappear. They settle.

Ammonium perchlorate does not fully combust. It leaves behind perchlorates—highly mobile, persistent compounds that move through soil and groundwater and remain in aquifers for decades. This is a documented outcome of rocket testing across the [U.S.] Southwest."

Since many rocket launches occur in coastal regions, breeding grounds for endangered species are impacted by emissions, noise, and falling debris when there is an explosive accident. "Space X operations continue to damage important coastal bird habitats at Boca Chica in south Texas," said Mike Parr, President of American Bird Conservancy.

What can we do? Pressure local governments to follow their own directives to regulate pollution produced by space programs. And organize to oppose war in space which would be catastrophic for climate and environmental health. Per GN's Bruce Gagnon in a 2025 op-ed: "For more than 30 years China and Russia have gone to the United Nations proposing a new space treaty called PAROS (Prevention of an Arms Race in Space). At the general assembly in a vote on the non-binding resolution, it overwhelming passes despite U.S. and Israel voting no. The treaty proposal is then sent to Geneva's Conference on Disarmament for negotiation. There the US and Israel block the treaty. The official position of the US (through Democrat and Republican administrations) has been, 'There are no weapons in space, we don't need a new treaty'."

Join the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space and donate to support one of the very few organizations that recognize threats to our safety and health posed by militarized space programs. Check out the GN's collection of articles, research, and informational webinars at www.space4peace.org.

~ Lisa Savage is a retired school teacher, serves on the Global Network's Board of Directors, and is the GN's Social media coordinator. She lives in Solon, Maine.

Wilson's Plover with debris from SpaceX operations in Boca Chica, Texas. Image credit: Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP)

How did the closure of Hormuz disrupt Starlink satellite internet?

The common perception is that SpaceX's Starlink network, which includes more than 9,400 low-Earth-orbit satellites, is completely independent from ground infrastructure. However, an analysis published by the American homeland security-focused outlet HSToday claimed that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz since March 2026 has paralyzed the supply chain for critical equipment used by the network.

According to the report, helium, cooling gases, and specialized semiconductors — all of which transit through the strait — are now effectively blocked.

Each Starlink ground station reportedly includes 1.4-meter antennas and equipment weighing several tons, which reach West Asia and Africa only by sea through the Strait of Hormuz. With the strait closed, no new equipment or spare parts are arriving. The report further argues that if undersea cables — which carry 97% of global internet traffic — were also cut, it would create a "no cables, no satellites" scenario.

Starlink also relies on laser links between satellites, but during a recent crisis, its ability to handle massive traffic volumes was reportedly insufficient, with latency reaching 300 milliseconds.

~ Reprinted from Tasmin News Agency

Space should be a safe space

By Bill Astore

Space should be a safe space for humanity. A place for exploration and wonder. The recent Artemis II mission to beyond the moon and back reminded us of this. The photos that mission produced, ones of our beautiful earth, the magnificent desolation of our moon, of earth rise in the moon's shadow that recalled the famous shot from Apollo 8 in 1968: they remind us of the splendor of the heavens. They inspire us, they move us, they humble us.

America needs to recover its dream for space, its thirst for knowledge, its drive to boldly go and to explore. Instead, the Trump administration seeks to militarize space further. Nightmares of danger and of dominance drive America now. Surveillance satellites invade privacy further. Weapons are led to their targets, often innocents, by GPS. A veneer of precision masks the agony of children killed for "greater" Israel or to make America "great again."

Wars don't make one great, as Yoda the Jedi Master reminded us. Weapons in space are escalatory and stupid. "I'm impatient with stupidity," the alien emissary Klaatu said as he visited our planet in "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951). I'm in total agreement with Klaatu.

Stupidity is represented by Donald Trump's "Golden Dome" project. It will never work to shield America from a concerted enemy attack consisting of missiles with multiple nuclear warheads. What it represents instead is a giant boondoggle for weapons makers and a further militarization and weaponization of space itself.

I was six years old when astronauts first walked on the moon. I had a poster on my bedroom wall illustrating the Apollo mission, featuring its orbital trajectories along with diagrams of space suits and similar equipment. That was what inspired me to want to join Air Force Space Command in 1985, not images of satellites being shattered by ASAT missiles. Not violence in or from space.

Humanity's "childish jealousies" and "petty squabbles" (the words are Klaatu's) are being exported into space. The narcissism of men like Trump and Elon Musk, as well as their greed, is making space an increasingly unsafe space for humanity. The Age of Aquarius is increasingly the Age of Starship Troopers. Of "warriors" and "warfighters" in space, contesting over the new high ground.

Perhaps, as the tagline from the movie "Alien" had it, in space "no one can hear you scream." But unless we reverse the arrant stupidity of our militarized space policies and our love of violence and war, we will most certainly hear the screams here on earth.

My fellow Americans, my fellow space lovers, let's make space a safe space for all humanity. Revel not in violence but in the beauty of our cosmos.

~ William J. Astore, a retired AF lieutenant colonel, served in AFSPACECOM at the tail end of the (first) Cold War. He serves on the Global Network Boad of Advisors.

Indonesia's Airspace Sovereignty Crisis

By Kurniawan Arif Maspul

Indonesia's skies are not empty. They are dense with memory, law, and the quiet weight of sovereignty. When Jakarta's foreign ministry urged caution over a reported US proposal for expanded military overflight access, it was not merely a bureaucratic reflex. It was a signal—subtle, deliberate, and deeply rooted in the uneasy geometry of power now reshaping the Indo-Pacific.

Airspace, as codified under the 1944 Chicago Convention, is among the clearest expressions of statehood: "complete and exclusive sovereignty" extends vertically as surely as it does across land and sea. Yet in an era of long-range missiles, persistent surveillance, and algorithmic warfare, that vertical sovereignty is no longer just a legal principle. It is an exposed frontier.

The proposal for routine or "blanket" overflight by a major power's military aircraft presses directly against that frontier, raising a question that is at once legal, strategic, and profoundly human: what does it mean to open the sky?

Indonesia's hesitation reflects a broader anxiety felt across the so-called middle powers—states that are too large to be ignored, yet too independent to be easily aligned. The Indo-Pacific today is saturated with capability. RAND has observed that the western Pacific now carries some of the world's highest concentrations of missile systems and air power, with China's anti-access/area-denial architecture designed explicitly to contest foreign military movement.

In such an environment, overflight is never neutral. It is read, interpreted, and often misinterpreted. Granting access to one power's aircraft risks being perceived by another as tacit alignment. Indonesian officials have already articulated this concern with unusual clarity: that such permissions could create "the impression" of alliance and render Indonesia a "potential target" in a conflict scenario.

Australia knows this tension well. The long-standing integration of Australian and American defence systems—through Pine Gap, rotational deployments in Darwin, and deep intelligence cooperation—has delivered strategic assurance while also binding Canberra into the operational logic of US power projection. Yet even within Australia, debates persist about the limits of sovereignty in such arrangements.

What distinguishes the Indonesian case is its insistence on process. Officials have emphasized that any such arrangement remains "under internal discussion" and "far from legally binding," underscoring the need to follow constitutional and institutional pathways. This is not procedural delay for its own sake. It is a recognition that decisions about airspace are decisions about risk distribution—about who bears the consequences if something goes wrong.

And things do go wrong. The mythology of precision warfare often obscures the physical reality of interception. When missiles are destroyed mid-air, they do not vanish; they fragment. In March 2026, debris from an intercepted Iranian missile in Abu Dhabi injured workers and ignited fires in an industrial zone: earlier barrages left material damage and at least one civilian fatality from falling fragments.

For Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands with dense urban corridors and critical maritime chokepoints, the geography of risk is unforgiving. A foreign military aircraft transiting Indonesian airspace is not just a symbol of partnership; it is a potential node in someone else's targeting matrix. The question is no longer abstract: if that aircraft is tracked, challenged, or engaged, where does the debris fall? Who answers for the consequences?

Iran's experience, shaped by sanctions and shadow conflicts targeting its energy infrastructure, reinforces the same lesson: strategic geography invites strategic intrusion.

There is also a quieter, more domestic dimension. Democratic accountability in security matters is uneven across the region, but the principle is gaining traction. In Japan, the Diet scrutinizes security agreements; in South Korea, the National Assembly must approve arrangements involving foreign forces. Indonesia's insistence that any overflight deal must conform to domestic law reflects this broader trend. It suggests an awareness that sovereignty is not only defended at the border but negotiated within it.

For global strategists, the Indonesian response offers a case study in calibrated restraint. It does not reject cooperation with the United States; nor does it embrace it unconditionally. Instead, it reframes the conversation.

GN YouTube channel

Be sure to check out the GN's YouTube channel at 'GNspace4peace'. If you click on the 'Subscribe' button you'll get a notice each time a new video is posted there. You can help by sharing the links to these videos so that more people can watch and learn. Thanks.

The myths of 'Russian aggression'

The RAND Corporation, a world-renowned US research and consulting firm, boasts 1,800 employees in more than 50 countries, who collectively conduct research and communicate in more than 75 languages, and of whom over a thousand—more than half—hold doctorates or even multiple doctorates. RAND is therefore not simply one of countless so-called think tanks. And what is particularly important to note: RAND's largest clients are the US State Department and the US military: the Army, the Air Force, and the Department of Homeland Security. These government clients account for more than half of all RAND revenue.

RAND, this truly gigantic research and consulting firm, has now examined the military behavior of the Soviet Union and Russia since World War II, and especially since the end of the Cold War in 1991. The result is remarkable. RAND demonstrates that Russia's military interventions are now marginal compared with those of the Soviet Union, and, above all, that these interventions were always linked to an imminent loss and never aimed at gaining additional territory or influence—that is, they were always used to defend the status quo.

Paul Robinson, a professor at the University of Ottawa specializing in geopolitical relations and well-known in Canada and the US, has closely studied the 186-page RAND report on the Russian military and reviewed and commented on its content on his web portal, *Irrussianality*. A few of his findings are quoted below as a summary:

A few years ago, I discussed the potential relevance of prospect theory to Russia's annexation of Crimea. Prospect theory states that people are more willing to take risks to avoid loss than to gain. This corresponds to the well-known psychological tendency toward loss aversion. Losing something bothers us much more than not gaining something. In the world of international relations, this means that states are more likely to use military force when threatened with loss than when seeking to acquire something they do not yet possess. It is therefore interesting to see this confirmed in a new study by the RAND Corporation entitled 'Russia's Military Interventions: Patterns, Drivers, and Signposts', which analyzes instances of Russian military intervention in the post–Soviet era. The conclusion: One of the main motivations is the prevention of loss.

Elsewhere in Robinson's work: "In any case, according to the study, it is wrong to see Putin as primarily responsible for Russian military interventions."

As quoted by Robinson from the RAND study:

If we examine all of Russia's interventions that meet the threshold described in this report, it becomes clear that most took place before (!) Putin came to power…. Most importantly, there is now a broad consensus among Russian elites on foreign policy issues. There is little firsthand evidence to suggest that Putin's personal preferences are a major driving force behind Russia's interventions.

Paul Robinson:

Russia intervenes when it feels threatened by a loss of status, stability, or security in its immediate neighborhood. It does not intervene to pursue "aggressive" or "imperialist" goals or to distract from domestic problems. And it is not a question of Vladimir Putin. Russia will have the same interests and preferences regardless of who is in power.

And once again, Paul Robinson:

In short, all claims that Russia wants to export its authoritarian ideology, destabilize democracy, support the "Putin regime," or that Russia's military interventions are driven solely by Putin's aggressive personality are false.

A graphic from the RAND study shows that military interventions were even more numerous during the time of Putin's predecessor Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999) than since under Vladimir Putin's presidency. (As a reminder, Yeltsin's second term was only possible thanks to financial support from the US under Bill Clinton.)

Paul Robinson's final paragraph:

The RAND report ends with a short series of recommendations for US policy. Primarily, the US should avoid putting Moscow in a position where it feels it is about to suffer a major loss in its near abroad. As a think tank report, this is a remarkably sober and sensible recommendation… which I don't have much to criticize. Essentially, it boils down to not cornering the bear. In this case, it's clear. The RAND report contradicts the currently prevailing narrative that Russia is bent on aggression and must be reined in by any means necessary, including incursions into its near abroad. If this RAND report is correct, then the [current NATO incursion to Russia's borders] is just about the worst thing you can do. But I doubt anyone is listening.

Is nobody listening?

Anyone closely observing current events in the EU, and especially in Germany, must conclude that it seems no one among current or future top politicians is actually listening…. A new project has just been announced: The E.U. intends to provide additional training for Ukrainian officers. Training for military deployment against which adversary? Against Russia, of course. To paraphrase Paul Robinson: Everyone—the US, NATO, the EU, and Germany—is trying to corner the Russian bear, knowing that this is precisely when it will begin to fight back. And this cornering is always justified by the same argument: Russia is aggressive, Putin is an aggressor.

Let's see if at least RAND's best clients, the State Department and the Pentagon, read RAND's latest comprehensive study—and perhaps even take it to heart.

~ Christian Müller, a Swiss journalist with a long record as an editor and commentator

It's not hostile super robots you should worry about—it's the heat they'll generate

By Delaney Nolan (Reprinted in part from The Nation*)*

Under the baking heat of a Louisiana sun, our killers are slowly rising from the leveled earth, humming darkly. Here, in Richland Parish, Meta is constructing a data center so large Mark Zuckerberg says the footprint would cover Manhattan from Harlem to Union Square. The behemoth will suck up 2.3 gigawatts of power—twice what New Orleans uses on its hottest days. And to keep it running, the utility company Entergy is building three new gas plants, its first new ones in decades.

The same story is unfolding across the country: more AI begetting more gas and oil. In the US, power demand is growing for the first time in over a decade. Trump even wants to bring back coal, all to air-condition data centers: those vast banks of whirring, dark, liquid-cooled processing units. Big oil is giddy. Op-eds in Fortune advise us not to divest from fossil-fuel companies, since the large language models we call "artificial intelligence" will be "forcing a reassessment of the clean energy transition." And yet we are ever reassured: Recent reporting from The Washington Post suggested that individual "AI" queries really only use negligible amounts of power.

But those statistics are misleading (notably, the columnist offering them worked with Planet FWD, a company that offers "AI-powered lifecycle carbon assessments"). For one, it leaves AI-generated videos, which are highly energy-intensive, out of the comparison. But it's no surprise to see this downplayed by a publication whose owner, Jeff Bezos, is up to his neck in AI-data-center investments.

Instead, we are put at ease: AI will solve the climate crisis. For now, it requires oodles of dirty energy and billions in resources, but it will eventually revolutionize society for the better, even if Big Tech can't exactly explain how.

We are told, repeatedly, that we need to generate more electricity for this revolution. But it may well be the other way around: Data centers are an excuse to squeeze a few more years of fossil-fuel profits from an exhausted planet. There will always be another excuse.

Each new piece of infrastructure locks us in for decades of emissions, at a time when—the science is overwhelmingly clear—we cannot go on building fossil-fuel infrastructure and have a livable planet. The threat, in Louisiana, is not abstract. It is immediate.

My neighbors die of heat. My city is shrinking as homes become uninsurable, as the sea rises ever faster. Back-to-back monster hurricanes make recovery exhausting, impossible, and cause some coastal communities to shrink to almost nothing. Whole barrier islands that I once planned to visit no longer exist.

But the AI overlords tell us with a straight face that their products, which cannot draw an accurate map of the US, will somehow solve this crisis, if only we let them make it worse first.

The danger of AI is not that it will achieve consciousness and hit the big red button. The end is much less flashy, far more stupid: The resource-intensive advertisement tools of AI will increasingly overtax the grid, leaving us to cook alive in sweltering darkness. The AI hype is part of a larger, false narrative justifying fossil fuel expansion. Let's not get fooled.

Letter to Editor

So many fronts of attack we are experiencing now with the roll out of Project 2025. What strikes me is that with the power of the pro-war agenda, portrayal of America as 'victim' in the media has made it difficult to come up with a clear counter message. I watch the development of the militarization of space for a war on China and find it staggering. China never did anything to hurt me. It is just the opposite really.

Corporate America's gutting of the wealth and industrial capacity of this country has caused a crisis for themselves and now they want a war. We should all be working together not against each other.

They have used the technological changes like AI to empower themselves not the general public. This is probably going to get much worse. Much of this happens out of sight and in the halls of Congress.

The labor movement and higher education ranks have been gutted of people able to help make others aware of the dangerous period we are in. Bringing this to the public's awareness is important. Space Alert is a strong tool in this effort. Thanks for keeping it in front of us.

~ Bob Anderson is a retired professor and serves on the Global Network Board of Directors. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and works with a group called Stop the War Machine.

Check Your Spam Filter

We have found that many of the emails sent to our members and friends are ending up in their spam filters. Please be sure to regularly check your spam filters for our emails and those of others who are trying to share important news. You can keep up with the work of the GN at our web site www.space4peace.org and Bruce Gagnon's blog called *Organizing Notes*.

Odds & Ends

Keep Space 4 Peace Week

The Global Network's annual space week will be held from October 3-10. Supporters of a peaceful use of space are encouraged to organize educational and protest events during the week. Help us spread global consciousness about the need to prevent growing arms races and war in the heavens.

Musk's Mars money machine

SpaceX has approved a plan linking stock compensation for founder and CEO Elon Musk to building a colony on Mars and operating large-scale data centers in space. Under the ambitious plan, Musk could be granted up to 200 million super-voting shares if the company reaches a valuation of $7.5 trillion and helps establish a permanent human settlement (mining colony) on Mars with at least one million residents. Additional incentives are tied to developing space-based computing infrastructure capable of delivering at least 100 terawatts of processing power, roughly comparable to 100,000 one-gigawatt nuclear reactors running at the same time.

Golden Dome key element in US first-strike plan

The US will struggle to defend itself against advanced missile systems developed by China and Russia, senior Pentagon officials told lawmakers as they called for funding for the proposed Golden Dome missile defense program. Michael Guetlein, who leads the Golden Dome program within the US Space Force, testified that both China and Russia are continuing to modernize and expand their missile arsenals. These systems, Guetlein said, are "designed to challenge the tracking and engagement capabilities of our sensors" and ensure a "responsive and survivable strike capability." While the US has insisted that the shield was aimed at countering limited threats from countries such as North Korea or Iran, Russian officials have long warned it was undermining nuclear deterrence by enabling a potential decapitating first strike. In that scenario, Moscow argued, American missile interceptors could be used to neutralize a retaliatory strike by surviving Russian missiles.

U.S. military in South Korea calls for 'kill web'

Japan Times reports: The head of US Forces Korea (U.S. Army Gen. Xavier Brunson) has outlined a new concept to potentially link the military capabilities of South Korea, Japan and possibly the Philippines into a "kill web" as a way of enabling a more coordinated response to mounting security challenges from North Korea, China and Russia. The strategy seeks to fuse the strengths of Washington's regional treaty allies into a single, networked system coordinating across land, sea and air as well as the space, cyber and electromagnetic arenas. A kill web relies on a network in which any sensor — such as a satellite, drone or soldier — can pass real-time data to any shooter, including aircraft, ships or missile systems, giving commanders multiple ways to respond to a threat. While the article presents China, North Korea, & Russia as the aggressors, it overlooks the obvious - it is the US alliance which has these countries surrounded and is constantly escalating and threatening them. They do not have us surrounded and are not threatening us.

Huntsville, Alabama: Space Command HQ?

US Space Command Headquarters at Redstone Arsenal is one step closer to its permanent home with the Appropriations Committee's passage of the Fiscal Year 2027 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies funding bill, which provides $565 million for the headquarters' design and construction. Establishing the Space Command headquarters at Redstone Arsenal is a goal of that community. Huntsville has already long been called the 'Pentagon of the South'.

Space Force wants more of everything

To facilitate the Pentagon's fast-growing demand for orbital capability, the Space Force is looking for more launch sites, more money, more troops, and more AI. "In 2025, the Space Force saw a drastic increase in mission requirements across space access, global mission operations, and space control. This trend shows no signs of slowing," Gen. Chance Saltzman, the Space Force's top uniformed leader, told House lawmakers in early May. "The Space Force we have today is not the Space Force we will need in the future." Nestled on a thin stretch of land just miles from nature preserves and cruise-ship ports, the historic Cape Canaveral facility launched 36 rockets in 2021, its first year as a Space Force facility. Last year, it sent 110 into the heavens, while its California counterpart, Vandenberg Space Force Base, launched another 65. This year, Space Force leaders intend to launch more than 200 rockets from their two main launch sites. And by 2036, they project, the pair will launch as many as 3,000 annually. Lawmakers have considered Wallops Island; Pacific Spaceport Complex, Alaska; SpaceX's Starbase in Texas; and Spaceport America in New Mexico and as potential alternative national-security launch sites. When Space Force was 'sold' to the nation the Congress was promised it would be a 'lean' organization. It's not.

Weapons R U.S.

During the first quarter of 2026, the U.S. government approved over $45 billion in potential Foreign Military Sales (FMS) with the overwhelming majority supporting West Asian Gulf dictatorship allies. Of total global approvals, the region garnered 81 percent, or over $36.6 billion in estimated sales value for defense equipment.

Iran still has weapons

Washington Post: US intelligence says Iran can outlast Trump's Hormuz blockade for months. A confidential intelligence community assessment delivered to the White House also finds that Iran retains a substantial missile and drone arsenal. Iran still retains around 75% of the mobile missile launch platforms it possessed before the war. Iran still retains approximately 70% of its missiles.

Israel crashing

Hebrew newspaper Haaretz: Israel is going through an unprecedented phase that could lead to its complete disintegration. Netanyahu has succeeded in establishing the equation that 'the state is me,' and his political fate has become directly tied to the fate of state institutions.

Pray for the Aliens?

A prominent US evangelist (Perry Stone, a Tennessee-based Pentecostal preacher and founder of the Voice of Evangelism ministry) has claimed that government officials held a secret briefing for pastors and urged them to prepare their congregations for the imminent release of information about alien life and unidentified spacecraft, which could shatter Christian faith.

EU rewriting WW2 history

The process of ridding German society and Europe of Nazi ideology was never completed, the deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council and former president, Dmitry Medvedev, wrote in an article ahead of the 81st anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany. Moscow has long accused the West of pursuing historical revanchism and seeking to erase the memory of World War II and rewrite the Soviet victory over Nazism. Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) said last year that German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in particular harbors a "maniacal drive for revenge" against Russia based on Nazi-era grievances. Medvedev argued that the West kept the bearers of Nazi ideology alive for their descendants to continue wreaking havoc. (Look up 'Operation Paperclip' and 'Gladio')

IMF takeover of Venezuela?

The Trump Administration controls all of Venezuela's oil revenues and much of its shipments are going to Israel for the first time in six years. Their goal is not just to get good deals for Western multinational corporations

Planned Gift to Global Network

If you are in the process of estate planning, please consider making a gift of a tax-deductible donation in the form of a bequest, donation of stock or other instruments to the Global Network. Your planned gift would be an important contribution to our movement to stop the nuclearization and weaponization of space. Thank you for your consideration.

Odds & Ends

but also to turn Venezuela into a debt-ridden colony dependent on the US Treasury and IMF, robbing the country of the sovereignty it once had during the years of Chavez and Maduro.

AI can't replace Chinese workers

China is putting AI in its place. A Chinese court forbade to replace people with AI. In Hangzhou, a worker was dismissed after automation and offered a lower-paid role, the court called it illegal, Fortune reports. Firms can adopt AI, but not fire staff as cost-cutting measure.

End Israel's nuclear bomb secrecy

A group of progressive House Democrats is urging the Trump administration to publicly acknowledge Israel's undeclared nuclear weapons program, a move that would abandon decades of US policy but confirm what has been an open secret among intelligence officials since the late 1960s. In a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio 30 lawmakers say Washington's silence on the program is indefensible amid the war in Iran and the acute threat of military escalation. Avner Cohen, a leading historian on Israel's nuclear program, said the letter breaks a taboo that has endured for more than half a century. "This is something that people did not dare do before," said Cohen, a professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies and author of the book "Israel and the Bomb."

Trump sons make $$ from Pentagon drone buy

Bloomberg: The US Air Force agreed to buy an undisclosed number of interceptor drones from a company backed by Trump's sons deepening the military's ties to defense contractors linked to the first family as the US war with Iran enters its third month. This is only one example of many where the Trump family is using the presidency to enrich themselves at the expense of the American people.

Starlink Sats disrupted during war

Tasnim News Agency: How did the closure of the Strait of Hormuz disrupt Starlink satellite internet? The common perception is that SpaceX's Starlink network, which includes more than 9,400 low-Earth-orbit satellites, is completely independent from ground infrastructure. However, an analysis published by the American outlet HSToday claimed that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz since March 2026 has paralyzed the supply chain for critical equipment used by the network. Helium, cooling gases, and specialized semiconductors, all of which transit through the strait, are now effectively blocked. Each Starlink ground station includes 1.4-meter antennas and equipment weighing several tons, which reach West Asia and Africa only by sea through the Strait of Hormuz. With the strait closed, no new equipment or spare parts are arriving. The report states that if undersea cables, which carry 97% of global internet traffic, were also cut it would create a 'no cables, no satellites' scenario.

Trump on Iran

"We'll get Iran's enriched uranium at some point. We have Space Force doing surveillance on that site. If somebody walked in, they can tell you his name, his address, and the number of his badge. If anybody gets near the place, we will know about it, and we'll blow him up."

Initial Golden Dome Cost$

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the "Golden Dome" national missile defense system would cost about $1.2 trillion over 20 years to develop, deploy, and operate. More than $1 trillion of the projected cost would come from acquisition and development alone, while the space-based interceptor layer would account for roughly 70% of acquisition costs and 60% of the total overall cost. Companies such as BAE Systems, Booz Allen Hamilton, L3Harris and General Atomics are among the firms the Pentagon has selected to work on space weapons program. The Israeli firm Elbit Systems is also on the list of potential contractors.

Space Ops Centers

The Space Force is requesting $1 billion in fiscal 2027 to build four space operations centers around the country. The expansion is intended to support resilient operations for space control, space-based sensing and targeting, and data transport. The four operations centers would cost $250 million each and be built at: Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico; Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Schriever Space Force Base, Colorado; Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota.

Are High-tech firms Legit Targets in war?

Digital infrastructure has moved from the periphery of war to its operational core. Intelligence gathering, drone coordination, and battlefield decision-making increasingly depend on cloud systems and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms. The architecture of contemporary conflict is therefore built as much on corporate-run networks as on conventional military hardware. This evolving reality shapes Iran's strategic outlook as the war with Washington and Tel Aviv deepens. In Tehran's assessment, the technological backbone sustaining western-aligned military operations in West Asia cannot be viewed as politically neutral. It constitutes an extension of the battlespace itself – a domain where economic assets, corporate platforms, and national security objectives intersect. Major technology firms now sit at the center of this process. Companies such as Amazon, Microsoft, and Google provide the infrastructure enabling governments and militaries to store, analyze, and deploy critical data.

That perception gained public visibility when Iranian media circulated a list of nearly 30 sites across West Asia, and especially the UAE, linked to major tech firms. Large-scale data centers in Gulf states highlight the scale of exposure. Over the past decade, governments in the Persian Gulf have invested tens of billions of dollars to attract cloud computing projects and establish regional digital hubs. Do you believe major global technology companies have effectively become legitimate strategic targets in modern warfare?

Launch sites seek Golden Dome bucks

Competition for contracts and overall Golden Dome involvement has expanded into launch infrastructure, as launch sites and ranges position themselves to attract Pentagon dollars for deployments and tests related to Golden Dome. During a recent Senate hearing it was announced that $22.5 million was allocated to Alaska Aerospace Corporation's Kodiak Island spaceport. The facility could serve as a testing ground for interceptors and sensors because it can launch missiles

Odds & Ends (continued)

and spacecraft toward the continental US on a similar trajectory as that of any incoming missiles launched from Asia.

Bombers from UK bases hit Iran

US B-52 and B-1 bombers landed at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire in Britain in the early days of the US-Israel war on Iran to carry out 'specific defensive operations'. Prime Minister Keir Starmer had granted permission for 'defensive' action against Iranian missile sites from UK bases. Several large protests were organized at the bases by local and national peace groups calling these bomber deployments 'offensive' and 'destabilizing' to global peace.

THAAD hit hard in the war

Four of America's crown jewels in missile defense the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, the AN/TPY-2 radar, (the eyes of the entire Gulf air defence architecture) were struck, charred, and destroyed by Iran. US bases hosted THAAD systems (launchers and radars) in Saudi Arabia, UAE (at two bases) and in Jordan. Even if the launchers survived, and the evidence suggests they did not all survive intact, a THAAD battery without its radar cannot engage targets. The US only operates eight THAAD batteries total - seven of which were operational. A massive loss in capability and money.

Kessler Syndrome

With satellites and space junk increasingly cluttering our planet's low Earth orbit, a team of scientists warn that this entire region could suddenly collapse into a destructive maelstrom of swirling debris, posing a threat to any spacecraft that dares to venture up there, and hurling dangerous missiles of space junk down onto our planet below.

Their study builds on a scenario first laid out by NASA scientist Donald Kessler, which describes how just a few accidental collisions between satellites could quickly cascade into a vicious cycle in which the resulting debris causes even more smash-ups, and thus even more debris. At worst, the ensuing vortex of dangerous debris could trap us on our planet and set back spaceflight for decades.

Hegseth on 'controlling space'

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth speaking in Denver, Colorado as part of his recent 'Arsenal of Freedom Tour': "We're leveraging the best and brightest, the most talented Americans to ensure that we do deliver space superiority and space dominance. We are running as fast as we can on Golden Dome to deliver for President Trump because we must defend our homeland. The fight for space is the fight for the future of the world as we know it. We cannot afford to have a fair fight in space — I'm not interested in orbital equity or orbital parity. We demand orbital dominance plain and simple. Whoever controls space controls the fight."

No more arms control?

On January 5, 2026, the last Russian-American arms control treaty still in force, the New START agreement, expired. In addition to China and Russia, there has been criticism across the west that Trump is trying to make the US invulnerable to nuclear attack with Golden Dome and thereby create a first-strike strategic advantage. This now destroys the balance that long rested on the theory of mutual deterrence, a concept that also presupposes a certain degree of mutual vulnerability. It appears the US is not interested in serious arms control any longer.

NATO MD base in Poland

The Netherlands took command of a NATO air defense mission in eastern Poland, where allies coordinate logistical support for Ukraine. About 300 Dutch troops, equipped with Patriot and other air defense systems recently replaced German forces, who had previously been carrying out the air defense mission in Jasionka, Poland (near the Ukraine border). "We protect supply lines to Ukraine, defend NATO's eastern flank and develop our capabilities," a Dutch officer said. This makes clear that the Ukrainian proxy war on Russia has always been a NATO war.

AI to replace workers in the U.S.

Geoffrey Hinton literally invented the neural networks that power modern AI. He won a Nobel Prize for it. He went on Bloomberg TV and said something that tech CEOs have been dancing around for years: "Tech companies cannot profit from their AI investments without replacing human workers." Not "might replace." Not "could eventually replace." Cannot profit without replacing. That's not a prediction. That's him explaining the capitalist business model. We all know how that works.

Caught between Trump & Musk's rockets, a Mexican village despairs

By India Vision

Playa Bagdad, a once-tranquil fishing village nestled along the northeastern coast of Mexico, finds itself at the intersection of ambitious technological advancements and the complex realities of community life. Situated just south of the US border and within earshot of the din of rocket testing, the village is experiencing profound changes, both environmental and social, as the global space industry expands its reach. The narrative unfolding in Playa Bagdad serves as a microcosm of the broader challenges faced by communities bordering burgeoning spaceports around the world.

For generations, the residents of Playa Bagdad have relied on the Gulf of Mexico for their livelihoods. Fishing has been the lifeblood of the community, passed down through families, and deeply intertwined with the rhythms of the sea. However, the increasing frequency of rocket launches and associated activities has raised concerns about the potential impact on marine life and the overall health of the ecosystem. Noise pollution, vibrations, and the potential for accidental spills are among the anxieties voiced by local fishermen and environmental advocates.

Beyond the immediate environmental concerns, Playa Bagdad is also grappling with the socioeconomic shifts accompanying the space industry's presence. While some residents see the potential for new jobs and economic opportunities, others fear displacement and the erosion of their traditional way of life. The influx of workers and investment can drive up property values and the cost of living, potentially making it difficult for long-time residents to remain in their homes. Furthermore, there are concerns that the focus on technological development may overshadow the needs of the local community, leading to neglect of essential infrastructure and social services.

The situation in Playa Bagdad underscores the importance of responsible and sustainable development in the space industry. As humanity ventures further into the cosmos, it is crucial to consider the impact on communities located near launch sites and to ensure that their voices are heard. Transparent communication, environmental impact assessments, and community engagement are essential to mitigating potential negative consequences and fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between the space industry and the communities that host it.

The Mexican government, along with international organizations, faces the challenge of balancing the economic benefits of the space industry with the need to protect the environment and the rights of local communities. Finding solutions that promote both technological advancement and social well-being is paramount. This requires a collaborative approach, involving government agencies, space companies, environmental groups, and, most importantly, the residents of Playa Bagdad themselves.

The story of Playa Bagdad serves as a potent reminder that progress should not come at the expense of vulnerable communities. As the space race intensifies, it is imperative that we prioritize ethical considerations and strive to create a future where technological innovation and human well-being go hand in hand. The fate of this small Mexican village, caught between the allure of space exploration and the realities of life on Earth, offers valuable lessons for navigating the complex landscape of the 21st century and beyond.

Corporate Profiteering in the Militarization of Space

By Christian Sorensen

The US government leads the world in militarizing space, launching way more satellites and space vehicles than any other government. The space tracking website Orbital Radar summarizes the kind of money involved: The US "dominates global space spending, accounting for over half the world total when defense and intelligence budgets are included." The budget of NASA, which covers the US civilian space program, "alone exceeds the combined space budgets of every other country."

US space technology is made mostly by corporations, not military or intelligence agencies themselves. I created a map to get a feel for these corporations and what they're working on.

I reviewed all US military contracting announcements (www.war.gov/News/Contracts) from fiscal year 2025 and separated out those pertaining to space. I focused on contracts issued by a relevant military unit (e.g., Space Systems Command at Los Angeles Air Force Base) or for military operations to, in, or from space. USAspending.gov and corporate websites provided additional information.

The map features 87 corporate facilities working on satellites and space vehicles, 20 on launch & propulsion, 29 on ground infrastructure, 37 on information technology (IT), 24 on engineering & research, and 10 on consulting.

You might recognize some of the corporations. The "Big Five" -- Lockheed Martin, RTX, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and General Dynamics -- are ubiquitous, making all kinds of space technology. Smaller US-based corporations, such as K2 Space developing satellite busses and LeoLabs building ground radar, are also present. Larger war corporations regularly buy up smaller corporations to get access to their technology. Examples seen on the map include RTX purchasing Blue Canyon in 2020 and Lockheed Martin purchasing Terran Orbital in 2024.

Some of the corporations militarizing space have a friendly civilian face. Bechtel, for example, is a huge engineering and project management corporation. It also happens to make components for US Navy nuclear propulsion and, when it comes to space militarization, builds ground infrastructure, such as launch towers. You know Microsoft as the corporation producing Windows software for personal computers. It's also a huge military contractor, selling IT, cloud computing, and more.

Infamous corporations also populate the map. Palantir makes data processing software, and is notorious for selling to US intelligence agencies and Apartheid Israel. The US military is also a big customer. Its purchases include Palantir software for command and control of space operations. Palantir says its products enhance military decision-making, a marketing line that the Pentagon brass eats up. KBR is another infamous corporation, having gained notoriety for alleged war profiteering after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. In 2006, it split from Halliburton (Vice President Dick Cheney's former corporation) and, while Halliburton went on to focus on fossil fuel infrastructure, KBR stayed in the business of war. When it comes to militarizing space, KBR sells engineering, data analytics, and digital technology.

Corporations know where the money is. It's in the US military budget, which is slated to top $1.5 trillion this coming year. Therefore, all manner of corporations, from consulting and accounting firms (e.g., McKinsey, Deloitte, KPMG, Guidehouse) to academic institutions (e.g., Georgia Tech, Utah State) have adjusted their goods and services to appeal to the Pentagon. And all of those help militarize space.

Never forget that capitalism is a global, anti-democratic, profit-over-people system, one which binds the transnational ruling class together against the workers of the world. Therefore, corporations headquartered overseas are welcomed into the US, where they manufacture weapons of war, including space technology. Among them are BAE Systems (London), Rolls-Royce (London), Leonardo (Rome), Airbus (Paris), Thales (Paris), Elbit Systems (Tel Aviv).

While corporations selling space goods and services are spread across the country, a few clusters stand out: Southern California, the die-hard epicenter of Cold War military industry and home to Vandenberg and Los Angeles Air Force Bases; Colorado, home to towns like Colorado Springs, Denver, and Boulder, which are rife with space-focused military bases; Northeast Virginia, home federal policymakers and numerous military bases and intelligence agencies; Alabama with growing Space Command operations in Huntsville with many contractors; and Florida's "space coast," extending from Palm Bay north through Titusville.

Visit the map at www.eisenhowermedianetwork.substack.com

Eventually, the public will rise up and say, "No more." No more war and no more war profiteering. And that's when industrial conversion takes place. Industrial conversion involves changing what factories and offices produce. The corporations militarizing space could instead manufacture satellites that monitor weather, climate, crops, and ocean temperatures and currents; improve satellites that help people navigate (not guide bombs to kill people); devise better communications satellites; design electronics for public infrastructure; craft infrared sensors for public safety; track space junk and develop ways to gather it up; fabricate composite materials for public transportation; defend the planet against near-earth objects (NEO); help governments and international organizations peacefully explore the cosmos; demilitarize space; research and develop non-polluting space launch; and so much more.

What should your local factory convert into producing?

~ Christian Sorensen is a researcher focused on the US-based corporations profiting from war. He is a member of the Global Network's Advisory Board. He lives in the northeast of the US.

NASA's plan for nuclear-powered rockets

By Karl Grossman

NASA got through the Artemis II mission with a few minor "anomalies," (aka problems) but in 2028 it plans to launch a nuclear-powered rocket to Mars. An accident involving a nuclear-powered rocket could be no small anomaly.

The NASA plan was heralded in an announcement on March 24th headed "NASA Unveils Initiatives to Achieve America's National Space Policy," asserting "a major step forward in bringing nuclear power and propulsion from the lab to space."

"NASA will launch the Space Reactor1 Freedom, the first nuclear-powered interplanetary spacecraft to Mars before the end of 2028, demonstrating advanced nuclear electric propulsion in deep space."

Using nuclear propulsion in space has been a NASA aim since the 1960s. NBC News correspondent Tom Costello in 2023 visited NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama where work is underway to develop nuclear rockets.

Costello reported "NASA looks at going to the moon…and to Mars. And to get to Mars, they're going nuclear…. While science and exploration are the driving motivators, there's also a competitive factor, China. The Chinese government is very secretive, and a lot of their plans involve their military preparations. And so, there's a reason for us to get there first. And NASA wants to get there faster…"

Costello continued, "This [1960s] project… called NERVA" (Nuclear Engine for Rocket Vehicle Application), "[was a] government program… to develop nuclear powered rockets. It turns out they made big progress back in the 60s, running expensive tests."

However, he wrote, NERVA's "success was short-lived. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, US President Richard Nixon nixed NASA and NERVA funding dramatically. Eventually, NERVA lost its funding and the project was scuttled in 1973."

It's not just the US that is intending to use nuclear-powered rockets in space.

"Nuclear-powered rockets will win the new space race," was the headline last year in The Washington Post. The sub-head: "Russia and China are working hard for a nuclear-powered advantage in space. The US must up its game."

"Space nuclear propulsion and power are not hypotheticals," said the article. "China is investing heavily in both terrestrial and space-based nuclear technologies, with plans to send a nuclear-powered spacecraft to Mars by 2033. Russia, too, has announced ambitious goals."

The headline in a 2024 article in the South China Morning Post: "Starship rival: Chinese scientists build prototype engine for nuclear-powered spaceship to Mars."

Its subhead told of how a "1.5 megawatt-class… fission reactor passes initial ground tests as global race for space. The lithium-cooled system is designed to expand from a container-sized volume into a structure as large as a 20-story building in space."

The article began by saying a "a collaboration of more than 10 research institutes and universities across China have made significant strides toward interplanetary travel with the development of a nuclear fission technology."

The Russians are bullish on the speed a nuclear-powered rocket could attain. "Mars in 30 days? Russia unveils prototype of plasma engine," was the headline last year of an article put out by World Nuclear News.

It began: "A laboratory protype of a plasma electric rocket engine based on a magnetic plasma accelerator has been produced by Rosatom scientists, who say it could slash travel time to Mars to one or two months." (Rosatom is the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation.)

The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, formed in 1992, now has membership throughout the world. It has organized protests at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to NASA launches of spacecraft using radioisotope thermoelectric generators. Using the heat of plutonium-238, the RTG's generate electricity to run instruments, not to propel spacecraft.

One of the largest protests organized by the Global Network involved the Cassini space probe mission to Saturn in 1997 with 73 pounds of plutonium in three RTGs, the largest amount of plutonium ever on a spacecraft.

The most dangerous portion of that mission was when NASA had the Cassini probe perform a "slingshot maneuver," sending it back towards Earth to use Earth's gravity to increase its velocity. If, as NASA said in an Environmental Impact Statement, there was an "inadvertent reentry" into the Earth's atmosphere in that maneuver causing it to disintegrate and release its plutonium, an estimated "5 billion …of the world population…could receive 99 percent of the radiation exposure."

In 2021, a report titled "Space Nuclear Propulsion for Human Mars Exploration" was issued by a committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine of the US.

The report lays out "synergies" in space nuclear activities between NASA and the U.S. military. It said: "Space nuclear propulsion and power systems have the potential to provide the US with military advantages…NASA could benefit… by working with a DoD program having national security objectives."'

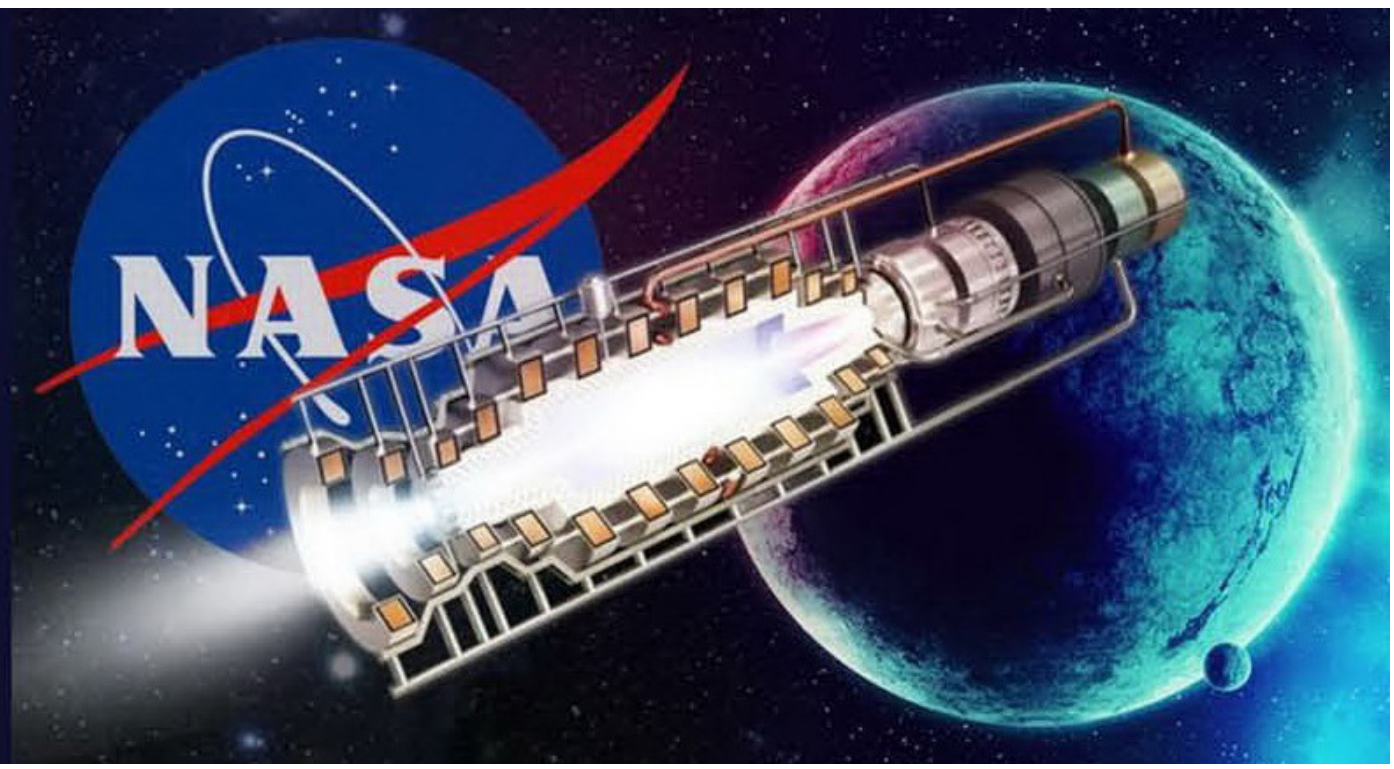
"Is using nuclear materials for space travel dangerous, genius, or a little of both?" was the heading of a 2021 article by Susan D'Agostino in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. With the US goal of "a human mission to Mars, the words 'nuclear' and 'space' are again popping up together…. Nuclear propulsion systems for space exploration… are expected to offer significant advantages, including the possibility of sending spacecraft farther, in less time, and more efficiently than traditional chemical propulsion systems."

"But extreme physical conditions on the launch-pad, in space, and during reentry raise questions about risk-mitigation measures, especially when nuclear materials are present. To realize the goal of nuclear-propelled, human mission to Mars, scientists must overcome significant challenges that include… relevant medical, environmental, economic, political, and ethical questions… attaching what amounts to a nuclear reactor to a human-occupied spaceship is not without risks."

An article in 2023 by Bob McDonald of the Canadian Broadcasting System was headed: "Nuclear powered rockets could take us to Mars, but will the public accept them?"

"Nuclear rockets are not a new idea… Now, with

NASA and the nuclear industry view space as a new market for their toxic nuclear products. NASA is currently asking for corporate bids to build the nuclear rocket to Mars. Plans call for testing of the reactors just above our heads in Lower Earth Orbit (LEO).



the prospect of sending humans to Mars in the 2030s, the idea is being revived in an effort to shorten the roughly seven months it takes a conventional rocket to get to Mars…"

"The design of a nuclear rocket means they typically would produce less thrust than a chemical rocket, but nuclear engines could run continuously for weeks, constantly accelerating… Nuclear propulsion is expected to be twice as fuel-efficient as chemical rockets, largely because they can heat the gas they use for thrust to a higher temperature than chemical combustion, and hotter gas means more energy."

"While the technology of nuclear propulsion is certainly feasible, it may not be readily embraced by the public. The accidents at Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Fukushima have left many people skeptical about nuclear safety. And there will be risk… the public would have to accept the risk of launching a nuclear reactor on a standard rocket filled with explosive fuel."

"And rockets have and will malfunction catastrophically..."

"No one wants to see nuclear debris raining down on the Florida coast or Disneyland, and… An accident in orbit could potentially drop radioactive material into the atmosphere. These safety concerns need to be addressed before any nuclear rocket leaves the ground," said the article.

Bruce Gagnon, coordinator of the Global Network since its formation observes "Besides the problem of an accident, the production process for nuclear space devices leads to radioactive contamination in the laboratories where they take place, and in air and water."

In 2015 Gagnon said: "The nuclear industry views space as a new market for their deadly product. Nuclear generators on space missions, nuclear-powered mining colonies on Mars and other planetary bodies and… nuclear reactors on rockets to Mars are being sought. Thus, there are many opportunities for things to go wrong."

If things go wrong, these "anomalies" could be major.

NASA's March 24 announcement also said: "When SR-1 Freedom reaches Mars, it will deploy the Skyfall payload of Ingenuity-class helicopters to continue exploring the Red Planet. SR-1 Freedom will establish flight heritage nuclear hardware, set regulatory and launch precedent, and activate the industrial base for future fission power systems across propulsion, surface, and long-duration missions. NASA and its US Department of Energy partner will unlock the capabilities required for sustained exploration beyond the Moon and eventual journeys to Mars and the outer solar system."

~ Karl Grossman was a co-founder of the Global Network in 1992. He is a retired Journalism Professor and lives in Sag Harbor, New York. He currently serves on the GN Advisory Board.

~ Please note that this article is an edited version of an article that first appeared in Daily Kos at https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2026/4/17/800021876/community/nuclear-powered-rockets-nasa-plans-for-launch-in-29/

Used SpaceX rocket is on collision course with the Moon

By Brandon Specktor

A discarded piece of a SpaceX rocket carelessly left adrift in space will likely crash into the moon this summer, a new report finds.

The renegade rocket poses no risk to the moon or any working spacecraft, the report stresses. However, the collision — which is predicted to occur Aug. 5 on the border of the moon's near and far sides — may be of "minor scientific interest" if it creates a new crater that can later be studied.

"It doesn't present any danger to anyone, though it does highlight a certain carelessness about how leftover space hardware (space junk) is disposed of," according to report author Bill Gray, a professional astronomer and developer of the Project Pluto software used to track near-Earth objects.

What's happening on the moon?

The object in question is a 45-foot-tall (13.8 meters) upper stage of a Falcon 9 rocket that launched in early 2025 and has been orbiting the Earth-moon system ever since. The rocket delivered two spacecraft to the moon — the Blue Ghost lander (developed by private company Firefly Aerospace), which successfully touched down on the moon in March 2025; and the Hakuto-R lander (developed by Japanese company ispace), which lost contact with Earth and crash-landed on the moon later that June.

According to Gray, various asteroid surveys observed the rocket's used upper stage more than 1,000 times over the past year as it tumbled through Earth orbit, staying roughly at the same distance as the moon. With this data, Gray used his software to predict with high certainty the likely time and place of the impending impact: approximately 2:44 a.m. EDT on Aug. 5, near a crater known as Einstein on the edge of the moon's Earth-facing side.

"The motion of space junk is mostly quite predictable; it simply moves under the influence of the gravity of the earth, moon, sun, and planets," Gray wrote. He added that radiation pressure from the sun's light could nudge things slightly, but isn't likely to drastically change the time or place of impact.

Unfortunately, any impact flash from the event will likely be too faint to be seen from Earth, even with a large telescope. Any scientific value will come by studying the fresh crater left behind by the debris.

A growing trend?

This isn't the first time Gray has predicted a lunar rocket crash. In 2022, he correctly predicted that a used rocket part would slam into the moon on March 4, getting the time of the crash right within a few seconds and the location correct within a few miles. (Gray initially predicted that the spent rocket was a Falcon 9 upper stage — in reality, it turned out to be a Chinese rocket booster.)

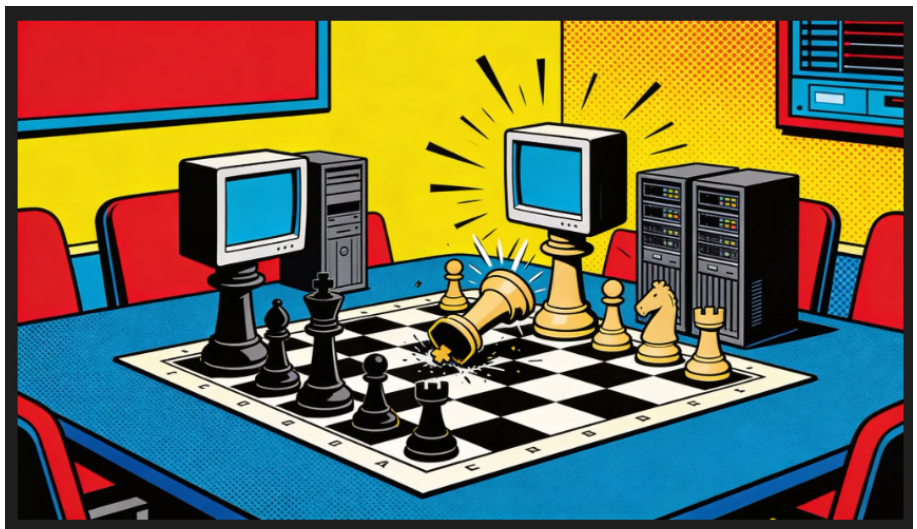
Gray's new report has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal, but he did ask several astronomers to review his findings. He predicts the debris will hit the moon at roughly 5,400 mph (8,700 km/h), or about seven times the speed of sound on Earth.

Although there is currently no human infrastructure on the moon for the incoming debris to damage, that may not be the case just a few years from now. Both the United States and China plan to increase the cadence of lunar launches, with the US aiming for annual moon missions starting with Artemis IV and V as soon as 2028. China, meanwhile, plans to land its first taikonauts on the moon by 2030.

With international interest in building permanent bases near the lunar south pole, the region could soon become crowded with cargo, crews and spacecraft. In the meantime, it will be increasingly important for space agencies and corporations to mitigate the downstream hazards of space junk by sending used rocket stages into orbit around the sun, rather than around Earth and the moon.

~ Brandon Specktor is the space/physics editor at Live Science.

the funnies



AI NEWS

AI Models Deployed Nuclear Weapons in 95% of War Game Simulations, Study Finds

King's College study finds GPT-5.2, Claude, and Gemini reached for nuclear weapons in nearly every simulated crisis. No model ever surrendered.

Space Alert! is the educational publication of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. GN's Coordinator, Bruce Gagnon is editor of this publication. Layout design by Nathan Galvez. The GN was founded in 1992.

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