OMNI NEWSLETTER: SPECIAL NUMBER ON MILITARIZATION OF OUTER SPACE, December 13, 2006,

BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE

Edited and written by Dick Bennett
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I am writing this Dec. 13 at a time when the debate over ending the war has suddenly shifted into high gear, esp. with the announcement by Cong. Dennis Kucinich that he will run for the presidency to end the occupation of Iraq by stopping funding. I agree with Kucinich that that is our most urget issue at the moment, and we must not be distracted by minor issues. But the militarization of outer space has immense danger, and it shares with the invasion and occupation of Iraq the same source: the thoroughgoing militarism of the United States. We must choose international diplomacy, negotiation, multilateralism, cooperation instead of armed force in both cases if we are to restore our country to the world’s trust.

NEW VIDEO ON MILITARIZING OUTER SPACE
(Following are notes by Dick written while watching the film.) “The High Frontier,” new video seen on FSTV for the first time Dec. 10, 2006, about the military and commercial exploitation of outer space. $30 billion being spent by US private companies annually, perhaps more by Pentagon, its space control budget largely secret.
Commercial: Mainly outside international regulation. Communication satellites are the main business, but mining asteroids are coming: natural resources in space are on a first come first take basis. The Outer Space Treaty gives space to all nations and peoples. The Moon Agreement gave all profits in space to all, especially the poor nations. But both treaties are totally disregarded by the US, which is the superpower on earth and in space.
NASA: the chief US promoter of space exploitation and imperialism without concern for the world community. Its annual $16 billion budget is used both for private and military enterprises.
Commercial satellites: The military has 60 known satellites, but it rents many more, how many more not known because secret by “national security.” For example, the Pentagon bought all commercial images of Afghanistan during the US invasion, for total domination of information from outer space during that time. This meant, for example, that the UN and private humanitarian groups could not track refugees. For war, satellite cameras can pinpoint not only an individual car for destruction, but can read license plates and a book over your shoulder.
Weapons in space are being developed in secrecy. The US withdrew from the International Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to pursue control of space unilaterally, and damned be the rest of the world.
Privacy laws in individual countries are obviously useless.
These notes are only a small part of what “The High Frontier” exposes. Buy the film and show it, write about it, call your Congressional delegation. Support the UN, join the UN/USA organization.

MILITARIZING SPACE BY EXPLORATION

Space Exploration Contributes to Militarization of Space

As Jack Manno’s Arming the Heavens showed, NASA was enmeshed in the Pentagon from its inception. The Pentagon has always sought to use space programs for its own purposes of violent force and domination, and it
continues to do so. But it was never a simple domination, but always a contestation of aims and powers. Carl Sagan illustrates the conflicts: he was a great supporter of space research but also as great an opponent of militarization of space. He believed the two could be kept separate, but were they? So we must gather the evidence and then interpret and assess the dangers.

The Military History of Space Exploration and NASA

Hitler’s V-2 rocket genius, Werner von Braun, enabled the US to get to the moon. At the end of WWII, von Braun switched sides and went to the US with his team and parts to build 100 V-2 rockets for the US Army. The Army practiced launching the V-2s from White Sands, N.M.. Then came the Bumper, a two-stage rocket with a V-2 as the booster or first stage and a U.S. Army rocket, called the WAC Corporal as the second stage.

The Army moved its missile operations to Florida at Cape Canaveral in 1949. By then Cold War anti-communist bigotry was pushing rockets faster and farther, with the Soviets at first taking the lead. Explorer 1 reached orbit in Jan. 1958.

Later that year NASA was formed, and Werner von Braun and his team developed the Saturn V, as tall as a 30 story building. Saturn went to the moon nine times.

Then Pres. Nixon ended the moon trips, because it was so expensive, and new NASA goals included the Skylab space station and the space shuttle in the 1970s and 1980s. The shuttle has reached 100 flights already. Mars exploration was being planned during this time, and space tourism.


Arming the Heavens

By the time of the Gulf War, all of this research paid off in the quick destruction of the Iraqi Army. U.S. satellites 22,000 miles above Earth, combined with radar installations and grand-based telescopes, instantly informed the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Cheyenne Mountain at Colorado Springs every time Saddam Hussein’s Scud missiles were launched, and the information was instantly forwarded to Israel or Saudi Arabia. U.S. satellites gave U.S. forces every advantage in the Gulf War. Satellites told commanders exactly where their own troops and Iraqi troops were, and predicted weather for air attacks. In contrast, Iraqis lost their ground-based communications early in the bombing before the ground war began. Iraq, deaf, dumb, and blind, was an easy target.

The Pentagon wants the next war to be controlled with even better weapons in space and directed from control rooms in places like Cheyenne Mountain. The generals and their congressional and corporate allies—the warrior complex—know that control of space leads to worldwide military superiority, and that the first country to flood Earth’s orbital lanes with weaponry may be able to prevent anyone else from doing the same. So the Strategic Defense Initiative, the Star Wars anti-missile program, has become an Earth-circling offensive weapons plan to shoot down not only missiles but satellites. Such a development might be likened to the invention of nuclear weapons and the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. And like them, it means an enormous increase in expenditures, and in an arms race.

The details of this program to control outer space have already been developed at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, directed by Lowell Wood, and is being strenuously lobbied by retired Air Force General Daniel Graham, head of the lobbying group High Frontier and by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.


Cassini Mission to Saturn

The Cassini rocket to Saturn carried 72.3 pounds of plutonium. Had the rocket exploded and that amount of plutonium scattered into the atmosphere and on Earth, the risk of cancer would have increased in all people. Why would NASA prefer the world’s deadliest substance over solar energy, which would have provided all the energy the probe needed? A report from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory said solar power was adequate. So why plutonium? Because atomic power in space has been a mainstay of U.S. military policy for decades. And
militarized scientists and politicians back up the military. Edward Teller convinced the Reagan Admin. to develop nuclearized orbital outposts. Senator Al Gore, senior, advocated the union of space and atomic power, surely deriving from Tennessee’s nuclear bastion at Oak Ridge National laboratory.

(Source: review of Grossman’s *The Wrong Stuff: The Space Program’s Nuclear Threat to Our Planet* in *The Nation* (Oct. 6, 1997)).

**“Vision for 2020” Report**  
(source: “U.S. Military Moves to Control Space and Be Enforcement Arm for the Global Economy,” by Karl Grossman)

That the United States seeks to control space and from space to dominate the Earth below cannot be doubted, for the U.S. has clearly declared that objective. The military seeks to base weapons in space, and the terms “control,” “dominate,” and “national interest” are repeated in military documents. As the Space Commission Report (2000), chaired by Pentagon Secretary Rumsfeld, stated: “…the U.S. will conduct operations to, from, in and through space in support of its national interests both on the Earth and in space.”

A key document is the U.S. Space Command’s “Vision for 2020” Report. Its cover depicts a laser weapon shooting a beam down from space zapping a target below. The U.S. Space Command, set up by the Pentagon in 1985, describes itself in “Vision for 2020” as “integrating Space Forces into warfighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict.” The motto of the Space Command is: “Master of Space.”

For what purpose? For the old purpose in a new domain of “dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect U.S. interests and investment.” That is, space domination is intended to keep the U.S.-guided global economy on track. “The globalization of the world economy will also continue with a widening between ‘haves and have-nots.’” From space, the U.S. would keep those “have-nots” in line. Essential to this plan is continued funding of military contractors and the military-industrial complex.

Why is the public ignorant of this plan even though it has been stated in print? One reason is the PR spin of a new Missile “Defense” System to protect against a “space Pearl Harbor,” as the Rumsfeld Space Commission Report state, combined with an uncritical media establishment (the military-industrial-presidential-congressional-MEDIA complex it should be called). Missiles are not our real problem (N. Korea has the GNP of Detroit), while biological and electronic “missiles” are.

But other nations do understand what the U.S. public does not. At the UN last November 2000, 163 nations voted yes for “Prevention of a Arms Race in Outer Space,” reaffirming the basic international law on space, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 stating that space be set aside for “peaceful purposes.” The US abstained! (Grossman’s books include *The Wrong Stuff: The Space Program’s Nuclear Threat to Our Planet* and *Weapons in Space*, and his video documentaries include “Nukes in Space: The Nuclearization and Weaponization of the Heavens.” 

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Additional evidence:

The Deep Space Program Science Experiment using the Clementine spacecraft technology launched in 1994 was sponsored by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization and NASA. Its main objective was to space qualify lightweight imaging sensors and other technologies for the next generation of Pentagon spacecraft—i.e. for Star Wars. (Source: Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space data sheet dated 10-27-99)

The space shuttle Endeavour launched in 2000 from Cape Canaveral, is one more example of the military involvement in the space program. The primary mission of the Endeavour is to make high resolution 3-dimensional maps for 80% of the Earth’s surface. The Pentagon gave NASA over $200 million for the flight. What is the military purpose? The Pentagon will increase their ability to identify and hit targets virtually anywhere on the planet and to determine missile flight paths. This is the global dominance outlined in “Vision for 2020.” (Source: Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space press release January 29, 2000.)

Why have these projects not become widely known? Because the US limited public disclosure of the details.

Pentagon control of the overall space budget increased from the 1970s to the 80s. Nearly 70% of the overall space budget in the 1980s was controlled by the Pentagon. Nearly $80 billion was spent on military space activities during the Reagan years. (Source: Cong. George E. Brown, Jr., “Pentagon Usurps Civilian Space
Manno and Grossman show the connections between the Pentagon and US space explorations. Perhaps an advocate of space exploration would argue that it is not inherently linked to militarization, that just because it has been true in the past does not inevitably make it happen in the future. Perhaps. Certainly, if we believe in space exploration that does not lead to future wars, we should not allow it to be contaminated by the military of a nation determined to dominate space as is the U.S. Japan has by law refused to apply the results of its space development program to military purposes. But all US space exploration history reveals that the US has applied its discoveries to militarize the heavens and suggests that it will continue to do so. Until advocates of space exploration can guarantee that their individual projects are unconnected to military domination, they should stop them.

**Additional Reasons to Oppose Weapons in Space (and therefore any exploration which contributes to proliferation of weapons in space and U.S. domination):**

A great threat to the security of the US is the unnecessary creation of enemies. The announced plans by the US to dominate space militarily is tremendously provocative and a source of new enemies for the US. If terrorists rise up against the US to attack our embassies or trade centers, we should blame our militarist leaders.

The use of space as a battlefield will be devastating to the world’s ability to travel away from Earth because of the amount of orbiting space junk that would result from such a conflict in space. Outer space is already becoming hazardous because of exploration/military litter.

That US attempts to dominate space militarily will lead to further expansion of weaponry and national rivalry is certain. It will continue the Cold War pattern of U.S. weapon initiative countered by Soviet search for equality or better. China will be impelled to develop new nuclear-armed missiles, expanding its nuclear arsenal with multiple warheads like the US missiles. China and Russia will seek to circumvent our “defenses.” India and Pakistan will respond with their own buildups. And on and on. So certain is this chain of cause and effect, that it’s almost as if the U.S. actually wants to encourage proliferation and threatening!

**NASA PLANS MOON BASE TO CONTROL PATHWAY TO SPACE**

*by Bruce Gagnon*

(This essay argues that the US has planned for many decades to commercially and militarily control the Moon. I have shortened it. D)

At a time when the U.S. faces historic debt, NASA announced last week its intention to establish a permanent base on the Moon by 2024.

The NASA plan is portrayed as the next phase of the space agency’s exploration agenda after space shuttles are retired in 2010. NASA’s ambitious schedule includes a 2009 test of one of the lunar spaceships, a 2014 manned test flight of the new Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) without a Moon landing, and a 2020 flight with a four-astronaut crew that would land on the Moon for a short visit. NASA envisions people living on the Moon for six-month intervals beginning in 2024.

Just to ensure that Congress will support funding for the Moon program, NASA is spreading the operation out to 13 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. Pratt & Whitney in West Palm Beach, Florida is now working on the engines for a lunar lander. Bechtel is interested in building structures on the Moon for NASA.

Last year, NASA said it would cost $104 billion just to return to the Moon for a first visit, but has declined to give estimates for the total cost of a permanent base. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports that NASA’s procurement plan for the Moon lander risks delivering a product that is late, over budget, and short on capability. This is what happened in the case of the International Space Station (ISS) that was originally supposed to cost taxpayers $10 billion; the price has grown to $100 billion and the station is still not complete.
The idea of a U.S. base on the Moon is nothing new. In a secret study called “A U.S. Army Study for the Establishment of a Lunar Outpost” published on June 9, 1959, the military maintained that, “The lunar outpost is required to develop and protect potential United States interests on the Moon; to develop techniques in Moon-based surveillance of the Earth and space; in communications relay, and in operations on the surface of the Moon; to serve as a base for exploration of the Moon...Any military operations on the Moon will be difficult to counter by the enemy because of the difficulty of his reaching the Moon, if our forces are already present and have means of countering a landing or of neutralizing any hostile forces that have landed.”

In 1999, John Young, former Gemini, Apollo, and space shuttle astronaut, said that the Moon would also be useful for “planetary defense.”

Recognizing that “control” of the Moon could cause enormous conflict over time, the United Nations created the Moon Treaty in 1979. Much of the Moon Treaty reiterates earlier and internationally-accepted “space law,” particularly the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. Article 11 of the treaty maintains, “The Moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind.” The treaty also prohibits national appropriation, adding the words “by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.” In other words, no military bases and no claims of ownership are allowed. The U.S. never signed the Moon Treaty, and in fact it was only ratified by nine nations.

A 1989 study commissioned by Congress, called "Military Space Forces: The Next 50 Years" reports that whoever holds the Moon militarily will control the "earth-Moon gravity well" and thus will essentially control the front gate to the Moon.

Former Nazi Major General Walter Dornberger, who was in charge of the entire V-1 and V-2 missile operation for Hitler’s Germany, testified before the U.S. Congress in 1958 that America's top space priority ought to be to “conquer, occupy, keep, and utilize space between the Earth and the Moon.” (Dornberger, along with 1,500 other top Nazi scientists, was smuggled into the U.S. under Operation Paperclip after WW II. He became Vice-President at Bell Aerospace in New York.)

The Moon has one resource that is getting everyone’s attention. It is helium-3, and, say many space enthusiasts, could be used for fusion power back here on Earth. In a 1995 New York Times op-ed, science writer Lawrence Joseph asks the question: “Will the Moon become the Persian Gulf of the 21st Century?” Joseph maintains that the most important technological question of our time will be “which nation will control nuclear fusion?” He ends his piece by saying, “If we ignore the potential of this remarkable fuel, the nation could slip behind the race for control of the global economy, and our destiny beyond.”

One person who is not ignoring helium-3 on the Moon is former astronaut and engineer Harrison Schmitt who has created a corporation to mine the Moon for it. Schmitt, though, is concerned about obstacles to his grand plans. In a 1998 piece for the industry newspaper Space News called “The Moon Treaty: Not a Wise Idea” he writes, “The strong prohibition on ownership of ‘natural resources’ also causes worry....The mandate of an international regime would complicate private commercial efforts....The Moon Treaty is not needed to further the development and use of lunar resources for the benefit of humankind...including the extraction of lunar helium-3 for terrestrial fusion power.”

Some scientists predict that one metric ton of helium-3 could be worth over $3 billion. Researchers at the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory have estimated that some one million tons of helium-3 could be obtained from the top layer of the Moon.

If all this turns out to be true and scientifically possible, imagine the gold rush to the Moon and the conflict that could follow in years to come. Who would police the Moon, especially when countries like the U.S. refuse to sign the Moon Treaty that restricts “ownership claims”? 
The U.S. Space Command's plan, *Vision for 2020*, says, "Historically, military forces have evolved to protect national interests and investments — both military and economic. During the rise of sea commerce, nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests....Likewise, space forces will emerge to protect military and commercial national interests and investment in the space medium due to their increasing importance."

I have always been convinced that, by creating offensive space weapons systems, one of the major jobs of the Space Command would be to control who can get on and off planet Earth, thus controlling the “shipping lanes” to the Moon and beyond.

There has long been a military connection to NASA's Moon missions. In early 1994, NASA launched the Deep Space Program Science Experiment, the first of a series of Clementine technology demonstrations jointly sponsored with the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO). The Pentagon announced that data acquired by the spacecraft indicated that there is ice in the bottom of a crater on the Moon, located on the Moon’s south pole — the same venue NASA now envisions as the site for the 2024 permanent base. According to a Pentagon website, “The principal objective of the lunar observatory mission though was to space qualify lightweight sensors and component technologies for the next generation of Department of Defense spacecraft [Star Wars]. The mission used the Moon, a near-Earth asteroid, and the spacecraft’s Interstage Adapter (ISA) as targets to demonstrate sensor performance. As a secondary mission, Clementine returns valuable data of interest to the international civilian scientific sector.”

In the end, the NASA plan to establish permanent bases on the Moon will help the military “control and dominate” access on and off our planet Earth and determine who will extract valuable resources from the Moon in the years ahead.

The taxpayers will be asked to pay the enormously expensive “research and development” costs of this program that in the end will profit the aerospace industry and those corporation like Bechtel that intend to build the bases and extract resources on the Moon.

NASA is not really looking for the “origins of life,” as it tells school children today. Instead, it is laying the groundwork for a new gold rush that will drain our national treasury and enrich the big corporations that now control our government. It is beyond time for the American people to wake up to the shell game underway.

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One of the foremost hero opponents of the militarization of outer space is Bruce Gagnon, founder and director of Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. OMNI (thanks to Mark Swaney) brought Bruce here several years ago, and his speech focused and inspired us. To learn about him go to google and type in Gagnon Bruce.

Another Level of Argument: Human Needs Should Precede Outer Space Exploration. The example of Arkansas.
Defenders of exploration argue that there is always an argument for present human/social needs over scientific research into space, so unless we are always to refuse to do research, we must find a balance. But this proposition is too vague for me. I prefer constantly to weight priorities (should we have first-class pre-natal care or first-class highways?), particularly when the practical value of a research project is undemonstrable or at least vague. And often no balance is possible because it should not be when the aims and results are incommensurate: one is universally recognized as essential to human life while the other is expensively unimportant: cure malaria or potholes? In these cases human needs should take priority. The clichéd “human thirst for knowledge” must take second place to urgent social needs, when the search for knowledge has minimal utility compared to other projects.

Proposition:
If the enhancement of life of all sentient creatures on Earth should be our main priority, as I think, then the people and creatures of our Earth urgently need increased assistance instead of shockingly expensive and trivial space programs promulgated by the self-interest of scientists and corporations, or instead of the $1.5 trillion tax cut for the wealthy engineered by Pres. Bush.

Consider Arkansas (1990s)
The useless expenditure of over $100 million to enlarge a football stadium for a few games a year contrasts to Arkansas’ needs:
Among lowest in teacher pay.
42nd in nation in per-pupil school spending. Ark. Constitution guarantees both an equal and adequate education, but the state provides neither.
Among lowest in per capita income.
2nd highest divorce rate.
Working poor in distress: in 1998 32% of children under 13 lived in low-income households with both parents working; 69% of children have both parents working.
No financial assistance to the working poor for daycare. State’s day-care workers among lowest paid in nation (consequence: child neglect and abuse, un readiness for school, etc.). Recent study shows that children who spend most of their time in child care are 3 times more likely to display behavioral problems in kindergarten.
Urgent shortage of nurses.
Gov. Huckabee recommended 100% cut in state aid to libraries.
Some of the lowest health ratings in the nation. State cuts $7 million from Health Department, cutting school health clinics that administer medical care and counseling to thousands of poor children. (10 million children in US have no access to health care.)
Early and periodic screening diagnosis and treatment for infants to be scrapped.
Private duty nursing program reduced (patients requiring total care must move to institutions).
Highest per capita smoking percentages; near top in smoking-related deaths; 4th for lung cancer deaths.
Babies less healthy than national average; high low-birthweight births.
Arkansas sixth in nation in number of tuberculosis cases.
Extreme need for more and better foster-care case workers.
Fewer than half the state’s counties have teams to investigate child abuse.
Early childhood programs for poor children eliminated.
Only state that does not fund domestic-violence shelters.
One of 19 states levying income taxes on people below the poverty line.
General lack of public transportation.
Inadequate mental health benefits for children and youth. More than half of jailed youth receive little help for their mental illnesses.
Inadequate AIDS medical care.
Public Defender Commission out of money.
Low workers pay because few unions.
AEGIS summer programs for high school students (Academic Enrichment for the Gifted in Summer) cut.
Global Systems Institute Summer Program (GSI, an AEGIS program) at Uof A to be cut.
School health clinics cut.
AIDS epidemic, infection rate maybe four to five times higher than reported.
Thousands upon thousands of jobs lost each year.
Teen-age nonviolent offenders can be sent where the most brutal offenders are contained.

(Yet Pres. Bush cut taxes mainly of the rich by est. $1.35 trillion over the next 10 years! And Tyson Foods Inc. urges improvements in highways.)

If I were to make a similar list for the world, the data would be a hundred times more atrocious and revolting—for example, one million people die each year from malaria; two million from tuberculosis. The diseases are preventable and curable, if the money were spent.

The Way to Peace: Disarming the Heavens Through Cooperative Treaties
The US should seek peace treaties, not war weaponry. The record on treaties of peace, such as the Antarctica Treaty is good. A reaffirmation by the US of the universal spirit of the Outer Space Treaty and the Moon Treaty will cause the entire world to rejoice.

Humans Can Create a Culture of Peace in the Heavens
Claims that wars are unavoidable are untrue; such claims are a type of self-fulfilling prophecy. Let the US seek to be a nation that expands international laws instead of weapons. (See: The Human Potential for Peace by Douglas Fry).

OMNI SEEKS A WORLD FREE OF WAR AND THE THREAT OF WAR, A SOCIETY WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERY PERSON’S POTENTIAL MAY BE FULFILLED, AN EARTH RESTORED. GRASSROOTS NONVIOLENCE, WORLD PEACE, HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL and ECONOMIC JUSTICE, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROTECTING SPECIES AND THE EARTH.

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