

# A stark choice

*The Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space discusses the choice being presented to the American public: social spending or Star Wars. They can't have both.*

It's all about two things - power and money. Star Wars technology will give the US 'control and domination' of space and the Earth below as the Space Command planning document *Vision for 2020* has outlined. On the second point, the aerospace industry acknowledges that Star Wars will be the largest industrial project in the history of the planet Earth - necessitating near total control of the federal budget by the Pentagon.

Recently, Colonel Robert Suminsby Jr., commander of Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico, told community leaders that social spending is problematic because it is impacting the Air Force's ability to buy new high-tech weapons systems.

*"As a military officer, my big concern is fixing Social Security and Medicare," Suminsby said. "If we don't fix [remove funding from] those things, there won't be anything left for a defence budget... There needs to be a national debate over what our priorities are."*

On that last point, Suminsby is correct - there needs to be a national debate - except his vision of a national debate is different from ours. His vision is one where the military makes an order and the public and Congress snap to it and hand over the federal treasury to the Pentagon. Our vision of a national debate is one that involves the grassroots citizens who talk about what real security means: housing, food, education, energy, retirement, clean environment - these are the things that bring real security to the people.

It's like two trains on a collision course. One train is called Star Wars and the other is called social progress. Which do you pick?

All over the world, the US is dragging the 'allies' into Star Wars and active resistance to the insanity of an arms race in space is growing. But we must do more - and it must be done over and over again... This issue of space warfare will be the defining issue of our time. Will there be money for social progress all over the world or will our corporate dominated governments move our taxes into the hands of the global war machine? We must call for the conversion of the military industrial complex. This campaign to keep space for peace also must become a campaign to end the madness of war - either on Earth or in the heavens.

*Members of the New Humanist 'No Star Wars' Campaign have been holding hunger strikes against US Star Wars plans in Europe, culminating in a one day worldwide fast on 22 June.*

They write:  
*The first step [in the US 'Star Wars' plan] is the installation of a radar system in the Czech Republic, and a base for interceptor missiles in Poland. This plan has divided Europe... The reaction of Russia and China has created a 'cold war' atmosphere. International tensions are increasing, and the crazy arms race (both conventional and nuclear) has restarted. Above all, the bases are being installed to militarise and control space.*



## Star Wars in Wales

CND Cymru has joined others campaigning to stop the arms race in space, in roundly condemning the testing of three 'penetrator missiles' which were fired into a sand bunker at the Qinetiq-run Missile testing centre at Pendine, Carmarthenshire [in June]. These tests now make Wales a prime testing ground for 'dual use' weapons for bunker buster applications and technologies to be used to further the arms race in space. This test in Wales is disguised as a Moon test but, as NASA has long said, everything carried out by 'space exploration' organisations, every technology they create, is for 'dual use', meaning they will serve as a space weapons system as well.

Peter Truss, one of those responsible for the testing of the missiles at Pendine, is reported as saying: *"...with the increase in technology that we can apply to these problems, all sorts of possibilities open up."*

In 2002, another penetrator bunker busting bomb was to be tested at Pendine, in advance of the invasion of Iraq, but the tests were called off after objections by local people and anti-war protestors. If a 'penetrator missile' could be aimed at a point on another planet, it is only a matter of time before such a missile will be fired at non-compliant 'adversaries' on Earth from military space stations.

Jill Gough, CND Cymru National Secretary, said:

*"We humans just don't seem to learn. It was the 'space race' in the 1950s and 60s that fuelled and helped develop the cold war arms race. At a time when we are allegedly having to live with increasingly scarce natural resources and with pollution, poverty, war and injustice, we are instead researching and learning new ways to deliver misery and destruction to life on earth and even to other planets."*

*"Is this what we want in Wales - to be part of the problem, or to be part of the solution?"*

CND Cymru

# Stop Deporting Iraqis - tent city

Genny Bove

Amnesty International has declared Iraq and the Kurdish territories to be unsafe deportation destinations and have been documenting deaths among those who have been forcibly returned, yet the British government persists in its inhumane deportation policy, with another 60 Iraqis deported in the seven days leading up to a 24-hour 'tent city' demonstration held during Refugee Week.

Voices UK writes:

*Because of its crucial role in the military invasion of Iraq, the British government bears a heavy responsibility for the acutely dangerous situation faced by Iraqis in their own country. Nonetheless, since the 2003 invasion, the UK has been one of the key players in forcible returns of Iraqis, and has operated a harsh practice of cutting off assistance, including accommodation and benefits, for people who reach the end of the asylum process. As a result large numbers of Iraqis are now living in destitution, in a legal limbo, and under constant threat of removal.*

Iraqi asylum seeker Ahmed:

*"I didn't want to leave Iraq. I would go back tomorrow if I knew I would be safe. I love my country and I miss it; I miss my road, I miss the corner where my school stands, I miss all these things, but I can't go back, because it is very likely that I would be killed."*

On 21 June, during Refugee Week, Voices UK organised a 24-hour 'tent city' in Parliament Square to highlight the plight of Iraqis facing deportation.

Being in Parliament Square, home of Brian Haw and well within the 'SOCPA zone', where all



demonstrations are supposed to obtain prior police authorisation to avoid falling foul of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (SOCPA), it seemed likely that participants might find themselves reported for alleged SOCPA breaches.

Mysteriously, however, the police claimed that authorisation had been asked for and granted, even though no-one participating in or organising the event had requested authorisation.

Our inalienable freedoms to self-expression are protected by human rights legislation and should not be curtailed by unjust laws such as SOCPA. As with previous actions in Parliament Square, such as the *No More Fallujahs* camp in 2006, police

authorisation had, on principle, not been sought.

On this occasion, having pre-emptively granted authorisation, the police then followed a couple of Greater London Authority officials around the square, checking that the campers understood the notices issued by the wardens which stated that the campers were in breach of by-laws and might be liable to prosecution. These notices helpfully explained that the by-laws have nothing whatsoever to do with SOCPA.

No further interference was made by the authorities and the camp went ahead overnight as planned.

Voices UK:

Tel - **0845 458 2564**

Website - **www.voicesuk.org**.

---

## Cluster Bomb Treaty

Over a hundred countries, including Britain, have now agreed to an international ban on cluster bombs following a meeting in Dublin in May. The treaty will be formally signed in Oslo in December.

Cluster bombs are responsible for very many deaths and severe injuries among civilians in areas where they have been used, since unexploded 'bomblets' are liable to be set off weeks, months or years later when disturbed, often by farmers returning to their agricultural land or by children playing. Large areas of land in countries such as Lebanon, Kosovo,

Afghanistan and Iraq are seriously affected by unexploded munitions.

The treaty is definitely a step in the right direction, and it is encouraging that the agreement applies to all cluster munitions, and will come into effect as soon as it has been signed by 30 nations this December. However, some questions remain.

A number of countries including the US, Israel, Russia and China have refused to sign up to the treaty. What's more, the US has large stockpiles of cluster bombs stored here in Britain, which it is unlikely to be required to remove in a hurry -

probably only by the deadline for participating countries to have destroyed all their stockpiles of cluster munitions; this is eight years away.

Article 21 of the treaty is also extremely disappointing on the subject of joint military operations. It grants legal protection to any country signed up to the treaty if the other country in a joint operation uses cluster munitions. It is hoped that, in spite of Article 21, the treaty will effectively stigmatise the use of cluster munitions so that even countries which are not signatories to the treaty feel obliged to comply with its provisions. Let's hope so.