

## **Stop Star Wars**

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### **Greenpeace sails to Star Wars test site**

The Greenpeace flagship SV Rainbow Warrior set sail on 12th February from Auckland, New Zealand for the Pacific Star Wars test site, to protest against the next scheduled test of the system and to call on President Bush to scrap the programme.

The next test of the Star Wars system is scheduled for sometime between March and June. The Rainbow Warrior will arrive in mid-March at the US Army Missile Testing Range at Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands, where the launch site is located for the so called "kill vehicle" - a missile intended to intercept a simulated enemy missile fired from the Vandenberg US Air Force Base in California.

Greenpeace is opposed to Star Wars because it risks triggering a new nuclear arms race and is already damaging prospects for nuclear disarmament. As this edition of the *Stop Star Wars Bulletin* reports, China's response to US plans has been to modernise its nuclear weapons capability to ensure it can overwhelm any missile defence system. This in turn could prompt India and Pakistan to develop their nuclear capabilities further.

Missile defence technology remains unproven and unreliable (two of the three previous tests have failed and questions have been raised over the one that the US military claims did succeed) and the potential costs involved are astronomical. National Missile Defence (NMD) is a programme that benefits only the arms manufacturers.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee has recommended "that the Government articulate the very strong concerns that have been expressed about NMD within the UK. We are not convinced that the US plans to deploy NMD represent an appropriate response to the proliferation problems faced by the international community. We recommend that the Government encourage the USA to seek other ways of reducing the threats it perceives."

**As Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon prepares to go to Washington on 19 March, Greenpeace calls on Members of Parliament to raise the issue of Star Wars with the Government, asking Ministers to take every opportunity to make British concerns about NMD clear to the new US Administration.**

Future issues of Stop Star Wars Bulletin will give more information on the involvement of defence companies in lobbying for Star Wars, responses from China, Russia and other countries, and updates from the USA.

## **Blair and Bush agree common approach**

Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush agreed on a common approach to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) at their summit meeting on 23 February. Blair said that he understood and shared the concerns of the President about WMD and nuclear proliferation, but did not say whether the UK would allow the use of the Fylingdales early warning radar base in Yorkshire as part of a Star Wars system.

In a joint statement the two leaders recognised the “common threat” from WMD and ballistic missiles and agreed to “obstruct and deter these new threats with a strategy that encompasses both offensive and defensive systems, continues nuclear arms reductions where possible, and strengthens WMD and missile proliferation controls and counter-proliferation measures.” With the emphasis very much on military approaches to proliferation, no mention was made of the need for diplomatic efforts to strengthen the arms control treaties covering nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

## **NATO allies remain sceptical**

Secretary of State Colin Powell attended his first NATO meeting on 27 February, against a background of criticism of US NMD plans. Although NATO allies welcomed renewed consultations with the US on its plans for Star Wars, many expressed reservations.

Last December, NATO Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to “preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability and a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons.”

Powell told the allies that the US had a “responsibility” to “protect all allies and friends” and that the US would consult with them prior to deciding on what type of missile defence systems to pursue.

Canadian Foreign Minister John Manley said the result of US consultations needed to be “enhanced global security, not increased global risk.” He urged the US to consult with China in addition to NATO allies and Russia.

Danish Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft indicated that Denmark would not take a stance on NMD until it had received a “concrete proposal” from the US for use of their base in Thule, Greenland, but said that US plans were “worrisome in their arms control aspects”.

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine welcomed consultations but said that it was “too early” to take a formal stance on NMD. France’s “questions” about the project had already been made clear.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union in Washington on 6 March, Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh added that the EU sees the “ABM

Treaty as very strategic and we don't want to see this ABM Treaty threatened."

A number of NATO Heads of State and Government have also spoken out against NMD in recent months.

- German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has said that he plans to discuss "differences" between the US and Germany on a number of issues including missile defence at his meeting with President Bush on 29 March.
- French President Jacques Chirac: "Our concern is that, in our opinion, NMD cannot fail to re-launch the arms race in the world. The costs of this technology are colossal. It seems to us there is something contradictory between unrestrained increases in defence spending and the very excessive reduction in spending on development aid throughout the world." NMD is "an invitation to proliferation".
- Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato added that NMD posed a risk to the "indivisibility" of the US and Europe in transatlantic defence.

### **Russian response to NMD**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that deployment of a national missile defence shield would do "irreparable damage to the architecture of international relations".

Secretary of the Russian Security Council Sergei Ivanov, a close aide to President Putin, said in February that "the destruction of the ABM Treaty will result in the annihilation of the whole structure of strategic stability and create prerequisites for a new arms race, including in outer space."

### **Russia proposes European missile defence plan**

President Putin has presented NATO Secretary-General, Lord Robertson with proposals for a European missile defence system, based on creating a mobile system that would be deployed quickly close to missile proliferators. However Russia remains fiercely opposed to any unilateral US plan and in recent weeks has adopted an increasingly hard line against the West.

On 16 February, shortly before Robertson was due to arrive in Moscow, Russia test fired a range of land, sea and air-launched nuclear-capable missiles, demonstrating its stated intention to strengthen its nuclear forces if US star wars plans go ahead. Russian air force bombers test fired one strategic missile and two tactical missiles in the south of the country, while the Navy launched a ballistic missile from a submarine in its Northern fleet and the land-based Strategic Rocket Command launched a Topol missile. In addition, the *Washington Times* has reported that in a return to Cold War tactics, Russia is forward deploying short-range nuclear weapons close to its borders with Lithuania and Poland.

The Russian missile defence plan involves close assessment of existing and future missile threats, combined with averting such threats by joint political efforts, and developing the capability to deploy a mobile anti-missile force near a potential aggressor only as a last resort. The Russians claim that it would be cheaper than US plans and would not breach the ABM Treaty. Russia hopes to appeal to European NMD sceptics such as France and Germany, encouraging them to continue to oppose the US. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said that Russia intended to pursue discussions on its plans with the US, Europe and China.

### **China responds with more missile tests**

China tested a DF-31 intercontinental ballistic missile over its territory in November, as part of a series of tests to modernise its long range missile capability. China is widely believed to have between 20 and 40 ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States, which could be intercepted if a US missile defence capability worked as planned. China may increase this capability to as many as 200 nuclear armed ballistic missiles if NMD goes ahead.

In recent years China has begun modernising its nuclear forces with the aim of enabling its intercontinental ballistic missiles to survive a pre-emptive strike and stand a reasonable chance of penetrating an adversary's defences. This has involved developing the ability to fire missiles from mobile launchers and equip them with multiple warheads.

China has been particularly angered by US plans for theatre missile defences in East Asia, particularly any suggestion that such defences should include Taiwan. China is widely suspected of transferring missile technology to Pakistan and Iran and of assisting Pakistan with its nuclear programme. The cooling in relations between the US and China caused by NMD reduce prospects for reaching agreement with China to stop proliferating missile technology.

### **Danish Parliament to debate Star Wars**

The Danish Parliament in Copenhagen will hold parliamentary hearings on national missile defence over the next couple of months followed by a debate. Denmark, like Britain, hosts a key NMD component on its territory: the early warning radar base at Thule, Greenland.

Danish Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft reportedly agreed at a meeting with Robin Cook on January 18 not to take a position on US plans until Washington makes a formal request. Denmark has previously voiced support for the ABM treaty.

### **Boeing wins Prime NMD contract**

On 22 December, 2000, the US Ballistic Missile Defence Organisation (BMDO) announced a \$6 billion contract extension to the Boeing

Company's Space and Communications Group for continuing development of a National Missile Defence system. The contract, which has a potential value of \$13 billion if future options are exercised, is intended to ensure continuity and expansion of the Star Wars development and test programme, until the Bush Administration decides on an NMD system.

## **US defence reviews**

In his first budget on 27 February President Bush has announced a spending increase of \$20 billion on military research and development between 2002 and 2006. A large proportion of this money is expected to go on developing missile defence technologies.

In January new Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld announced that the Pentagon is undertaking a "top to bottom" review of US Defence Policy, expected to report to President Bush this summer. The review will look at alternatives and additions to the National Missile Defence system initiated by the Clinton Administration including options for globe-spanning land, sea and space based missile defences. Factors in determining which systems to deploy include "the urgency of the ballistic missile threat to the United States, US forces overseas, and our friends and allies, as well as the technical feasibility, costs and deployment schedule for potential alternatives."

With two out of three tests of a prototype national missile defence system having failed to hit their targets, and the next full flight test expected in late spring, Rumsfeld is keen to "avoid setting hurdles" on the issue of technological feasibility. Many Republicans believe that just deploying a national missile defence system, irrespective of whether it has technical problems, would be sufficient to force US adversaries to think twice about attacking the United States.

The Pentagon is also currently conducting a Nuclear Posture Review, which will look at the possibility of unilaterally reducing the US nuclear arsenal. During the election campaign, George W. Bush pledged to consider scaling down US nuclear forces, but any cuts are likely to be linked to progress on missile defence and nuclear deterrence will remain an "essential element" of US defence policy.

According to Secretary Rumsfeld, the US approach to any nuclear reductions "would need to be developed in the context of a number of inter-related factors... These include decisions on the ABM Treaty and National Missile Defence as well as measures relating to tactical nuclear weapons, [and] the evolution in Russia's unilateral strategic force posture." The Bush Administration may attempt to offer progress on unilateral nuclear disarmament in an attempt to ease concerns about national missile defence from NATO countries and as an incentive to Russia to drop opposition to modification or scrapping of the ABM Treaty.

The unilateral approach also marks a de-coupling of US nuclear policy from international arms control agreements. A White House spokesperson

said that the review reflected “the possibility of the United States setting its nuclear levels of deterrence at a level that we would set, not as a result of treaties, but as a result of a decision that the United States makes that that is the level appropriate to protect our national defences.”

### **Star Wars Calendar**

19-21 March, Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon MP visits Washington DC

26-27 March, Expeditionary Ballistic Missile Defence conference, London

29 March, German Chancellor Schroeder meets President Bush, Washington DC

March-April, Hearings on NMD in the Danish Parliament, Copenhagen

March - June, next full scale NMD test, Kwajalein Atoll, Pacific and Vandenberg AFB, California

29-30 May, NATO Foreign Ministers meeting, Budapest

7-8 June, NATO Defence Ministers meeting, Brussels

14-15 June, US-EU Summit, Stockholm and Goteburg, Sweden