

Stop Star Wars

Bulletin no. 4, June 2001

A stark reminder of the decisions on National Missile Defence that must be made by Tony Blair during this Parliament were presented to him shortly after the Election as President Bush touched down in Europe for meetings with the allies – Star Wars and Kyoto were top of the agenda. Whilst political leaders welcomed Bush, civil society was much more hostile with protests following the President from meeting to meeting across the continent.

Throughout Europe Greenpeace made it clear that Bush's unilateralist policies were not welcome. As Airforce One arrived in Brussels activists blockaded the exit gates at the airport and called on allied leaders to stand up to Bush and "Stop Star Wars". A further demonstration involved a motorised parachute circling NATO HQ during the heads of state meeting, trailing a "Stop Star Wars" banner. And in Slovenia while the US and Russian leaders met, Greenpeace launched a giant kite flying a "Stop Star Wars" banner over the meeting venue.

The first Stop Star Wars bulletin of the new parliament includes -

- Allied Responses to Bush in Brussels
- Global Statement of Opposition to National Missile Defence
- UK Unions say no to NMD
- US Democrats take aim at Missile Defence
- Boeing pushes for Missile Defence by 2004
- Bush set to reject Biological Weapons Convention

Bush comes to Brussels, but Allies fail to back Star Wars

President Bush arrived in Brussels on 13 June, calling for NATO allies to "prepare for new threats", but his Star Wars missile defence project faced opposition inside and outside NATO HQ. NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson attempted to play down divisions, but Allies were unable to take any decisions on a "common NATO approach", agreeing only to "a continuing process of consultations". A number of Allies made their opposition clear.

Wim Kok, Prime Minister of The Netherlands said, "Our security agenda includes the need to give adequate answers to severe threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The primary method to prevent and combat these threats are international agreements on non-proliferation and arms control. These should include the international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation, the CTBT and an effective Biological Weapons Verification Protocol..."

Our goal must be...to achieve more stability and more security - not less. It is my firm conviction that a unilateral abrogation of the ABM-treaty by the US would not be the right approach."

Jacques Chirac, President of France reiterated: "the need to preserve the strategic balances, of which the ABM Treaty is a pillar. If we are to envisage a new framework, one that takes account of the emergence of a multipolar world, then we must ensure that it contains binding provisions designed to guarantee international stability."

NATO Foreign Ministers, attending their biannual meeting in Budapest on 29 May, also refused to agree to language proposed by the US that allies share a "common threat" from ballistic missiles. US officials had hoped that the allies would indicate "understanding" for missile defence plans, but NATO's Final Communiqué agreed only to "continue substantive discussions" with Washington.

France and Germany reportedly opposed stronger language proposed by US Secretary of State Colin Powell. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said that it was important that no decisions be made on missile defence until further consultations have taken place and that missile defence "must not lead to another arms race."

The Allies pointedly reiterated that "the principal non-proliferation goal of the Alliance and its members remains unchanged: to prevent proliferation from occurring, or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means. In this context we continue to place great importance on non-proliferation and export control regimes, international arms control and disarmament as means to prevent proliferation."

The following week NATO Defence Ministers meeting in Brussels were also unable to agree on any joint assessment on the ballistic missile threat. Instead the Allies repeated their "commitment to work for further reductions of nuclear weapons, and our determination to contribute to the implementation of the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference." French Defence Minister Alain Richard said that NATO needed a more comprehensive analysis of what the supposed threat entails and suggested that the US view of Iran and North Korea was out of date.

Global Statement of Opposition to US National Missile Defence

On 12 June, Malcolm Savidge MP, Dr Phyllis Starkey MP and Lord Wallace joined non-governmental organisations in London to launch an international letter of opposition to encourage Washington to abandon its missile defence plans, proceed with deep nuclear arsenal reductions, take missiles off hair-trigger alert, and move immediately towards the total and unequivocal elimination of nuclear weapons. The letter has been signed by over 600 parliamentarians and non-governmental organisations from around the world.

Malcolm Savidge, whose Early Day Motion on Missile Defence at the end of the last parliamentary session attracted 178 signatories in just a couple of days, said that deployment of missile defence was "not inevitable" and highlighted the "grave cost of increasing the risk of arms races,

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism". Dr Phyllis Starkey, who is a member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, said that Bush's rationale for missile defence was "not credible" and that it was time that the UK Government made clear to the Bush Administration that missile defence was "a problem not a solution". Lord Wallace, Liberal Democrat Defence Spokesperson called on European Governments to "question very sharply" US plans for missile defence and called for proper parliamentary scrutiny of the US-UK co-operation agreements.

UK Unions oppose National Missile Defence

(letter printed in The Guardian, 14th June 2001)

We note with alarm George Bush's plan for an anti-ballistic missile system. This initiative will not make the world a safer place and will do immense damage to international treaties covering weapons of mass destruction. It will also considerably undermine international confidence in treaties as a system of resolving problems, if the US is to set them aside when it feels it is expedient to do so.

We therefore consider it wholly inappropriate for our Government to support this initiative and strongly urge it not to do so.

Signed by 17 trade union general secretaries including Bill Morris of TGWU, John Edmonds of GMB, Dave Prentis of Unison and Gordon Taylor of PFA.

Democrats take aim at Missile Defence

New Senate Leader Tom Daschle (Democrat – South Dakota) has criticised the Bush Administration's plans to accelerate deployment of Missile Defence. Daschle said he was "troubled" by Bush's plans to deploy a rudimentary Star Wars system before it was technically proven.

"The system won't even work without radar," Daschle said, "... there is such a rush to deploy that I think it's going to be an embarrassment to them, to the country, if we rush to judgement, rush to the commitment of resources."

Senator Carl Levin (Democrat – Michigan), the new Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee following the defection of Senator Jeffords, also says that the Bush Administration has placed too much focus on defending against missiles, "the least likely means of delivering a weapon of mass destruction," at the expense of more likely threats to US security.

According to Levin, the US has "got to spend more resources on the World Trade Centres and the embassy bombings and the Cole attacks and invest in the defences and strategies to beat those threats and to beat those terrorists and to try to avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

The Senate Armed Services Committee plays a key role in determining US defence spending through the annual Defense Authorization and Defense Appropriations Bills. The Bush Administration is expected to seek funding approval from the Senate and the House of Representatives for its plans for missile defence spending, such as money to break ground for missile defence facilities at Alaska's Shemya Island, and for other military construction programmes such as the possible new X-band radar facility at RAF Fylingdales in the UK.

Most Democrats are opposed to any unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty. They are expected to use their new power base in the Senate to question whether the missile defence technology works and whether the diplomatic and financial trade-offs are worthwhile. According to Representative Barney Frank (Democrat – Massachusetts), "there's overwhelming agreement" amongst Democrats in Congress "that a major financial commitment at this point is a mistake."

Boeing Pushes Plan for Missile Defence by 2004

Boeing, the lead contractor for the US national missile defence programme, has presented plans to accelerate missile defence deployment with the aim of putting a rudimentary system in place before the end of President Bush's current term of office. The Pentagon is eager to press forward as quickly as possible with missile defence despite opposition from the Senate and US allies.

Options include an initial deployment of five interceptor missiles in Alaska, before construction of a new X-band radar is completed, relying on upgraded early warning radars such as the Fylingdales radar in Yorkshire for guidance. Alternatives such as deploying missile tracking radars on moveable floating platforms in international waters are unlikely to be deployed due to their vulnerability to attack. Boeing's proposals are based on the assumption that "treaty constraints" in the form of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia are "removed".

Other "crash deployment" options under serious consideration are airborne laser for limited boost-phase intercepts of all missiles, or deploying off the North Korean coast a small number of AEGIS destroyers armed with modified Standard Missile-2 Block IV missiles in an attempt to deploy an extremely limited capability against short and medium range missiles.

The total cost of Boeing's proposals is as yet unclear, although they would reportedly involve more missile defence tests, at a cost of between \$75 million and \$100 million each. The next integrated flight test is currently scheduled for this July. Previous tests have failed spectacularly to hit their targets.

A Pentagon spokesperson said that the Defense Department budget for Fiscal Year 2002 will include "considerably more" money for missile

defence. Boeing's current contract, which is worth up to \$13 billion, was renewed in January. US companies Raytheon, TRW and Lockheed Martin are the major subcontractors.

Bush set to reject Biological Weapons Protocol

Following its rejection of the Kyoto protocol on climate change, the Bush Administration is preparing to reject a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), intended to provide verification for the treaty. The protocol, which was strongly backed by the British Government and NATO, was on track to be completed by November 2001 in time for the fifth BWC Review Conference.

The BWC has been ratified by 143 countries, including Iran, Iraq, Libya and North Korea – all "rogue states" identified by the Bush Administration to justify its missile defence plans. The new protocol was intended to give the BWC some teeth, by providing mechanisms for investigating suspicious facilities that could be used to make biological weapons. According to Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain MP, the BWC Protocol was expected to provide "an effective compliance regime that will help deter and detect proliferators".

In February, when Tony Blair attended his first meeting with President Bush he reportedly urged the President to pursue non-proliferation measures, not just missile defence. However, a confidential Bush Administration review recommends that the US not accept the BWC Protocol, arguing that it would be inefficient in stopping cheating and that it will be impossible to remedy in time for the negotiating deadline.

Supporters of the BWC Protocol include:

- Former Foreign Office Minister, Brian Wilson MP: "The UK has played a leading role throughout these negotiations as we have had responsibility for the section of the text on compliance measures-- the core of the future Protocol. We welcome the appearance of the text and are currently assessing this overall content. A successful outcome by the time of the BWC Review Conference remains a possibility but will depend upon the reaction to the text from all countries involved over the coming months. An effective BWC Protocol remains an important arms control objective for the United Kingdom as it will help fill the last remaining gap in Treaty provisions designed to stem the proliferation of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction)." (Hansard, 10 Apr 2001, Column: 531W)
- Menzies Campbell QC MP: "It is imperative that the British Government use all their political influence to try to ensure a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations on the convention... Some people oppose a verification regime because they are anxious to prevent secrets in commercially lucrative biotechnology becoming more widely available. However, the need for a verification regime for the most easily carried and concealed weapons of mass

destruction is overwhelming." (Hansard, 15 March 2001, Column 1240)

- Foreign Affairs Select Committee: "The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is an integral part of the web of deterrence against states developing and stockpiling WMD... we believe that national security requirements demand that the BTWC contains the strongest verification regime that can be agreed... We recommend that the Government reiterate this position and push for an early conclusion to the negotiation." (HC 407 of 1999-2000)
- NATO Heads of State and Government: "We are determined to achieve progress on a legally binding protocol including effective verification measures to enhance compliance and promote transparency that strengthens the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." (Washington Summit Communiqué, 24 April 1999)
- Ambassador Tibor Tóth, Chair of the Ad Hoc Group conducting negotiations on the BWC Protocol in Geneva: "Barriers have been raised to nuclear and chemical proliferation. If the world community fails to agree on a protocol to strengthen the ban on biological weapons after six years of talks, it will send a very unfortunate message." (*New York Times*, 20 May 2001)

Star Wars Calendar

July 2001: Expected date for next Missile Defence Integrated Flight Test.

20-22 July: G-8 Summit, Genoa. Possible date for first visit by President Bush to the UK.

23 July – 17 August: Biological Weapons Convention Protocol talks resume in Geneva.

11 September: 56th United Nations General Assembly begins.

25-27 September: Conference on Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) Entry Into Force, New York.

September – December 2001: Approximate date of completion of the Nuclear Posture Review. (Congressionally-mandated deadline is December 1, but the NPR and more focused policy reviews on Missile Defence could be completed sooner.)

19 November – 7 December: Fifth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference, Geneva.

6-7 December: NATO Foreign Ministers meeting, Brussels.

18-19 December: NATO Defence Ministers meeting, Brussels.