

Stop Star Wars

Bulletin no. 5, July 2001

Star Wars Fringe Meeting at Labour Party Conference

Tuesday 2nd October, 8pm, the Grand Hotel, Brighton
Chaired by Polly Toynbee

Tell Bush : Star Wars Starts Wars

President Bush arrives for his first visit to Britain on Wednesday 18th July on his way to the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy. Bush's visit gives Tony Blair the perfect opportunity to implement the Foreign Affairs Select Committee's recommendation that "the Government articulate the very strong concerns that have been expressed about NMD within the UK".

British concerns about Star Wars have been made clear inside and outside Westminster. On July 3rd, over 100 Greenpeace activists, many carrying banners with the message "Star Wars Starts Wars", peacefully invaded the US spy base at Menwith Hill, near Harrogate to expose the base's proposed role relaying early warning data for Star Wars. Menwith Hill hosts two Space-based Infra Red System (SBIRS) radomes which, if the Government gives consent, would be used to transmit information on ballistic missile launches for a US missile defence system.

Stephen Tindale, Executive Director of Greenpeace UK, who was present at the action, said: "We urge Tony Blair not to kowtow to Bush on such a crucial issue. He must say no to UK involvement and stop Star Wars in its tracks".

Over 250 MPs have signed a cross-party Early Day Motion, sponsored by Malcolm Savidge MP, expressing "concern at President Bush's intention to move beyond the constraints of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in developing missile defence" and recommending that "the Government voice the grave doubts about NMD in the UK".

Greenpeace has again stepped up its international Campaign against Star Wars. At the weekend, 16 Greenpeace volunteers including two from Britain breached security at the Vandenberg Airbase in California, to successfully delay the latest test Star Wars missile test by forty five minutes. This week our ship "Arctic Sunrise" is setting sail for Greenland, home to the Thule Radar facility, which would play a similar role to Fylingdales in any Star Wars system. Greenpeace will be cataloguing political and local resistance to Star Wars in the region.

International parliamentary opposition to Star Wars is also growing, with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly voting by a margin of 2-1 in the last month to support the ABM Treaty. Australia's Labor Party has also made its opposition to Star Wars clear.

Meanwhile, there are worrying signs that the Bush Administration is considering ways to ditch the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to resume nuclear testing at short notice if a decision is taken to end the 9-year US nuclear test moratorium.

As Tony Blair prepares to host Bush in Britain, Greenpeace calls on Members of Parliament to sign EDM 23 and to raise the issue of Star Wars with the Prime Minister, asking him to take this opportunity to make British concerns about Star Wars clear to the President. He should also make clear Britain's support for international treaties such as the ABM Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention protocol, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Kyoto protocol.

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Text of Early Day Motion 23, tabled by Malcolm Savidge MP

"That this House expresses concern at President Bush's intention to move beyond the constraints of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in developing missile defence; and endorses the unanimous conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which recommended that the Government voice the grave doubts about NMD in the UK, questioned whether US plans to deploy NMD represent an appropriate response to the proliferation problems faced by the international community and recommended that the Government encourage the USA to explore all ways of reducing the threat it perceives."

A true friend is an honest friend

By David Clark, Sunday July 15, 2001, The Observer

This morning, as America's prototype anti-ballistic missile interceptor was launched from the Marshall Islands, silent prayers were being offered in Whitehall for another failed test.

This reflects no malice on the part of the Government, merely a recognition that American ambitions to build a National Missile Defence (NMD) system have presented British policy makers with a headache.

The Government's dilemma is that it knows there is no strategic rationale for NMD, but will feel compelled to go along with it if the Americans decide to deploy.

In the British view, NMD is a sledgehammer designed to crack a walnut. North Korea is the only potential 'rogue state' with the medium-term capacity to hit continental America, and only then with a very limited strike.

If the Americans wanted to eliminate the threat, they could destabilise the regime by droppings billions of dollars on Pyongyang instead wasting their money on technology that is unlikely to work.

Irrational it may be, but the Americans remain convinced that the barbarians are at the gate, leaving officials and Ministers from both sides of the Atlantic locked in a dialogue of mutual incomprehension.

None of this would matter if the two sides could simply agree to disagree, but the Bush administration is determined to proceed and requires the use of British soil to locate some of its missile tracking facilities. There is already extreme irritation on the Republican Right that Britain didn't offer blanket support from the outset.

For Labour, this creates all sorts of problems. Most ominously, it exposes the fragility of Tony Blair's assertion that Britain does not have to choose between being close to America and being at the heart of Europe. Our European partners, unencumbered by fanciful notions of a Special Relationship with Washington, have fewer inhibitions about pointing out that Emperor Bush is butt-naked. They will not understand if the Government ends up acquiescing in a project both we and they know to be unworkable and dangerous.

Despite the consequences, there has never been any doubt about which direction Tony Blair would jump if forced. Even though Tony Blair understands the threat posed by NMD, the political imperative has always been to avoid any question over Labour's commitment to the Special Relationship. The memory of Neil Kinnock's 1987 scolding in front of the White House fireplace has left a deep scar on Labour's psyche.

New Labour's solution has been to replace simplistic anti-Americanism with a vulgar Atlanticism, obliging Britain to bow to every American concern, no matter how ill founded. As Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook was horrified by the implications of NMD, but he also recognised the inevitability of a Prime Ministerial decision to support it.

The strategy of the Foreign Office was therefore to play for time in the hope that events would conspire to get the Government out of its hole; technological failure, spiralling costs, a deal with Russia or even the collapse of North Korea.

This approach failed to account for the ideological zeal of those driving the policy in Washington and their disregard for the niceties of international diplomacy. A target date for deploying NMD has now been set for 2005 and Bush shows every intention of doing whatever it takes to get the results he wants. Unless he fails, Labour will be forced to a decision before the next election.

The real prospect looms of Labour finding itself complicit in a decision that will bring lasting discredit to its record in office. America's illusory security will be bought at the cost of greater insecurity for everyone else.

The abrogation of the ABM Treaty will remove the central support pillar of the entire international arms control regime, bringing down the rest of its structure as Russia and China in particular seek new ways to maintain the credibility of their deterrents. The knock-on effects will increase the pressures driving the proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Perhaps just as worrying as the effect on strategic stability is what NMD says about the contemporary American mindset. Never in history has any country enjoyed the same degree of military superiority and territorial security. But instead of leaving Americans at ease in the world, their unassailable position seems to have induced a mentality bordering on national paranoia.

The outside world is seen as incomprehensible and threatening. They want, as the mood suits, to isolate themselves from it or lash out at it. NMD cannot be understood in any other terms, except possibly as an expression of national virility and a determination to do it because they can and no one can stop them.

Either way, indulgence is the last remedy likely to produce the outcome we need.

The priority for Britain must be to restore some sense of balance in the global system, whatever the collateral damage to the Special Relationship in short-term. That requires Britain to be part of a European consensus urging restraint and making it clear that America cannot expect unconditional support.

A strong transatlantic alliance must remain a cornerstone British foreign policy. But if it takes that objective seriously, the Government should proceed on the basis that a true friend is an honest friend

This anti-American stunt in Yorkshire is a perfect gesture

Demonstrators at Menwith Hill have ignited the missile defence debate

Comment, Hugo Young, *Guardian*, Thursday July 5, 2001

"Scouting the tundra that is New Labour, some Tories claim to know where it will break up. They think the issue will be Europe. Iain Duncan Smith is running his leadership bid on that misguided fantasy. Actually, the real fault line is about as uncomfortable for him as for Tony Blair.

We see the beginnings of it in the Greenpeace escapades at Menwith Hill. For two days running, demonstrators broke past dozy guards at the American listening post in Yorkshire to make their point against national missile defence.

It has been a perfect gesture: well-organised, attention-getting and sparking into life an argument the government was hoping to suppress. It also signals a contest in which the anaesthetic sibilance of New Labour will face its hardest struggle to put the instincts of the old left to sleep.

Unlike Europe, NMD strikes at the living heart and mind of Labour. As an issue of principle, Europe is dead. The socialist souls it stirs are barnacled with age. George Bush's missile defence schemes, by contrast, draw conscience and politics together to demand a statement about the modern world. Here the argument has only just begun. NMD's presumptions about the post-cold-war world challenge the European left to think seriously.

Mr Bush ended his recent visit apparently thinking he had it licked. Such was the briefing from spokesmen and spinners, especially in Washington and London. Europe, we were led to believe, agreed that there were missile threats from rogue states, and did not fundamentally oppose the US in its efforts to counteract them. The phrase "moral imperative" was even attributed to one European power, believed to be not a million miles from Madrid. The strategists, both political and military, of the Republican right sustain the assertion that, come what may, NMD is irreversible, will go ahead and - a more recent promise - will be deployed whether or not it has been proved to work.

The imperative has become political. "It is a simple question," the June 9 Washington Post quoted a Pentagon official as saying. "Is something better than nothing? The president and the secretary for defence have made it pretty clear that some missile defence in the near term is in fact better than nothing." The definition of near term appears to be set just before the end of Bush's first term as president.

The European response is in fact more fragmented, more aware than ever of the fragility of some of the claims coming out of the ultra-hawkish Pentagon, and the plethora of defence businesses that would be the only unambiguous gainers from NMD. There's a seamlessness between the Bush and Clinton missile programmes, and more evidence appearing of the critiques that were made of the Clinton approach even from within his administration.

In a telling piece in the new issue of Foreign Affairs, John Newhouse, who worked in the Clinton State Department, pours scorn on the threat-analysis that persuaded Clinton he needed "red meat thrown to the rightwingers on the [Capitol] Hill". North Korea and Iran were depicted as capable, within a few years, of threatening the US with strategic missile systems.

"But within and beyond the administration," writes Newhouse, "as well as within the intelligence bureaucracy itself, the threat was widely seen as greatly inflated." It reminded him of the later 1970s, "when cold warriors in and out of government exaggerated the strength of Soviet strategic forces, in part by intimidating the intelligence community and skewing the intelligence product."

The key player in both the late 70s and late 90s was Donald Rumsfeld, the present secretary for defence. "His agenda is modest," writes Newhouse. "He concentrates on just a few subjects, but these he routinely bulldozes into submission." Although, on his own recent visit to Europe, Rumsfeld continued to bulldoze - NMD is "simply inescapable", he said - many allies are becoming less not more willing to accept his analysis.

The politeness they showed to Mr Bush masks the growing likelihood that any European government with a socialist element in its coalition will be working to oppose NMD, as a source of global instability which Washington has not succeeded in talking down.

In response, the British line is that it's too early to raise such alarms. Everyone should hold off arguing until we know more about Washington's real intentions. This is typically disingenuous. The missile defence system to which all efforts have been, albeit imperfectly, directed is space-based, rather than speculative and unresearched boost-phase interception. That means using Menwith Hill for satellite relay and, more offensively, Fylingdales as an integral element in the chain of early warning radar. Early NMD probably means early British involvement.

The Ministry of Defence sounds ambivalent about the prospect. Officials express their anxiety about being drawn into a misuse of our own stretched defence resources. Meanwhile, though, they scheme to be a part of it, in keeping with their special alliance. The instinct of defence officials not to get left out has no limit.

The top brass are therefore now working to seek a place for British scientists on the NMD development teams. As one of the top military people told me not long ago, everything must always be done to reinforce the outwards signs of London's concurrence with Washington, for a simple reason: "If we disagree, we tend to find the door not slammed - but rather less wide open."

That axiom now faces a challenge from two quarters. The first is Europe. The objections to NMD focus on finding a credible balance between threat and response. As Newhouse argues, the biggest, and perhaps most answerable, threats to the US come from more immediate and less expensive items than first-generation ICBMs.

Europe, he suggests, may want to get together with Vladimir Putin to make a realistic assessment of threats to their shared landmass. This would only be divisive between Europe and America if the Bush administration caused it to be.

The second challenge should be just as strong. Opposing NMD is not another bout of CND-ism. It's not about crypto-pacifism, or any other of the charges levelled at Labour in the 1980s. It says, along with many Americans, that NMD is not self-evidently benign, and may be a waste of money and stability. It insists the debate must go on in public before irrevocable decisions are made, which may in any case be impossible to carry out.

For Fylingdales is a more inflammatory target than Menwith Hill. Some in the ministry privately doubt whether its physical extension, necessary for NMD, could be done, in face of direct action against the American bulldozer and the desecration of the Yorkshire Moors. Minority protest could be forged into public opinion. There seems a good chance that Labour will become the agency where that opinion finds its voice, and thereby regain some self-respect."

US set to break the ABM Treaty in "months, not years"

The State Department has notified US diplomats around the world that Star Wars tests are set to breach the ABM Treaty "in months, not years". A memorandum circulated to US embassies states, "the United States needs release from the constraints of the ABM treaty to pursue the most promising technologies and basing modes to field limited, but effective missile defenses."

In Congress, US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz has also told the Senate Armed Services Committee that violations of the ABM Treaty may occur "sooner rather than later". The Pentagon wants to start construction in April of facilities that could put the US in violation of the treaty.

The 1972 US-Russia Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty prohibits missile defence systems that could provide a national territorial defence of the US or Russia. The treaty prohibits ABM radars, it prohibits the development, testing and deployment of sea, air or space-based and ABM systems and components, and it prohibits deployment of any ABM component outside of the national territory of the signatories.

Although Britain is not a signatory of the ABM treaty, the Government may become directly involved as UK consent is required for the US to use facilities at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales, in the UK. Upgrading the early warning radar or constructing an X-band radar at Fylingdales would violate Article III of the ABM Treaty as currently constituted, which prohibits deploying ABM components outside of the allowed ABM deployment areas, and Article IX, which prohibits deploying ABM components in other countries. Upgrading the early warning radars would also violate Article VI, which prohibits giving non-ABM facilities ABM capabilities.

Chirac Initiative on Missile Non-Proliferation

French President Jacques Chirac is calling for the EU to convene an international conference to "restart efforts for ballistic missile non-proliferation at a political level". On 15-16 June, the Goteborg Summit issued a Declaration on Prevention of Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles calling on the European Council to "adopt without delay" a "common position on the fight against ballistic missile proliferation". France's objective is to achieve a new "international instrument" to make the missile non-proliferation regime as "constraining" as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The proposal has support from Germany and also has the backing of Russian President Putin.

Chirac has been an outspoken critic of US plans for missile defence. In Brussels for President Bush's first NATO meeting, he told reporters that anti-ballistic missile defences could be a "strong incitement to proliferation". According to Chirac, the highest priority is "to fight against proliferation in general and ballistic missiles in particular" and "the need to put in place international procedures constraining proliferation."

Chirac is also keen to maintain the "non-militarisation" of space, warning that a "new arms race in space" could have "disastrous consequences for the world".

Russia and NMD: Nuclear Arms Race or Nuclear Disarmament Talks

Following his first meeting with President Bush on 16 June, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia "stands ready" to respond to unilateral US abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty action by "augmenting" its nuclear arsenal.

Putin told reporters that if the US goes ahead with Star Wars unilaterally, "we will reinforce our capability" by "mounting multiple warheads on our

missiles" and "that will cost us a meager sum...The nuclear arsenal of Russia will be augmented multifold."

In response to comments made by US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice that the US would proceed with missile defence with or without Russia, Putin said that both the Start I and Start II nuclear disarmament treaties would be negated by an American decision to build missile defenses in violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

Referring to the possibility of a new nuclear arms race in the Far East and Asia, Putin warned that unilateral US deployment of missile defenses could "result in a hectic, uncontrolled arms race on the borders of our country and neighboring countries."

The collapse of the START treaties would remove verification and inspection of Russia's nuclear arsenal, and raise the possibility of Russia redeploying missiles armed with multiple warheads. The Russian nuclear arsenal is currently estimated at 5,600 strategic warheads deployed on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), nuclear-armed submarines, and bombers, along with around 3,600 non-strategic nuclear warheads. Russia's nuclear forces were expected to fall to between 1,000 and 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2010, but if Russia stops reducing its long-range missiles in response to missile defence, it may retain as many as 3,500 strategic warheads.

Russia calls for 5-Power Nuclear Disarmament Talks

Russia has proposed that the five nuclear-weapon states (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States) institute a "permanently operating consultation process" on strategic stability and nuclear arms reductions.

Russia proposes strategic nuclear arms reductions to 1,500 each for itself and the US with the objective that "the total number of warheads among the five nuclear powers would not exceed 4,000 after 2008". Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alexander Yakovenko also called on the smaller nuclear powers, Britain, France and China "to continue to show restraint in the nuclear field."

Yakovenko said that "the question of the preservation and strengthening of the ABM Treaty" would be relevant to the talks, along with the Russian proposal for a Global Control System (a multilateral regime to control missile technology). The time was also "ripe" for "the elaboration of an international agreement on preventing the appearance of weapons in space."

President Putin has previously proposed reductions to US and Russian nuclear arsenals to 1,500 or lower, but emphasises that any Russian reductions would be "closely linked to maintaining the ABM treaty." At a press conference with French President Jacques Chirac on 2 July, Putin reiterated, "Our concrete proposal is that we are ready for a further

controlled reduction to 1,500 warheads and even less, but I want to stress controlled."

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly backs the ABM Treaty

Parliamentarians from 55 North American and European countries voted to support the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly in Paris on 8 July.

US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (Republican – Texas) had attempted to delete references to the Treaty in a resolution on European Security, but parliamentarians from many Western European countries joined with Russia to defeat the amendment by a margin of 2 –1. The Assembly called on OSCE participating states to "maintain adherence" to the ABM Treaty and engage in "dialogue regarding its continuing validity and role in safeguarding international peace and security".

Bruce George MP, leader of the British delegation abstained on the issue, but Germany's delegation were unanimously in favour of the Treaty. Uta Zapf (Social Democrat and Chairman of the German parliament's committee on Disarmament and Arms Control and Non-Proliferation) said: "We don't want to do away with any treaty until a proper solution has been found. To break the ABM Treaty because you think three rogue states [might pose a threat in the future] is not the way. I don't see the need to spend \$180 billion to stop three small states."

Australian Labor Party Opposes Star Wars

Australian Labor Party Foreign Affairs spokesperson Laurie Brereton has said that Labor does not want Australia to participate in US plans for National Missile Defence. Brereton said that there was a "danger perceived of a new nuclear arms race" throughout the region, if the ABM treaty was "torn up" and if China responded with a substantial build up of its ICBM capacity.

Australia hosts the Pine Gap Joint Defense Facility near Alice Springs – a US spy base similar to Menwith Hill in the UK, which includes a Ground Relay Station for the US Space-based Infra Red System, a key component of Star Wars.

Labor's policy is that Pine Gap should not be "involved in the research, the developing ... development or the testing of national missile defence." However, the early warning facilities at Pine Gap are viewed as crucial to Star Wars as the base is ideally situated to track ballistic missiles fired anywhere in the Eastern Hemisphere, including Iraq, North Korea, China and eastern Russia.

Australia's Conservative government was one of the first US allies to express support for the Bush Administration's plans for missile defence.

Prime Minister John Howard will visit Washington in September, but an Australian General Election is expected by November.

Bush moves to lift sanctions against India and Pakistan

The Bush Administration is poised to lift sanctions against India and Pakistan in the next couple of months, giving a green light to nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Sanctions were imposed by the US following the 1998 South Asian nuclear tests, but despite the rhetoric on preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of ballistic missile technology, the Bush Administration has no intention of maintaining pressure on India and Pakistan to renounce their nuclear programmes.

India and Pakistan both also have ballistic missile programmes and have been identified in numerous US Government ballistic missile threat assessments. Most recently, the Pentagon's *Proliferation: Threat and Response* report of January 2001 described proliferation of missile delivery systems and related technologies in South Asia as an "area of keen interest and concern".

In 1998, the G8 attempted to put pressure on India and Pakistan to abandon their nuclear programmes and to "adhere unconditionally to the NPT and the CTBT". However, the US is now pushing for the G8 to drop references to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at its summit in Genoa this month, as the Bush Administration is opposed to the Treaty.

In recent months, while US-China relations have deteriorated, India has been positioning itself as the key US ally in the region, enthusiastically welcoming US consultations on missile defence and US proposals for nuclear reductions. In May, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said he was "delighted" with consultations in India, while Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee welcomed Bush's offer of "consultations with allies and major powers on a new framework of security", but underlined India's commitment to develop a "credible minimum nuclear deterrent".

India cites China's growing nuclear arsenal and Chinese nuclear assistance to Pakistan as justifications for its own nuclear programme. China has consistently opposed India's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council. But whereas the Clinton Administration denounced the South Asian nuclear tests and threatened to keep India out of the Security Council until it renounced nuclear weapons, India sees the Bush Administration as more likely to assist in its aims of achieving international acceptance as a nuclear power and gaining Security Council membership.

The Whitehouse has indicated in the last month that the US would prefer to lift sanctions simultaneously against both India and Pakistan, however the issue is complicated by the lack of a democratically-elected government in Pakistan.

US may resume nuclear weapons tests

Julian Borger in Washington, Guardian, Monday July 9, 2001

The Bush administration has commissioned a study on how quickly nuclear test sites in the Nevada desert could be put back into action, as part of a broad strategy of freeing the US from the constraints of the nuclear test moratorium and the 1996 comprehensive test ban treaty.

A readiness review of the Nevada test site has been ordered by General John Gordon, the head of the national nuclear security administration (NNSA), who told a congressional committee: "During this year we will look hard again at improving test site readiness and will review whether an appropriate level of resources is being applied to this vital element of stockpile stewardship."

The US signed the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) five years ago, but in 1999 the Senate - then under Republican control - voted not to ratify it. Meanwhile, the US is abiding by a nine-year-old moratorium on nuclear tests.

The new administration is reviewing both the treaty and the moratorium, in the belief that they represent an obstacle to maintaining the efficacy and safety of the US nuclear stockpile, and that they are fundamentally unverifiable.

Pentagon officials are also examining the potential of a new range of low-yield "bunker-busting" nuclear weapons, which would require testing to develop, they say.

Asked in a recent interview whether the US would break the moratorium, the deputy defence secretary, Paul Wolfowitz said: "Well, there may be circumstances where, particularly if we develop questions about the reliability or safety of our nuclear weapons, where you would have to contemplate doing that."

US nuclear experts believe that it would take up to three years to get the Nevada underground test site ready, from the moment a presidential decision was taken. A congressional commission said earlier this year that it wanted to cut that time to three to four months. The White House has also been investigating ways of extracting the test ban treaty from the Senate so that the administration could formally withdraw from it, but has been told by lawyers that there are no legal means of doing so.

However, although the Democrats now have a majority in the Senate, they concede they do not have the two-thirds majority necessary to ratify the CTBT and force the president's hand.

Therefore the treaty is in limbo and administration officials have said that that is where the White House is content to leave it. "We don't support

CTBT and we don't support its ratification," one official told the French Press Agency yesterday. "The key is to have an effective counter-proliferation programme. In our view, CTBT is not an effective anti-proliferation regime."

The Bush administration's strategy now is to persuade its European allies to place less weight on the CTBT, portraying it as a cumbersome leftover from the cold war - the same line as Washington is taking with the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty.

To that end, the US is trying to remove discussion of the CTBT from the agenda of the G8 summit in Genoa later this month, and to scrub any mention of it from the summit's final communique.

Meanwhile, news that the administration is taking the first steps necessary for a resumption of nuclear tests in Nevada has alarmed local activists. Preston Truman, the director of one group, the Downwinders organisation, said: "The Bush administration has been undermining the ABM treaty, and the outer space treaty; now this signal that they may resume below-ground testing also leads to an ominous conclusion – that the US is preparing to unilaterally jettison an arms control regime fostered by every president since Eisenhower."

Star Wars Budget Rockets

US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is proposing a \$3 billion (40%) increase to funding for missile defence programmes in US Fiscal Year 2002. The increase to \$8.3 billion for missile defence is intended to speed development of technologies such as the airborne and space-based lasers. Overall the Pentagon has requested \$343 billion for 2002, a \$33 billion (10.5%) increase over President Clinton's last budget - the highest defense budget increase since Ronald Reagan left the Whitehouse.

Senator Carl Levin (Democrat - Michigan), the new Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he would use his power over the Pentagon budget to "try to stop the funding" for a premature missile-defence system that he argued could be "very dangerous, very destabilizing" because it could heighten tension with China and Russia. Levin plans to conduct hearings on the administration's missile defence proposals, which should provide the opportunity for missile defence concerns to be aired.