

Stop Star Wars

Bulletin No. 8, February/March 2002

Stand up to Bush

Since Bush's "axis of evil" speech in January, international opposition to US unilateralist policies has been mounting. Whilst European leaders such as Lionel Jospin and Jose Maria Aznar, along with senior EU officials Chris Patten and Javier Solana have all questioned US policy, one government has lent support – Britain.

Far from using his influence to try to reign-in the Bush Administration's enthusiasm for trashing international treaties, Tony Blair praises Bush's "tremendous leadership" skills and says he is "absolutely right" to raise the issue of weapons of mass destruction.

According to Foreign Secretary Jack Straw missile defence is "not an alternative to the wider non-proliferation effort, but could be part of it." Whilst Defence Minister Adam Ingram says that the UK has "consistently made it clear that we understand the role that missile defences can play" and claims that the US is "not proceeding in a unilateral manner."

Since taking office the Bush Administration has unilaterally rejected the Kyoto protocol on climate change, scuppered international efforts to verify the Biological Weapons Convention, abandoned the ABM treaty, and now opposes the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. How many more British policy objectives must be scrapped before the Government is prepared to take a stand?

This month, Greenpeace campaigners set off on skis to visit isolated Greenlandic communities as part of the campaign against US plans to use the Thule radar site on Greenland as part of the Star Wars system. Last summer 1200 Greenlanders visited the Greenpeace ship MV Arctic Sunrise to express their deep concerns about Star Wars. The US needs consent from Denmark and Britain to use radar and tracking facilities on their territories.

The British Government continues to state that the US has not yet requested the use of British bases at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales, but as this *Bulletin* reports, Ministry of Defence officials confirm that "the facilities feature very large in their calculations." The Government is now "thinking through the implications of such a request." With the news this month that missile defence may cost Britain £10 billion, it is vital that Government policy is kept under public scrutiny.

If the Government will not stand up to Bush on Star Wars, it is up to Members of Parliament and the public to make their opposition clear.

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Greenpeace Stop Star Wars campaign targets Greenland

This month sees Greenpeace again working in Greenland, building on our ship tour with the Arctic Sunrise last summer. Opposition to the use of Thule Airbase (which is slated, along with Fylingdales, to host an X-band radar) is growing and Greenpeace will be visiting local communities by dog sled (the only viable transport at this time of year), arranging public meetings, speaking with politicians and collecting testimonies. Greenpeace will take these testimonies to decision makers in Washington to help the Greenlanders' voices be heard.

Still protesting Star Wars

Nine Greenpeace activists have been sentenced to 2 years probation for participating in a peaceful protest against a missile defence flight test at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California last year. Whilst awaiting sentencing, the activists returned to the front gate of Vandenberg to display banners that read "Still Protesting Star Wars". A further six activists and two freelance journalists await sentencing in April, and the US Attorney's office is demanding jail terms for seven of the group.

The 17 activists, part of an international group which includes Britons John Wills and Bill Nandris, went to Vandenberg on July 14, 2001 to peacefully protest against a Star Wars missile test. During the protest some activists swam ashore with "Stop Star Wars" banners while others protested under the flight path of the missile, delaying the test for 40 minutes. The two journalists who documented the protest are a US national and Briton Steve Morgan.

All 17 defendants pleaded guilty to a single misdemeanour charge of conspiring to enter a military base, which carries a potential jail term of up to six months. The activists had hoped to go to court and face all the charges, believing that if the jury heard why the protest took place they would have been acquitted. However, under a motion 'in limine', or gag order, sought by and granted to the prosecution just prior to the trial, they would have been unable to present a defence based upon moral opposition to Star Wars, or from detailing their case that the test was illegal under both US and international law.

In January the US Attorney's office agreed to drop felony charges against the Star Wars 17, but under the terms of an injunction United States Greenpeace staff are barred from participating in any protests which break the law at military bases supporting the Star Wars programme in the US, as well as the facility in the Marshall Islands. \$150,000 was demanded in damages for costs incurred by the government and military as a result of the protest and subsequent legal proceedings. Should Greenpeace in the US violate the

terms, a \$500,000 fine will be imposed and individuals involved in the breach could face jail terms.

We would like to thank all of the MPs that contacted the Foreign Secretary and the US Ambassador in London in relation to the British citizens involved in this case.

Speaking during the sentencing hearing, Bill Nandris, from London, said "Greenpeace has in the past been ridiculed, subjected to intimidation and even state sponsored terrorist acts, only for its beliefs to become enshrined in national and international law. Nuclear weapons tests in the Pacific and in the atmosphere, the dumping of nuclear waste at sea and indiscriminate drift net fishing are some examples that come to mind. It is my sincere wish that the Star Wars system and the National Missile Defence policy go the same way. This will happen because people instinctively know the difference between wrong and right. Encouraging a new nuclear arms race is wrong."

Missile Defence faces renewed opposition in Parliament

Whilst the Government has appeared to move closer to giving the go-ahead for the US to use the British bases at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales, opposition to Star Wars has increased at Westminster.

In an Adjournment debate in Westminster Central Hall, former Defence Minister **Peter Kilfoyle MP** (Labour) said that National Missile Defence was "one of the biggest – if not the biggest – threats to global stability that we face in contemporary times". Kilfoyle argued that the use of Menwith Hill and Fylingdales would make the UK "become a front-line target in a way that beggars belief." (16 Jan 2002 : Column 133-137WH)

In Defence Oral Questions, **David Chaytor MP** (Labour) asked the Secretary of State Geoff Hoon MP whether "the decision to abrogate the ABM treaty is likely to increase or decrease the likelihood of other countries adhering to their international agreements?"

Former Defence Minister **Nicholas Soames MP** (Conservative) demanded to know what discussions the Secretary of State had had with the US concerning "improvements to the facilities at Fylingdales? In what circumstances was the extensive new work started without planning permission, and who was responsible?"

He was followed by former Transport Minister **Glenda Jackson MP** (Labour) who asked the Secretary of State: "As it would seem that my right hon. Friend's American counterpart cannot give him any direct information on whether there will be a national missile defence system or whether it will work, how can President Bush's promise to defend this country and Europe by means of NMD be brought into play? A sizeable body of scientific opinion and many military strategists believe—unlike the chocolate soldiers sitting on the Conservative Benches—that no such scheme could ever work and that, far from defending this country, it would place us in the front line of terrorist action." (11 Feb 2002 : Column 12-14)

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Jack Straw MP also faced questions this month, with **Norman Baker MP** (Liberal Democrat) criticising Straw's "formula that no request has yet been made by the US authorities, and that therefore he is not in a position to state the Government's policy." Baker believed that the Secretary of State "must have made an assessment of the British national interest in this matter. Will he tell the House what that assessment is, and whether it is in our national interest for this country to be used as a base for NMD?"

Brian White MP (Labour) argued that "the perception in many parts of the world that US foreign policy is based on double standards, because America is prepared to rip up the ABM treaty, reject the Kyoto agreement, ignore the World Trade Organisation ruling, blockade Cuba and so on. Is it not up to us as the closest ally of the US to make it aware of the dangers of that approach?"

Pointing out that "In reviewing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 2000, all countries promised to maintain and strengthen the ABM treaty and rapidly to ratify the test ban treaty," **Malcolm Savidge MP** (Labour) called on the Government "to impress on our US allies that, by directly contravening those undertakings while blocking other arms control agreements, they increase the risk of proliferation and endanger us all."

Finally, **Glenda Jackson MP**, queried, "How would a nuclear missile defence system have protected the United States from the events of 11 September? Clearly, it would not have done so. If America were to go ahead with a programme that had little scientific base for it being successful and that would be astronomically expensive, would this country automatically grant the United States of America a right to site bases on our soil, or would there be a debate before any such undertaking was given?"

Europeans oppose Bush's axis of evil

Government Ministers from France, Germany and Spain, along with EU representatives Javier Solana and Chris Patten, have spoken out against US unilateralist policies and President Bush's concept of an "axis of evil" involving Iran, Iraq and North Korea – the three countries the US accuses of posing a potential ballistic missile threat.

In an interview with *The Guardian*, European Commissioner for External Affairs Chris Patten called for allies of the United States to voice their concerns about US unilateralism. According to Patten:

"I think it's very dangerous when you start taking up absolutist positions and simplistic positions..."

"I still hope that America will demonstrate that it has not gone on to unilateralist overdrive... I don't think that keeping quiet makes us good allies". (*The Guardian*, 9 February)

EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana has also called on the US and Europe to "try to overcome the difference and potential nuances we may have," but warns:

"I don't think the problems of today can be solved in a unilateralist manner." (BBC website, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 8 February)

In a series of interviews with the media, **French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine** also described US security policy as "simplistic" and "irresponsible." In an interview with France-Inter's *Question Directe* programme, Vedrine said there was a "radical difference" of approach between France and the US Administration:

"We are today threatened by a new simplism which consists in reducing all the world's problems to the battle against terrorism. That's not a responsible approach." (French Foreign Ministry web site, <http://www.diplomatie.fr>, 6 February)

In response to a parliamentary question in the French Assemblée Nationale, Vedrine added:

"In the past year the United States has taken a number of decisions in international affairs that we have regretted. I am thinking of her refusal to ratify the International Criminal Court, Kyoto Protocol, treaty on anti-personnel landmines, her withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and many other things as well."

"...should we reduce all the world's problems solely to the battle against terrorism? Must this be waged solely by military means, ignoring the deep-seated causes and roots? That is what would be too simplistic, dangerous and ineffectual." (French Foreign Ministry web site, <http://www.diplomatie.fr>, 6 February)

Vedrine was backed by **French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin**, a candidate in this year's French presidential elections. Jospin criticised US unilateralism and said:

"For my government, the world must operate on international principles and rules negotiated by all, accepted by all and adopted for the benefit of all." (Associated Press, 22 February)

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has also criticised the US approach:

"An alliance partnership among free democrats can't be reduced to submission. Alliance partners are not satellites. All European foreign ministers see it that way. That is why the phrase 'axis of evil' leads nowhere." (US State Department, Washington File, 19 February)

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, whose country currently holds the Presidency of the EU, warned against any unilateral US attack on Iraq and called for greater discussion of US-European relations. According to Aznar:

"...striking out at so-called rogue states believed to be dangerous is not the same as fighting terrorism... We shall have to discuss the new vision of American foreign policy. We are experiencing a historic moment, in which Europeans and North Americans must redefine their alliance." (Reuters, 16 February)

Planning permission "overlooked" at UK Star Wars base

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has been forced to admit that it "unintentionally overlooked" planning procedures at the Fylingdales base when it built a new road, made changes to the access road and installed an additional razorwire perimeter fence. President Bush is expected to ask for the British government's consent to use the Fylingdales early warning radar as part of the US Star Wars programme.

Work on the new road, which is believed to drain onto a site of special scientific interest, has temporarily stopped while the MoD gives notification retrospectively to the National Park authorities and conducts an environmental impact assessment. But according to the Council for National Parks: "There have been many concerns about plans to upgrade Fylingdales for the US 'son of Star Wars' missile system. This incident has heightened concerns that Fylingdales could be developed by the back door, without proper public scrutiny."

The Ministry of Defence claims that the new developments are intended to strengthen security at Fylingdales following the September 11 attacks, but the base has attracted increasing protests in recent years due to its role in Star Wars.

Missile system's £10bn price tag

Richard Norton-Taylor, Thursday 28 February 2002, reproduced from *The Guardian*

"A missile defence system of the kind the US is pressing on its allies would cost British taxpayers up to £10bn, more than 40% of the entire defence budget, officials disclosed yesterday. The estimate assumes Britain would have access to American technology and facilities at Menwith Hill, the US intelligence gathering base in North Yorkshire, as well as the early warning station at Fylingdales on the North Yorkshire moors, they said.

Ministry of Defence officials appeared sceptical about the Bush administration's plans for missile defence, not least because terrorists were unlikely to use missiles to attack the US or American interests abroad. They said there was no evidence of any existing threat to Britain from "rogue states" such as Iran, Iraq, and Libya, which are acquiring long-range missile technology.

However, they admitted the US would want to use British bases for its own national missile defence system. "The facilities feature very large in their calculations", Brian Hawtin, the ministry's director general for international security policy, told the Commons defence committee. He insisted that the US had yet to decide what kind of missile defence technology to invest in - whether land, sea, airborne, or space based.

Though he said the government had yet to receive a specific request from Washington about the use of bases here, he was clearly expecting one. The government was "thinking through the implications of such a request".

Paul Roper, director of strategic technologies at the MoD, described Fylingdales as a "very attractive option", for the US as part of its project designed to protect itself from missile attacks from the Middle East. Upgrading the soft ware there would enable the US to track incoming missiles. A new x-band radar built nearby would be able to identify decoys as well as warheads.

The officials disclosed that the government had already given permission for the US to install a new space-based infra-red system ground relay station at Menwith Hill to monitor missile launches around the world. However, Mr Hawtin said: "If the US wanted to use this for missile defence purposes, it would need to request approval".

The officials repeatedly told MPs that it was too early to be specific about the implications for Britain of America's missile defence plans since the technology was still being developed. Though a decision by Britain to join a system could cost as much as £10bn it could be half as much, Mr Roper said.

Mr Hawtin said he "could not see the risk of terrorists acquiring ballistic missiles". The problem about firing long range missiles, Marcus Fitzgerald, the MoD's director of nuclear policy, told the committee, was that it was possible for others to see very quickly where they were launched. He added: "It is not a terrorist priority to acquire ballistic missiles as much as weapons of mass destruction" - a reference to chemical, biological, and radiological substances.

Despite MoD scepticism about missile defence, there is little doubt the government will accede to Washington's request to use Fylingdales and Menwith Hill for its project. And

despite the squeeze on the defence budget, the ministry is also likely to come under increasing pressure from the US to devote more.”

Non-missile attacks on US more likely

“US territory is more likely to be attacked with WMD [weapons of mass destruction] using non-missile means” than by ballistic missiles according to a CIA report. The latest US National Intelligence Estimate on the Ballistic Missile Threat argues that delivery systems such as ships, trucks or aeroplanes may be more likely to be used because they:

- “Are less expensive than developing and producing ICBMs.
- Can be covertly developed and employed; the source of the weapon could be masked in an attempt to evade retaliation.
- Probably would be more reliable than ICBMs that have not completed rigorous testing and validation programs.
- Probably would be much more accurate than emerging ICBMs over the next 15 years.
- Probably would be more effective for disseminating biological warfare agents than a ballistic missile.
- Would avoid missile defenses.”

The unclassified version of the CIA’s National Intelligence Estimate is available at:

http://www.cia.gov/nic/pubs/other_products/Unclassifiedballisticmissilefinal.htm.

Excerpts are available at <http://www.acronym.org.uk/docs>.

Russia and China modernise nuclear forces to overcome Star Wars

The CIA reports that the US missile defence programme has “led several high-ranking Russian political, military, and industry officials to openly discuss military countermeasures to the system.” According to the CIA, Russia is currently deploying a new nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile, the SS-27, which was developed in the 1980s in response to Reagan’s strategic defence initiative and is now regarded as the basis for Russia’s “most credible responses to MD [missile defence].”

The CIA also projects that “Chinese ballistic missile forces will increase several-fold by 2015.” US intelligence sources have different projections of the future size of China’s nuclear forces, “ranging from about 75 to 100 warheads deployed primarily against the United States.” The size of the force would depend on whether missiles had multiple independent re-entry vehicles and missile defence counter-measures.

China reportedly tested a Dongfeng-31 ballistic missile in January. The test appears to have failed when the rocket exploded in mid-flight. However, the missile was reportedly equipped with multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRV), which allows a single missile to launch several warheads in space simultaneously at different targets. MIRV capability is crucial to overcoming missile defence systems.

Star Wars to play a key role in US Nuclear Posture

The Bush Administration has set out its plans for nuclear forces in a Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). Under Bush nuclear forces will be part of a new “triad” including non-nuclear strike forces, missile defence and enhanced command, control, intelligence and planning capabilities.

The Review spells out the Administration's intention to "develop and field missile defenses more capable than the ABM treaty permits." Missile defence is intended to work in tandem with nuclear weapons by discouraging "attack by frustrating adversary's attack plans" and providing "protection if deterrence fails."

The Bush Administration offered reductions in nuclear forces as a sweetener for Star Wars, but the cuts announced are more conservative than first expected and the Administration intends to "preserve" warheads removed from the US stockpile for redeployment in a contingency. According to the *Washington Post*, despite the cuts, the Bush Administration is now "studying the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems."

The Nuclear Posture Review announced a reduction to 3800 nuclear warheads by 2007 – a similar level to that specified in the START II treaty. This would be followed by a reduction to 1700-2200 nuclear warheads by 2012. This compares with the previous proposal for a reduction to 2000-2500 strategic nuclear warheads by 2007, agreed in 1997 by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin as the objective for START III talks.

The US's long-term commitment to nuclear deterrence was underlined by the announcement that all current nuclear systems are to have "life extension programmes" and that the US will study "alternatives for follow-ons". Despite the cuts, the US nuclear force structure is to be maintained and the "downloaded warheads preserved" for possible redeployment as part of a "responsive force."

Pentagon spokesperson J.D. Crouch confirmed that the US is looking at a "number of options" to give it the capability to attack "hard targets and deeply buried targets", such as caves or bunkers. The *Washington Post* also reports that the US Nuclear Weapons Council, made up of officials from the Defense and Energy departments, "has ordered a three-year study into developing a nuclear-tipped, earth-penetrating weapon that can destroy hardened underground targets. The administration has also established 'advanced warhead concept teams' at the nation's three nuclear weapons laboratories to work on new warheads or warhead modifications."

Most controversially, the NPR includes the objective of "accelerating" the US Department of Energy's "test readiness." \$15 million has already been allocated to this objective, which would allow the US to resume nuclear testing at short notice. Currently the Department of Energy would require 24-36 months notice to resume testing. The NPR also reaffirmed that the US will continue to "oppose CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] ratification."

The Department of Energy (DOE), and many Republicans are lobbying hard for a resumption of nuclear testing, with DOE Under-Secretary of Energy John Gordon telling Congress that: "To date we have been able to certify stockpile safety and reliability without underground nuclear testing, but the capability to do so in the future as the stockpile continues to age remains uncertain." DOE argues that "emerging threats could call for new warhead development," and that a "revitalized" US nuclear weapons industry is required.

DOE's position is backed by the White House, according to Spokesperson Ari Fleischer: "we would never rule out the possible need to test to make certain that the stockpile, particularly as it's reduced, is reliable and safe."

Missile Defense Agency exempted from controls

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has granted the Missile Defense Agency – the agency that is overseeing missile defence development – extraordinary freedom from normal Pentagon procedures for controlling and monitoring new weapons programmes. The Agency is responsible for a budget of around \$7-8 billion per annum.

The agency will be exempt from regulations that require US military commanders to specify requirements for new weapons. In addition, the agency will not be subject to traditional reporting about programme timelines and costs and much of its testing will be free from oversight by the Pentagon's test evaluation office.

Formerly, the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), the Missile Defense Agency was renamed and its status elevated in January 2002. The move to exempt the agency from normal scrutiny follows a report last year from the Pentagon's Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, which warned that national missile defence testing did not yet address "important operational questions."

Democrats attack missile defence spending plans

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, with the backing of senior democrats, has asked the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to estimate the cost of national missile defence. According to the CBO, which is not party political, the Bush Administration's plans for missile defence could cost as much as \$238 billion over the next 15 - 25 years. The CBO estimate provides costs for development and operation of a ground-based system, a stand-alone sea-based missile defence system, and a space-based laser system. But the CBO said it received insufficient information from the Pentagon for estimating the cost of three other potential parts of the Bush Administration's layered defence: sea-based boost phase system, Brilliant Pebbles, and airborne lasers.

The Democrats have been reluctant to criticise Bush's anti-terrorism policies to date due to strong public support for the Administration. However, increases in spending on missile defence and the removal of the Missile Defense Agency from scrutiny have prompted outrage.

In a joint statement Daschle, along with Senate Budget Committee chair Kent Conrad and Armed Services Committee chair Carl Levin said:

"If the administration decides to pursue such a costly program, it could draw resources away from programs to counter other, more likely and more immediate threats we know we face: terrorism, attacks with anthrax or other biological and chemical agents."

These views were also reflected in the House of Representatives.

"It would be a mistake to interpret the silence in the wake of September 11th as a sign of approval by all in the Congress of these unprecedented actions," said Representative Martin Meehan (Democrat - Massachusetts), ranking minority member of the Armed Services subcommittee on research and development. "The administration's proposals raise very serious questions in the minds of many members on our side."

Rep. Gene Taylor (Democrat - Mississippi), ranking minority member of the Armed Services subcommittee on procurement, said the money spent on missile defence would come at the expense of other defence needs, notably ships and aircraft to replace aging fleets, a sacrifice that, he suggested, the United States could ill afford.

Representative John Spratt (Democrat – South Carolina) said it was likely that the Democrats would launch challenges to missile defence spending plans in committee and possibly attempt to legislate for specific requirements for the programme.

EU to pursue Missile Proliferation Code

Spain, which currently holds the Presidency of the EU, is to host an international meeting to discuss developing an International Code of Conduct Against Missile Proliferation. Following an initiative from France, a draft Code of Conduct was presented at an initial meeting in Paris on 7-8 February, attended by 86 countries including the United States, Russia, all the EU members, Israel, China, India, Pakistan and Iran.

France intends the Code to be a multilateral initiative to address missile proliferation, leading to some form of global instrument open to all countries. It includes a series of general commitments on non-proliferation and on restraint with regard to all aspects of ballistic missile systems, confidence-building measures and transparency on ballistic missile and space launch vehicle programs, and the principles relating to cooperation on the peaceful applications of space.

Star Wars Calendar

10-20 March	US Vice-President Cheney visit to Middle East and Britain
15 March	Next missile defence intercept test
1-5 April	UN Government Expert Panel on Missiles, New York
8-19 April	First nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, New York
23-25 May	Bush-Putin summit, St Petersburg
14-15 May	NATO Foreign Ministers meeting, Reykjavik
June	US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty takes effect
6-7 June	NATO Defence Ministers meeting, Brussels
1-12 July	UN Government Expert Panel on Missiles, New York
15 – 19 November	NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Istanbul, Turkey
21-22 November	NATO summit, Prague