

Trump Supports 'Space Force' For War-Making And Dominance in Space

Calls by Trump for a new 'Space Force' could further the potential of an armed showdown between US and foreign powers, such as China and Russia, reports Dennis J Bernstein in this interview with peace activist Bruce Gagnon.

By Dennis J Bernstein

In the few dreamy moments between his various personal dramas and dramas of State, Trump has been floating the idea of creating a 'Space Force' to fight wars in space. Bruce Gagnon is concerned. Last Thursday, March 15, Gagnon, coordinator of the [Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space](#) said, "The aerospace industry sees an opportunity to expand their profit capability by the creation of a new 'Space Force' that would direct the expanding U.S. war-making program in space.

"The industry," Gagnon continued, "has been pushing Congress to authorize this new separate service while the leadership of the Air Force have opposed the plan claiming that it would increase inefficiency and bureaucracy. In the recent NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] it was mandated that the Air Force increase their focus on space and make it a higher priority."

When I reached Gagnon in Maine, he was on the 31st day of a [hunger strike protesting a corporate welfare bill for General Dynamics in Maine](#), where he lives. Nevertheless, he was quite strong and coherent about his opposition to the aggressive and highly costly US program toward full dominance in Space.

And he warns of the power of the aerospace industry to control the day. "Last year a bill to create a separate 'Space Force' passed the House but failed to be approved by the Senate," he said. "Trump's endorsement of the 'Space Force' concept indicates that the aerospace industry has found a strong ally in the White House and the pressure on the Senate to approve the plan will now increase dramatically."

I spoke to Gagnon in Maine on Wednesday, March 14th, 2018.

Dennis Bernstein: You are on the 31st day of a hunger strike. Tell us about the strike and why it is happening.

Bruce Gagnon: General Dynamics, which owns Bath Iron Works in my hometown of Heron, Maine, builds destroyers for the navy, which are being sent off to encircle Russia and China with so-called "missile defense systems." General

Dynamics is demanding from our very poor state \$60 million that we don't have. They don't need it, they made \$3 billion in profits last year. They are also asking Connecticut for \$150 million and they have already gotten \$20 million from Rhode Island. I have been organizing a campaign across the state to try to block this.

DB: How are you doing, by the way?

BG: Well, my mind is getting a little foggier, as you will probably notice in this interview.

DB: Why a hunger strike? Why put your life on the line?

BG: I did it for two reasons. Number one, when I came home from a public hearing on this bill before the taxation committee in our capital, I was cursing the whole way home. I said that night that if I don't go on a hunger strike I'm going to have a heart attack before this is over.

The political reason is that, because this bill is being sponsored by two Democrats from our local community and has the support of the Democratic Party leadership, a lot of Democratic front groups in the state that work on social justice have been told to stay away from this. So it is really the peace community that has been organizing this. I knew that if I did a hunger strike more people would be inspired to get involved.

DB: Tell us about this new concept of a "space force." What is it, what is it meant to do, and do we really need it?

BG: Like the Air Force or the Army or the Navy, this is meant to be a separate branch of the military. The aerospace industry are the people who are really pushing this. They know that if they can get established a separate entity, they can make even more money. They have long said that "Star Wars" would be the largest industrial project in history.

In an industry publication years ago, they wrote that they would have to come up with a dedicated funding source to pay for all of this and they referred to it as the entitlement program. That is why today we see efforts in Congress to defund those programs and move the money into this very expensive "Star Wars" program.

Air Force Chief of Staff, General David Goldfein, told reporters recently, "The nation expects its Air Force to own the ultimate high ground and to achieve space superiority which, like air superiority, means freedom to attack and freedom to maneuver." As the United States encircles Russia and China today militarily, trying to bring about regime change in those countries, space

superiority becomes a linchpin in that whole strategy.

In the last NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] there was a provision that said that the Air Force had to put more effort into the space operation. The bill passed the House and then was sent to the Senate where it failed, largely because the Air Force is opposed to it, saying that it will create inefficiencies and more bureaucracy.

But as a result of the latest NDAA passing, a division has been created within the Air Force that will direct the US space command and will be headquartered in Washington. This is part of a broader effort by the Air Force to comply with this legislative mandate to focus on space and to make it a high priority. The aerospace industry is pushing hard and has a lot of power in Washington and, as we have seen, they have Trump's ear.

DB: The seeds for this sort of program have been laid since at least Clinton with the move to try to control the entire world from space.

BG: Most people think of the SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] program initiated under Reagan. When Clinton came in, he basically announced that we were shutting down SDI. But what people didn't know is that he basically shifted funding over to a program called BMDO [Ballistic Missile Defense Organization], which did the same research and development. When George W. Bush became president he changed the name again, to Missile Defense Agency. Now we are moving into whole new realms of space weapon technology development.

Obviously, Russia doesn't want this. They have been going to the UN since the Clinton years begging the United States to join them in negotiating a treaty called PAROS, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The US position has always been that there is no arms race and so there is no need to negotiate this treaty.

DB: This program has everything to do with the kind of negotiations that the new secretary of state [Mike Pompeo] is going to push for [if he is approved by Congress]. This is all about controlling the powerhouses of this new century through full dominance in space. This is what is really going on behind the scenes when the United States threatens North Korea as being the aggressor.

BG: That's right. North Korea is a sideshow to justify US massive investment in weapons technology in the region. Remember that it was Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama who came up with the "Pivot to Asia," whereby we would move 60% of US military forces into Asia to encircle both China and Russia.

As a result, they need more ports of call for their ships, such as on Jeju Island, they need more airfields as we see in Okinawa, more barracks for US

soldiers such as those being built in Darwin, Australia. And now we are seeing NATO expanding into the Asian Pacific.

DB: The worst polluter in the world is the United States military. The US pulled out of the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] treaty in 2002 and ever since then it has been “full spectrum dominance” all the way.

BG: It is really about China and Russia saying, “We want a multi-polar world where many countries are involved in the economy of the world and dealing with the security issues of the planet.” The United States recognizes that it only has about two or three years to try to take down Russia and China before they reach a point where they cannot be taken down.

What Putin has said is, we don’t want war, but we are not going to let you control and dominate space. Missile defense is really the shield the US will use after launching a first-strike attack.

DB: Does General Dynamics stand to gain from this “space force” scenario?

BG: Oh, yes. These destroyers they build in my community are equipped with one of these missile defense systems, called SM3 interceptors. They park the ships very close to Russia and China so that they can pick off a retaliatory strike. They are also putting these systems on the ground in Romania and Poland, right up on the border to Russia.

DB: Has the industry essentially bought off Congress to push this new space program forward?

BG: Absolutely, Republicans and Democrats alike. That is the reality of America. We have been hollowed out and turned into a country that builds weapons. Our number-one export product today is weapons. Then what becomes your global marketing strategy?

DB: How would you estimate the amount of money that is being sucked into this permanent war economy?

BG: All told, we are spending a trillion dollars a year on the military. It is a massive amount of money and that is why there is no money for social programs, for environmental clean-up, for combating climate change. Military spending is by far the worst way to create jobs.

Dennis J. Bernstein is a host of “Flashpoints” on the Pacifica radio network and the author of Special Ed: Voices from a Hidden Classroom. You can access the audio archives at www.flashpoints.net.
