



"float like a butterfly, bite like a dawg"

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<http://www.nukewatch.org>

Walking Away from the ABMTreaty: the Militarization of Space?

On December 13, President Bush announced that the U.S. would be withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, signed in 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union. This treaty has long been regarded as the cornerstone of strategic nuclear balance. By severely limiting anti-ballistic defenses it helped assure that neither country could win in a nuclear war. Therefore, neither country would start a nuclear war because that would result in mutual suicide. Bush is arguing that the ABM Treaty is now a Cold War relic and that the threats posed by rogue nations necessitate the construction of anti-ballistic missile defenses. He even argues that the September 11 attacks prove the need for a National Missile Defense (NMD). That, however, appears at face value to be an empty argument.

The problems with abrogating the ABM Treaty are:

- It unnecessarily strains our relationship with Russia and imperils the future of what nuclear arms controls we have;
- **NMD technologies are unproven.** Failures aside, to date the Pentagon's touted successes have been achieved during unrealistic scenarios: using homing beacons on the targets and lacking the credible warhead decoys that an adversary is sure to use;
- **The expense will be huge.** In May 2000 the federal General Accounting Office estimated the initial program would cost \$36 billion, and that was before Bush dramatically accelerated it. President Reagan spent many billions on

his "Star Wars" program in the 1980's and achieved essentially nothing. ABM defenses will prove to be a **bonanza for defense contractors** during the time that our budget surpluses have disappeared, perhaps never to return.

- NMD may actually **undermine our national security.** China has a small strategic nuclear arsenal that is not on high alert. In order to feel confident of overwhelming a NMD, China is likely to both expand and put its nuclear forces on high alert so that it can feel assured of its own "deterrence."

- Future U.S. ABM systems can do nothing to protect this country from unconventional delivery of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear Watch of New Mexico believes that this is precisely what 9/11 and the anthrax attacks demonstrated, not justification for walking away from the ABM Treaty. Instead of the exorbitant sums of money that will be spent on a NMD this country needs to invest in better protection of our borders. For example (and this is a particularly vexing problem) how are we to be assured that somewhere in the incredible volume of shipping containers that come through our seaports, an enemy someday won't place a weapon of mass destruction? How are we to be assured that a terrorist won't fly a hijacked plane into one of our many nuclear or chemical plants? **NMD will do virtually nothing to detect or eliminate these all-too-credible threats.**

In light of what we believe to be the obvious dangers of abrogating the

ABM Treaty and preparing to build a dubious and expensive National Missile Defense, one must ask what might be the hidden purpose in starting such programs. Nuclear Watch of New Mexico is concerned that all of this is essentially a **platform for the future U.S. militarization of space.** Some evidence justifying this concern follows:

- The U.S. has not been observing international protocols that account for the tracking and verification of man-made objects in space. The U.S. has launched the majority of terrestrial objects that are orbiting in space, but to date has accounted for only a minority of them.
- The U.S. is already taking a very aggressive approach to obtaining global "full spectrum dominance," which very much includes the militarization of space. The U.S. Air Force Space Command 2020 Vision states that American "[c]ontrol of space is the ability to assure access to space, freedom of operations within the space medium, and the ability to deny others the use of space protecting U.S. military, civil and commercial investments in space." Moreover, U.S. Space Command "will have a greatly expanded role as an active warfighter with the potential for a space-based global precision strike capability [including] space-based strike weapons."
- The U.S. Department of Defense has recently taken initial steps to institute a unified U.S. Space Command that will eventually be a **fourth military service** (in addition to the Army, Navy and Air Force).

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Why does this matter post-9/11?

In the post-9/11 security climate it may be tempting to think and feel that U.S. "full-spectrum dominance" of the globe (including space) might be a good thing. That is not the case, for some of the following reasons:

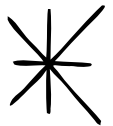
- The present "war on terrorism" requires continuing **international co-operation**. U.S. plans for the militarization and domination of space (as oppose to mere space-based reconnaissance and intelligence gathering) will inevitably create geopolitical tensions and conflicts.
- As already explained, ABM systems (and by extension U.S. space-based weapons) are very unlikely to protect us from unconventional means of delivering weapons of mass destruction, arguably our greatest national

security threat. Better to redirect funding to defensive detection systems for the U.S. postal system and seaports (while these expenses would be huge, they would no doubt be less than "Star Wars II").

• If nuclear weapons are to be part of the planned future "full-spectrum dominance," that agenda is very misguided. The gravest threat to our nation is posed by weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. pledged as recently as May 2000 to an "unequivocal commitment" to disarm its nuclear stockpile, along with the other declared nuclear powers.

To position nuclear weapons in space would be a tremendous step in entrenching their permanence, and would literally bring them to another dimension.

As a footnote: The greater American Southwest region is very much involved in the potential U.S. militarization of space. Most of the USAF Space Command centers are situated in the area around Colorado Springs, Co. In addition, the USAF Research Laboratory is very much involved in related R&D, and Sandia National Laboratories is designing the "kill vehicles" for the NMD. Both of these facilities are located on Kirtland AF base immediately outside of Albuquerque, NM. For more background see our fact sheet on the ABM Treaty at www.nuke-watch.org. Related web links of interest: www.spacecom.af.mil/usspace and www.space4peace.org.



Update: Biological Research Lab at Los Alamos

NWNM is deeply involved in the issue of the proposed biological research facility at LANL. This proposed biological safety level (BSL)-3 facility is currently undergoing an environmental assessment (EA) as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). [A BSL-4 facility is the highest possible level.] The draft EA was released to the public at the end of this October and the DOE Los Alamos Area Office allowed 21 days for public comment. However, notice to citizens' groups occurred late (if at all). Also, two weeks elapsed before the public could obtain a copy of the EA. This problem was further exacerbated by DOE's closure of accessibility to supporting technical documents on the internet (see p.3). NWNM was compelled to ask LANL officials for numerous documents that we deemed necessary to prepare informed comments. In all, we had but one week in which to review and comment on a boxload of supporting documents and the 150-page EA itself.

Our resulting 17-page comments can be summarized into two fundamental points. The first: we strongly believe that pursuant to NEPA requirements, a **programmatic environmental impact statement** is required for the entire DOE biological select agents program. LANL explicitly states that its proposed BSL-3 facility will support DOE's Chemical and Biological National Security Program, which has been in existence since 1997 and is being implemented in at least 9 DOE sites across the country. Moreover, bioagents are being shipped between these and other laboratories via U.S. mail.

Our second fundamental point concerns **occupational and public safety**. The EA grossly failed to address safety issues, quickly glossing over serious concerns such as the preparation of credible accident and emergency response plans, the threat of terrorist attacks and earthquakes (yes, LANL does face seismic risks). While we recognize that this nation needs enhanced defenses against the threat of bioterrorism, at the same time the public needs to be assured that DOE runs its bioagent program in a safe and secure manner. DOE is not yet meeting this obligation. Furthermore, biological research is by its inherent nature dual-use technology. It is very easy to divert defensive research into offensive weapons work. Though it is unlikely that the U.S. is conducting research on offensive bioweapons (why would it when it has nuclear weapons?), an environment of transparency and accountability must exist in U.S. government bio-research programs. We must assure the international community that the U.S. does support strong global control of biological weapons. This issue is especially serious given that the U.S. has recently walked out of international negotiations for the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention.

On an ironic note, DOE and LANL finally caved in to public and congressional pressure (thanks to the Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall offices!) to extend the public comment period after it had already been closed. It now lasts until January 15, 2002. We urge interested citizens to read our analysis on our web site (www.nukewatch.org) and then to download a **ready-to-sign one-page comment** and submit it to DOE.



The Cutting Edge of New U.S. Nuclear Weapons?

The national nonprofit group Physicians for Social Responsibility has made available a Department of Defense (DoD) and DOE "**Report to Congress on the Defeat of Hard and Deeply Buried Targets**" (HDBTs). HDBT's are underground command and control bunkers, leadership quarters, garrisons, etc., built out of reinforced concrete or tunneled into mountains. Due largely to the Gulf War and the present war in Afghanistan, U.S. military planners are particularly keen to find ways to destroy HDBTs. This recent report estimates that there are potentially some 10,000 HDBTs worldwide (report page 8), not all of which can be destroyed by conventional weapons. In response, "DoD and DOE have completed initial **studies on how existing nuclear weapons can be modified** to defeat those HDBTs that cannot be held at risk with conventional high-explosives or current nuclear concepts. Any development and procurement of advanced nuclear capabilities would be considered in the broad context of nuclear stockpile policy, plans, and priorities..." (p. 4.) On the latter point, DoD will soon be releasing a new "Nuclear Posture Review" which is likely to include this new focus on destroying

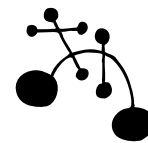
hard-to-get HDBTs.

Although the report states that "[t]here is no current program to design a new or modified HDBT Defeat nuclear weapon," nevertheless DoD and DOE "have formed a joint Nuclear Planning Group to define the appropriate scope and option selection criteria for a possible feasibility and cost study." (p.18) Indeed, a classified study called Project SAND DUNE was conducted in 1997 that "addressed nuclear solutions for holding the most challenging HDBTs at risk." (p. 11) Currently "DoD and DOE are investigating potential options and costs." (p. 17) Moreover, "[f]or destruction of more deeply buried facilities, DoD and DOE are studying the sensitivities and synergies of nuclear weapon yield, penetration, accuracy and tactics." (p. 21) This chiefly refers to the further development of earth-penetrating **nuclear weapons that can burrow underground**, thereby multiplying exponentially their destructive force. This is also points to the development of new low-yield nuclear weapons (or the modification of existing weapons to lower their yield). Low-yield nuclear weapons would be inherently more dangerous because they would be more

"usable." One U.S. congressman has already called for the use of a low-yield nuclear weapon in Afghanistan.

The overarching significance of this report is that it provides **further evidence** (if any more is needed) **that the U.S. intends never to disarm its nuclear stockpile**. As recently as the May 2000 review conference of the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) the U.S. and the other nuclear powers restated their NPT obligation to disarm as an "unequivocal commitment." Yet the strong signal is that the American nuclear weapons complex is beginning the process of designing and producing new "advanced concepts" to destroy HDBTs, **contrary to stated current U.S. policy that no new designs will be produced**. This raises a host of questions concerning the future of nuclear weapons, the continuing viability of the international non-proliferation regime and whether the U.S. will be conducting full-scale testing sometime in the future.

Want to know more? You can download the DoD and DOE Report on HDBT Defeat from our web site: www.nukewatch.org.



DOE Web Sites Watch

NWNM, in collaboration with the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (www.ananuclear.org), has initiated an ongoing effort to monitor public accessibility to DOE web sites. These web sites are often the primary (and sometimes only) means of obtaining information concerning the massive environmental contamination across the nuclear weapons complex. Since 9/11 DOE has **restricted or completely removed documents that were once available to the public** on-line. As an example, the entire Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) environmental, safety and health web site has been closed to the public. This includes the many links that used to exist for the LANL Resource Conservation and Recovery (RCRA) permit and its voluminous supporting documents. The RCRA permit allows the lab to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous and mixed wastes (both radioactive and hazardous). Though it is not required that the permit be electronically available over the internet, environmental laws do require the permit to be made public. LANL, however, does not have the entire permit available in its environmental reading room, nor had the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) fully compiled it. This is a gross disservice to the public, particularly because **the LANL RCRA permit is now up for renewal by the NMED**.

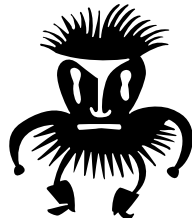
For more comprehensive information on the status of DOE environmental web sites, please visit our site: [3](http://www.nuke-</p></div><div data-bbox=)



mission statement

The mission of Nuclear Watch New Mexico is to provide timely and accurate information to the public on nuclear issues in the American Southwest, and to encourage effective citizen involvement and activism in these issues. We seek to promote greater environmental protection, safe disposition of radioactive wastes, and federal policy changes that will curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Inside this issue: US Treaty-busting, Energy Department Websites Clam Up, Burrowing Nukes?... Groovy New WIPP Fact Sheet, Update on Los Alamos Biolab & more



What To Do!

- 1) Los Alamos Biolab public comment period extended to January 15. See inside.
- 2) Tell Congress you weren't quite ready to withdraw from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. And it's so, like, anthropocentric, to militarize space instead of cleaning up our messes from the last millennium.
- 3) Tell Congress that Yucca Mountain in Nevada is in no shape to receive high-level nuclear waste.
- 4) Find out more about numbers 1 through 3 on our fabulous, award-winning website: <http://www.nukewatch.org>
- 5) Have a swell holiday in spite of it all. We're ready for a new year, aren't we?
- 6) Send us a few dollars so we can keep working for you on all of these fascinating issues.

nuclear watch new mexico

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