

Mission Absolute: American hegemony in space

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Come April 2010, officials from the sleepy Polish municipality of Morag will be gearing up for perhaps their most critical assignment in the new decade. Their job will be to provide Polish military officials overall support for the deployment of American Patriot missiles barely seventy kilometres from the Russian border.

Targeted to be fully functional by the middle of this year, the main battery of this missile system will contain up to eight intercepting missiles, manned by about 100 American soldiers deployed at Morag.

The Poles recently acknowledged that Morag had been strategically chosen by the Obama administration to offer the best military support and technical propping system for American forces in Europe. In other words, it will help cement America's position as the big bullying brother in Eurasia.

This development came after former President George Bush's original plan of deploying long-range missile defence systems in Poland and the Czech Republic was reluctantly shelved by Barak Obama, following Moscow's accusation that the missiles were aimed to destroy the Russian atomic arsenal.

Poland, however, is not the only target the United States has in its sight for expanding bases for missile warfare. In January this year, the Americans beefed up their arsenal in the Persian Gulf to thwart a "possible" Iranian missile strike.

In a shrewd and covert move, the Obama administration silently increased the capability of the land-based Patriot defence missiles in most of its bases in the Arabian Peninsula. The upgraded missiles systems that previously had the ability to shoot down flying aircraft are now able to intercept missiles in flight anywhere over the Gulf.

According to General David Petraeus, America's top military commander in the Middle East, America now has eight Patriot missile batteries stationed in the Gulf region – two each in Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Bahrain also hosts the American Navy's 5th Fleet Headquarters and Qatar is the base for a state-of-the-art modernized air operations centre from where much of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is still being fought.

With the American appetite for global domination and military supremacy growing insatiably, and with an unrivalled edge provided by its space age ballistic defence warfare, satellite imagery and space based attack abilities, U.S. forces seem to have acquired an impenetrable armour of invincibility.

Undoubtedly, America's ability to exploit space and deploy cutting edge space warfare technologies imparts to it a momentum on battlefields that no other nation can match, barring – possibly – the Russians. Two of the fastest growing space-age nations, China and India, are – comparatively – new kids on the block, and almost their entire space technology has been developed relatively recently, as compared to the decades-old U.S. space plans which started being developed in the 1950s.

American space technology allows the U.S. comfortably to dominate all warfare on earth and is meticulously coordinated by a highly specialized "Space Command". The question is: what makes the U.S. an unchallenged leader in space warfare and how did it acquire such a devastating sting? The answer lies in a series of events immediately following World War II.

Operation Paperclip: The Genesis of the U.S. space warfare mechanism

Operation Paperclip was a top-secret operation carried out by the American government immediately after the Second World War. Almost 1,500 scientists serving the Nazi regime were smuggled from Germany into the U.S.

Among these were 100 of Hitler's highly advanced rocket team scientists. Prominent among them was Wernher Von Braun, a rocket-physicist and astronautics engineer who created the acclaimed V1 and V2 rockets that were used to terrorise London, Paris and Brussels during the Second World War.

Von Braun and his fellow scientists were brought to America secretly to develop its space programme and to devise an infrastructure that would allow the U.S. covertly to deploy weapons in space and, subsequently, to control and dominate space totally.

The American government was able to achieve this through NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA served as the perfect vehicle for bringing in the space warfare scientists and masking their work as scientific research and development.

Under the Nazi regime in Germany, Von Braun and the team of brilliant rocket scientists that he headed had set up a cutting edge research and development base along the Baltic Sea in an obscure place called Peenemunde. After the end of the Second World War, Von Braun and his colleagues, along with 100 copies of the deadly V2 rocket that they had developed, were brought to Huntsville, Alabama, in the U.S., where Von Braun later became the first director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Centre.

Another brilliant German scientist that the Americans smuggled into the U.S. was Kurt Debus. Like Von Braun, the priority the Americans had set for Debus was to innovate technology that would impart a mantle of supremacy to the American space exploration programmes. Debus later became the first director of the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

The Americans also brought in Major General Walter Dornberger, one of Hitler's supreme ballistics commanders. Dornberger later became the Vice President of the Bell Aerospace Corporation in New York, a company that made its fortunes by building combat helicopters for the Vietnam War.

American space prowess received a shot in the arm when the industry roped in the genius of another extraordinary German innovator, Arthur Rudolf. Like Von Braun and Dornberger, Rudolf served under the Nazi regime and was key to Hitler's rocket and ballistics programme. Rudolf was made the first project director of NASA's Saturn V rocket programme, the rocket mechanism that eventually took Americans Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong to the moon and brought global recognition to American space technology.

This influx of bright German scientists continued for years and many German ballistic experts were relocated to Boston and West Palm Beach, Florida. Operation Paperclip turned out to be one of the most successful brain drains that the U.S. facilitated anywhere in Europe, thus serving as the essential origin of the American space programme.

Today, the U.S. Space Command Headquarters at the Peterson Air Force base gloriously flashes the slogan "Master of Space" on its building. Considering the "Nazi" origins of the American space programmes, one can easily spot the similarity between this slogan and

Hitler's slogan "Deutschland uber alles" or "Germany above everything." It is testimony to the fact that, at the end of the day, both the mottoes were about nothing but unchallenged superiority and domination.

U.S. Space Command and Vision for 2020

What is the main objective of the "U.S. Space Command" and why does it crave supremacy over extra-terrestrial space?

Bruce Gagnon, renowned peace activist and Coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (GN), says the U.S. Space Command was the command that was put in charge of a total control of space and has recently been entrusted with America's strategic Air Command.

"So now the space guys, the bomber guys and missile guys are all part of the same command," Gagnon said. "And this very command put out a planning document a few years ago called 'Vision for 2020'. On the cover of this document one sees a satellite hitting targets on the earth below."

According to Gagnon, the attempt to enjoy supremacy on earth through threatening space warfare tactics will remain the essential doctrine of the U.S. for years to come. Perhaps this is why most of the complex space exploration projects of NASA remain classified. Keith Glennon, the first director of NASA, said the major implications of the U.S. Space Act was to pursue the development of activities in space for the benefit of all humankind. Just like any other American policies, Glennon's description of NASA's prerogatives sounds dangerously suspicious.

We must analyse the language in the "Vision for 2020", says Gagnon. "The Space command says in the future, because of corporate globalization of the world economy, there is going to be a widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'haves-not', between the rich and the poor all over the world. As a result, there's going to be more regional instability around the world.

The Pentagon says we cannot put a marine on every single street or corner of the world, to suppress uprisings and have an upper hand. But with space technology, we will be able to see, hear and spy on everything and essentially target every place on earth. And it is this very clandestine vision that explicitly states that space superiority will undoubtedly emerge as an essential element of battlefield success in future warfare," adds Gagnon.

"'Vision for 2020' also talks about dominating and controlling space. And they actually define the 'control' of space. They say control of space is the ability to assure access to space, freedom of operations within the space medium and, most importantly, an ability to deny others the use of space. So one country in the world, the United States of America, is going to deny other countries the use of space. That would truly ensure that America remains the master of space," remarks Gagnon.

At a Press Conference in 2003, renowned author and thinker, Noam Chomsky, openly attacked the American craving for total space supremacy. "They are trying to put in motion plans which, in effect, could allow some command post in Colorado Springs in the mountains to instantaneously attack any part of the world without warning, using space platforms endowed with either nuclear or other highly destructive weapons," said Chomsky.

According to Chomsky, such attacks on earth from space would be the final nail in the coffin for humankind, because of the high risk of accidents. But the use of space for warfare is not a far-fetched idea. The U.S. has already successfully deployed its arsenal of space coordinated warfare mechanisms in waging wars on earth, and has been able to maximize the advantages of being the solitary power moderator in space.

Space Wars: Iraq

“The Persian Gulf war in the early nineties was actually the first war fought from space ever,” says Gagnon. “With U.S. satellite supremacy, the American forces were able to pre-identify all its military targets before the war even began. In the first two to three days, the U.S. bombed over 90 percent of Saddam Hussein’s bases, intentionally leaving just a tiny area where the Americans then played a cat and mouse game over the remaining weeks of the war,” Gagnon adds.

In the war to dethrone Saddam Hussein, the U.S. fired 100 Cruise missiles into Iraq, which cost a million dollars a piece. American forces also unabatedly tested new stealth bombers against a militarily weak Iraq.

It is highly probable that after the war, the U.S. Space Command realized that whoever controlled space would inevitably control the earth below. Needless to say, whoever controls space will unarguably win all the wars on earth as well.

Space Wars: Kosovo, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Gagnon considers the war in Kosovo as the second space war, and the war against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan as the third space war.

“In the war in Afghanistan, the United States introduced a completely new world of weapon systems called the UAV, the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, a pilot-less plane that flew over Afghanistan sending back real time, split second time, streaming video via satellite back to the air-force base in Tampa, where the generals commanding the base decided whether to push a button or not. This would effectively prompt the UAV to hit the targets on the earth below. And all this was accomplished in split seconds, thanks to satellite technology,” remarks Gagnon. “In fact the UAV was so successful in Iraq that the Pentagon decided to nickname it ‘The Predator’.”

It is not surprising that the Pentagon adopted the policy of “Shock and Awe” in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The advanced American warfare system governed from space was bound to send shock tremors through weak opponents.

The doctrine of deceit

The George Bush administration introduced the National Missile Defence policy which, it said, was to protect the U.S. from an attack by “rogue states”. Some defence analysts and pressure groups consider the National Missile Defence policy as not being meant to defend America but, in fact, to control space; dominating it and denying other countries access to it. The U.S. Space Command’s most controversial space warfare system, however, is the Theatre Missile Defence System (TMD). It waits for target-specific missiles to be positioned in deep space, and then forward deploys them to surround enemy nations. It works similarly to a surround-sound theatre system.

This system is aimed at missiles launched from “suspicious nations”. It surrounds these countries from space and shoots down the missiles the moment they are launched. In other words, the system is well adept to strike enemy missiles in the initial boost phase. The U.S. has strategically placed the TMD over Iran, China, North Korea, the Persian Gulf and the Asia Pacific region.

The last decade has witnessed the U.S. strengthening its military presence in the Asia Pacific region. The fact that it has lengthened and widened runways at its Guam base to accommodate B-2 bombers is a testimony to that. As if that was not enough, America is now pre-positioning Cruise missiles on Guam. The tiny island remains a crucial playground for America’s TMD system in the Asia-Pacific region, especially targeting China.

However, Gagnon and his organisation insist America’s loud concerns over China’s intentions in South East Asia are mostly exaggerated and over-amplified. “The fact is that China has 20 to 30 nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States while the U.S. has more than 7,500 nuclear missiles with which it could completely decimate China,” says Gagnon. “China is growing huge economically and shadowing the U.S. in more ways than one. Therefore the U.S. will try every trick in the book to ‘manage’ China,” he adds.

Considering America’s increased efforts to arm Taiwan, it is probable that the TMD system will loom over China from a base in Taiwan, 90 miles off the coast of mainland China. “A TMD system over South East and Central Asia is bound to insinuate Pyongyang and Beijing, making them feel that the U.S. is indeed closing in. Their safest response would then be to escalate their own military hardware,” says Gagnon.

According to GN, the U.S. occupies 700 military bases in about 130 countries and has attacked 30 countries so far, dropping 10 million tonnes of bombs since the end of the Second World War.

Another hush-hush planning document of the U.S. Space Command, called the “Long Range Plan” indicates the grand vision of controlling not only the Middle East and the Asia Pacific region, but the entire world. To achieve this ambitious plan, the Space Command is expected to activate its secretive Space Based Laser, nicknamed the Death Star.

Control of space for warfare systems and strategic usage is paramount for the Americans. As John Collins, author of *Military Space Forces: The Next 50 Years*, says, whoever controls the Earth-Moon gravity, will control who gets on and off planet Earth. And this is an ability that the U.S. wants to monopolise. Collins predicts that the U.S. will have permanent bases on the moon, protected by armed space stations in orbit, thereby enabling it completely to regulate access to extra-terrestrial space.

Lust for space dust

Totalitarian control of military warfare and defence systems from space is not the only prize the U.S. seeks. The Americans are also finding ways to create wealth out of space.

Mining The Sky: Untold riches from the asteroids, comets and planets, a book by former NASA scientist John Lewis, addresses this issue. Lewis argues that there are precious metals and elements in many celestial bodies, waiting to be tapped and exploited. His theory is that anybody who controls access to these planetary bodies will realise unimaginable fortunes. In fact, the various NASA missions to Mars over the past decades could indeed have been

treasure-finding missions for identifying the composition of the Martian red soil. Such missions could open the door for commercial exploitation and innumerable profits. Not surprisingly, there is a bill pending in the U.S. Congress to exempt from taxes all profits derived from space.

Space junk

Space has been subjected to a plethora of activities over the past 50 years: exploration, mapping, spying, target assessments, missile coordination, warfare systems, and so forth. These have ensured that space will not remain pristine, and that there will be long-term negative consequences to such human activities.

Many scientists and astronomers believe the U.S. Space Command's space weapon testing processes and policies, along with many of NASA's unjustified space exploration projects, have led to the creation of an unprecedented quantity of space junk which is orbiting the earth as uncontrollable debris. "This has created a minefield around the earth and poses a horrendous danger for the people of earth below," says Gagnon.

Gagnon's view is endorsed by Dr Edgar Mitchell, former Apollo 14 astronaut to moon. "If we have a war in space in the vicinity of the earth, it will be the one and only war. There will never be a second war in space because it only takes a few million pounds of matter in space broken up into tiny pellets to make the near-earth regions completely unsafe," says Mitchell.

"The Space around earth is extremely sensitive. In an ocean, a beer can sinks to the bottom, remains covered with sediments for many generations and finally disintegrates. However, a piece of space junk in orbit will stay forever and there is no way one can clean it up," he emphasises. "And trying to navigate your way through this space junk is akin to swimming through a piranha filled river or running through a shower of bullets. Future generations will have completely lost the chance of exploring space."

Mitchell's concerns are not unfounded. Today, there are over 110,000 pieces of space junk orbiting the earth at 18,000 miles an hour. This is such a huge volume that the International Space Station had recently to be moved to another orbit in order to get it out of the way of oncoming space junk. It would not surprise astronomers if, at some time in the future, this multi-billion dollar space station is smashed to bits by orbiting debris.

'New Clear' threat

Another matter of concern is the presence of 34 nuclear reactor cores orbiting the earth. Launched by the U.S. and the former Soviet Union in the early sixties, when space exploration was in its nascent stage, these nuclear reactor cores still power military satellites orbiting earth. However, several have fallen back to earth. In an accident in 1964, a U.S.

military satellite called SNAP-9A, with two pounds of plutonium aboard, burned up on re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, spreading the plutonium globally.

In 1997 when the Cassini space-flight was launched, GN launched a global campaign against the locating of 72 pounds of Plutonium-238 on-board. The protest attracted worldwide attention and brought Cassini into the black books of global activists.

“It only takes one pound of plutonium to give every single person on earth a lethal dose of radioactivity,” says Gagnon. For the first time in the history of space exploration, Gagnon and his supporters had successfully campaigned to force NASA to change the re-entry fly-by distance of Cassini to a distance far away from earth.

“An accident on the launch or re-entry of a space shuttle that could cause enormous contaminations is not just a theoretical probability. The sheer processing and fabrication of these space devices is affecting people already, and if one learns from the Challenger and Columbia Shuttle accidents, space technology can and does fail,” says Gagnon. “This should be a warning that launching nuclear power into space could contaminate massive parts of the earth.”

The use of space for warfare, commercial exploitation, missile coordination, and nuclear propelled reactors is the worst form of Russian Roulette that the U.S. Space Command or any other body can play with the current and future generations. Many space warfare and exploration systems used by governments worldwide remain classified. What the general populace knows is frightening but what is yet to be known is even more frightening.

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