



OPPOSITION TO US ALLIANCE

MARK Latham's opposition to the ANZUS Treaty were shared by one in five Labor Party candidates going into the last Federal election in October 2004. ALP candidates also lined up almost unanimously with Mr Latham's attacks on President George W. Bush.

In a study of their views during the election, 31 per cent of candidates said they had little or no trust in the US coming to Australia's defence.

After disclosing in his diaries that as leader of the Opposition he considered the US alliance as "neo-colonialism" and wanted to opt out of the ANZUS treaty as New Zealand had done, Mr Latham has been repudiated by the Labor leadership.

But the Australian National University and Queensland University of Technology Australian Candidate Study found strong support for Mr Latham's views.

When asked to rate the US as a threat to Australian security, 21.9 per cent of ALP candidates said it was a "very likely" or "fairly likely" threat, placing it above China, Vietnam or Malaysia.

Only 1.4 per cent of Coalition candidates rated the US as a fairly likely threat, placing it second from the bottom of threats, just above New Zealand.

Mr Latham said no one could doubt his feelings about Mr Bush after he described the US President as dangerous and incompetent.

When asked about Mr Bush, 91.5 per cent of ALP candidates said they disliked him with 60.9 per cent saying they strongly disliked him.

In accordance with their almost unanimous opposition to the war in Iraq, 38 per cent of ALP candidates said they disliked British Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Only 11.3 per cent of Coalition candidates said they disliked Mr Bush and only 12 per cent said they disliked Mr Blair.

Australia's fight against terrorism has gone too far or much too far according to 44.2 per cent of Labor candidates, compared with only 2.5 per cent of Coalition candidates.

When asked how important the US alliance and ANZUS treaty were, every Coalition candidate said very important or fairly important, but 18.8 per cent of ALP candidates said not very important.

Every Coalition candidate said they trusted the US to come to Australia's defence, while 31 per cent of ALP candidates said they did not trust the US very much or at all.

Source: article by Dennis Shanahan, The Australian, 23/8/2005

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Editor's Note

Mark Latham's diaries produced a number of surprises on foreign policy matters.

This issue of the Bulletin looks at some of his ideas on the US alliance and also at the surprising amount of support for them among ALP members, many of whom are now Federal Senators and MPs.

Their views are in sharp contrast to current ALP Leader Bomber Beazley whose slavish support for the United States is almost as great as Howard's.

We also look briefly at a report from yet another think tank report which yet again uses scare tactics to argue for even more military spending more than the current \$60 million a day.

Finally we publish an edited version of an article by Professor Roland Simbulan, Vice Chancellor of the University of the Philippines, which looks at US bases and US intervention in the Asia-Pacific region.

Latham attacks US alliance in his diaries

In early September the Latham Diaries were published and caused a real stir. Most of the reports covered his views on various ALP personalities and the media. His opinion on the ANZUS alliance was noted and quickly dismissed.

Latham calls the alliance "the last manifestation of the White Australia mentality", referring back to the times when Australia wanted nothing to do with countries that were not Anglo-Saxon.

It's just another form of neo-colonialism, Latham says. Australia is once again being colonised.

Latham mocks public support for the alliance and dismisses with contempt anybody who thinks it serves a purpose. He argues that it is a relationship which has not been properly or adequately debated and understood.

Writing after the election, Latham says he should go public and question the long-term need for the alliance, but laments that this "would turn the party an upside down" and that "the Big Mac faction would go ballistic". "Big Mac" refers to Kim Beazley and the ALP right.

Latham opposes every war Australia has fought, except World War II. He blames the US alliance for dragging Australia into unnecessary conflicts. His preferred foreign policy model is based on New Zealand's.

He writes that if the Australian people prefer being "an American colony under (John) Howard, that's a nation not worth leading".

He accuses the Prime Minister and Mr Bush of being cowards, saying "they wouldn't fight themselves, of course, but they readily send other people's children to fight in their name".

In his diary entry of December 1, 2004, six weeks before he resigned, he writes: "The Americans have made us a bigger target in the war against terror -- Australian lives are certain to be sacrificed on the altar of the US alliance."

When the Federal Police Commissioner said something similar, he was quickly forced to withdraw.

The peace movement has been saying this for a long time but we are denied media coverage and so cannot get our message out far and wide.

Latham comments that the alliance survives "because a significant number of Australians still think we need an insurance policy against invasion by Indonesia, that's why. Poor old

Indonesia. They can barely

govern themselves these days, let alone invade us."

Latham is convinced that "the Americans need us more than we need them". He says Pine Gap is "vital to their international security network". He claims that the Americans "restrict our capacity to trade and integrate with Asia" and that "one day their trouble with China will be our trouble".

Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition policy has always been that Australia must have an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. The US alliance must be broken if Australia is to be a mature and peaceful country, able to do perform a positive role in our region. Latham recognises this. It is the peace movement's task to convince many, many more of the dangers and the cost of the US-Australian 'alliance'.



US spy budget revealed

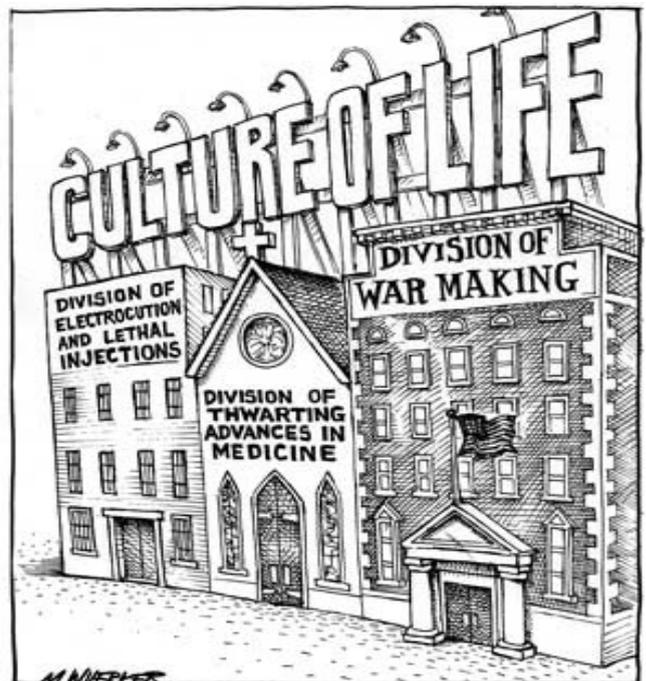
A top U.S. intelligence official has revealed what has long been secret -- the amount of money the United States spends on its spy agencies, according to a New York Times report.

At a conference on October 31, Mary Margaret Graham, a 27-year veteran of the CIA and now the deputy director of national intelligence for collection, said the annual intelligence budget was \$44 billion.

Graham's saying it in public was a surprise, because the government has repeatedly gone to court to keep the current intelligence budget and even budgets as far back as the 1940s from being disclosed.

Source:

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/11/08/news/intel.php#>



Push for more military spending

The Kokoda Foundation is a newly established not-for-profit independent think-tank which conducts research into Australia's future security challenges. It is partly funded by the Defence Department.

AUSTRALIA'S military budget should be increased by least \$1 billion a year, according to a report released in October this year.

The report by Ross Babbage of the Kokoda Foundation says the costs of new equipment, facilities and personnel are increasing at a much faster rate than the current three per cent annual real increase in the current \$18 billion defence budget.

Babbage claims that real budget increases of five per cent a year for the next ten years are needed.

The usual method of justifying calls for more spending on the military is to claim unspecified threats and dangers in the future, and this report is no different.

The report, *Preparing Australia's Defence for 2020 -- Transformation or Reform?*, predicts Australia faces a far more demanding security outlook in 2020, with

China likely to be the dominant power in Asia.

It calls for radical reform of the defence organisation to meet emerging threats, ranging from what it calls failing South Pacific states to the possibility of regional threats, and the use of weapons of mass destruction.

The report even says: "In the 2020 time frame, there is a serious risk of the ADF becoming engaged in a major war in Asia."

The report draws on a series of closed workshops with senior defence force officers, senior bureaucrats and industry and academic experts.

Sources: www.kokodafoundation.org
<http://theaustralian.com.au> report

US military presence in Australia

Late in July 2005, the AABCC requested Senator Kerry Nettle (Greens NSW) to ask about the numbers of US military personnel in Australia, using a US Department of Defense report called *Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area (2001)* which said there were 663 Marines stationed in Australia.

Senator Nettle asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 4 August 2005 (question no. 1052):

With reference to the United States of America's (US) Department of Defense report entitled *Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area (2001)* which states that 663 US Marines were stationed in Australia:

1. *Why and for what purpose were 663 US Marines stationed in Australia in 2001?*
2. *For the years 2002 to date, how many US Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force personnel respectively, were deployed in Australia?*
3. *For the years 2002 to date, what was the total number of US military personnel deployed in Australia?*
4. *For the years 2002 to date, what was the number of US dependents in Australia?*

Senator Hill -The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. *The US Marines referred to in the honourable senator's question were not "stationed" in Australia in 2001. The United States Marine Corps personnel in question were temporarily deployed to Australia for routine training.*

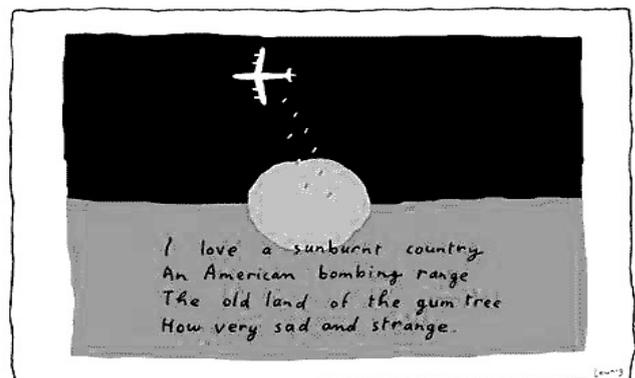
2. *The Department of Defence does not keep detailed historical data on the number of US military personnel, or their dependents, stationed in, or deployed to, Australia. The most recent relevant data is as follows:*

As at January 2004, the number of US military personnel stationed in Australia by service was: Army 41, Navy 80, Marine 25, Air Force 86

As at July 2005, the number of US military personnel stationed in Australia by service was: Army 69, Navy 75, Marine 16, Air Force 101.

Additionally, the number of US military-related personnel who temporarily deployed to Australia aboard US military vessels, for both exercises and port visits, was as follows: 2002 47,536; 2003 52,588; 2004 23,007; and 2005 to date 13,839.

3. *See Part (2) above.*
4. *As at January 2004, there were 369 US military dependents in Australia. As at July 2005, there were 421 US military dependents in Australia.*



KCB's Strategic Policy

by Clinton Fernandes

Over the course of a long political career, Kim Christian Beazley has demonstrated an impressive consistency in his views on strategic policy. In 1974, he submitted his Masters' thesis to the University of Western Australia on "the evolution of Australian Labor Party attitudes to the United States alliance, 1961-1972". He had the benefit of unparalleled access to Labor's internal records, thanks to his father, who was a senior party figure. The thesis demonstrated how the right faction took control of Labor's foreign policy in the lead up to Whitlam's election win in 1972.

While aspects of the Australia-US alliance were opposed by many within the party and the labour movement, the right faction was able to knock them into policy subservience, thus neutralising an important electoral vulnerability. As Beazley would later note, "conservatives throughout the 1950s and 1960s used arguments about the alliance as a stick with which to beat Labor. It was crude but effective politics which played into the Labor split and the fear of communism."

Australia's alliance with the US was a matter of great interest to the 25 year-old Beazley. For him, it was essential to depoliticise the alliance, to make it bipartisan. A decade later, he became Minister for Defence in the Hawke Government.

Similar themes confronted him rank-and-file opposition to US bases on the North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar, and misgivings about the Reagan administration's foreign policy. New Zealand had effectively walked out on the ANZUS pact, and some Australians were wondering openly whether Australia should follow suit.

Beazley believed the solution was to ensure that the "public should benefit from a contemporary explanation of the value of the alliance". Accordingly, the Labor government argued that the US bases "contributed to the deterrence of nuclear war and the verification of compliance with arms control agreements".

In 2005, Beazley once again finds himself at the centre of debates about the US alliance. As Leader of the Opposition, he will have to manage negative attitudes towards the US alliance within his own party, as well as in the broader community. Many people have expressed misgivings about Australian participation in the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq.

For Beazley, however, the problem was that Australia's commitment to the wars had been too feeble. In conversations with members of the Defence Sub-

The Labor government argued that the US bases "contributed to the deterrence of nuclear war and the verification of compliance with arms control agreements".

Under a Beazley government, Australian diplomats will argue strongly for a US presence in East Asia

Committee of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, he criticised the tokenistic nature of the Howard Government's commitment, arguing that Australia was merely waving the flag, not carrying its weight as an alliance partner.

He expressed the view that a more substantial ground force would have been desirable. On this issue, a Beazley Labor government might have outflanked the Coalition from the right.

Beazley is keen to balance his support for the US alliance with greater regional engagement. The most important feature of "regional engagement" is the need to avoid the nightmare scenario of having to choose sides in any conflict between the US and China.

Beazley's chief criticism of the Howard Government's regional approach is that it has given the impression that Australia is a mere proxy of the US. By contrast, Beazley takes the view that Australia must make it clear that it will not participate in any attempt to contain China. After all, Australia's population and GDP are both likely to decrease relative to that of East Asia. As a middle-level power, Australia will have neither the economic nor the military clout to wield significance in the region. However, unlike some other middle-level powers, Australia cannot immerse itself in a regional economic or political union; neither the European Union nor a future East Asian Union would accept it. Nor can it become the 51st state of the USA. It will therefore have to make its own way in the world.

Under a Beazley government, Australian diplomats will argue strongly for a US presence in East Asia, but one that tolerates the rise of China. According to this line of thinking, it is counter-productive to confront China militarily. Rather, China should be encouraged to accelerate the privatisation of its economy, secure foreign investments and increase trade. The fervent hope of Australian planners is that both the US and Taiwan desist from provoking China militarily.

Beazley's defence policy towards the rest of the region has also followed very consistent themes, the most important of which is the need to build greater links with the Indonesian military. This is because for him the complexity of Indonesian society can be reduced to a narrow set of geopolitical considerations.

He has long argued that Australian strategists "do not address the complex texture of political, economic,

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Alternative Annual Report on Halliburton

In a alternative annual report , released on May 17 by CorpWatch, Halliburton's real 2004 track record is revealed. The report details everything from the company's unwillingness to prevent bribery, fraud, and corruption within its workforce to its inability to take proper precautions to protect its employees in Iraq.

CorpWatch also exposes the company's attempts to undermine US Government regulations that protect drinking water, and side-step federal laws meant to prohibit Halliburton from doing business with corrupt and brutal regimes around the world.

For example:

- A dozen investigations are pending against Halliburton ranging from the Securities and Exchange Commission to the US Department of Justice.
- Former Halliburton accountants filed a class action lawsuit in August 2004 alleging "systemic" accounting fraud from 1998 to 2001.



KCB's Strategic Policy *continued*

cultural and social characteristics of our neighbours. On all these subjects we make no judgements: we address only the simple facts of geography, in light of what history tells us about the vulnerabilities of our territory and approaches”.

The “war on terror” has provided the Howard Government with a good pretext to renew military co-operation, which had been suspended after Indonesia's campaign of state-sponsored terror in East Timor. In opposition, Beazley will not take issue with this policy. In government, he can be expected to continue it.

Clinton Fernandes is a historian and author of Reluctant Saviour (Scribe, 2004).

- Allegations of overcharging in Iraq persist: early in 2004, Halliburton returned \$6.3 million to the U.S. military, admitting that two of the company's employees took kickbacks from a Kuwaiti company. The company still has not repaid the \$212.3 million the Defense Contract Audit Agency says Halliburton overcharged for fuel transportation in Iraq, nor has it found the millions of dollars in government property it "lost" because of mismanagement there.
- Sixty Halliburton employees were killed in Iraq in 2004. Victims' families allege that Halliburton misrepresented the true nature of their loved ones' duties and intentionally placed them in harm's way. These families are now suing Halliburton in both Texas and California.

For the full report:
<http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=>

Global military spending nears Cold War peak

Massive US spending on the "war on terrorism" pushed global military expenditure above \$US1 trillion in 2004, the sixth successive year the total has risen, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

World military expenditure rose 5 % to \$US1.04 trillion, still 6 % below a Cold War peak in 1987-88, but up sharply since 1998,

"World military spending ... is again approaching its level at the height of the Cold War," SIPRI said.

US military spending accounted for nearly half the global figure, rising 12 % last year to \$US455 billion. That was more than the combined total of the 32 next most powerful nations. The figure was set to rise still further to \$US502 billion in 2010.

By February 2005 the total amount of extra spending requested for the "global war on terrorism" since September 11, 2001 had reached \$US346 billion.

US military spending increased to 3.9 % of gross domestic product (GDP) last year from 3 % in 1999, but remained well below its Cold War peak of more than 6 %.

The top five countries by military spending - the United States, Britain, France, Japan and China -- spent nearly two-thirds of the world total last year.

Growth in China's military spending slowed to 7 % -- \$US35 billion -- while Russia's 2004 national defence budget increased almost 5 % to \$US19 billion.

Source:
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200506/s1386989.htm>

Rearranging the infrastructure for US military intervention in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific: resistance and solidarity

by **Roland G. Simbulan**

Professor and Vice Chancellor, University of the Philippines

(This is an edited version of Professor Simbulan's speech at the International Peace Meeting, Tokyo, Japan, October 22, 2005)

I take this opportunity to thank all of you for your solidarity in, our past struggles against US military bases in the Philippines. We in the Philippines were finally able to remove US military bases in 1991 as a result of the broad unity of anti-base, anti-treaty peoples' forces and movements. We successfully convinced the Philippine Senate on September 16, 1991 to terminate the bases treaty and to remove all US military bases, US troops and facilities stationed on Philippine soil.

But we also need your continuing solidarity against the renewed US military activities, U.S military exercises and restoration of US military presence on Philippine territory since 1991 to the present.

I am confident that this conference will be successful in clarifying the dangers and threats of US military bases, the intensification of US military intervention and aggression, the imperial propensity for war, and the need for a broad regional as well as international struggle against U .S. military intervention and war.

Today, it is of crucial importance to stress the need to form international solidarity against US military bases and "military access agreements", as these are being used as the machinery and arsenal for warfare that the United States is waging overseas. We must do everything possible and necessary to enlighten, organize and mobilize as many people possible to condemn and block US military bases, facilities and access agreements with host countries and to demand their immediate dismantling and abrogation. These US air, naval, army, marine, logistics, training and communications bases are the infrastructure of US intervention and aggression against other countries. They are also the infrastructure for nuclear war fighting and the pre-emptive "first strike" doctrine of the United States. /1

US military bases and access agreements have always been used as springboards in armed intervention and aggression against other countries. They are already in countries or in global regions where there are armed conflicts. US military forces use them to engage in military intervention and aggression. Where there is yet not blatant aggression, the US military bases and/or facilities are sources of US military advice, espionage, training, and weapons against people's movements and progressive governments which are defending their national integrity and sovereignty .In effect, the U. S. military is further strengthening itself for policing and reconfiguring the Asia-Pacific and the world for U .S. global corporations.

Under the Bush administration and especially after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, the US has provided the big US transnational firms with large tax cuts and fat military contracts, combining this with a policy of military

Keynesianism or the use of state funds to promote military production. The Bush administration has taken advantage of the Sept. 11 attacks to wage an anti-terrorist hysteria world -wide to grab most of the spoils of war and aggression. The US has been helping itself to monopolize the greatest advantages from the series of wars in the Gulf, in the Balkans and Central Asia, especially in terms of taking control of sources and routes of oil and gas.

The US continues to get what it wants up to the present time, as its allies in Europe and Japan adjust themselves to US policies and plans. Right now, the US is using its occupation of Iraq and control of Iraq' s oil resources as lever for "reconfiguring" the Middle East in favour of Israel, subordinating OPEC to the US oil policy and manipulating the fuel requirements of China, the European Union and Japan.

Since September 11, 2001, as part of its international campaign against terrorism, the United States has made the Philippines its "second front" in Asia next to Afghanistan in its fight against so-called terrorists. The administration of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has given the United States its full cooperation in renewing American military presence in the Philippines and possibly, even restoring its military facilities and bases in the near future.

Right now, more than a thousand US combat troops are already deployed in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in the Philippines. US Marine Expeditionary Forces based in Okinawa are now not only being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan but are also now actively deployed in the many areas of armed conflicts in the Philippines.... The pretext is for the troops to train the Philippine armed forces how to fight in the combat zones of Basilan, Jolo and Mindanao against a small bandit and kidnapping group, the Abu Sayyaf, a creation of the US-CIA with the collaboration of some Filipino military intelligence officers in the early 1990s in the war against the Moro National Liberation Front....

There are unofficial reports, as part of a global military realignment plan, to shift a regiment of the 18,000-strong 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force stationed in Camp Schwab in the City of Nago, Okinawa to the Philippines.

However, the Pentagon is also planning to transfer the Headquarters of its US Army's 1st Corps from Fort Lewis, Washington , to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture. Okinawan US military bases have in fact become the stronghold for new US anti-terrorism interventionary wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Philippines.... And with the plan to station some Okinawan-based units of the 3rd US Marine

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Expeditionary Forces in the Philippines, another Okinawa is being made in the Philippines as an additional staging area in the western Pacific for US interventionary forces.

Since 1999 when the US-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was signed, the US government has used this document to sneak in US military forces and Pentagon and CIA civilian operatives into the Philippines. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement or MLSA, which was signed in 2001 between the Philippines and the United States, is also another unconstitutional document like the VFA that has been used to justify the stockpiling of US military armaments and war materiel as they did during the time of the U.S. military base presence....

Philippine courts cannot, under the VFA, even assume jurisdiction over US soldiers and try them for such crimes as rape, murder or homicide, committed against Filipinos right in our own country....

The real main objective of US military re-deployment and restoration of US military presence in the Philippines is to participate actively in combat against the guerrilla forces nationwide of the New People's Army, and the Bangsamoro Army in Mindanao. It is also to establish military bases in southern Philippines especially in General Santos City and Zamboanga City to be a springboard at the center of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and exercise control over the oil and other natural resources as well as the routes of international commerce in the region....

A new base in southern Mindanao would be an ideal fulcrum for US military operations not only in that island, but also for future counter-terrorism strikes in Southeast Asian countries, particularly in predominantly Islamic Indonesia and Malaysia. The aforementioned countries are major oil producers while the Cotabato basin and Palawan waters in Mindanao are also acknowledged as having rich oil reserves. The Philippines is also seen as the gateway of the Pacific to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf and would therefore be ideal for forward-deployed US forces in the Western Pacific.

In short, in abject servility to the United States, the Philippine government has volunteered the use of the entire national territory again as a base for US armed aggression and intervention, as it has in the past during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and other armed conflicts.

Japan's Role in the Global Eavesdropping System-Echelon

The estimated 702 US foreign military bases and installations that are currently located in at least 40 nations today are part of the integrated global infrastructure for imperial domination of the United States. Not only does it use these bases and military

forces for global intervention, controlling the world's oil resources and natural resource supplies as well as trade and sea routes, but they are also used to intimidate smaller nations into submission. Bases in Japan and South Korea, as well as "visiting" and "access" agreements such as those in the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, are used to serve and reinforce aircraft carriers, destroyers, nuclear armed submarines that serve America's gunboat diplomacy today.

But we should not neglect their use for command, control, communications and intelligence (C3I), including essential roles in nuclear war-fighting, using space for intelligence and warfare. Signals intelligence (SIGINT) also needs to be mentioned....

At the US Air Force Base in Misawa in northern Japan, US Project Echelon facilities are installed and operated with sophisticated surveillance equipment to spy and eavesdrop not only on China, North Korea and Russia, but also to intercept all military and civilian communications within Japan including those by fax, email and telephone calls both landline and mobile.

These eavesdropping facilities in Misawa are linked to the brain center of US SIGINT operations at the US National Security Agency (NSA) in Fort Meade, Maryland....

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)

The United States is now also trying to legitimise, under a semblance of international law, its modern-day piracy and gunboat diplomacy against smaller nations.

Under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) which was introduced by the United States in 2003, US gunboats docked at military bases overseas may now intercept any vessel in the high seas that they suspect to be transporting or carrying weapons of mass destruction, or components and ingredients of such weapons.

This is very dangerous and may provoke wars and conflicts because under international law, ships with the proper identification are extensions of the state and cannot be intercepted or boarded by a foreign state....

But look who's talking!

The United States has long been vehemently opposed to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, an anti-nuclear weapons treaty, because it perceived this as restricting, if not challenging, the unhampered operations especially of the nuclear-armed, nuclear-powered US 7th Fleet in the Western Pacific.

Can nations not see this practice of double-standards that the weapons of mass destruction of superpowers

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are not restricted in any way while other vessels from smaller countries can now be subject to full inspection even in international waters?...

If the United States and other countries were to implement a Proliferation Security Initiative, then let it include the subjection to inspection and interdiction of vessels of the United States Navy that carry nuclear weapons, chemical and bacteriological weapons, and their components, as well as the inspection of Japanese vessels that carry plutonium from Europe!....

But let us remember that neither the story of the Philippines then nor the story of Iraq now end with successful US occupation. We can expect more resistance from the people to arise as the Iraqis are valiantly showing in the relentless effort to free their country of US-Anglo aggression and occupation. By unleashing acts of state terrorism in the world as it did against the Philippines in 1899, and against Japan when it atom-bombed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the United States is only generating more hatred for US aggression and will further arouse the just resistance of the people of the world.

US study finds H-bomb tests still causing cancer in Marshalls

A study has found that the number of cancers caused by hydrogen bomb testing in the Marshall Islands is set to double, more than half a century after the tests were conducted in the tiny Pacific nation.

The study by the US Government's National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimated 530 cancers had already been caused by the tests, particularly the explosion of a 15 megaton hydrogen bomb codenamed Bravo on March 1, 1954.

"We estimate that the nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands will cause about 500 additional cancer cases among Marshallese exposed during the years 1946-1958, about a nine per cent increase over the number of cancers expected in the absence of exposure to regional fallout," the NCI study said.

The study said because of the young age of the population when exposed in the 1950s, more than 55 per cent of cancers have yet to develop or be diagnosed.

The NCI completed the study in September 2004 but it was only publicly released in April this year after officials from the Marshall Islands noticed a reference to it in a US Congressional report and requested a copy.

It was prepared for the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which is scheduled to launch hearings next month to review a petition from the Marshall Islands seeking more than three billion dollars in additional compensation for nuclear test damages and health care.

At the time of the Bravo test at Bikini Atoll, islanders were not evacuated despite their land being engulfed in snow-like radioactive fallout for several days after the bomb.

Although many islanders developed severe radiation burns and had their hair fall out, the US Atomic Energy Commission claimed "there were no burns" and the islanders were in good health.

US officials later allowed islanders to return home to live in radioactive environments without performing any cleanup work.

Source:

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/afp/20050417/hl_afp/marshallsusnuclear_050417204948

Japan to host US nuclear carrier

Japan is to allow a US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be stationed in its waters for the first time.

The vessel will replace the USS Kitty Hawk, the US Navy's oldest active ship, when it is decommissioned in 2008.

Although US troops have been based in Japan since the end of World War II, public opinion there has long been wary of a nuclear presence. Today the United States has about 50,000 military personnel in Japan.

The Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were devastated by US atomic bombs at the end of the war.

The agreement, announced at the end of October, is fiercely opposed by the Japanese peace movement and also by Shigefumi Matsuzawa, the governor of Kanagawa prefecture where the ship will be stationed.

"It is very regrettable and we can never understand it," he said in a statement, adding that he will call on the US and Japanese governments to reconsider the plan.

Source:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4383974.stm>

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