



JOIN THE PEACE CONVERGENCE

SHOALWATER BAY, QUEENSLAND

JUNE 10 - 12

NO BASES — NO WAR GAMES — NO WARS

From June 10 to 30, a US-Australian joint military exercise called **Talisman Sabre 2005** will take place in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Much of the activity will happen at Shoalwater Bay, 50 kms north of Rockhampton in Queensland, the location of the planned new US-Australian training base.

RESISTANCE NONVIOLENT ACTION IS PLANNED TO RESIST THESE WAR GAMES.

The Peace Convergence will be three days of peaceful protests from Friday, June 10 to Sunday, June 12, the Queen's Birthday weekend

Largest exercise

Talisman Sabre is the largest military exercise to occur in Australia to date, with 30,000 troops expected to participate. It will involve nuclear powered and nuclear capable vessels, firing live ammunition and explosives from land and aircraft, amphibious assaults, sinking vessels, the use of high power sonar and active sonobuoys, parachuting and land force manoeuvres.

Military activities will occur in civilian facilities such as Sydney, Rockhampton and Brisbane airports, and

military training bases including Shoalwater Bay, Townsville and Cowley Beach and Delamere in the NT. The Tasman, Timor and Coral seas will also be sites for military exercises and access.

Talisman Sabre representatives refuse to reveal if weapons produced from uranium will be used during the exercise. DU weapons cause serious health effects such as cancers and birth defects. With a half-life of 4.5 billion years, DU will harm future generations.

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NOTICE TO QUIT ACTION

Editor's Note

Every anti-bases activist can take heart from the decision of the Canadian Government to pull out of star wars (see story page 3). If the Canadian peace movement can do it, then so can we!

A first step will be the Peace Convergence in Queensland in June when activists gather to demand an end to war games and a ban on new United States bases on our land.

Step two for many will be in August when we will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the United States atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, demanding the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

Step three could be the demand for the Australian Government to give the United States notice to quit its base at Pine Gap. (see page 8)

Of course, there will be many other activities of different kinds for peace and justice around the country, including demands for the withdrawal of Australian troops from Iraq.

If you want to get involved in evicting the foreign military bases, stopping the war games, getting Australia out of Star Wars and building a culture of peace and security, join the anti-bases campaign. Email us on aabcc@zipworld.com.au.

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The people of Vieques in Puerto Rico have seen their environment devastated and their health undermined by decades of US military exercises on their land. With three new US training bases being developed in Australia, and Talisman Saber, the first of a series of major war games, due to be held in June, Vieques presents Australians with a terrible warning of what may happen here US bases are not thrown off our land.

The presence of the US Navy since 1941 and its use of the island as a bombing range generated massive opposition from Puerto Ricans and human rights activists from around the world and the base was finally closed in 2003.

Opponents documented how the Navy's practices destroyed the island's unique ecology and continually jeopardised the health, livelihood and safety of the Viequesens.

The health impact is horrific. The cancer rate for children 11 to 19 years is 256 per cent higher than for the rest of Puerto Rico. Heart disease is 73 per cent, hypertension 64 per cent and diabetes 58 per cent higher than in the rest of the country.

NEW US NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY

The use of space "enables us to project power anywhere in the world from secure bases of operation," says the Pentagon's National Defense Strategy, which Defense Secretary Rumsfeld signed on March 1.

Among the key goals in the strategy paper are "to ensure our access to and use of space and to deny hostile exploitation of space to adversaries."

The strategy paper, done every four years, provides the policy basis on which the armed services plan their research, development and acquisitions of weapons' systems.

Pentagon officials have described a variety of new space initiatives such as updating intelligence and communications satellite programs and systems that would allow the United States to silence enemy satellites.

Space communications have already become important to US war fighting. "Our most recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq prove our nation relies on capabilities coming from and through space more than ever before," one official said.

More than 60 per cent of all communications at the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom came through satellites, which also guided munitions to targets and today transmit intelligence from the US directly to troops fighting in the field.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38272-2005Mar15.html>

The people of Vieques recently issued the following statement::

Military studies and those done by civilian scientists during the year the people of Vieques occupied the bombing area (April 1999 to May 2000) offer abundant evidence of the ecological disaster created by the Navy. Exaggerated levels of heavy metals, massive destruction to mangroves, lagoons, coral reefs and extensive palm groves, the use of extremely dangerous chemicals like napalm and depleted uranium have poisoned the flora, fauna, air, water and land and present a health risk to all Viequesens...

The CRDV ... repudiates the Navy's total insensibility to the suffering caused by their presence and actions on Vieques.

"We demand a complete and thorough clean up of all lands directly affected by the Navy's practices and those areas in the civilian sector affected by more than half a century of contamination," declared Nilda Medina, spokesperson for the CRDV.

*Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques
(Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques)
Website: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bieke_pr/*

ORCHIDS AT MENWITH HILL SUCCESS AT LAST!

On January 7 this year, "Flossie Mintballs", one of the WoMenwith Hill women, wrote to the AABCC:

In 1988 Hazel Costello started the campaign to conserve the orchids growing in wetland on the north west corner of the Menwith Hill base.

In 1998 Harrogate Borough Council objected to plans to put a new security fence through the orchid site and asked the Ministry of Defence to take advice from English Nature.

Pete Lazenby wrote "A scatter of rare native wetland orchids, some so obscure they haven't yet been identified, could halt the mighty US war machine in its tracks..."

In 1999 the site was investigated by one of the country's top botanists, Professor Richard Bateman, who discovered a rare species. He made recommendations for management of the site.

Continuous representations for conservation measures to be implemented were submitted to the authorities who have now agreed that this area can never become part of the US facility.

NOW FOR THE REST OF THE BASE!

New CIA Director Porter Goss says China's military modernisation poses a direct threat to the US. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee that within a decade the Chinese navy could surpass the US Navy and that China is "increasingly moving their navy further from shore."

These statements contradict the administration's Independent Task Force on Chinese Military Power. Last year the taskforce found that while China is modernising its military, it is 20 years behind the US and that "the balance between the United States and China, both globally and in Asia, is likely to remain decisively in America's favor beyond the next 20 years."

Republicans divided

The Republican Party is divided between those who favour engagement with China and those who advocate confrontation and encirclement, and the influence of the hardliners is growing.

Earlier the lure of China's markets and efforts to widen the Sino-Soviet division gave the engagement wing greater power, expressed most clearly in Secretary of State Kissinger's trip to China in 1971, establishing relations with Peking.

The old confrontationist "China lobby" did not die. Using the immense wealth of the Scalfi, Olin and Carthage foundations under the umbrella of the highly influential American Enterprise Institute (AEI), it began recruiting powerful political allies.

The AEI is closely aligned with the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), the group that successfully lobbied for "regime change" in Iraq and argues that it is a strategic necessity for the US to control the world's oil supplies.

The confrontationist wing is apparently back in the driver's seat.

China's military budget

China's military budget is less than one tenth that of the US. The Chinese navy is designed for defending its territorial waters, not projecting force elsewhere. While the US has a dozen aircraft carriers, China has one.

While China has deployed large numbers of intermediate range ballistic missiles facing Taiwan, most observers see this as an attempt to intimidate the Taiwanese rather than a prelude to invasion or a threat to US forces in the region.

A ring of bases

A strategy of ringing China with US military bases is well underway.

In Australia new US "training" bases are being developed. In addition to bases in Japan (where it is expanding its presence on Okinawa) and South Korea, Guam has become, according to Pacific Commander

Admiral William Fargo, a "power projection hub" that will play an increasing role in Asia, with "geo-strategic importance."

The island already hosts B-52s, fighter planes, nuclear attack submarines and the high altitude spy drone, the Global Hawk. Since Guam is a US colony acquired during the Spanish American war, the military does not need permission for the buildup.

The US is attempting to build bases in Southeast and South Asia. While Indonesian authorities deny the story, the Singapore Times reports that the US is presently negotiating to open a naval base on Sulawesi Island. It is also strengthening military ties to Thailand, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

The encirclement has also spread to Central Asia, an important source of oil and gas for China. The US presently has bases in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, while military ties with Uzbekistan, according to Rumsfeld, are "growing stronger by the month."

Missile defence

A central goal of the confrontation lobby has been to deploy missiles (the so-called missile "defence" program) in Asia, which the administration is now doing. So far it has enlisted Japan and Australia in this effort and is wooing India as well. While the rationale is alleged to be North Korea, the real target is China's 20 intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Once the United States believes it has a strong spear and a strong shield," Sha Zukang, a leading Chinese arms expert, says, "it could lead them to conclude that no one can hurt the United States and they can harm anyone they like anywhere in the world."

War games

The US Navy has announced that from mid-July to August it will hold "Operation Summer Pulse 04" exercises in waters off the China coast near Taiwan.

It will be the first time in US naval history that seven of the country's 12 carrier strike groups (CSGs) will deploy in one place at the same time.

A single CSG includes the aircraft carrier itself, usually with nine to ten squadrons of about 70 aircraft, a guided-missile cruiser, two guided missile destroyers, an attack submarine, and a combination ammunition, oiler and supply ship.

According to Chinese reports, Taiwanese ships will join their American colleagues in this modern rerun of 19th Century gunboat diplomacy.

Source: "Cornering the Dragon" by Conn Hallinan, Foreign Policy in Focus, March 3 2005.

TWO MISSILE DEFENSE TEST FAILURES

After two years without any tests, the last two missile defence tests have failed.

In February this year, a target missile carrying a mock warhead was launched from Kodiak Island, Alaska, but the interceptor missile failed to launch from its island base in the Pacific Ocean.

The cause, according to the Missile Defense Agency, was "an unknown anomaly".

In plain English this means the Pentagon, after spending roughly US\$100 billion over the past two decades on the system, has no idea why it still does not work.

The test had been postponed several times due to "bad weather" so apparently the Pentagon must hope that the enemy chooses a nice sunny day to attack.

"This is a serious setback for a program that had not attempted a flight intercept test for two years," Philip Coyle, the Pentagon's chief weapons tester under Mr Reagan, said.

NATO MOVES AHEAD ON THEATRE MISSILE DEFENCE

In a worrying development, the North Atlantic Council launched its theatre missile defence (TMD) program by approving the Charter for the Program Management Organisation. The decision, taken on 11 March this year, paves the way for the financing and purchase of the NATO TMD system.

A NATO press release claims that the organisation has, "for the past several years, worked to design a battle management system for theatre missile defence. The system will be able to integrate different TMD systems (such as PATRIOT, the NATO MEADS system, SAMP-T) into a single coherent, deployable defensive network able to give layered protection against incoming ballistic missiles."

*Source: NATO Press Release (2005) 036
16 March 2005*



The previous test, on December 15 last year, failed under almost identical circumstances. The target missile launched, but the interceptor did not.

The interceptor had not been tested for two years because the previous test in December 2002 was also a disastrous failure. On that occasion, the kill vehicle did not separate from the booster rocket, missed the target by hundreds of miles and finally incinerated in the earth's atmosphere.

Previous tests have been carefully rigged by placing a homing beacon on the target, by launching the target repeatedly along the same course, and by programming complete information about the timing and trajectory of the target to the interceptor. The enemy not only has to attack on a sunny day, but they had better also tell us exactly when and how.

FIGHT OVER FUNDING FOR BUNKER BUSTERS

The Pentagon wants the US Congress to restore funding for research into nuclear bunker busters which was dropped from the budget last year.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested in January the administration ask for funds over the next two years to finish a study into the possible development of the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. The weapon would burrow into the earth to demolish hardened and deeply buried targets.

Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein, a leader of the opposition to the study, said: "Dr. Sidney Drell at Stanford University has said there is no casing known to man that can sustain driving a missile a thousand feet underground. Therefore you would have a spewing of radiation."

In November last year, Congress omitted about \$27 million for the research sought by the Bush administration. Opponents of the research argued that even studying the possibility of making such a weapon takes nuclear warfare out of the realm of the unthinkable and encourages adversaries of America to develop nuclear weapons.

*Source:
"Pentagon Wants Nuclear Bomb Research Funds Back"
by Will Dunham, Reuters, 1/2/05
"Rumsfeld Seeks to Revive Burrowing Nuclear Bomb"
by Walter Pincus, Washington Post, 1/2/05*

War games don't bring jobs, security or prosperity

Military spending creates far fewer jobs than spending the same dollars on civilian projects and businesses. German studies showed that one billion marks transferred from the military budget to civilian programs created at least 800 and in some sectors up to several thousand more jobs than would be lost in the military sector.

When the US base at North West Cape closed, the nearby town of Exmouth experienced an economic boom, especially with tourism.

Security does not come from more and more satellites, bases and military technology. It comes with jobs, homes, education, health care, food and clean water, democracy and human rights.

The Howard Government's military spending of over \$55 million every day steals the resources needed to provide these necessities.

To meet its exorbitant military spending, the Howard Government has raided other portfolios such as health, welfare and education. In its 2004-2005 budget, spending on the military was higher than on education.

An extra \$700 million -- less than two weeks military spending -- spent on public hospitals each year would overcome their critical problems.

A percentage of military spending should go to upgrading public schools, reducing the cost of university education, supporting childcare, developing Medicare, assisting the needy in our community and creating jobs.

Social costs

The cost of bases and war games are born by the most vulnerable in our community.

In the Philippines, Japan and other countries, US bases are the centre of major social problems. The Governor of Okinawa says US bases on his island brought a major increase in prostitution, drugs, alcoholism, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, and abuse of women and children.

An Anglican Church report from Hobart details frequent sexual assaults on juvenile men and women by US service people.

Environmental fears

Environmental impacts will include effects on air quality, toxic exploded and unexploded ordnance, possible fires, noise pollution, waste disposal and spills and erosion from amphibian craft landings and weapon target zones.

Talisman Sabre will use world heritage areas, natural heritage listed sites, indigenous sites and important wetlands. These areas are habitat to many migratory birds and threatened species such as dugongs and humpback whales.

Shoalwater Bay is home to the largest dugong population in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park WHA. This sanctuary is considered crucial to the stabilisation and recovery of local dugong numbers.

The region also supports nesting sites for green turtles, critical feeding areas for turtles and dugongs and is home to 26 species of dolphins and whales including humpbacks.

To get involved contact:

**Brisbane Anti-Bases - 0401 301 614 Email: peaceconvergence@yahoo.com.au
Australian Anti-Bases Campaign (Sydney): (02) 9698 2954 Email: aabcc@zipworld.com.au**

BUSH ADMINISTRATION LOOKS TO SPACE TO FIGHT

The Pentagon is developing a suborbital space capsule that would be launched from the United States and could deliver conventional weapons anywhere in the world within two hours. The Falcon program reflects how the Bush administration is increasingly looking to space to impose its will on the world.

This year, the Falcon program will test a launcher for its Common Aero Vehicle (CAV), an unmanned maneuverable spacecraft that would travel at five times the speed of sound and could carry 1,000 pounds of munitions, intelligence sensors or other payloads.

The first-generation CAV is expected to be ready by 2010.

Within the next three years, the Falcon program hopes to test two versions of a reusable hypersonic cruise vehicle, sometimes referred to as a space plane, that could travel a suborbital path, about 100,000 feet high, carrying a CAV anywhere in the world.

The Falcon program vehicles "will improve the military's ability to quickly position intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance payloads, while reducing its reliance on forward and foreign basing," Anthony Tether, Director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, said.

John Pike, Director of GlobalSecurity.org, a non-governmental defense think tank, said the Falcon program will allow the US "to crush someone anywhere in world on 30 minutes' notice with no need for a nearby air base."

Source:
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38272-2005Mar15.html>

THE TSUNAMI AND US BASES IN AUSTRALIA

How is it possible that, with the extensive US assets in this region watching the surface of the earth, the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami escaped detection? The US has many satellites monitoring the earth with infrared, photographic imaging and other techniques. Of course US military satellites are not intended to help people in emergencies and were of no use during the crisis.

The US also has a less well known network of "joint" seismic stations in Australia. These include Mundaring (WA), Hobart, Sydney, Charters Towers (Queensland), Daly Waters, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs (Northern Territory).

This is an impressive list of stations which would have received an impressive amount of data as the earthquake and tsunami struck. But apparently none of these assets was any use in this terrible emergency.

In a recent SBS documentary, scientists at the seismology centre in Hawaii where all this "joint" information went were visibly shaken and apologetic about their powerlessness to warn people.

They were aware of the tsunami but did not have communication paths to send the information to

communities around the Indian Ocean.

In contrast, the US military base at Diego Garcia was well informed and able to take measures so there was no real damage.

In an interview on Australian TV, the head of Geosciences Australia complained that their equipment was only calibrated to measure up to 8.6 on the Richter scale.

The Boxing Day tsunami was registered at 9.3, possibly the biggest earthquake of the last century. As a result, they could not pinpoint where the earthquake occurred.

The AABCC has asked the Howard Government what role these seismic centres played. So far we have not received an answer.

The seismic stations are used to detect underground nuclear detonations in countries around the world.

The peace movement has argued that all aspects of our society are distorted by the military agenda. This is a case in point. It is another example of what could have been used as good science to provide a service for the world being abused for negative ends.

NZ ACTIVISTS WANT SPY BASE CLOSED

Activists are vowing to step up a campaign to close the government spy base at Tangimoana, near Palmerston North.

Protesters picketed outside the eavesdropping facility on March 27 for several hours, watched by police.

Green Party co-leader Rod Donald said much of the anti-bases campaign had centred on Waihopai near Blenheim but more attention would be paid in future to Tangimoana.

He said protesters would be back to continue the protest "within a couple of months".

Mr Donald is calling for more information about Tangimoana and Waihopai to be made public.

Anti-base activist Bob Leonard said "New Zealand has no say over how it's run or what it does but it costs this country millions."

Tangimoana has the ability to "spy on half the globe", he said, although a decreasing use of high frequency radio meant its importance is diminishing.

Source: Manawatu Evening Standard, Palmerston North, 28/3/05

ING DISINVESTS FROM WEAPONS

In a press release from Brussels on 24 March, peace groups Netwerk Vlaanderen, Forum voor Vredesactie, For Mother Earth and Vrede have welcomed the decision by ING, the largest private financial institution in the Benelux countries, and the 11th largest in the world, to no longer invest in companies producing controversial weapons.

The weapons excluded by ING are anti-personnel mines, cluster bombs, depleted uranium weapons, biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

The four peace groups have been campaigning since 2003 for an end to investments of Belgian banks in the arms trade. Their campaign "My Money. Clear Conscience?" has put pressure on ING to make this important step in the direction of a peaceful investment policy.

ING will no longer finance companies involved in the production, maintenance, or sale of such weapons and

will no longer make its own direct investments in these companies.

However, indirect investments are still permitted. For customers who invest in ING funds, nothing has changed. Their money can still be invested in producers of these highly controversial weapons.



Pine Gap Notice to Quit

In November this year, the Federal Government can give three years notice that it intends to terminate the agreement which permits the US base at Pine Gap to continue operating.

Pine Gap is one of the largest and most important United States war fighting and intelligence bases in the world. It is also a front-line base for the US Star Wars system.

Anti-bases activists are already discussing actions that might be taken on this important occasion. A postcard campaign is being developed and a protest in Canberra is a possibility.

If you have suggestions about what might be done, email them to us at: aabcc@zipworld.com.au

Radar Network for star wars, the establishment of a new US training bases in the Northern Territory and Queensland, and the US navy's Sea Swap program in WA.

There are over 30 US military facilities in Australia. A few are constantly staffed by the US military. Many more can be turned over to the US. When Prime Minister, Bob Hawke made the deal which allows every ADF base to be used as a US base if the need arises.

The US military base at Pine Gap is already part of the star wars system. The satellites it controls monitor the most important area of US strategic interest China, southern Russia and the Middle East oil fields.

The number of US bases on our soil will rise as the government hands over Shoalwater Bay in Queensland and the Bradshaw Training Area and Delamere Air Weapons Range in the Northern Territory to the US military.

The Governor of Okinawa has said the US bases on his island brought a major increase in the crime rate. It has increased levels of prostitution, drugs, alcoholism, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, abuse of women and children and other social problems.

There are also major dangers of pollution from repairs and maintenance programs and from weapons firing.

New United States military bases will undermine Australia's security and add even more to the already out of control Australian military budget.

Fighting back

The United States is not all-powerful or invincible and is being challenged by the "super power of peace".

The recent rise of the anti-war movement has brought an unprecedented force onto the world stage with over 10 million people in the streets around the world in February last year.

The organisation I represent -- the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition -- aimed in 1987 to form a coalition of people across the continent to get US bases out of Australia. We want Australia to be an adult independent country among friends, not the sycophant of the US.

The struggle is and has not been easy but we know that we have rattled their cages. We know the US sent operatives here to do a 'threat assessment' of our group. In a recent poll Australians said that the US was as least as dangerous as Islamic fundamentalists.

It is easier to stop a base before it is commissioned than to close it after it has begun operations.

We have a job to do now to warn Queenslanders and all Australians of the dangers of the planned US base at Shoalwater Bay and to encourage them to join the efforts to stop the three new so-called "training bases".

The job is big but not impossible. The people can do it. We just need to convince them.

BASES OF INSECURITY *from page 3*

Other bases are not listed because they are secret and perform illegal or 'sensitive' tasks (Israel).

Some are only activated in times of need. The current US military emphasis is on a network of small bases or 'transit points' dispersed around the Asia-Pacific region, the so-called "lily pads", bases to and from which US troops could jump like so many well-armed frogs.

New factors make the situation more dangerous than ever:

The end of the Soviet Union removed any force able to constrain at least some US ambitions

US President Bush has an extremely aggressive agenda

There has been a revolution in military affairs.

The final frontier

US wars since Gulf War 1 have been space wars; wars large controlled and directed from space. In US military speak, the Pentagon is finalising its 'full spectrum dominance' -- dominance of the land, sea, atmosphere, and now space.

The US is determined to implement 'missile defence' or star wars. Such wonderful US doubletalk! -- missile defence which is really more about missiles than defence against missiles, and more about pre-emptive strikes than defence.

The US's main aim is to position weapons in space to attack terrestrial targets and to deny space to friend and foe alike.

The US Space Command proclaims that its mission is "dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment."

Australia

In this new Century, the process of making the Australian military an extension of the Pentagon began to accelerate.

Examples include the February 2004 Defence Capability Plan, the decision to build three air warfare warships for theatre missile defence, upgrading the Jindalee Operational

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