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Editor's note: this transcript is a product of the original text Bruce Gagnon wrote which he read from during his presentation extended both with observations he made during the course of his exposition as well as some of the text he had written which he passed over during his talk. I am grateful to Bruce Gagnon for sharing his text me. The original webcast recording can be found inside: <http://totalwebcasting.com/view/?id=hcf>. Left-mouse click the local file recording here at - <DPNE-BruceGagnon022815.mp3> - to download the mp3 file to your machine. This presentation of Bruce Gagnon was recorded on 28 February 2015 at [The Dynamics of Possible Nuclear Extinction Symposium](#), presented by [The Helen Caldicott Foundation](#), at [The New York Academy of Medicine](#).



Bruce Gagnon starts at 19:57 into the above film

The [Helen Caldicott Foundation](#) Presents

**Bruce Gagnon**

## **The Ongoing and Dangerous Militarization of Space**

[Symposium: The Dynamics of Possible Nuclear Extinction](#)

The New York Academy of Medicine, 28 February - 1 March 2015

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### Introduction by Dr. Helen Caldicott

The next speaker is Bruce Gagnon. Bruce is [Coordinator](#) of the [Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space](#) where he offers his own reflections on organizing and the state of America's declining empire. His title is The Ongoing and Dangerous Militarization of Space Nuclear War. Bruce:

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Before we get started I want to mention in the coffee room there's a literature table and on that table is a Global Network Newsletter called [Space Alert!](#) which covers many of the topics that I'm going to be referring to today. So I encourage you to pick one of those up.

I live in Bath, Maine where Navy destroyers are built. These ships are outfitted with so-called "[missile defense](#)" systems that the Pentagon is today using to help encircle Russia and China. Few people in our community, including activists, are interested in where these ships go or what their military mission actually is. It's not popular to raise these questions – especially when [Bath Iron Works](#) is the largest industrial employer in our state.

Soon after George W. Bush became president he pulled the US out of the [1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty](#) – the ABM Treaty that we had with Russia. That treaty limited the deployment of missile defense systems that are key elements in [US first-strike attack planning](#). This led to the

creation of the [Missile Defense Agency](#), and today we see US deployments of missile defense systems on the land and on board Navy ships being used to surround Russia and China.

Each year the [US Space Command](#) conducts a computer war game in which they practice a first-strike attack on Russia and China. They call it the blue team against the red team. In this war game the first weapon used to attack China is the successor to the space shuttle – the [X-37B] [military space plane](#) – that during testing has shown that it can stay in orbit for over a year without a pilot on board. It's really a super drone. In the computer war game the military space plane drops back towards Earth and hits China. Other weapon systems under the direction of Strategic Command's '[Prompt Global Strike](#)' program are then used in a further strike.

When Russia and China in this war game attempt to fire their remaining nuclear forces our "[missile defense](#)" systems are used to pick off any retaliatory strike, thus giving the Pentagon a "successful" first strike attack. Thus, missile defense, or should we call it missile *offense*, is the shield that is used after the US first-strike sword is thrust into the heart of another nation.

Russia and China have repeatedly said that any hopes for real nuclear disarmament are out the door as long as the US continues to test and deploy these missile offense systems. [They are destabilizing](#) and make the reality of launch-on-warning more of a problem than ever.

[Greg Mello](#), from the [Los Alamos Study Group](#) (a speaker later), reports that modernization of nuclear weapons, now underway at Sandia labs and elsewhere, is creating dramatic new instabilities in US-Russian nuclear affairs. What is billed in Washington as necessary "modernization" and "repair" is really quite a serious new arms race, underway against a backdrop of expanding missile defense deployments.

Today the US is deploying land-based and sea-based missile defense systems (including radars) in Romania, Poland, and Turkey and on ships in the Black, Baltic, Mediterranean, and eventually, the Barents, and Bering seas. These deployments are directly aimed at Russia, although the Pentagon claims that they are intended for Iran, which we know is not true.

Coupled with the hyper aggressive NATO expansion up to the Russian border, Moscow has been forced into a red-alert corner. Just this week the U.S. Army's Second Cavalry Regiment, [driving armored personnel carriers and other military vehicles](#), rolled through the streets of Narva, Estonia, [just 300-yards from the Russian border](#) – a dramatic escalation of the insane Pentagon military confrontations that are being created in Eastern Europe. The US is just poking Russia to get a response.

Imagine if the reverse were happening and Russia was deploying military forces in Canada or Mexico. We'd go freaking ballistic!

The [US-NATO directed coup in Ukraine](#) has led to a civil war that is intended to create chaos on Russia's border. The eventual goal is regime change in Moscow – all to benefit corporations that want to control the largest supply of natural gas on the planet, sitting under Russian soil. Couple that with the melting Arctic ice which has fossil fuel extraction corporations drooling at the thought of control of the Arctic region.

The US Navy recently sent a nuclear submarine into the Arctic with *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman along for the ride. In his column afterward he quoted Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations saying, “In our lifetime, what was [in effect] land and prohibitive to navigate or explore, is becoming an ocean, and we’d better understand it. [We need to be sure that our sensors, weapons and people are proficient in this part of the world](#),” so that we can “own the undersea domain and get anywhere there.”

Just look at a map and note that Russia has the largest land border with the Arctic Ocean.

At the same time, these missile defense systems are being positioned in [South Korea](#), Japan, Okinawa, Guam, Taiwan and on Aegis destroyers throughout the Pacific Ocean. They are aimed at China, though similarly, Washington claims they are in response to North Korea, which we know is a lie.

Last October I organized [a peace walk through Maine](#) to help shine a light on our state’s growing economic dependence on military spending. We began the walk up in the beautiful mountain and lakes region called Rangeley where the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency is considering putting up to 60 ground-based missile defense interceptors.

Narrow, winding roads would have to be bulldozed and widened, and huge holes would have to be blasted into the mountains in order to insert the missile silos. Toxic rocket fuel would be trucked in and stored – the same rocket fuel that is now contaminating water sources in 22 states across the nation. The whole plan would be an environmental disaster and would cost taxpayers more than \$4 billion.

Come to find out the Pentagon didn’t want this expensive program, but pressure on Congress from the Boeing Corporation forced it to go forward with an environmental impact statement process and public hearings [in four states \(including Maine\)](#) to select a possible ‘east coast deployment’ site for a missile defense base.

Another major weapons program being built that the Pentagon did not actually want is also in Maine. General Dynamics Corporation owns Bath Iron Works where destroyers for the Navy are built. The standard Aegis destroyers cost about \$1.5 billion each and are outfitted with these missile defense interceptor missiles – which have had much success in their testing program. But after Obama became president he forced the Navy to build the new high-tech ‘stealth’ destroyer called the Zumwalt, the job of which is to sneak up on China and blast it with new electromagnetic rail guns and other weapons systems. This is part of Obama’s ‘pivot’ of 60% of US military forces into the Asia-Pacific to provocatively confront and control China.

As it turns out, the majority stockholders in General Dynamics are the Crown family from Chicago who helped Obama get elected to the presidency. So he owed them, and the new [Zumwalt stealth destroyer](#), at a cost to taxpayers of between 4 and 6 billion dollars per copy, is their reward.

As part of the US pivot to China, the Pentagon needs more airfields for warplanes, more barracks for troops, and more ports of call for the warships being re-deployed into the Asia-Pacific region.

So in places like [Jeju Island](#), South Korea, we see a 500-year-old fishing and farming culture being torn apart and [UNESCO-recognized world-heritage](#) soft coral reefs just offshore being destroyed as a naval base is being built for US nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers and the destroyers made in my hometown of Bath.

In the US today more than 60% of every federal discretionary tax dollar goes to the Pentagon to fund the cancerous war machine. Our communities have become addicted to military spending as our physical and social infrastructure continues to deteriorate. There is virtually no money for anything else these days as we witness austerity cuts in social programs all over the nation.

The Pentagon says that America's role under corporate globalization of the world economy will be "[security export](#)." We won't have conventional jobs making things useful to our communities anymore. Instead we'll build weapons for endless war and send our kids overseas to die for the fossil fuel corporations.

In fact, today, weapons are the number one industrial export product of the nation. And when weapons are your #1 industrial export product, what is your global marketing strategy for that product line? What does it say about the soul of our nation that we have to keep selling weapons and killing people in order to provide jobs so workers can feed their families?

The Pentagon has the largest carbon boot print on the planet. But sadly, there is little acknowledgement of that fact by most climate change groups, which well illustrates to me, the "off limits" nature of the growing military domination of our society.

We have become an occupied nation. The corporate oligarchy that runs the show in Washington uses space-based technologies to spy on us and to direct all warfare on the planet. In a way, you could call today's expensive military satellites the "triggers" that make the high-tech weapons, like drones and offensive missiles, work. These satellites allow the military to see everything, to hear everything, and to target every place on the planet. We are sold the line that high-tech robotic warfare will save American lives and will be a cheaper way to fight.

The military industrial complex has become the primary resource-extraction service for corporate globalization and is preparing the future generations for its dead end street of perpetual war.

Due to the fiscal crisis across the nation, engineering departments, computer science, mathematics, astronomy, and chemistry departments in colleges and universities have become increasingly dependent on Pentagon funding.

In the US, approximately 40% of all scientists, engineers, and technical professionals today work in the military sector. This is a colossal waste of talent and intellectual resources as we face the coming reality of climate change.

Another key reason for the militarization of space is [resource extraction on the planetary bodies](#). One of the Space Command's job will be to control the pathway on and off the planet Earth. Some years ago the Congress commissioned a study and it was published as a book, signed by the likes of John Glenn, and Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, called "Military Space Forces: The

Next Fifty Years.” In it they talked about controlling the Earth-Moon gravity well, controlling who could get on and off the planet Earth. With control of the Earth-Moon gravity well we would be able to hijack rival shipments upon return.

The aerospace industry says it needs nuclear power in space for mining the sky. Nuclear reactors on rockets will be needed to give them the kind of lift capability to reach Mars. International space law is now being re-written by corporate interests to allow their control of the planetary bodies. The industry plan is to scrap the United Nations Moon and Outer Space Treaties.

Rovers on Mars today are currently powered by plutonium-238. I organized campaigns to oppose nuclear launches from the space center in Florida in 1989, 1990, and 1997. Future mining colonies on the planetary bodies would be nuclear powered necessitating a host of launches of nuclear materials into space on rockets that blow up from time to time.

Space entrepreneur Elon Musk says we must move our civilization to Mars. The Mars Society says the Earth “is a rotting, stinking, dying planet” and that we have to terraform Mars to make it habitable. Imagine how much money that would cost?

When the Civil War and the Indian Wars ended, the military industrial complex at the time saw an end to its massive war profits. They needed an enemy to keep the military production lines humming. So a strategy was developed: Journalists and artists were paid to fabricate stories about Crazy Horse, the great Lakota warrior who had been brought onto the reservation in South Dakota in 1877. They reported that Crazy Horse had broken out of the reservation and gone back on the warpath, killing innocent white children, raping white women, and burning their houses to the ground. These stories were printed in major papers across the nation and the American people were afraid and outraged. Congress swung into action and appropriated more money for weapons production, while Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull sat inside their tepees on the reservation without a gun to their names.

Similarly, in our time, we’ve seen the military industrial complex fabricate stories about ‘weapons of mass destruction’ in Iraq, and today we see ISIS—which has been trained, armed and funded by the CIA, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan—as the justification for the US to get back into Iraq and bomb Syria. Putin has been demonized by the western media creating the false notion that he is on the warpath to re-create the former Soviet Union.

Studies by the economics department at UMASS-Amherst reveal that military spending creates the fewest jobs – while spending on solar, rail, wind turbines, education, health care, or repairing sewer and water systems and our crumbling roads and bridges creates *many more* jobs with the same amount of money.

Abolitionist Frederick Douglass reminded us that power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. When it comes to our current dark, evil economic system, called militarism, we should be *demanding* its conversion and the jobs that would result from that transformation.

Without massive cuts in the Pentagon budget how can we ever kick start our needed social

transformation?

The militarization of everything around us is a spiritual sickness. Lakota holy man Lame Deer talked about the green frog skin – the dollar bill – and how the white man was blinded by his love for the paper money. His spiritual connection to Mother Earth was broken. It's time to repair the sacred hoop.

The integration of the economic conversion issue into the existing work of the peace, environmental, labor, and social justice movements could be a transformative strategy that would unify our disparate efforts and provide the despondent American people with a positive vision for the future. We don't have time to waste.

Let me just make this announcement that the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) Review Conference at the UN will be happening this Spring. A thousand Japanese people are coming here as part of that. Four peace walks from the US will merge into New York City at that time. A rally and march will be held here in the City on April 26 and non-violent civil resistance action will be held on April 28. For more information there's literature on the tables in the coffee room or check with the [War Resister's League](#).

Thank you all very much.

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**Follow-on by Dr. Helen Caldicott**

Thank you Bruce Gagnon for making an adequate diagnosis. As physicians we have to look at etiology of disease. Etiology means the cause of a disease. So unless you isolate a polio virus you can't prevent polio which Jonas Salk and [Albert] Sabin did. Therefore we're looking at the etiology of killing and the etiology of possible nuclear extinction. That's what this conference is about.

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