

The Final Frontier

US Domination of Space

by Diana Reiber-Garcia

Unbeknownst to American civilians, the US government has included the militarization of space as part of its global dominance strategy to protect "national interests and investments." Securing the control of space follows the historic model of military forces that evolved to protect commercial interests. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, empires employed naval forces to protect major seaways. Now controlling access to "spaceways" and information collection through space technology is seen as similarly beneficial to the US military's imperial control of the planet and the universe.

The United States Space Command, part of the US Air Force, states in its *Vision 2020* report that "just as land dominance, sea control, and air superiority have become critical elements of current military strategy, space superiority is emerging as an essential element of battlefield success and future warfare." Since the early 1990s, US SpaceCom has been publishing documents outlining their plans to obtain "Full Spectrum Dominance."

US Space Command has developed four operational concepts, which will be implemented to maintain control of space and protect commercial interests. The "Control of Space" concept includes securing access to space, the ability to deny others access to space and space information, and freedom of operation within the space medium. This includes, but is not limited to, real time space surveillance, satellite surveillance of space, and something cryptically titled "Destroy, Disrupt, Delay, Degrade, Deny."

The "Global Partnerships" concept of SpaceCom's vision will "augment military space capabilities through the leveraging of civil, commercial, and international space systems." This concept outlines the provision of financial support by "off-loading" expenses to civil and commercial providers so as to decrease the financial pressure on existing military infrastructure and operations. Global Partnerships will be developed to "command and protect US national interests and investment capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict."

The Project for a New American Century (PNAC), which emerged in 1997 as the neocon's response to Clinton's multilateralism, jumped on this vision of universal empire as America's future. This group, which has become a driving force in the Bush administration, published a defense strategy originally outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the last days of the George Bush Senior administra-



tion. *Rebuilding America's Defenses* calls for the United States to defend its control of space, a medium they refer to as the "international commons." The report describes space as a strategic location where "commercial and security interests are intertwined." According to the report, the complexity and importance of space control will only increase as the commercial activity in space intensifies.

PNAC views space dominance not only as essential to military operations, but essential to US economic interests as well. Claiming that space control is purely defensive ignores the obvious fact that commercial space systems have been in use for decades. These commercial systems are exceedingly important in their direct military applications, including information obtained from global positioning devices. According to PNAC's defense report, "95% of current US military communications are carried over commercial circuits, including commercial communication satellites." Maintaining US dominance in space not only protects our global military operations, it protects our global commercial interests as well, for the two are, now and historically, inextricably linked.

George W. Bush is promoting PNAC's plans by increasing military spending and endorsing military-industrial contracts. Judging from this administration's domestic and foreign policies, corporate interests are not only primary areas of concern, they are directly tied to military spending and operations. Space warfare undoubtedly will require new military organizations, weapons, training, and machines. Thus the military-industrial complex has much to gain by promoting US space control.

It is important to remember that warfare and military operations have never been purely about defense. Militaries have always used their power to secure and protect commercial interests, often at the peril of their own people. It is clear that our current US government is more concerned with protecting its economic powerholders and wielding global control than it is with the protection of its own, or the world's, citizens.

Diana Reiber-Garcia graduated with a degree in English Literature from Mills College and is pursuing a career in journalism.

Controlling access to "spaceways" and information collection through space technology is seen as beneficial to US military imperial control of the planet and the universe.