

Nuclear Proliferation

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April 14, 2005 By **Dr. Helen Caldicott**

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The Bush administration has taken a hard line against nations they say are engaged in the development of nuclear weapons. Targets of harsh rhetoric coming from the White House include Iran and North Korea, countries that Bush has branded the Axis of Evil. But while the administration speaks out frequently about the dangers of nuclear proliferation around the world, it has announced plans to spend millions of dollars to develop and test a new generation of American nuclear weapons and technology to militarize outer space. These include new "bunker buster" bombs, anti-satellite weapons and anti-ballistic missiles as part of the national missile defense program.

Talks to renew the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, begin in May, but the Bush administration and other nuclear powers are reported to be unconcerned about its future. If the NPT is abandoned, its demise could pave the way for an unprecedented explosion of nuclear weapons proliferation across the globe.

Dr. Helen Caldicott is a pediatrician and anti-nuclear weapons activist. She founded the Nobel Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility in 1978 because of her grave concern over the medical impact of nuclear weapons on the human race. Caldicott, who went on to found the Nuclear Policy Research Institute in 2002, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts. Between The Lines' Scott Harris spoke with Dr. Caldicott about the current danger of nuclear weapons proliferation and the U.S. effort to militarize outer space.

Dr. Caldicott: The administration used 9/11 to say, "Well we probably need some more nuclear weapons." This plan was actually initiated during the Clinton era, and they are currently designing, developing and about to test new nuclear weapons, up to 80 a year. Therefore, North Korea looks at America and says, "Well, if you're doing it, we will too." So it gives a very unfortunate message to the rest of the world. And unfortunately, America leads the world in the development of nuclear weapons; it always has, and is the model for the whole world.

People in glass houses can't throw stones. As Jesus said, "instead of the mote in the other person's eye, look instead at the mote in your own eye." And so America can't with impunity tell other countries they can't have nuclear weapons when it's building more, and has an arsenal of over 10,000 itself.

I see the solution to this terribly detrimental problem being that Russia and America are now friends, they're fighting the terrorist issue together -- and that if Russia and America decide to, they could within five years eradicate and abolish their nuclear arsenals. Of the 30,000

bombs in the world, Russia and America own 95 percent of them. So, if they would move toward abolition rapidly, then France, China and England have said they will too. And Israel, which has over probably 300 to 400 hydrogen bombs -- and India and Pakistan would be forced to do the same. And then we could enter an era of relative nuclear sanity in the world and I can think of no other issue more serious and pertinent now for us to address than this issue which hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles twisting in the wind.

Between The Lines: Dr. Caldicott, your group which you founded back in 2002, the Nuclear Policy Research Institute, is sponsoring a conference in Washington, D.C. this May. The focus of that conference will be the weaponization of space. Tell us your concerns overall about the Bush administration and where they're headed with a revival of the Reagan era Star Wars program and weaponizing space.

Dr. Caldicott: OK, the conference I've organized is called, "Full Spectrum Dominance," which is the term that the U.S. Space Command uses to put weapons in space, and to fight war in space and to fight war from space down to earth -- and literally vaporize "cities" and effect very many killed. They are intent on anti-satellite weapons and they're building them right now -- and the two companies that are most involved in this are Lockheed Martin and Raytheon.

Missile Defense is supposedly contrived to knock out Russia's missiles when they launch them. However, Russia can launch 2,500 hydrogen bombs all at once, and all tests that have been conducted thus far for Missile Defense in America where a hit to kill vehicles-- is hitting a dummy warhead have all failed and have all been fraudulent. It will never work according to all of the physicists and scientists who are involved, and it's going to suck up to \$1 trillion in money from the American taxpayers. That's a different system than putting actual weapons in space and launching war from space down to earth.

America plans to actually dominate space, and space is a global commons according to the United Nations law. It belongs to all of us, not just 5 percent of the earth's population. So, this is an absolute violation of international law. It could in fact trigger a nuclear war, as could the National Missile Defense plans, because Russia and China have both said, "If you build a missile defense system against our missiles -- which are targeted on you, we'll just build thousands more hydrogen bombs, so we can supersaturate your system."

Incidentally, China only has 18 weapons that can hit America. So, at this point in time she's really not involved in the nuclear arms race, although the Pentagon is being very provocative and pushing her in that direction because it's all good for business, you see.

Between The Lines: Where does citizen activism come in to this very bleak world where international law seems to be pushed aside by the Bush administration in setting an example for the rest of the world? Treaty after treaty, whether it's global warming or nuclear non-proliferation or biological or chemical weapons treaties, seem to, again, be ignored or decimated by the world's remaining superpower, the United States. Where do you have hope that things can change Dr. Caldicott?

Dr. Caldicott: The earth is in the intensive care unit. We have an acute clinical emergency on our hands, like we did in the early 80's when Reagan got into office. And there's an aphorism that says, "In a dark time, the eye begins to see," and this is a very, very dark time. I believe in the wisdom and intelligence of the American people. I believe they will do the right thing.

And we just have to now get off our chairs and decide that we will save the earth -- and in five years move toward bilateral nuclear disarmament with Russia. I know it can be done. I know, I've spoken to millions of Americans, I know how they think and feel. They desperately want to do the right thing.

Dr. Helen Caldicott is author of "The New Nuclear Danger, George W. Bush's Military Industrial Complex," published by the New Press. Contact Dr. Caldicott's Nuclear Policy Research Institute at (202) 822-9800 or visit their website at <http://www.nuclearpolicy.org>

Scott Harris is executive producer of Between The Lines, which can be heard on more than 35 radio stations and in RealAudio and MP3 on our website at <http://www.btlonline.org>. This interview excerpt was featured on the award-winning, syndicated weekly radio newsmagazine, Between The Lines for the week ending April 15, 2005. This Between The Lines Q&A was compiled by Scott Harris and Anna Manzo. tNuclear Proliferation