

What you should know about Star Wars

A topical study guide

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NOTES FOR TUTORS

This is intended as a 2 hour class for Party organisations. It is proposed that:

- There should be no introductory talk by the tutor.
- Participants should be asked to do the reading, bearing in mind the discussion topics (20 minutes)
- Participants then break into small groups, each group to be given one or two of the topics to discuss (30 minutes)
- The small groups then bring their conclusions back to the whole class for collective discussion (1 hour)
- The tutor should take a few minutes at the end of the class to sum up, including dealing with any action the Party organisation can take.

The purpose of this class, to be reached through the reading and subsequent discussion, is to:

- Provide an understanding of the functioning and purposes of Star Wars;
- Ensure an understand the role of Star Wars in globalisation;
- Develop an understanding of the relationship between the campaign against Star Wars and the Party's work to develop the political alternative and achieve a "new type of government" in Australia.

Tutors should keep the following points in mind:

The opening sentence of the *Political Resolution* says: "*The world-wide struggle between the people and the transnational corporations is intensifying.*"

While Karl Marx said:

"The philosophers have interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

We are witnessing the transfer of global power on an historic scale to an aggressive imperialist state equipped and willing to overthrow all legal barriers to complete its world domination. Its aim is to consolidate US global hegemony through neutralisation and absorption of former socialist states; encirclement of China; expansion of US economic, political and military control to global dimensions; total control of world oil resources to reinforce its global economic and political hegemony.

At the same time, there is a growth in actions of many kinds, stemming from an unjust and unsustainable global system by the anti-globalisation movement.

Although not yet as strong as the TNCs, the anti-globalisation movement is **what is new, what is coming into being, what will be the fundamental determinant of new century.**

“Marxists have always maintained that capitalism needs war The competition for resources, markets and labour is periodically solved, for the capitalist class, by resorting to war.”

From the CPA 9th Congress Political Resolution:

(Sections 8 & 9, pages 23-25)

“The Communist Party must, as a matter of priority, work to draw together all left and progressive parties and community organisations or elements in these organisations into a popular anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly democratic front transcending party and organisational boundaries. The aim of such a front is to build the widest possible unity of the people’s organisations...”

“The alleviation of even some of worst features of the present economic and social system with its drive for maximum profits, requires the establishment of a new type of government such as has not been seen in Australia before.

“Such a government, closely linked with the people’s mass movements and struggles, could implement many of the policy proposals which have been put forward by the left and progressive political parties, by trade unions, environmental, peace, educational and community organisations, health and democratic rights bodies and so on.

“To be effective, we believe that such a new type government would have to implement policies to substantially curb the power of the big corporations and increase the democratic rights of the people, especially the working class and the trade union movement.”

DISCUSSION TOPICS

CPA EDUCATION CLASS ON STAR WARS

1. What is Star Wars? What does the US have in mind? How do they justify it?
2. Do people believe the US justification . What is your experience?
3. What are our arguments against Star Wars?
4. The opening sentence of the *Political Resolution* says: “The world-wide struggle between the people and the transnational corporations is intensifying.” What is the place of Star Wars and the campaign against it in this struggle?
5. In what ways are democratic rights being attacked in Australia? Why is this taking place? What has this got to do with Star Wars?
6. What is the political alternative and how are we building it?
7. Which social forces in Australia may support the campaign against Star Wars and why? How should we approach them?
8. What arguments do the Liberal/National Coalition and the ALP use to justify Star Wars and Australia’s role in it?

READING

Reading should begin with:

CPA *Political Resolution* Sections 1-3, pages 2-10

(as this is a fairly long extract, tutors may prefer to photocopy parts of it for the class)

Then give the class participants some reading from the articles below (it will not be necessary for them to read everything as there is a fair degree of overlap).

If participants are to get the reading material in advance, tutors could probably give them all three articles as well as recommending they read all three sections from the *Political Resolution*.



STAR WARS — THE ARMED WING OF GLOBALISATION

by Dr Hannah Middleton

September 11 gave a huge boost to the United States plans to move full-speed ahead on National Missile Defence (NMD) or ‘Star Wars’. Despite the fact that space weapons would be no defence against low-tech terrorist “suitcase” bombs or the kind of attack that destroyed the twin towers, Star Wars supporters are riding high and the aerospace industry expects super profits from defence contracts.

Australia is a front line state for US NMD plans, through the base at Pine Gap and the Australian Government is almost alone in giving strong public support to Star Wars.

The National Missile Defence program involves developing a system to intercept a limited number of ballistic missiles targeted on the US. However, NMD is not a benign, defensive umbrella. It is a controversial space battle system to control space for the US alone.

Bruce Gagnon, co-ordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power In Space, says the program has “never been about defence. It’s always been about controlling space, dominating space, denying other countries access to space and the US being the master of space. And that isn’t a defensive posture.”

He also points out that: “Spending hundreds of billions of dollars on Star Wars will take money away from education, programs for women and children, and health care. There is a direct link between promoting weapons for space and the destabilisation of our communities. People must connect these struggles.”

Since research began in 1976, attempts to destroy mock warheads have failed more than 70 per cent of the time. During the Gulf War, not one Patriot anti-ballistic missile managed to hit a Scud.

In an extraordinary statement, US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said “a system of defence need not be perfect”. Allowing for any margin of error in the functioning of a multi-billion dollar system designed to stop a small number of missiles makes it pointless. It is rather like applying the “need not be perfect” standard to a condom.

In order to deploy NMD, the US has withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. As a result, other arms control and nuclear disarmament treaties may collapse. The fragile foundation for progress in nuclear disarmament will come crashing down. We are on the brink of a new, more dangerous nuclear arms race.

MASTER OF SPACE

The US is planning to militarise, commercially exploit and to control space, taking corporate globalisation to a new and more terrifying level.

The press spin is that the US military push into space is about “missile defense”. However, the US military explicitly says it wants to “control” space to protect its economic interests and establish superiority over the world.

“With regard to space dominance, we have it, we like it, and we’re going to keep it,” said Keith Hall, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space.

Vision for 2020, a 1996 report of the US Space Command, proclaims that its mission is “dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment.”

A century ago, “Nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests” by ruling the seas, the report says. Now it is time to rule space.

The Space Command’s 1998 *Long Range Plan* underlines the globalisation aspect of US space war plans, saying, “Widespread communications will highlight disparities in resources and quality of life — contributing to unrest in developing countries.... The gap between ‘have’ and ‘have-not’ nations will widen, creating regional unrest”. By controlling space and the Earth below, the US intends to keep those “have-nots” in line.

NUCLEAR THREAT

The January 2001 report of the Space Commission argues for “the option to deploy weapons in space” and points out that unlike “weapons from aircraft, land forces or ships, space missions initiated from earth or space could be carried out with little transit, information or weather delay.”

The spectre of nuclearisation of the heavens is with us with plans for nuclear tipped missiles aimed at incoming weapons, the possibility of nuclear weapons deployed in space, and the use of nuclear power.

MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The development and production process for NMD involves many corporations. The big four, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and TRW, will get very rich from it.

These corporations donate huge sums to the Republican Party and aggressively lobby Capitol Hill on defence spending, with no regard for the safety and well-being of the world. This is corporate greed on a global scale.

They have close ties to the Bush administration. Star Wars lobby members dominate the expert commissions that have strongly influenced Congress decisions on missile defense spending. From this lobby Congress has received an inflated “threat assessment” on other nations’ missile capabilities and a blueprint for space warfare. This policy cannot protect the United States from missile attack and is likely to create the imaginary threat it is supposed to defeat.

Before becoming US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld chaired the Commission to Assess US National Security Space Management and Organization. Just days before Rumsfeld became Pentagon chief, this Space Commission issued a report championing Star Wars.

Rumsfeld is listed as an “informal adviser and faithful supporter” of the Center for Security Policy, the heart of the Star Wars lobby. In 1998 the Center for Security Policy awarded Rumsfeld its “Keeper of the Flame Award” in recognition of his contribution to their mutual cause. Past recipients of the award include Ronald Reagan, and Newt Gingrich.

Bush’s Vice President Cheney is a former member of the board of TRW. His wife Lynn was a longtime member of the Lockheed Martin board.

Bush’s appointee as deputy director of the National Security Council is Stephen J. Hadley, previously a partner in Shea & Gardner, the Washington law firm of Lockheed Martin.

Other Bush administration officials drawn from the aerospace industry include Albert Smith, a Lockheed Martin vice president, appointed undersecretary of the Air Force; Gordon England, vice president of General Dynamics, named Navy secretary; and James G. Roche, retired president of a Northrop-Grumman division, appointed as Air Force secretary.

UNITED NATIONS

In November 2000 the United Nations General Assembly voted to reaffirm the fundamental international law on space, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.

Some 163 nations supported the resolution which reiterates that the use of space “shall be for peaceful purpose . . . carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries.” It states that the “prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security.”

The United States, Israel and Micronesia abstained.

Canada and China have been leaders at the United Nations in challenging the US space military plans and seeking to strengthen the Outer Space Treaty by banning all weapons in space (the treaty currently prohibits nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction).

Marc Vidricaire, counselor with the Canadian delegation to the United Nations, said “it is clear that technology can be developed to place weapons in outer space, and no state can expect to maintain a monopoly on such knowledge - or such capabilities - for all time. If one state actively pursues the weaponisation of space, we can be sure others will follow.”

AUSTRALIAN INVOLVEMENT

Pine Gap is one of the largest and most important US satellite ground control stations in the world.

Established in 1968 as a CIA intelligence base and situated in Central Australia, 19 kms south-west of Alice Springs, Pine Gap has been used to collect data on ballistic missile launches for over 30 years.

Pine Gap is in the Star Wars front line. It will be a Ground Based Relay Station for a new space based missile tracking system, called SBIRS (Space-Based Infra-Red System), planned to be operational by 2004.

Pine Gap will receive from satellites and forward to the US early warning of missile launches. It will also provide information on the launch site, missile type, velocity, and what kind of warhead the missile may carry. This information is essential if the missiles are to be destroyed before they reach their targets.

The SBIRS satellites monitored by Pine Gap cover the most important area of US strategic interest – China. Pine Gap is also an essential element in providing early warning and for tracking any missile launches from Iran or Iraq.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer claims that Pine Gap is not involved in NMD. However, he has also said that “If the US were to have the capacity to shoot down or destroy a hostile missile, they would have to know that the missile had been launched, and where it was. Pine Gap can transmit that sort of information to the US. The government has said we would not cut off the transmission of that information to the US.”

American Government representatives are franker. In an interview with Channel 9 in July 2000, then US Secretary of Defence William Cohen said Pine Gap had been “very much” involved in NMD.

The Australian Government is backing NMD despite warnings that the system is not in Australia’s interests. Classified documents from the Office of National Assessments (ONA – Australia’s peak intelligence assessment body) say “Pine Gap will be a key component of the early warning system for any US missile defence system.”

“Any weakening of international arms control regimes would have a negative impact on Australia’s security,” the ONA report says.

Star Wars development involves massive secrecy and denial of national sovereignty.

The Australian parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has complained that MPs are kept in the dark about Pine Gap. Although members of the US Congress have visited Pine Gap and received classified briefings about its functions, the Treaties Committee is “entrusted with less information than can be found in a public library”.

ACTION NEEDED

There is worldwide opposition to US space wars plans. The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power In Space is co-ordinating actions in countries around the world in early October.

As part of this, there will be a demonstration at Pine Gap from October 5 to 7, 2002 and solidarity actions in centres around Australia.

We need to act now. There is only a narrow window to stop NMD going forward and preventing what inevitably would follow: other nations will meet the US in kind and there will be an arms race and ultimately war in space.



Star Wars: Protecting Globalisation From Above

By Karl Grossman
January 18, 2002

The United States is moving full-speed ahead on a missile defense program with events of September 11th giving a big boost to the scheme. Missile defense, or “Star Wars,” advocates maintain the terrorist attack demonstrated the kind of future assault — the next time around with missiles — that the U.S. must seek to offset. They also point to the need to protect “US interests and investments” around the globe.

Opponents argue the most likely threat to the U.S. continues to be relatively low-tech terrorist attacks, not sophisticated missiles. Star Wars supporters are now riding high. Meanwhile the troubled aerospace industry is hoping to be shored up by big-ticket defense contracts.

Some \$95 billion has been spent on missile defense since Ronald Reagan first advanced the program in 1983, according to the Center for Defense Information (CDI) in Washington. Despite the billions the program has never produced a successful missile system. Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and TRW have been the “Big Four” among aerospace corporations receiving program monies. Many billions more will be spent in coming years. All four companies aggressively lobby Capitol Hill on defense spending.

These companies have close ties to the Bush administration, as they did to the Democratic administration that proceeded it. The military machine is alive and well more than a decade after the end of the cold war. This time globalization is the rationale for arms build up — and some of the same corporations that promoted and profited from the cold war are behind it.

The Star Wars Debate Revived

President George W. Bush cleared a legal path for a renewed missile defense program in December when he advised Russia that the U.S. is withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. September 11th was part of his message as he warned that the threat to both countries came from terrorists and “rogue states”.

“We know that the terrorists, and some of those who support them, seek the ability to deliver death and destruction to our doorstep via missile. And we must have the freedom and the flexibility to develop effective defenses against those attacks,” Bush said.

On the other side of the debate, Bruce Gagnon, coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power In Space, held that “September 11th ultimately is irrelevant” because missile defense is a Trojan horse for the “real objectives” of the U.S. space military program. “It’s never been about defense. It’s always been about controlling space, dominating space, denying other countries access to space and the U.S. being the master of space,” said Gagnon. “And that isn’t a defensive posture.”

But others reached a different conclusion. By September 17th, O’Dwyer’s PR Daily was reporting that President George Bush’s full \$8.3 billion request for missile defense in 2002 “has now gotten new life in the aftermath of the terror attacks.”

In the days following the attacks Senate Democrats backed away from a pre-September 11th pledge to cut the amount by \$1.3 million and agreed to remove a provision requiring the administration to seek Congressional approval to spend money on activities that would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Media commentators widely interpreted the move as an effort to avoid a partisan debate in the middle of a national crisis. And the White House made it clear that opposition to its legislative agenda, on a variety of fronts, would be branded unpatriotic.

Militarizing the Heavens to Enforce Globalization

While the push for a Star Wars program was buoyed by the September 11th attacks, plans for the administration's space military program were well underway when Bush took office.

Prior to being appointed U.S. defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld chaired the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization — known as the “Space Commission.” Just days before Rumsfeld was named Pentagon chief, the Space Commission issued a report championing Star Wars.

Before there was a director of “homeland defense,” this report spoke about “homeland defense” — against missiles — urging an array of military hardware, including space-based weapons systems, to “destroy a missile shortly after launch, before either warhead or countermeasures are released.”

The 13-member Space Commission advocated elevating the U.S. Space Command, established by the Pentagon in 1985 to “coordinate” U.S. space military operations, to a “Space Corps” like the Marine Corps, to then possibly to become a “Space Department” at the same level as the Departments of Army, Navy and Air Force. General Richard B. Myers, current chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, headed up Space Command before being tapped by the Bush Administration for his current post a year ago.

The January 2001 Space Commission report was preceded by its Long Range Plan, which framed the space missile program in terms of furthering corporate-led globalization and maintaining US economic and political dominance. “The United States will remain a global power and exert global leadership,” stated the 1998 plan.

“Widespread communications will highlight disparities in resources and quality of life — contributing to unrest in developing countries. The global economy will continue to become more interdependent. Economic alliances, as well as the growth and influence of multinational

corporations, will blur security agreements. The gap between ‘have’ and ‘have-not’ nations will widen, creating regional unrest” the Long Range Plan continued. This worldwide gap between rich and poor, the Space Commission reasoned, would lead to conflicts threatening US dominance.

The Long Range Plan opens by declaring that it has “U.S. Space Command’s #1 priority investing nearly 20 man-years to make it a reality. The development and production process, by design, involved hundreds of people including about 75 corporations.” And it subsequently lists these 75 corporations-beginning with Aerojet, Aerospace Corp., BD Systems and Boeing, to Lockheed Martin, Rand Corp., Raytheon, Spaceport Systems International, Sparta Corp., Stella Solutions, TRW Space and Vista Technologies.

Bush Administration Ties to the Aerospace Industry

The Bush administration is intimately linked with the corporate interests behind the missile defense program. Vice President Cheney is a former member of the board of TRW. His wife, Lynn Cheney, was a longtime member of the Lockheed Martin board stepping down only as her husband prepared to take office.

“I wrote the Republican Party’s foreign policy platform,” Bruce Jackson, vice president of corporate strategy and development of Lockheed Martin, flatly told this reporter in an interview last year, referring to his role as chair of the Foreign Policy Platform Committee at the Republican National Convention where he was a delegate.

Bush’s appointee as deputy director of the National Security Council — whom he has also assigned to travel the world to promote the U.S. missile defense program — is Stephen J. Hadley, previously a partner in Shea & Gardner, the Washington law firm of Lockheed Martin. “Space is going to be important. It has a great future in the military,” Hadley, speaking as “an advisor” to Bush, told the Air Force Association in a speech during the Bush campaign.

Other Bush administration officials drawn from the aerospace industry include Albert Smith, a Lockheed Martin vice president, appointed undersecretary of the Air Force; Gordon England, vice president of General Dynamics, named Navy secretary; and James G. Roche, retired president of a Northrop-Grumman division, appointed as Air Force secretary.

Campaign Contributions

Then there are political contributions. William D. Hartung and Michelle Ciarrocca of the Arms Trade Resource Center have tracked these contributions focusing on what they term the “Big Four” of missile defense — Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and TRW. These four corporations, which have been receiving 60 percent of government missile defense contracts, have been “making a major political investment,” they say.

Their report, *Tangled Web: The Marketing of Missile Defense*, lists millions of dollars in “soft money donations” and “PAC contributions” to members of Congress in the last several years. The preference has been for money to Republicans, they say. But “the bottom line” is that “both major parties have been bought off.” As a result, “under the leadership of Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and the Democratic Leadership Council, the Democratic Party [was] almost as pro-military as the Republicans throwing billions at missile defense. The answer is to get special interest money out of politics by supporting full public financing of presidential and congressional races.”

Other Star Wars critics see the space missile program as a government bail out for the ailing aerospace industry. Missile defense is especially important to Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon “as a medium-to-long term source of revenue and profits to help them recover from recent management and technical problems that have slashed their stock prices in half and reduced their profit margins,” according to the Arms Trade Resource Center.

“Our government is being bribed by these corporations pushing for Star Wars,” charges Alice Slater, president of the New York-based Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE). “They have

absolutely no regard for the safety and well-being of the world. This is almost a cliché about corporate greed-at a grand scale.”

On the other side, aerospace corporations say that they are working to protect the U.S. — more necessary now than ever after September 11th, they stress.

“This notion that space is going to remain a peaceful area in the future is absolutely putting our heads in the sand. It is just a fact of life,” emphasized retired U.S. Space Command commander-in-chief, General Howell Estes, to the Colorado Springs Independent in December. “The fact of the matter is man is a warlike being. That’s the nature of the beast, and we just can’t be naive about it.”

Gagnon of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power In Space sees the Bush Administration’s massive military build up in direct competition with funding for social programs. “Spending hundreds of billions of dollars on Star Wars will take money away from education, programs for women and children, and health care,” said Gagnon. “There is a direct link between promoting weapons for space and the destabilization of our communities. People must connect these struggles.”



CPA RESOLUTION:

STOP US

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE PLANS

This 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia condemns the United States new Star Wars plans, the National Missile Defence (NMD). NMD is a space battle system which aims to allow the US to attack other countries without fear of retaliation.

One of the main aims of the Bush administration's drive to develop NMD is US imperialism's plans to defeat the People's Republic of China, by military force if necessary.

NMD is a step in the global domination plans of the US new world order. NMD is the armed wing of globalisation.

Imperialism has never hesitated to use force to maintain control and eliminate threats to its interests. US global strategy is leading to greater instability, insecurity and uncertainty and a greater likelihood of conflicts and wars. NMD is part of this process and will undermine global and regional peace, security and stability.

NMD will give billions to the arms industry. At the same time it will destroy the existing international arms control and disarmament regime and trigger a wave of destabilising events around the world. We are on the brink of a new, more dangerous nuclear arms race.

The US military base at Pine Gap has functioned as a front-line base for Star Wars for many years. Using the Pine Gap for NMD will make Australia a nuclear target. It will also make Australia complicit in a program that will diminish global security and stability.

Congress condemns the Federal Government for ignoring the 92 per cent of Australians, who, in a poll last year, said the Government should take a leading role in achieving the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Congress calls on all Party members to take an active part in the importance of the struggle to stop the deployment of NMD.



Other booklets to read

- Was the war against Afghanistan planned
before September 11? \$3
- The US war on terrorism -- what is the real agenda?
A talk by Dr Hannah Middleton at "Politics in the Pub" . \$2
- Good Planets are Hard to Find
Three contributions to the debate on the environment. . \$5
- A brief history of Australian Unionism and the role of the
Communist Party by Warren Smith \$3
- The three sources and three component parts of Marxism
by Lenin \$5
- Political Resolution of the 9th Congress of the Communist
Party of Australia (April, 2001) \$3

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