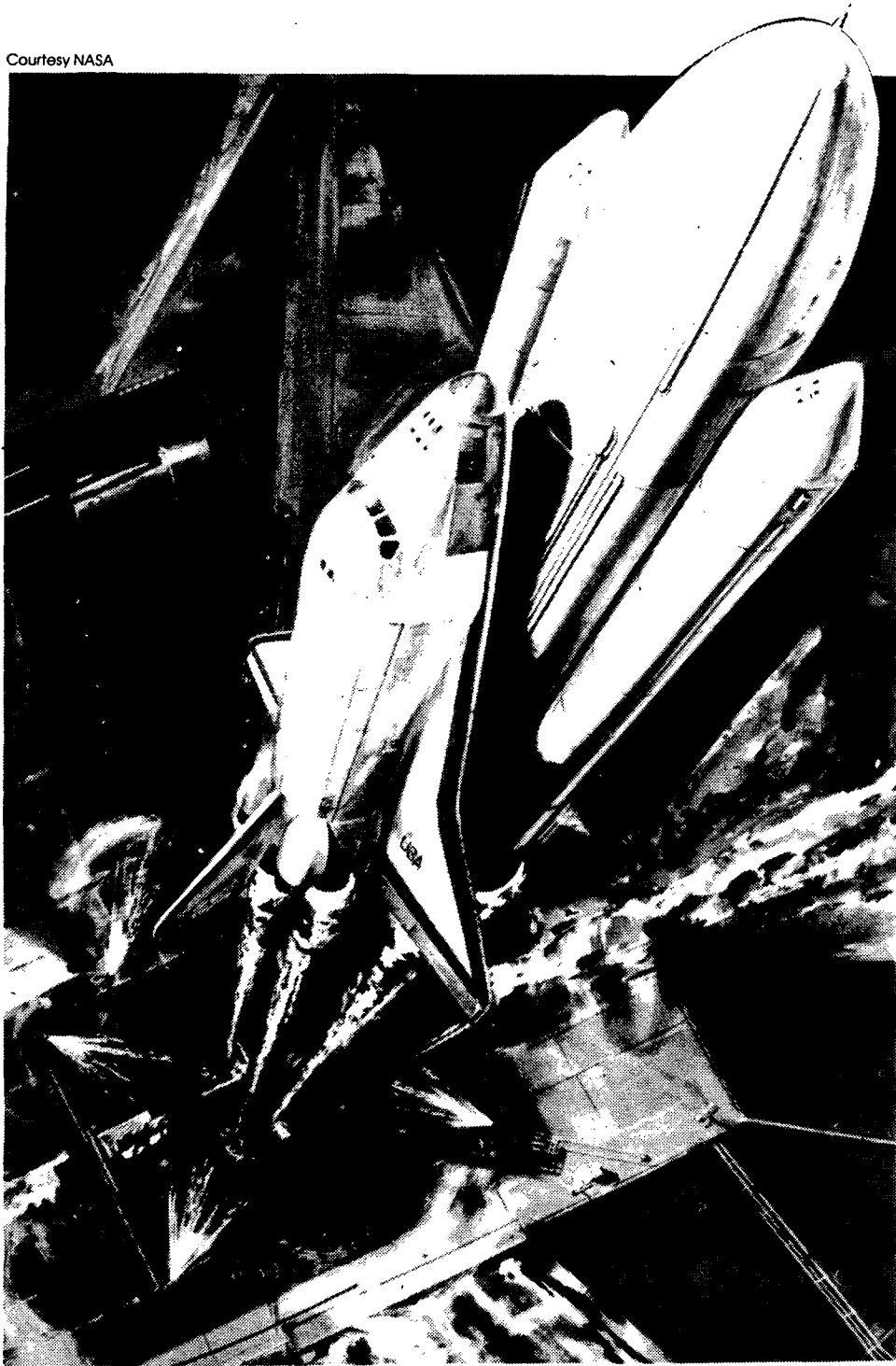


Courtesy NASA



SPACE WARS

& Other Defense Department Fantasies

Wanna new rocket?
Or perhaps I could
interest you in a
neutron bomb...

MILITARY NEEDS ENCROACHING ON NASA AND SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM

By John Markoff
Pacific News Service

Space war—now only a movie fantasy—could add a frightening new dimension to global conflict as early as the mid-1980s.

The Pentagon has quietly begun using the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) new Space Shuttle program as a stepping stone to build a capability to fight a war in space. More than 100 of the first 560 Shuttle flights will carry American military satellites and weapons experiments into orbit.

Publicly, most American officials are on the record against expanding the arms race into space. In a press conference this month, for instance, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown said, "I would hope that we could keep space from becoming an area of active conflict."

But some military planners are excited about possible star wars. "Space is a dandy arena, actually," one DoD scientist was quoted as saying in a recent issue of *Aeronautics and Astronautics*. "You've got to attract strategic war off the planet. The notion of abhorring war in space is just plain wrong."

The Pentagon is concerned that the U.S. is falling behind the Soviets in key portions of the "space race." One Air Force general summarized the military's view of the situation: "There has never been a transportation medium in the history of man that has not been exploited for economic and military advantage. Space is not going to be an exception."

Weekly flights in the '80s.

The Space Shuttle, now being tested in Southern California, will allow scientists, private industry and the military to send large payloads into orbit on a weekly basis during the 1980s. The Shuttle system will include a reusable orbiter that will be boosted into space by giant rockets and then glide back to earth, landing like an airplane. The first spaceflight for the Shuttle is now scheduled for 1979.

Pentagon involvement in the Shuttle program began shortly after the Nixon administration—in a cost-cutting move—cancelled the Air Force Manned Orbiting Laboratory in 1969.

The DoD then decided to rely exclusively on NASA's Space Shuttle for routine access to space. By 1984 all military space missions will be carried by the Space Shuttle.

The Pentagon's first 10 shuttle missions will include the following satellites and weapons:

- Air Force DSCS-3—communications satellites for military use.
- Defense Meteorological Satellites.
- Laser weapons developed from the Space Laser Experiment Definition (SLED) studies intended to counter Soviet ICBMs.
- Teal Ruby, an infra-red monitoring system to detect low-flying aircraft.
- High Altitude Large Optics (HALO) a huge camera designed to monitor Soviet sites.

Military planners are currently at work on more exotic and potentially more deadly research to be carried out by the Space Shuttle. Last month the Air Force contracted with the Vought Corporation to build a test version of a satellite killer.

American intelligence agencies have re-

ported that the Soviets are also studying the use of lasers and space-mines, and some defense officials are worried that such Soviet satellite killers could be a threat to the Space Shuttle.

On the American side, NASA commissioned a study last year on the feasibility of placing a huge array of mirrors in orbit to reflect the energy of ground-based lasers and shoot down enemy missiles. The think-tank envisioned an advanced version of the Space Shuttle to put the mirrors into orbit and estimated the cost of such a system to be \$105 billion.

Orienting NASA to military.

NASA/DoD cooperation in the Space Shuttle program was called into question recently by the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities. The Council warns that Congress' ability to control the American space program will be complicated by the inclusion of the military in the Space Shuttle program.

"Because the DoD will be entirely dependent upon NASA's transportation system for space launches," a Council report states, "there is a danger that in the future NASA programs will be oriented toward military, rather than civilian and scientific purposes."

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) has claimed that NASA increased the payload of the Shuttle from 25,000 to 65,000 pounds to satisfy the Air Force and that Shuttle thrust was increased and other technical changes made in the program at the military's request.

In an interview last week, Gordon Adams, a research associate at the Council, said that NASA has been placed in a position where it must indirectly subsidize many DoD costs. In 1976 the Air Force refused to participate in funding the fourth and fifth Shuttle orbiters. "In effect NASA is carrying the charge for what they had originally anticipated being able to share with the Air Force budget," Adams stated.

But proponents of NASA's new military role argue that its cooperation with the DoD space program is both cost-effective and vital to national security.

Major General Richard D. Henry, vice commander of the Air Force research and development agency for space systems, says, "The Shuttle represents the next threshold for using space for vital military and scientific missions. If military space technology can provide reliability and global information, then our nation can cope with those forces that are upsetting the global equilibrium."

John Markoff is a freelance writer specializing in military affairs.

WHAT'S BEHIND CARTER'S PUSH FOR THE M-X MISSILE AND NEUTRON BOMB?

By Alan Wolfe

Two recent decisions by the Carter administration presage a new defense "posture" for the U.S. Within a ten-day period in early October, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown announced that development would continue on the M-X missile program, and he told NATO ministers to overcome their scruples against the neutron bomb and support its deployment.

Between them these two decisions will have a long range impact on defense policy far more decisive than the decision to stop production of the B-1 bomber. Both decisions seriously impair Carter's image as a man who understands the folly of the nuclear arms race.

The M-X missile is a key aspect of the defense TRIAD—the term used to describe a three-pronged strategy of bombers, sea-launched missiles, and land-based missiles.

At the moment, the U.S. has 1,054 intercontinental ballistic missiles. Each missile contains three warheads. If successfully launched, each ICBM could destroy sig-

nificant amounts of the Soviet Union.

But, some experts say, this is not enough. ICBMs are currently stored in immovable "silos." If the Russians broke through our defenses to attack them, all our Minuteman ICBMs would be vulnerable. Therefore we have to make our missiles moveable and, while we're at it, increase their number of warheads to 14. The result is the M-X.

M-X missiles will be stored in trenches seven to 12 miles long. Kept under five feet of concrete, they'll move back and forth at random speeds to prevent their being tracked. More accurate than existing ICBMs, they are also more powerful. They can drop a nuclear bomb within a quarter of a mile of a Soviet target.

They are also expensive. Brown has asked for an 80 percent increase in funds for the project: \$745 million in fiscal year 1979, compared to the current figure of \$134 million. If 200 to 300 M-X missiles are set into their tunnels—as most defense planners advocate—the total cost would be from \$30 to \$40 billion.

Serious about neutron bomb.

Secretary Brown's Oct. 12 speech to the NATO defense ministers in Bari, Italy, was also significant. While the Europeans are convinced that the neutron bomb has military value, they are skeptical of whether it can be politically justified.

The Nuclear Planning Group meeting was called in Bari to discuss the question of NATO preparedness against Eastern Europe. Despite Brown's plea that the Europeans proceed with the weapon, the defense ministers failed to agree to its use in Europe.

Undismayed, Brown claimed after the meeting that the U.S. did not require unanimity from Europeans before deploying the neutron bomb on the continent.

The Bari meeting is the first indication we have of how serious the Carter administration is about the neutron bomb. It would not be unlike Carter to advocate deployment in order to please hard-liners but proceed very slowly in order to please anti-nuclear forces. Brown's actions make this scenario unlikely. Apparently Carter takes very seriously the appeal of a weapon that can destroy people and preserve property.

There are two possible interpretations of the significance of these recent actions. The Carter administration may be talking about weapons production because it really wants them, or it may be developing "bargaining chips" to be used in the SALT talks with the Soviet Union. Either possibility is disturbing, if for different reasons.

Does Carter want weapons?

It is quite possible that Carter wants new weapons like the M-X and the neutron bomb for their own sake. His presidential campaign, of course, led people to think otherwise. Not only did Carter call during the campaign for cuts in the defense budget, he also repeatedly argued that limited nuclear war was an impossible concept. Any use of nuclear weapons, he said, would escalate to a full-scale, nuclear confrontation.

Yet both the M-X and the neutron bomb are based on the hypothesis that limited nuclear war is theoretically possible. Something must have changed Carter's mind, unless he was not telling the truth from the beginning.

The most obvious explanation for the shift in Carter's thinking on defense policy is that he has been strongly influenced by the cold war liberals of the Democratic party.

When he took office, Carter deliberately snubbed men like Paul Nitze and Eugene Rostow—firm believers in the Soviet menace and in the need to build weapons to counter it. Shocked at being frozen out of office, men like Nitze formed the Committee on the Present Danger to rail against communism and in favor of weapons.

Apparently they are having quite an impact. Columnists Evans and Novack have reported that Carter is now willing to listen to them. A procedure has been established whereby the Committee on the Present Danger will be able to meet on a regular basis with Defense Secretary Brown and National Security Advisor Brzezinski.

Thus Carter may have become a weapons advocate because of domestic pres-

ures within his own party.

He first thought that political moderation led to the left, since the Nitzes of the world had discredited cold war liberalism in Vietnam. In this phase of his political development, Carter appointed to key positions men who did not believe in extensive rearmament.

But the mood has shifted. The Committee on the Present Danger is on the offensive. Carter is moving with them. His decision to go ahead with expensive weapons does not make the world a more secure place, but it does nullify a source of potential disruption from the right-wing of his party.

Bargaining chips with Soviets.

The alternative explanation for the M-X and neutron bomb is that the Carter administration wants to enhance its position *vis a vis* the Soviet Union in the SALT talks.

For the very reasons that the military wants the M-X, the Soviets would see it as a violation of SALT. Knowing this, Carter could be holding it over their heads to win concessions on other points.

If this is true, it is a dangerous game, the most dangerous in town. Soviet missiles are also stored in silos. They would have no choice, if the gamble fails, to build their own version of the M-X. The result would be the most serious escalation in nuclear confrontation since the Cuban missile crisis.

One thing comes through. Whichever Carter's motivation in proceeding with these weapons, he is gambling with nuclear war in order to win a political point. The difference is whether the point is to be won at the expense of the right wing of the Democratic party or the Soviet Union.

The disturbing thought is that for all his talk of a new morality, Carter is ignoring the implications of what it means to proceed with the arms race in order to maintain his position.

Nuclear weapons defy politics: they kill everybody. It is worse than irresponsible to play games with them. Brezhnev understands this. Even Kissinger understood the point, although he backed away from it repeatedly. Carter seems not to have learned it yet.

We can only hope he does before we are all asked to pay the price of his folly.

Alan Wolfe writes regularly for IN THESE TIMES.

DESPITE CARTER THE U.S. REMAINS THE NUMBER ONE ARMS SUPPLIER TO THE WORLD

By Michael Klare
Pacific News Service

Behind President Carter's gloomy Oct. 4 assessment to the UN of efforts to limit the world's arsenal of arms lies the failure of his administration to curtail American arms sales abroad.

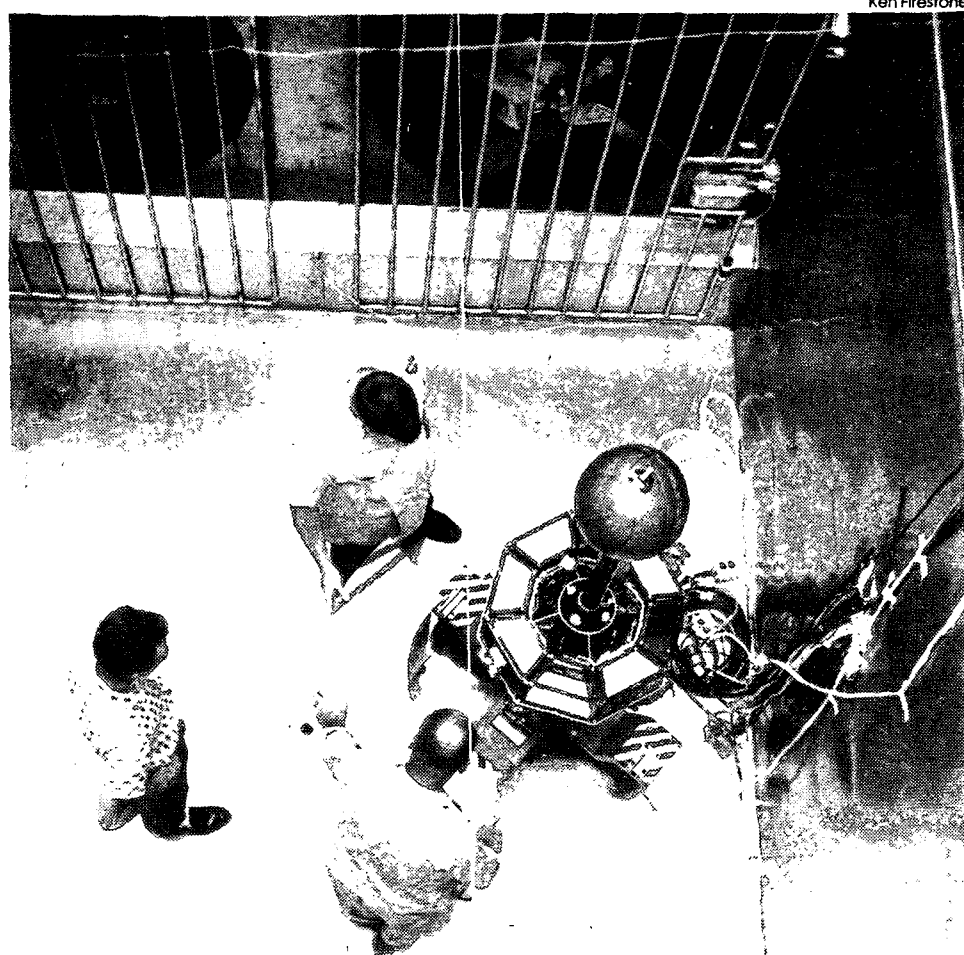
"I am particularly concerned," candidate Carter declared last year in the heat of his presidential campaign, "by our nation's role as the world's leading arms salesman." Denouncing the policies of the Nixon administration, he added, "If I become president, I will work...to increase the emphasis on peace and reduce the commerce in weapons."

Nine months into the Carter administration, however, Pentagon figures put foreign military sales for fiscal 1977 at \$8.8 billion—well above the 1976 levels.

Leslie Gelb, director of the State department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs and the man assigned to implement the arms reduction policy, has found himself fettered by the legacy of commitments and policies—often contradictory to each other—from previous administrations.

Changing attitudes.

When Gelb first began his study of arms policy options last winter, Washington observers predicted that the administration would impose a permanent ceiling on



American exports at a level considerably lower than the 1977 figure of \$10 billion.

One authoritative report in April suggested Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance were planning a 25 percent cut in sales. But as the Washington summer heat wore on, insiders began to disclose a changing attitude.

"Initially, the guidance was all predicated on finding ways to scale back on arms sales overseas," one official participating in the talks said recently. "The thesis was that arms sales are all wrong, but now that has changed, and the guidance for preparing the options is fairly balanced. The people in the White House now realize there are valid reasons for selling arms."

That balance, analysts both inside and outside the administration agree, has resulted from a combination of political, military and economic concerns.

Militarily, Washington finds itself obliged to continue arms supplies to its regional allies—Iran, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Brazil, among others—which, under the Nixon Doctrine, took over the job of defending American interests in the troubled Third World.

Economically, arms sales are a major instrument for improving the American balance of payments position and for reducing the costs the U.S. must pay for its weapons. Such exports are also a major source of profit for American arms firms and the various subcontractors who depend on military orders.

Before 1970 most American arms sales went to Japan, Canada and Western Europe, but today the bulk of purchases is by Third World nations. These countries bought \$230 million in arms per year in the 1950s, but now buy an astonishing \$6 billion worth—a large chunk going to the poor, debt-ridden nations of Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Early signs.

These considerations, combined with direct lobbying by the munitions corporations, began to affect administration decision-making even before Gelb had completed his policy analysis, according to State department officials.

On April 26 Carter bowed to stiff Air Force pressure and approved the sale of five super-sophisticated AWACS radar surveillance planes to the Shah of Iran.

Two weeks later, during his first trip abroad as President, Carter assured America's European allies that the NATO powers would be exempted from any new restrictions on military sales and that Israel would be afforded "special treatment."

On May 19 Carter announced a "set of controls, applicable to all transfers except those to countries with which we have major defense treaties (NATO, Japan, Australia and New Zealand)," and adding that he would "remain faithful to our treaty obligations" and "honor our historic responsibilities...to Israel."

During the last three years, however, approximately 35 percent of American arms exports have gone to these "exempted" countries and Israel. Another 10 percent of the arms sales have gone to those countries with which the U.S. has "major defense treaties."

The President also exempted from the cutback "transfers which can clearly be classified as services" and "commercial sales which the U.S. government monitors through the issuance of export licenses." Exemption of Foreign Military Sales contracts and commercial sales would further limit the promised controls to only about 35 percent of all military exports.

Total exports could even rise.

Said one longtime observer of Pentagon contracting, "Because commercial sales are expected to rise in coming years, total military exports could well rise above the fiscal 1977 level even if Carter's proposals are vigorously enforced."

Guidelines in the May 19 policy statement also banned promotional activity by the Department of Defense. Yet scarcely a week later the Pentagon displayed its wares at the International Air Show in Paris. The show featured flight demonstrations by a full roster of American planes, and *Aviation Week's* report on the show said that "U.S. technological domination across almost the entire aerospace spectrum has never been stronger."

Carter has ordered some cuts in military aid to Argentina, Ethiopia and Uruguay as a penalty for alleged human rights abuses, but he has opposed cuts to other countries with equal or worse records on human rights—including South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines—on the ground that national security precludes any reductions of American aid.

These, and related events including recent proposals for weapons sales to Somalia, the Sudan and Chad, have called into question the significance of Carter's whole arms sales policy. The trade journal, *Aviation Week*, has even declared that "the impact on the U.S. aerospace industry will be small."

Michael Klare is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies/Transnational Institute of Washington, and author of *War Without End: American Planning for the Next Vietnams*.