

SUBMISSION ON DEVELOPING THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND AEROSPACE STRATEGY

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To The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment,
Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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The Pacific Institute of Resource Management, (PIRM), based in Wellington was founded in 1984 to promote principles of ecology, equity, peace and justice. We have published a journal, *Pacific Ecologist*, and made submissions to government on various issues. In 2013 we published *Pacific Ecologist issue 22: WHY IT'S VITAL TO RID THE WORLD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS & WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.* ⁱ WHY IT'S VITAL TO RID THE WORLD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS & HOW YOU CAN HELP <https://pacificecologist.org/archive/22/>

Aotearoa/New Zealand has a wonderful past history of speaking out and opposing the western allies, the US/British/French over their criminal testing of nuclear weapons on Pacific Islands, which caused the deaths of thousands of Pacific Islanders and left a legacy of destruction of vital resources in the Pacific. Studies on the effects of America's nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands have shown that 60 years after the tests the soil was still contaminated with cesium, so unable to produce health food. **See Dr Nancy Pollock's article:** *¹Nuclear contamination of food in the Pacific - Lifting the veil of secrecy* <https://pacificecologist.org/archive/22/pe22-food-contamination.pdf>

Aotearoa/NZ also withstood criticism when it forbade U.S. nuclear-powered or nuclear-weapons-carrying ships in our ports. It must also be recalled that America is the only country in the world to have deliberately unleashed nuclear weapons on civilians in cities in Japan in 1945, not just once, but twice, days apart, when Japan was already defeated by aerial bombardments. Aotearoa/New Zealand's government claims to be an independent sovereign country with an independent foreign policy, it is a rare country with a Disarmament Ministry and a nuclear-free policy.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) reports that Aerospace is a dynamic sector combining space and advanced aviation activities. Its Aerospace Strategy will focus on innovation and economic development drivers and set the overall broad direction for the sector, align activities across the government and the sector, and inform policy and regulatory development. MBIE aims to support the further growth of an internationally competitive New Zealand aerospace sector that is thriving, **innovative and safe.**

It's interesting to read the Consultation Document of the Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment on Developing the Aotearoa /New Zealand Aerospace Strategy. Yes, Māori and Pacific peoples' voyages using celestial navigation were incredible feats of innovation and exploration. However, their great endeavours were drawn from respect for life, the Earth and a respectful observation of the stars and skies. The document makes much of business opportunities it sees as helpful for our country to develop in the Aerospace industry, while: "ensuring we keep New Zealanders, our livelihoods, and our national interests safe."

We are told: “Globally, aerospace is big business, worth over \$600 billion and growing. Aerospace has value beyond economic development in enabling environmental and social outcomes that improve the wellbeing of all New Zealanders. Our aerospace sector currently has the foundations of a highly skilled workforce, well-connected research system, and safe and enabling policy and regulatory environment. However, a clear direction for the future of aerospace is needed for the sector to unlock its true potential.” What is the true potential MBIE, seeks for Aerospace? By 2030, we want to have a strong, resilient aerospace sector, coordinated in its activities, leverages shared strengths and seizes new opportunities. We want a sector that is acknowledged as world-leading in key areas of aerospace technology.

However, Aerospace endeavours and Aotearoa’s Rocket lab are linked to the US space programme. This is omitted in the document. Today, Space that vast, mysterious region beyond Earth’s atmosphere has tragically become a region from which America has been directing wars. The U.S. space programme has been meshed with the US military and weapons corporations since 2003, when 70% of the weaponry used in the illegal invasion of Iraq was directed using space-based technology. Attacks on many other countries since have used drones, unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and GPS-guided bombs, directed by space satellites and remotely controlled far from the battlefield, causing huge civilian casualties.

PIRM sees difficulties in maintaining Aotearoa’s international obligations in the Aerospace given its military implications through links with US Defense agencies. Rocket Lab has worked under contract for the Operationally Responsive Space Office,” studying “a low-cost space launcher to place nano-satellites into orbit. “ The ORSO site declares it “...focuses on providing quick-response tactical space-based capabilities to the warfighter utilising smaller satellites such as the Tactical satellite Program and smaller launch vehicles.” Organisations involved with ORSO activities include the US Army, the US NAVY, DARPA, the (US) National Reconnaissance Office, the (US) Missile Defense Agency and NASA.

SPACE VEHICLES LINK TO ONGOING WARS

These aerospace activities are of great concern because the proposed activity will principally benefit the perpetrators of the many egregious and ill-advised wars going on in the world today. These wars have caused the deaths of millions of people and great suffering for millions more, including refugees, forced to leave war-torn countries. The wars have increased violence and instability in the world, rather than improving the situation. For example, **the UK parliamentary Chilcott report** on the US/UK allies war on Iraq reported in 2016 that despite contrary claims in 2003 by then Prime Minister Tony Blair, [Saddam Hussein](#) was not an urgent threat to British interests, also that intelligence regarding [weapons of mass destruction](#) was presented with unwarranted certainty, that peaceful alternatives to war had not been exhausted, that the United Kingdom and United States had undermined the authority of the [United Nations Security Council](#) in waging the war, that the process of identifying the legal basis for war was “far from satisfactory,” and that the war in 2003 was unnecessary and has not achieved its aims. Over a million people died in Iraq during the war, according to respected British medical journal *The Lancet* and many more afterwards due to the destruction and deprivation caused by the western allies war on Iraq. Millions of people would be alive today if the war had not been waged.

Another scathing UK report in September 2016 about the UK’s war in Libya, from the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee heavily criticised former Prime Minister, David Cameron for turning a limited intervention intended to protect civilians into an “opportunistic policy of regime change” based on

inadequate intelligence. It said his failure to develop a coherent strategy to support Libya following the overthrow of Gaddafi had led to political and economic collapse, internecine warfare, a humanitarian crisis and the rise of Islamic State in north Africa.

KAITIAKITANGA & NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION

MBIE's document claims the Maori concepts of kaitiakitanga (guardianship,) and stewardship, are guiding frameworks "to ensure that space, and its benefits, remain accessible for all. We value innovation, science, and technology as means of advancing our knowledge about the universe, driving productivity in the economy and improving the well-being of New Zealanders." But how can Maori concepts such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship), stewardship, work with integrity in our association with the most aggressive, war-mongering countries in the world? The US, UK and their NATO allies, using information from space observations, have attacked and destroyed many countries over the past 20 years, killing millions of people, destroying countries, violating human rights to live and the sovereignty of countries, as well as international law and UN Charter.

Space is again being used for intelligence gathering by our allies in their efforts to maintain what they see as their supremacy against Russia and China, which are seen by America and NATO as competitors to outwit or destroy. It's disturbing that MBIE at this particular time when threats of nuclear war are looming large, ignore the imminent threats of nuclear conflagration at the present time. The conflict in Ukraine could have ended months ago, except the US and its allies prevented it, wanting to continue the war to undermine Russia, and the conflict is clearly undermining the entire world now, because of the huge sanctions placed on Russia that are affecting the whole world. There is no idea of guardianship, cooperation or sharing the Earth in the U.S. philosophy of "full-spectrum dominance." Maori principles of Kaitiakitanga/guardianship in its fullest meaning have no place in the US/ Pentagon's philosophy.

Bearing all this in mind, there is no reasonable case for New Zealand to support the ability of America, which is leading these wars, to wage war more effectively through more efficient rocketry. If Aotearoa/New Zealand supports this we are contributing to the psychosis of endless western wars that these days could end in nuclear annihilation, helped along by the aerospace industry. Aotearoa/New Zealand's great gift to the world lies in taking an independent stance, not agreeing with the Iraq war, for example, and having an independent nuclear-free policy, etc.

Our country needs to continue to voice our concerns to protect the security of the whole world, from the devastation of warfare being delivered from outer space, including nuclear war. MBIE's consultation submission and form treats the development of Aotearoa's Aerospace industry association as a business enterprise, that will provide opportunities for worthwhile employment for a growing a valuable pool of expertise in our country, working with our allies in this endeavour.

AMERICA'S WARS ON EARTH NOT GOOD IN SPACE EITHER

With such a narrow focus and questions in the consultation document, the MBIE strategy is divorced from reality. It's far removed from what's been happening in the world now and the past 2 decades at least. **The plan developed by MBIE ignores what America has been doing on Earth and in Space, which is not peaceful at all. MBIE's plan links Aotearoa/NZ even more strongly as a partner to US/NATO eternal wars,** which have destroyed many countries this century, killing millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, using false pretexts (like weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that didn't exist). America's latest war targets are Russia and China which America sees as "competitors," it must defeat. America and its

NATO allies with their wars have greatly undermined the human right to life, and the sovereignty of countries, violating international law and the United Nations Charter. SEE The Bombing of Afghanistan is Illegal and must be Stopped by Professor Marjorie Cohn <https://marjoriecohn.com/bombing-of-afghanistan-is-illegal-and-must-be-stopped/>
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TESTING NUCLEAR REACTOR ROCKET ENGINES IN LOWER EARTH ORBIT – SAFETY ISSUES

The submission form and document omits that the US military and NASA have been developing strategies to launch weapons from space and satellites for conveying politicized information to carry out wars against America's latest enemies, Russia, China, Iran, etc.

MBIE points out its great success in introducing US company LeoLabs to Aotearoa's Ruamoko Solutions in Naseby, Central Otago, which now is part of a global network of radar stations tracking thousands of space debris of objects in lower earth orbit. Bruce Gagnon, coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, reported recently that the nuclear industry will soon start testing nuclear reactor rocket engines over our heads in the Lower Earth Orbit. What could possibly go wrong,

Gagnon asks. *“As they make plans to test nuclear reactor rocket engines just over our heads in Lower Earth Orbits (LEO) they discount any concerns of environmental impacts if the tests go wrong. They never talk about the Department of Energy laboratories where these nuclear devices are fabricated with a long history of radioactive contamination of workers, local water tables and air contamination.”*

“The space nuclear industry is flying blind—blinded by its devotion to profit and power,” Gagnon declared. “Their hard hearts have no concern about negative impacts they might create on Earth, to the people and environment, nor any long-term impacts their high-tech nuclear power ‘visions’ might have in space. Their vision is so myopic, so limited, so tunnel like, because their minds are closed to the idea that space is alive and is an environment that we humans who are on this tiny spinning orb called Earth live in. They are colonizers, much like the long-history of earth-bound colonizers, who have raped and pillaged our lovely planet home.” **“The new space race is going nuclear” by Karl Grossman Nation of Change 19/8/2022** [“The new space race is going nuclear” | NationofChange](#)

See also **Forget Your Morning Commute — We Now Have Satellite Traffic Jams In Space By Amiah Taylor Oct 22, 2022** [Forget Your Morning Commute — We Now Have Satellite Traffic Jams In Space | Discover Magazine](#) As active satellites continue to pile up, so does the risk of collisions. If that happens, it could cause serious turmoil.

Awareness of the existential dangers of nuclear weapons for life on Earth has diminished amongst western governments and populations. And it’s evident in MBIE’s strategy document. Covid-19 with its health and economic impacts has diverted attention. We are sleepwalking to nuclear war. Even Aotearoa/New Zealand’s government with its decades long, life-protecting, nuclear-free policy and history has been distracted. Raising our voice to draw attention to this clear potential today for nuclear war to unravel in Europe, is the most vital priority for the entire world’s basic security. MBIE’s document shows a complete divorce from reality about all this going on now.

Nuclear weapons are the greatest immediate threat to all life on Earth, because their pervasive long-term effects make them annihilatory in Nature. Besides the immediate horrifying incineratory effects to those close to the blasts, research shows that even a "regional" war with release of 100 nuclear weapons can spread radioactive pollution across the world, bringing wide-spread famine via nuclear winter blocking the sun, causing dry, cold conditions worldwide for over a decade. Whatever food is grown is likely to be toxic to people's health for decades as shown in the Marshall Islands study mentioned earlier - [Nuclear Contamination of Food in the Pacific: Lifting the Veil of Secrecy](#) in Pacific Ecologist issue 22).

Today the world faces clear and present dangers of nuclear annihilation arising from the Ukraine war. When it comes to conflict and wars, it’s vital to have accurate information, untainted by bias or a partisan approach, especially as this conflict involves the major nuclear weapons-possessing countries clashing, it can easily result in obliteration of life on Earth as we know it. To prevent catastrophe, objective, careful analysis with the reason and clarity of the due processes of law approach is essential.

An example of lack of balance and honesty is the US/UK/EU allies’ strident condemnations and sanctioning of Russia for its not yet 9 months intervention in Ukraine as being the greatest act of invasive violence the world has seen. The historic record,(evidence provided in references above), shows the US-led Western allies, are undeniably the greatest violators of human rights and international law this century in their 20 years of attacks and invasions of several countries since 2001. Our Western allies have refused to acknowledge their war crimes even threatening the International Criminal Court in its efforts to investigate their war crimes.

Another example of Western countries' deceit is that Ukraine and its Western allies rush to judgment with much publicized war crimes allegations against Russia, devoid of any tested evidence or due lawful process. This dangerously stokes the war, promoting racist, Russophobic sentiments with no basis in reality. It obscures the truth about the origins of the war and ensures there's no diplomatic solution to ending the conflict..

Our allies continually supply Kiev with advisers and enormous amounts of long-range weapons that can now reach Russia. This is a boon for the Pentagon's weapons manufacturers, but not for peace and security. Western populations are also being taught by Western propaganda to hate Russians. All this prevents rational discussion and peaceful settlement of the war and increases risks of nuclear exchanges by accident or deliberately. The current conflict could have been resolved months ago if reason had been applied.

The Government has said it will not allow a launch from New Zealand if the satellite contributes to nuclear weapons programmes or capabilities. "Rocket Lab supports this clear and robust policy." "Launching satellites for defence forces does not automatically equate to launching weapons," they said, adding that New Zealand relies on satellite technology operated by international militaries, including for communications for disaster relief and monitoring the exclusive economic zone. Satellite customers are required to disclose what their mission is to the government, and include the purpose, capabilities and objectives of putting the satellite into space. Watchdog group, Rocket Lab Monitor, has said it's skeptical that this is a fail-proof system and worries the country's space agency lacks in-house expertise to assess if satellites are contributing to nuclear weapon programmes. "It all relies on the 'intent' of a payload rather than monitoring what it actually ends up being used for," spokesperson Sonya Smith said. Smith pointed to Rocket Lab's 2021 launch of the "Gunsmoke-J" satellite, an experimental satellite that, according to the [US army](#), can "provide tactically actionable targeting data" to "warfighters," which Minister Nash admitted he was "unaware of [its] specific military capabilities."

ANOTHER CONSIDERATION: RUSSIA & CHINA WORK TO BAN SPACE WEAPONS: US WON'T AGREE

The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), is a UN resolution advocating a ban on the weaponization of space. In 1981, debate over weaponization of outer space led the Conference on Disarmament, CD, to begin talks on the PAROS treaty. America is the only country to vote against the resolution, with Israel abstaining, America argues PAROS is unnecessary because there are no weapons, thus no arms race in outer space at this time. Russia and China, which America depicts as threats to its supremacy, have been calling for a global ban on weapons in space since 1981. In July 2003 they delivered their pleas for this ban again at a session of the U.N. Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Both countries were worried that former US President Bush's call for early deployment of National Missile Defense (NMD) would create a new, costly arms race in space that would be difficult to stop. The U.S. refused to discuss a moratorium or banning weapons in space then, again saying there was no problem, therefore no need for negotiations.

Finally, on 8 December 2015, a UN Resolution, sponsored by Russia banning weapons in space was passed at the General Assembly with 126 votes in favour and 4 votes against: the US, and its allies, Georgia, Israel, Ukraine. The US again refused to enter into negotiations banning weapons in space, claiming there was "no problem in space." Surely the Pentagon's military technology should not be in space, when so many countries want weapons to be banned in space and for space to be used only for peaceful purposes, for scientific research and the benefit of all humanity, rather than the private benefit of corporations and for one country, America to threaten and kill people.

PIRM calls on MBIE and our government to stop funding the militarization and nuclearization of space. We must protect our common security in outer and inner space, if we hope to survive. The space industry, directed by America and its allies is flying blind – blinded by its devotion to profit and power. It will not be possible for Aotearoa to separate out what is happening with developments it's involved in with US space agencies, connected as they are to the US military, the US nuclear industry, NASA, and their NATO allies. **Keep space for peace not war to preserve life on Earth.**

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ⁱ <https://pacificecologist.org/archive/22/>