

Message from Noam Chomsky read out at 4 October 2008 demonstration

Within the past few days, the US Congress authorized a substantial expansion of the military budget, reaching a new record; and the Kremlin announced that Russia would put its armed forces on permanent combat alert while also modernizing its nuclear forces and developing a “system of air and space defense.” The US and India are moving towards a nuclear deal that “would be a nonproliferation disaster,” the executive-director of the nonpartisan Arms Control Association warned, adding that the capitulation of the Nuclear Supplier Group to intense US pressure will “effectively end it as a meaningful entity.” It has since capitulated.

The recent Russia-Georgia conflict revealed dramatically how close we are to the edge of destruction. If Georgia had been admitted to NATO, and US leaders mean what they say, the conflict over South Ossetia could easily have led to terminal nuclear war.

US military expenditures are about the same as those of the rest of the world combined. The US military is technologically far more advanced than any potential rival and is developing new and more exotic means of destruction. Washington’s global system of military bases and force projection is of course unique. There is no need to comment on how it is regularly used. The Georgia conflict provided the pretext for concluding agreements to place missile defense systems in Eastern Europe. It is understood on all sides that missile defense is an offensive weapon – “not simply a *shield* but an *enabler* of U.S. action,” the quasi-governmental Rand Corporation explains. Leading US strategic analysts recognize that the new sites in Poland and the Czech Republic pose a potential threat that cannot be disregarded by Russian planners, just as the US would never tolerate Russian missile defense sites in Canada or Mexico . These are among the reasons why Russia is significantly expanding its offensive military capacity. All of these moves enhance the threat of war, the threat of “apocalypse soon,” in the words of former US defense secretary Robert McNamara, supported by many others.

Menwith Hill is a primary component of this monstrous system of power and domination. The struggle to break through the shrouds of secrecy and dismantle these installations is of extraordinary significance. It is no exaggeration to say that the survival of the species is at stake.

Noam Chomsky
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