

Greenpeace, Stop Star Wars and the Bush Administration

Since George W. Bush became President of the United States in January there has been an enormous escalation of the Star Wars programme, both politically and financially. Greenpeace has been at the forefront of opposition to Star Wars, a system which threatens a new nuclear arms race and would wreck international nuclear non proliferation regimes. Below are just some of the actions taken by Greenpeace over the past eight months, and the reaction of the authorities to the Stop Star Wars Campaign.

January 2001

George Bush takes office and immediately highlights his intent to proceed with the National Missile Defence Programme – “Star Wars”.

February 2001: George W. Bush’s first foreign visit.

Greenpeace takes it’s Stop Star Wars message direct to George Bush in Mexico on the first foreign trip of his Presidency.

March 2001: US State department, Washington, DC

Danish and Australian foreign ministers queuing up to meet the new President and his administration had to face Greenpeace first during a series of Star Wars protests at the State department.

April 2001: Ronald Reagan National US Missile Test Range, Marshall Islands, Pacific

The Greenpeace flagship the *SV Rainbow Warrior* arrives to monitor plans for the next planned Star Wars missile test.

May 2001: US Navy Aegis class destroyer, Maryland, USA

Two Greenpeace boats act as unofficial “escort” for boat carrying senior US military officials on a tour of the USS Monterey. It will become part of the Star Wars programme if it is implemented– our help is not welcomed!

May 2001: Ronald Reagan National US Missile Test Range, Marshall Islands, Pacific

Two Greenpeace activists from the *SV Rainbow Warrior* are sentenced to a month in jail after a sixty second trespass on the range, also known as Kwajalien atoll. It is the site of the “kill vehicle”, which is launched as part of the Star Wars missile test. Marshallese authorities unofficially confirmed the US ambassador pressured them to give the harshest possible sentence. They subsequently served one week in the most basic of conditions.

June 2001: NATO HQ, Brussels

During the Bush European tour Greenpeace activists protesting the Star Wars programme, blocked the front gates at the airport and NATO HQ in Brussels - forcing the President to use the back door in both places on his first major visit to win over European allies to the programme.

June 2001: US Embassy Slovenia

Greenpeace was back in action days later, occupying the grounds of the US embassy during the Bush/Putin summit. After the summit Putin re-iterates Russian support for the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty and opposition to the US Star Wars programme.

July 2001: US military “spy base” Menwith Hill, UK.

Over 100 activists invade the base in Yorkshire and occupy it for two days. Activists scale fences and then occupy rooftops and radio masts until the last of them and their supplies are exhausted. Menwith Hills along with the nearby Fylingdales early warning radar facility (also in Yorkshire) are key sites that are critical to the implementation of the Star Wars programme.

July 2001: Ebeye, Marshall Islands, Pacific

One man in a tent, Richard "Alice" Leney, is arrested and taken off the island opposite the site where the "kill vehicle" is launched two days before the test. The Greenpeace activist had been invited to camp on the local senator's land following the departure *SV Rainbow Warrior's*, in order to bear witness to the missile test. He was removed by the Marshallese authorities at the behest of the US administration. The charges against him have subsequently been dropped - but he has still been forced to leave the area where he has many friends and has been visiting for many years.

July 2001: US Airforce Base, Vandenberg, Lompoc, California.

The Star Wars missile test is delayed for 40 minutes after activists carried out a peaceful protest in the flight path of the missile. Despite warning the base commander that it would be unsafe to fire, the rocket is launched regardless. 15 activists and 2 independent journalists are currently on bail awaiting trial in Los Angeles on conspiracy charges – they face up to six years in prison.

August 2001: US embassies world-wide

Greenpeace offices in the US, Canada, Spain, Japan, Lebanon, Slovakia, Sweden and India all demonstrate outside US embassies to mark the Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries, to call for an end to Star Wars and to support the 15 activists and 2 journalists' right to peaceful protest and document the event.

August 2001: US airforce base, Incirlik, Turkey

Greenpeace blockades the entrance to the only nuclear bomber base in the Mediterranean. Police arrest 11 protesters and forcibly prevent independent journalists from documenting the demonstration which is in support of the activists and journalists.

August 2001: US embassy, Moscow

25 Greenpeace activists are arrested and charged, despite being given permission for the demonstration in support of the Star Wars 17.

August 2001: US radar base, Thule, Greenland.

Three Greenpeace activists breach security and trek for two days in sub zero conditions inside the base, before being arrested in sight of the radar. Elsewhere inside the base four more activists hang a Stop Star Wars banner, all are thrown off the site. Repeated requests to deliver a letter to the base commander are all denied. The Thule radar facility is key to the development of Star Wars in the same way as the UK base. Both Governments could stop Star Wars by vetoing the upgrading and use of the bases.

August 13th 2001: Federal Court, Los Angeles, USA / US embassies world-wide.

The Star Wars 17 will be arraigned at Los Angeles Federal court on conspiracy charges relating to the Vandenberg protest in July. Greenpeace activists all over the world will be taking action to support them.