# Learning from Two Commandments of War:
## *Know the Enemy* and *Take the High Ground*

By Richard Sanders, coordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade, and editor, *Press for Conversion!*

About 2,500 years ago, a Chinese "defense analyst" named Sun Tzu wrote a treatise called *The Art of War*. In it he counselled rulers on a subject that anti-war activists have often said is an oxymoron, namely "military intelligence." Never-the-less his aphorisms are profound. For example:

> "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."[1]

Sun Tzu is still being quoted by today's war experts, like John Mahaffey of NATO's Consultation, Command and Control Agency. At a 2004 U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) conference, Mahaffey discussed the lessons learned during a war simulation exercise conducted by the Coalition Aerial Surveillance and Reconnaissance (CAESAR) project (in which warfighters from seven countries prepared themselves for the day when they could use data from Canada's RADARSAT-2 satellite, see pp.19-27). Mahaffey began this technical paper with a Sun Tzu quotation:

> "What enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge."[2]

Sun Tzu was actually a latecomer to the field. A thousand years before Sun Tzu's birth, Egypt's Pharaoh Thutmose III created an army that

> "used agents and reconnaissance techniques to gather tactical intelligence. He was the first to formally recognize the five elements of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance: Observe, Locate, Process, Decide and Disseminate."[3]

We can be sure that even Thutmose III was not the first ruler to use intelligence agents, spies and scouts in wars. For however long humans have been killing each other—whether that is measured in the tens or hundreds of thousands of years—there
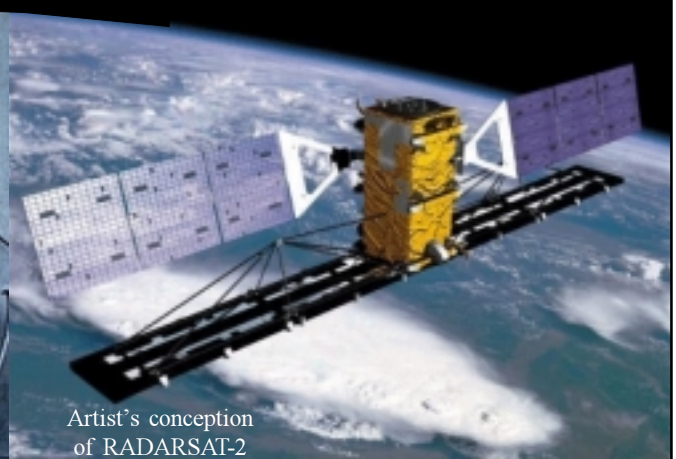


"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."
Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*
(Circa 490 BC. The world's oldest-known military treatise.)

Artist's conception of Sun Tzu

Artist's conception of RADARSAT-2

Canadian Space Agency

**What is ISR?** "Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance are integrated capabilities to collect, process, exploit and disseminate accurate and timely information that provides the battlespace awareness necessary to successfully plan and conduct operations."
*Air Force Doctrine Document 2*, February 17, 2000.

have, no doubt, been those engaged in the important work of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR).

Because it has always been perilous to underestimate the importance of collecting and disseminating information about ones enemy, the ability to gather and control data about the killing field, and especially about the enemy's movements and capabilities before and during battle, has been considered an indispensable activity. Indeed, the triple-edged sword of ISR has often made the difference between winning and losing military engagements, regardless of whether they are fought for offensive or defensive purposes.

## The Public Enemy

Over the millennia, the tactics and technologies used of to monitor enemy activities have changed greatly. What's more, the notion of who constitutes the enemy has also undergone considerable change. The extent of these changes is evident in a tsunami of a scandal that is now swirling around President Bush. He has been forced to

acknowledge secretly authorising what the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) calls "warrantless electronic eavesdropping" on U.S. citizens. The ACLU has long been a kind of unofficial, people's intelligence organization turning the ISR spotlight back onto America's government. Through Freedom of Information requests for 150 clients in 20 states, it has obtained many government documents that

> "reveal FBI monitoring and infiltration by the FBI and local law enforcement, targeting political, environmental, anti-war and faith-based groups [including] advocates for the environment, animal rights, labor, re-

President George Bush is now facing a storm of controversy for authorising the National Security Agency to conduct unwarranted surveillance of American citizens.

Who is Watching Over Us?

ligion, Native American rights, fair trade, grassroots politics, peace, social justice, nuclear disarmament, human rights and civil liberties."[4]

Although such "domestic spying" in the U.S. is not new, a scandal erupted when the *New York Times* (*NYT*) revealed on December 16, 2005, that—beginning in 2002—Bush authorised the National Security Agency (NSA) to listen in on American's phone calls and emails without having to get a judge's permission.[5] (The *NYT* then covered up this story for a year, due to a request from the government.[6])

Another little *Times* article, on the history of NSA spying, said

"Created in 1952, the National Security Agency is the biggest American intelligence agency, with more than 30,000 employees at Fort Meade, MD., and listening posts around the world. Part of the Defense Department, it is the successor to the State Department's 'Black Chamber' and American military eavesdropping and code-breaking operations that date to the early days of telegraph and telephone communications.

The NSA runs the eavesdropping hardware of the American intelligence system, *operating a huge network of satellites* and listening devices around the world. Traditionally, its mission has been to gather intelligence overseas on foreign enemies by breaking codes and tapping into telephone and computer communications." (Emphasis added.)[7]

The NSA's newly-authorised and widely-broadened intelligence-gathering "mission" could not be conducted without its "huge network of satellites." How else could the NSA tap into the scary conversations of such disarmingly terrifying "enemies" of the state as animal lovers, tree huggers and peace-loving church ladies? To carry out its orders from on high, the NSA must do what military and intelligence agencies have done since enemies were first invented, they must control the highest possible ground.

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## So, what else is new?

U.S. police, military and intelligence agencies have been "targeting political, environmental, anti-war and faith-based groups" for decades.

## What's *new* is the technology.

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## Controlling the High Ground

Space-based platforms, like spy satellites, are merely the latest example of an artificially-created military "high ground." For millennia, people have occupied and modified hilltops for strategic purposes. For example, in the third millennium BC, the Athenian acropolis was a neolithic hill fort.[8] And, in countless other equally-ancient cultures, communities built defensive earthworks around the crowns of high hills.
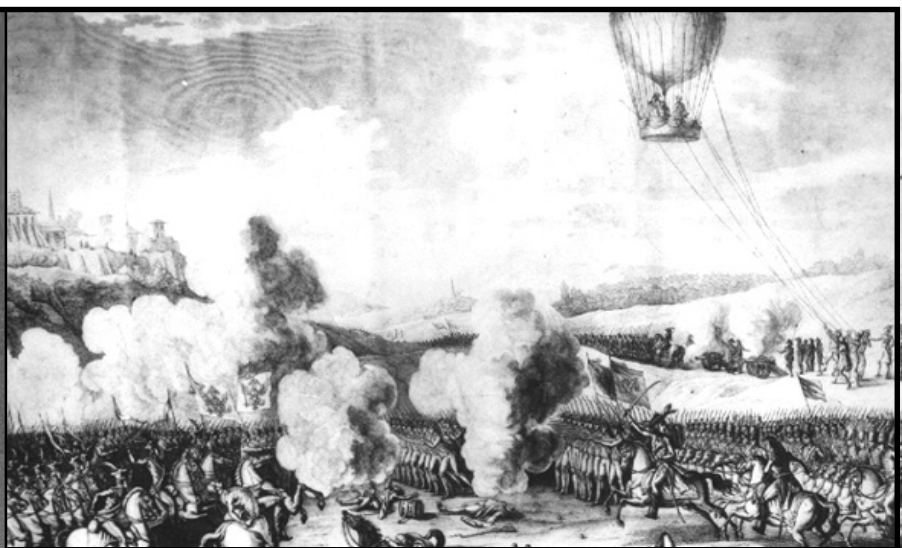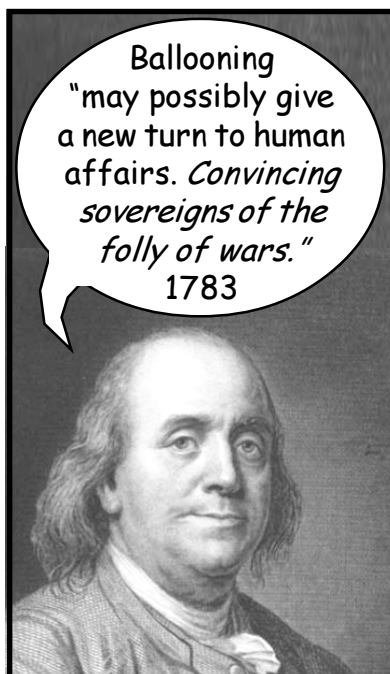
Returning to the martial wisdom of Sun Tzu, his *The Art of War* says:

"He who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven.... It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill.... All armies prefer high ground to low.... With regard to precipitous heights...you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but retreat and try to entice him away."[9]

In more recent centuries, architects of the rich and famously violent have put tall castles and fortresses, often atop unscalable cliffs. By thus artificially extending natural "high grounds," powerful elites have used the laws of gravity to overcame ascending enemies with all manner of falling projectiles.

Equally important is that heightened elevation also provides the best surveillance capabilities. Military minds have always sought the advantage of having hidden and secure vantage points from whence enemy forces can be safely watched and assessed.

Always on the lookout for higher terrain to give them even more power over others, war geniuses were quick to exploit early airborne platforms. In 1782, France's Montgolfier brothers were the first to launch *montgolfière* (hot air balloons). A visiting U.S. scien-

Ballooning "may possibly give a new turn to human affairs. *Convincing sovereigns of the folly of wars.*" 1783

1794: First use of an aerial platform in war - France defeated Austria in the Battle of Fleurus, thanks to a balloon conducting Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnoissance.

tist, Benjamin Franklin, observed one of the first flights of a hydrogen balloon on December 1, 1783. Many military sources, like *Joint Force Quarterly,* say that this future President wrote home excitedly about using balloons

"for spying, dropping bombs, and ferrying invading armies across enemy-dominated seas."[10]

However, in examining Franklin's letters one sees that his perspectives were not so supportive. In fact, he wrote from France on January 16, 1784, to say that ballooning might

"give a new turn to human affairs. *Convincing sovereigns of the folly of wars may perhaps be one effect of it; since it will be impracticable for the most potent of them to guard his dominions.* Five thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than have ships of the line; and *where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defence*, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds might not in many places do *an infinite deal of mischief*, before a force could...repel them?" (Emphasis added)[11]

Unfortunately, Franklin was dead wrong that balloons would convince "sovereigns of the folly of wars." (Just as Alfred Nobel erred in thinking that dynamite was "substance...of such terrible destruction that it would make war for ever impossible."[12] Other such 'geniuses' even naively believed that nuclear weapons would do the same.)

Using balloons to gain a new

high ground also had the opposite effect. By 1794, the French used war balloons to get the upper hand. They were the first to use this technology in war when an army "ordinance officer" rose

"above the battlefield...to conduct the first aerial surveillance. As a result of this and later missions, the French win the battle of Fleurus."[13]

For a 100 years, "tethered balloons were developed...to provide useful artillery spotting lookouts."[14] They were, for instance, used by "both the Union and Confederate armies... for reconnaissance during the American Civil War."[15]

But, the rest isn't just hot-air history. One of the next great leaps forward came in the 1920s when Winston Churchill—who was then Britain's "colonial secretary presiding over the creation of Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine"—called Iraq an "ungrateful volcano."[16] What were those "ungrateful" Iraqis grumbling about? It may have had something to do with lessons that Churchill and fellow colonialists were teaching the Iraqi people about the role of air power in forcing regime change. Britain's air force commander at that time was Arthur Harris. He was prone

"[to] boasting that his biplanes had taught Iraqis that 'within 45 minutes a full-sized village can be practically wiped out and a third of its inhabitants killed or wounded.'"[17]

(Later, he became famous, as Arthur "Bomber" Harris, for his role in leading the highly controversial firebombing of whole German cities during WWII.)

Since that war, colonial powers have continued teaching similar lessons to the "developing" world. And, thanks to armies of "defence" planners, "defence" analysts, "defence" scientists and "defence" industries, many great advances have been made in the sphere of air power. These great strides forward in "defensive" weapons technologies have ensured that the civilising lessons of warplanes could be visited upon countless villages, towns and cities the world over. The resulting toll on innocent civilian lives since WWII can be measured in the millions.

Thanks largely to progress in ISR technologies, our government's abilities to teach subject nations about air superiority have reached lofty new heights. But, as any good "defence" expert can tell you; bombs and missiles aren't much good if warfighters don't know where to send them. One such expert, the aforementioned Sun Tzu-quoting John Mahaffey, wrote in 2004 of the "Revolution in ISR information":

"Within the last 20 years there has been a marked increase in the number and type of ISR systems available to the commander.... These new capabilities may include ground radar surveillance using GMTI data and SAR imagery, [see pp.14-18] ... [and] electro-optical and infrared imagery, electronic intelligence and passive acoustic sensors.... Their data and information is often a critical component in the successful detection, identification and engagement of opposing forces."[18]

# Ultimate High Ground

The use of aircraft, and more recently uninhabited aerial vehicles (UAVs), as platforms on which to place such ISR sensors, represents an incredibly important breakthrough in modern warfare. However, in terms of gaining the highest ground possible, warplanes are obviously trumped by military "platforms" that float *above* the atmosphere. As U.S. war planners have been clearly and emphatically saying, for all who care to pay heed, space is the "ultimate high ground" and they will continue to dominate it to fight their wars:

> "Space for peaceful purposes – what a bunch of god-damned bullshit that was!"
> General Bernard Schriever, "Father" of the U.S. Air Force's space and missile program.

> "The highest priority should go to space research with a military application, but because national morale, and to some extent national prestige, could be affected by the results of peaceful space research, this should likewise be pushed."
> Pres. General Dwight Eisenhower

> 'If, out in space, there is the ultimate position—from which total control of the earth may be exercised—then our national goal... must be to win and hold that position.'
> President Lyndon B. Johnson

> "Space is the fourth dimension of warfare.... Air and space power is the force of the future."
> General Ronald R. Fogleman

> "The ultimate high ground is space."
> "We're going to fight a war in space. We're going to fight from space and we're going to fight into space... We will engage terrestrial targets someday—ships, airplanes, land targets—from space. We will engage targets in space, from space."
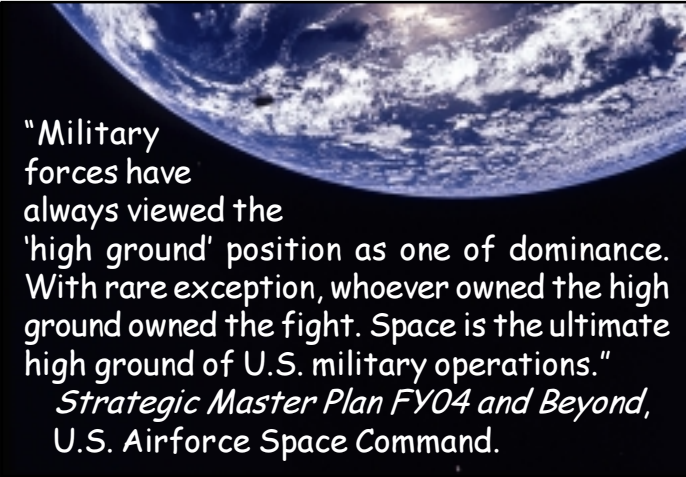> General Joseph Ashy, then Commander-in-Chief, Space Command

> "Space power will help overcome the widening gap between increasing military commitments and diminishing resources.... The globalization of the world economy will also continue, with a widening between 'haves' and 'have-nots.'.... Space power will be ... decisive in war, and preeminent in any form of conflict.... Global Engagement is the application of precision force from, to and through space."
> *Vision for 2020*

> "With regard to space dominance,



"Military forces have always viewed the 'high ground' position as one of dominance. With rare exception, whoever owned the high ground owned the fight. Space is the ultimate high ground of U.S. military operations."
*Strategic Master Plan FY04 and Beyond,* U.S. Airforce Space Command.

we have it, we like it, and we're going to keep it…. Space is in the nation's economic interest."
> Keith Hall, Pres. Clinton's Assistant Sec., Air Force for Space; Director, National Reconnaissance Office.

> "Space is a medium requiring exploitation for military purposes. Space Control is the first order of business."
> Major Kevin Kimble, Space Command

> "Set our sights high, on that high frontier and be the space warfighters our nation needs today—and will need even more in the future."
> "Space is...a requirement for conducting military operations."
> "It is time to push up the 'space superiority throttle.'.... "Warfighting CINCs [Commanders in Chief] recognize [Space-Based Lasers] SBL's inherent capability to support other DoD missions such as air defense, global surveillance, space control and target detection."
> Air Force General Ralph E. Eberhart, Commander, Air Force Space Command, then commander-in-chief, Space Command

> "[It is] possible to project power through and from space in response to events anywhere in the world... Having this capability would give the U.S....an extraordinary military advantage.... The U.S. Government should pursue relevant capabilities to ensure the President will have the option to deploy weapons in space."
> Report, [Rumsfeld] Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization.

> "Weapons will go into space. It's a question of time."
> Pete B. Teets, Undersecretary, Air Force.

> "Effective use of space-based resources provides a continual and global presence over key areas of the world...military forces have always viewed the 'high ground' position as one of dominance. With rare exception, whoever owned the high ground owned the fight. Space is the ultimate high ground of U.S. military operations.... Today, control of this high ground means superiority.... Tomorrow, ownership may mean instant engagement anywhere in the world.... Planners should consider... the capability to deliver attacks from space.... Space Force Application, focuses on missions carried out by weapons systems operating from or through space for holding terrestrial targets at risk.... Space forces extend the reach, precision and intensity of U.S. military power and operations."
> *Strategic Master Plan FY04 and Beyond*, U.S. Airforce Space Command.

These are but a few of the many military statements cited in *Press for Conversion!, #55, December 2004.*[19] They leave no doubt about the high goals which U.S. war institutions have set for themselves in space. U.S.-based anti-war organisations, like the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, have done an excellent job exposing the folly of space-based warfare. Similarly, activists in Canada and elsewhere are understandably wont to point fingers at the bellicose ambitions that the U.S. military-industrial complex has for space.

Canadian quote on ultimate high gr

## The Enemy is Us

Canadian antiwar activists would however do well to heed the prophetic ramblings of the world's most famous fictional possum, Pogo, who first cried out from a 1970 "Earth Day" poster: "We have met the enemy and he is us."[20] (Pogo's creator, Walt Kelly, wrote of McCarthyism in *The Pogo Papers* (1953) saying: "we shall meet the enemy, and not only may he be ours, he may be us."[21])

It is appropriate that by standing back and observing the globe from a satellite's perspective, the false duality of 'us' and 'them' can be dissolved; not only the political borders between the U.S. and Canada, but the wide intracultural gulf between 'civil' and 'military.'

So, for Canadian antiwar activists, rather than pointing the finger at America's militarisation of space, we should take a closer look at our own country's leading role in the race towards corporate hegemony. Being America's closest friend and neighbour, and its biggest supplier of military equipment, Canada is more deeply integrated into the U.S. war machine than any other nation.

Canadian officials are 'at the table' as partners in the world's strongest military pacts; NATO and NORAD. There are hundreds of bilateral Memoranda of Understanding to bind the armed forces and corporations of North America. Canadian warfighters often join U.S. wargames and strive with them to make our militaries even more interoperable. Our forces fight side by side in aggressive wars to overthrow regimes that our corporate/political masters don't like and to maintain other regimes that benefit the unjust global status quo.

The list of examples of Canadian complicity in U.S. empire building is extensive. Suffice it to say that Canada is not the innocent bystander that so many naively imagine. Therefore, before throwing metaphorical stones at the big glass house that borders us, we would be wise to look carefully into those panes not only to investigate what lies inside the belly of the beast

but, more importantly, to see our own shady reflection therein. Although it is relatively easy to rhetorically break our ally's huge windows, Canadian anti-war activists should take on the harder task of shattering national illusions about Canada's mythic peaceloving status.

For example, Canada is part and parcel of the longstanding U.S. effort to use the high ground of space to domi-



Earth Day poster by Walt Kelly (1970)

nate future wars here on earth. And, contrary to popular misconception, Canada is also playing major roles in the both the "missile defense" weapons program, and the war in Iraq.

The job of understanding and publicising the contradiction between Canada's illustrious peace image, and our actual complicity in preparing for and engaging in war, should be a central task of Canada's peace movement.

In this self-reflexive spirit, this issue of *Press for Conversion!* examines Canada's participation in the militarisation of space, by focusing on a major contribution called RADARSAT; a billion-dollar publicly-funded satellite system that the Liberal government proudly privatised. After many years in the works, this satellite's next generation, RADARSAT-2, is sched-

uled for blastoff in December 2006. When launched into public consciousness, news of RADARSAT-2 will likely be whitewashed with one-sided stories about its wondrous contributions to protecting ecosystems and humanity.

Whether Canadians learn the more complex truth—that RADARSAT has a dark military side—will largely be up to Canadian anti-war activists. The material herein only begins to scratch the surface of a mound of data about RADARSAT and how it will continue to be used by warfighters. Hopefully, anti-war activists will use the information in this exposé of Canada's role in space warfare, in campaigns of public education and political action.
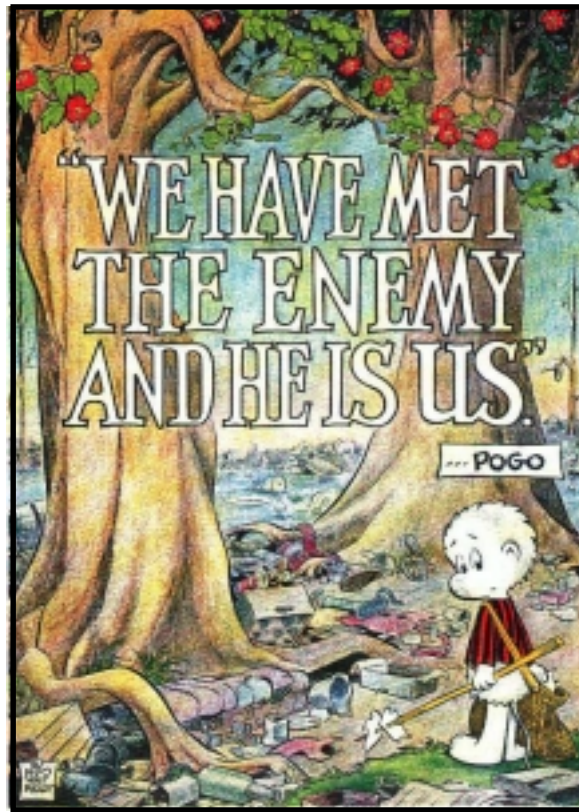
## Facing Reality

Not that we can actually stop warfighters from claiming their prize. Militarists *will* have ready access to RADARSAT-2 data, just as they have used countless images from RADARSAT-1 since its launch in 1995.

We must face this harsh reality with the sad understanding that this has long been the way of our world. For many thousands of years, military institutions, their weapons and intelligence-gathering techniques and technologies have been used to change the political and economic landscape of our planet. Armed men, engaged at the front end of the business of war, have been moved about like pawns to serve the interests of those elements in society with the most economic clout.

However, on the bright side, we can also take heart that for however long *some* of our brethren have greedily organised widespread destruction, murder, slaughter and warfare, *others have been trying to stop them*. And, for those of us now struggling to continue this age-old tradition of exposing and opposing the forces of war, we would do well to also try to keep on top of the mountainous task of monitoring the platforms and movements of our adversaries. For just as they are surely watching us, we too must do our best monitor and understand them.

# Planetary Panopticon

In 1999, a *Village Voice* article on the privatisation of satellites—which concludes by referring to Canada's RADARSAT—begins by saying:

"As the new millennium dawns, the omniscient eye fixes its gaze towards Earth. The eye, as in Foucault's treatment of the Panopticon, holds power over us: watched without seeing our watcher, we internalize rules, assuming our actions will constantly be seen. But is anyone watching the watcher?"[22]

The author here refers to the Panopticon, or "inspection house," which was devised by philosopher and "social reformer," Jeremy Bentham. His design was described in letters in 1787 (between the time that of the Montgolfier's first flight and the military use of their balloons). Panopticon is a Greek neologism meaning 'all-seeing place.' Bentham's plan was envisioned primarily as a solution to prison design but he also promoted it in much broader terms as a whole

"new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection; and in particular to penitentiary-houses, prisons, houses of industry, work-houses, poor-houses, lazarettos [ships or buildings used to quarantine people with contagious diseases], manufactories [factories], hospitals, madhouses and schools."[23]

Bentham, who also developed "a plan of management adapted to the [Panopticon] principle,"[24] wanted inmates to be under constant surveillance by an inspector

"who was a kind of secular version of the allseeing god's-eye. But while the inmate is seen by the inspector, he himself cannot see."[25]

The French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault (1926-1984), critiqued Bentham's Panopticism and raised concerns that whole societies are increasingly coming under the watchful gaze of centralised bodies of governing overseers. He described how modern states monitor and control the behaviour of their members by using complex systems of power and knowledge. Foucault discussed these two systems as an interconnected whole that he hyphenated into one concept that he called "power-knowledge."[26]

## The Panopticon (1787)
In the "inspection house," an ever-watchful central authority watches over everyone, but can never be seen.



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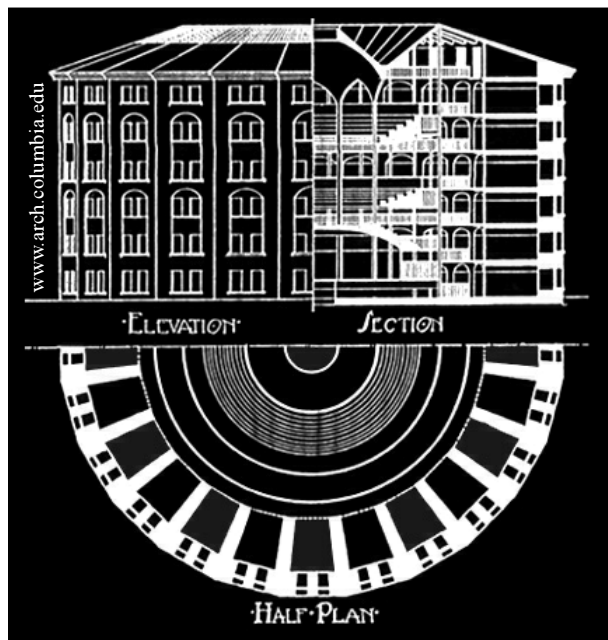
Jeremy Bentham said his "new principle of construction [was] applicable to any sort of establishment in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection;...penitentiary-houses, prisons, houses of industry, work-houses, poor-houses, lazarettos [to quarantine the contagious], manufactories [factories], hospitals, mad-houses and schools."

Foucault saw the "carceral state," stemming from Bentham's Panopticism, as a precursor to the totalitarianism of a "police state." In this prison-like society, central governing authorities demand the right to know everything about their citizenry, but keep secret all data about themselves.[27]

With increasing ease one can recognise the accuracy of Foucault's dystopian vision of the modern security state, especially in the reality of the post-9-11 world. Authoritarian laws like the Patriot Act—which drastically erode basic civil liberties while enhancing state powers to spy on, and exert influence over, their citizenry—have spread like a contagion through numerous countries, including Canada.

In our closely-monitored world, replete with cameras and other sensor devices, the ultimate Big Brother-style technologies for overseeing the earth's 6.5 billion inhabitants, are aboard satellites that occupy the military high ground above the earth.

# Watching the Watchers

ISR is of central importance to warfighters. Likewise, its value should also recognised by those using peaceful means to "fight" against war. Not that the anti-war movement should even dream of using military technologies, like the highly-expensive ISR sensors that clutter the collective heavens above us. The anti-war movement would benefit from paying more heed to conducting our own intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities. Our ISR must, out of preference and practical necessity, be of a more grassroots, down-to-earth nature.

One of the world's most famous advocates of nonviolence—who is said to have trod the sands of the Middle East about two thousand years ago—is reputed to have said: "Love your enemy." This man apparently refused all pleas to take up arms against the oppressive colonial regime under which his people lived. Neither would he allow his friends and followers to exercise their 'right' to carry swords. However, he is reputed to have gone further to say that even if struck in the face he would not raise an arm in defence but would, instead, offer the other cheek.

For centuries, the powerful words associated with this ultrapacifist have been quoted by anti-war activists.

However, in glaringly perverse examples of cultural misappropriation, Christian parables and symbols are routinely exploited to support institutions of colonialism and war like those that tried, tortured and executed this religion's founder.
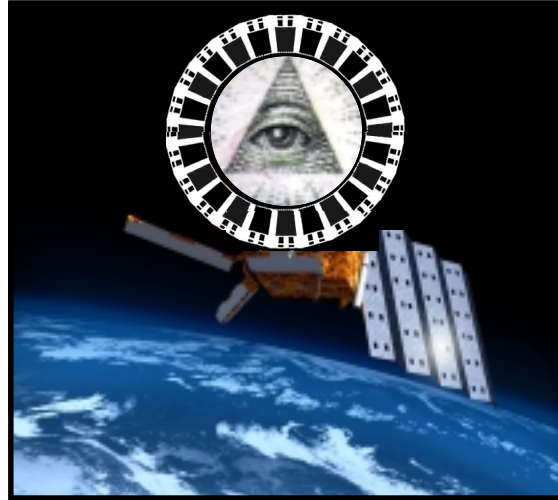
Ironically, although peace activists strive for the day when society will "study war no more," heeding the call to love ones enemy may actually require the studious understanding of military culture. Activists may even benefit from appropriating certain pearls of wisdom from ancient military traditions. For example, although peace activists take the moral "high ground" by rejecting any idea of using violence, there may actually be something for us to learn from studying the philosophies of such profound warriors as Sun Tzu.

To start with, we need to keep closer tabs on what the world's militarists are doing with the data from our commercial satellites—like RADAR-SAT—and other ISR technologies that our taxes have been conscripted to pay for. In particular, we would do well to at least monitor how military forces and our political overseers are using those 'eyes in the sky' to train their deadly sights on us.

In our closely-monitored world, Big Brother-style ISR sensors, aboard satellites occupying the military's ultimate high ground, turn the entire world into a Panopticon.





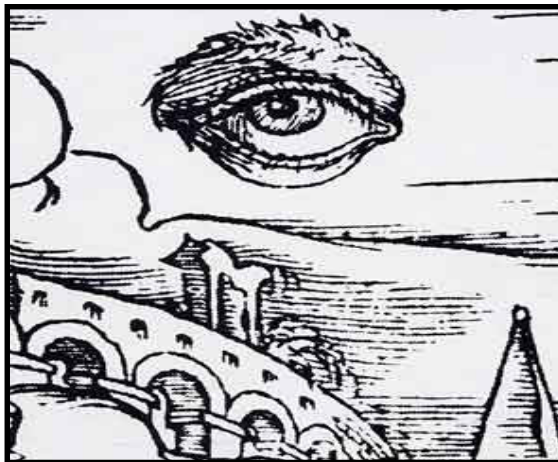Who will Watch the Watchers?

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