

## Report on High North Space Conference

By Bruce Gagnon

Here are some observations from the Global Network's 21st annual space conference held June 27-29, 2013 in Kiruna, Sweden.

The event was attended by people from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, England, Russia, US, Mexico and Japan.

Kiruna is a city of about 20,000 people in the High North and has the largest underground iron ore mine in the world. During WW II the Nazi's never occupied Sweden but instead took the iron ore from Kiruna to Germany to build their war machine.

Just outside of Kiruna is the Esrange Space Center where images are downloaded from satellites in polar orbits. The information from the satellites is used for both civilian and military purposes.

Norwegian journalist Bard Wormdal, who wrote *The Satellite War*, reported that Norway practices a "double standard" as it violates the Svalbard and Antarctic Treaties, which forbid military operations of any kind from these north and south polar locations. In both cases Norway has downlink satellite stations at these two points and provide the U.S. and NATO with imagery that is used for military operations. The Norwegian government still denies this even after the publication of Wormdal's book, which provides conclusive evidence of these treaty violations.

Russian conference participant Vladimir Kozin told us that when Obama recently spoke in Berlin about the need for cuts in nuclear weapons the Pentagon at the very same moment was releasing a new plan to upgrade existing U.S. nuclear weapons based in Europe.



Full poster, including this image, available to download at [space4peace.org](http://space4peace.org)

Kozin stated that the Russian government feels strongly that the U.S. “missile defense” program (now being expanded with NATO to surround Russia) undercuts Russian strategic defense capability and makes hopes for nuclear disarmament virtually impossible. In Obama’s Berlin speech he did not mention one word about missile defense Kozin recalled.

The new European Union “Galileo” military/civilian satellite system (like the U.S. GPS) will be used to explore for oil and natural gas drilling in the melting Arctic Ocean.

Activists from Finland showed the conference a map of the large drone testing area that has been established in their country. The 11,000 square kilometer test area is only 30 kilometers from the Russian border. In 2005 drones that were used in Afghanistan were tested at the range. Finnish corporate controlled media, as in Sweden and Norway, are conducting major anti-Russian propaganda that is pumping up tension in the region.

Again and again during the conference links were made between climate change and expanding militarism. There was agreement that we should all be demanding the conversion of the military industrial complex so that our resources can be used to deal with climate change.

In Darmstadt, Germany U.S. military downlink radars were removed some years ago but it was only recently learned that, at that same location, there still exists a military war fighting computer center.

Following the recent disclosures about the NSA by the whistleblower Edward Snowden, the UK government told their media that they are not allowed to mention the NSA surveillance program and the Menwith Hill (U.S. NSA spy base) in Yorkshire in the same story.

Particular thanks go to Women for Peace and especially those in Kiruna who worked so hard to make it a great conference.

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