

Imperial Hubris Redefined

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There have been two developments in the past month that illustrate clearly what is wrong with the White House's perception of America's place in the world. Going far beyond the oft-repeated nonsense that the United States is somehow the "leader of the free world," the Trump Administration has taken several positions that sustain the bizarre view that such leadership can only be exercised if the United States is completely dominant in all relevant areas. Beyond that, Washington is now also asserting that those who do not go along with the charade and abide by the rules laid down will be subject to punishment to force compliance.

The first issue has to do with outer space. There is an international treaty agreed to in 1967, the so-called Outer Space Treaty, which has been signed by 107 countries including most Europeans, Russia, China and the United States. Conventional weapons or electronic systems designed to protect orbiting satellites from attack are permitted over where the atmosphere ends 62 miles above the Earth's surface, but outer space is supposed to be free to all. The treaty also forbids any colonization or appropriation of the moon or planets by any national authority.

President Donald Trump apparently is not familiar with the treaty. Speaking before an audience at the National Space Council on June 18th, he [said that](#) he was, on his own presidential authority

"...hereby directing the Department of Defense and Pentagon to immediately begin the process necessary to establish a space force as the sixth branch of the armed forces...our destiny, beyond the Earth, is not only a matter of national identity, but a matter of national security. It is not enough to merely have an American presence in space. We must have American dominance in space."

The idea that the US would seek to have a major presence in space would probably surprise no one, but Trump is saying something quite different. He is creating a military command for space, the moon and the planets and is intent on using that to support an offensive capability that provides dominance in those areas. As no one in his right mind would allow Washington to militarily dominate outer space based on its track record of irresponsible leadership since 9/11, the Trump proposal should be and will be opposed by virtually the entire world.

A fantasy of space dominance is a symptom of a governing class that cannot distinguish between what is important and what is not. It is rooted in a nation that has been constantly fed fear since 9/11 even though it is not threatened. Iran, the second issue surfaced

recently, is part of that alleged threat matrix, with the United States and its barking dog Israel repeatedly claiming that the country is both a terrorism supporter and is involved in a secret nuclear weapons program. Both claims are basically false.

Trump has complied with Israel's demands to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) restricting Iran's nuclear program even though Tehran was in complete compliance. On June 26th, the White House announced Iran's punishment, declaring [that it would sanction](#) anyone buying Iranian oil, starting on November 4th. The "zero tolerance" global Iranian oil ban deliberately seeks to devastate most sectors of the country's economy to force it to comply with Israeli, Saudi and US demands that it should effectively disarm.

The threat of sanctions is blatant bullying as the United Nations and all other signatories of the JCPOA continue to support the agreement and have no reason to punish Iran, but there is also an appreciation that sanctions would include being blocked from US financial markets, meaning that the warning must be taken seriously. [There are reports](#) that a number of European and Asia refiners and their financial backers are already moving to cut purchases and exit the Iran market well before November.

But there also has been some pushback. Turkey is refusing to go along with the American demand and it is unlikely that China, Russia and India will comply, even if threatened with sanctions. If the European Community were to unite and develop a backbone to take a stand against submitting to US pressure it might actually force Washington to save face by issuing waivers to mitigate the impact of its demand.

There is no rational US interest that compels a hubristic American government to establish a space military or to create a global sanction against Iran, but it is clear that the Trump Administration does not care much for genuine interests as it huffs and puffs to show its power and determination. It is time for the rest of the world to wake up to the danger posed by Washington and mobilize to stand up against it.

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