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Name: Gareth Smith
Organisation: Byron People for Peace and Justice

Submission: The University of Queensland's Centre for Hypersonics enjoys funding from the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency. It has developed the world's first scramjet which flew in 2002 over the Woomera Testing Facility achieving a speed of 8,000kph. Scramjet engines capable of 16,000kph plus are planned so that the U.S. can mount pre-emptive, "prompt global strikes", using FALCON (Force Application on Launch from CONTinental United States). Falcon is a revolutionary edge-of-space bomber capable of carrying 5,500 kg of ordnance and delivering this from 453 kg individual hypersonic gliders to target any point on the planet within minutes of order to do so. These glider bombs would hurtle with unerring accuracy towards their targets and release massive amounts of kinetic energy, in addition to their actual explosive charge ("Australia's role in arming the heavens", Byron Shire Echo, April 26, 2006).

There is no reference to the essential part played by this scramjet research to the Falcon programme in any of the University of Queensland's or the DSTO's (Defence Science Technology Organisation) media releases despite the acknowledgement that, "The most ambitious project in a \$US459 billion defence spending bill is the Falcon...the cost of the vehicle has not been revealed but a spokesman for the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency said the first test flight was scheduled for next year." ("America pumps billions into space-age weapons", Sydney Morning Herald, November 15, 2007).

Australian scramjet research is being boosted by increased funding and by the appointment of Dr Russell Boyce of the University of New South Wales, at the Australian Defence Force Academy, to the DSTO Chair and Professorship in Hypersonics. "In November 2006 DSTO signed a \$74 million HIFiRE Agreement with the United States Air Force that will comprise up to 10 hypersonic flight experiments planned for the Woomera Testing Facility over the next five years." (Minister for Defence Media Mail List, May 2, 2008).

This technology is being pursued without consideration of its profound military, societal, legal and international implications. The Australian Hypersonics Initiative will increase the already thoroughly discredited US policy, endorsed by the Howard government, of unilateral pre-emptive conventional or nuclear strike. The effects of these initiatives will be destabilising and lead to the development of counterforce strategies by countries feeling threatened, like China, leading to a world less governed by collective security and one more prone to unilateralism and chaos.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report