

1-26-2001

Trends. Commentary on the January 16, 2001 SECREC NEWS item "Rumsfeld Commission Calls For Anti-Satellite Tests."

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Recommended Citation

Editor (2001) "Trends. Commentary on the January 16, 2001 SECREC NEWS item "Rumsfeld Commission Calls For Anti-Satellite Tests.," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol10/iss3/4>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. Commentary on the January 16, 2001 SECRECY NEWS item "Rumsfeld Commission Calls For Anti-Satellite Tests."

Author: Editor

Volume: 10

Issue: 3

Date: 2001-01-26

Keywords: Donald Rumsfeld, FAS, Federation of American Scientists, SECRECY NEWS, Security, Space

SECRECY NEWS (a publication from the Federation of American Scientists' Project on Government Secrecy) cites a commission report chaired by Donald Rumsfeld--before he became the United States Secretary of Defense--that is premised upon the "virtual certainty" of hostile action in space. Virtual certainty (as described by the commission report) is based on an appeal to history that every medium--air, land, and sea--has seen conflict. SECRECY NEWS asserts that this appeal should be considered "in lieu of evidence," is a not a very persuasive argument, and does not conform to "reality."

SECRECY NEWS seems to be taking the position that space has not been, is not, and will not be a venue of conflict--at least as it applies to strategic thinking and planning as well as defense research, development, and testing. Yet, for years, many newspapers, journals, periodicals, and books have published articles on such activities engaged in by countries including the United States, the Soviet Union, and several other countries. SECRECY NEWS also seems to be taking the position that space does not significantly pose even a potential environment of threat.

In contrast, Rumsfeld and the other commission members seem to be taking the position of trying to anticipate threat, of being proactive. Historical precedent of air, sea, and land conflict seems to be a reasonable database for this position. (So does unclassified reporting in the context of space). Does this not seem more reality-oriented, persuasive, and evidential than an assertion--without explicitly stated precedent or data--of SECRECY NEWS to the contrary? (See Leeds, B. A., Long, A. G., Mitchell, S. M. (2000). Reevaluating alliance reliability: Specific threats, specific promises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44, 686-699; McGregor, H. A., Lieberman, J. D., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Arndt, J., Simon, L., & Pyszczynski, T. (1998). Terror management and aggression: Evidence that mortality salience motivates aggression against worldview-threatening others. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 74, 590-605; Rumsfeld Commission calls for anti-satellite tests. (January 16, 2001). SECRECY NEWS, <http://fas.org/sgp/news/secrecy/index.html>; The report of the commission to assess United States national security space management and organization. (January 11, 2001). <http://fas.org/sgp/military/commission/report.htm>.) (Keywords: Donald Rumsfeld, FAS, Federation of American Scientists, SECRECY NEWS, Security, Space.)