

THE GOOD NEWS OF
HIGH FRONTIER

by

Robert A. Heinlein

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“High Frontier,” is the best news I have heard since VJ Day.

For endless unhappy years the United States has had no defense policy. We had something we called a defense policy... but in the words of Abraham Lincoln, “Calling a tail a leg doesn’t make it a leg.”

Under our present policies what do we have? H-bombs, airborne, water-borne, and in silos, capable of destroy-ing anything, anywhere on this planet. Elite troops second to none in our Marine Corps, in our Army’s 82nd Airborne, and in our Navy -SEALs. Other armed forces stationed around the world and on every ocean. Eyes in the sky that can spot any missile launched in our direction.

And none of these can even slow down an ICBM launched at Washington.

(Or at your hometown).

So we have *no* defense. Instead we have something mislabeled a “defense policy,” called “Mutually Assured Destruction,” referred to as “MAD.”

Never has Washington produced an acronym that fit-*ted* so perfectly. Picture two men at point-blank range each with a .45 aimed at the other man’s bare chest. That is MAD. Crazy. Insane. And *stupid*.

High Frontier places a bullet-proof vest on our bare chest. High Frontier is as non-aggressive as a bullet-proof vest. There is no way to kill anyone with High Frontier—all that High Frontier can do is to keep others from killing us.

That is one of the two best aspects of High Frontier. It is so utterly peaceful that the most devout pacifist can support it with a clear conscience—indeed *must* support it once he understands it. . . as it tends to stop wars

from happening and to save lives if war does happen. All who supported GROUND ZERO should support High Frontier.

The other best aspect of High Frontier is that its systems are non-nuclear. I am not one who gets upset at hearing the word “nuclear”. . . but no one in his right mind wants nuclear explosions going on over his head or anywhere on this planet. - It is happy indeed that the best defense we can devise does not call for nuclear explosions. To save ourselves we *do not* need to blow up Moscow, we *do not* need to add to

the radioactive fallout

on our lovely planet.

The designers of High Frontier calculate that this new strategy will decrease our military costs. I am not in a position to judge this. . .but, frankly, I don't give a damn. A man with a burst appendix can't afford to dicker over the cost of surgery.

But will High Frontier in fact protect the Republic? As an old Research and Development engineer with the pessimism appropriate to the trade, I am certain- that most of the hardware described in the High Frontier plan will undergo many changes before it is installed; that is the way R & D always works. But I am equally certain that the problems can be solved.

The first stages of High Frontier, point defense of our missile silos, we could start building later this afternoon; it involves nothing but well-known techniques and off-the-shelf hardware. That first stage alone could save us, as it denies to an enemy a free chance to destroy us by a preemptive first strike. It forces him to think twice, three times and decide not to try it.

But the key point is not whether- this hardware will do the trick; the key lies in a change of attitude. A firm resolve to *defend* the United States. . .rather than resigning ourselves to the destruction of our beloved country. If we will so resolve, then the development of hardware is something we certainly know how to do..

But we won't get there by throwing up our hands and baring our necks to the executioner. God helps those who help themselves; he does not help those who won't try.

So let's try!

—

Robert A. Heinlein.