

## SPACE WARS

*On January 11, 2007, China used a missile to destroy, by ramming, one of its own orbiting satellites, a move the United States found puzzling and threatening. The Americans lodged a formal diplomatic protest to China, and, according to news reports, an unnamed American official said he was surprised and disturbed that the Chinese “have chosen this moment to demonstrate a military capability that can only be aimed at the United States.” The same reports noted that in August of 2006 President Bush had asserted an American right to “freedom of action in space” and said the United States will “deter others from either impeding these rights or developing capabilities intended to do so.” Indeed, the United States had demonstrated its own ability to disrupt the orbits of satellites as long ago as 1985.*

*After more than a week, the Chinese acknowledged that it had indeed conducted this test. Their spokesman said that China has not abandoned its long-standing opposition to the military use of space and that the test “was not targeted at any country and does not pose a threat to any other country.” Of course.*

*Unchallenged American supremacy in space may be of comfort to Americans, but it is not necessarily surprising that others should be less enchanted by the idea. The calls by China and other countries for treaties or agreements regulating or prohibiting the military use of outer space may reflect a simple love of peace, but a stronger motivation is a desire to reduce their vulnerability to American power. And however disturbing the idea may be to Americans, given American power, it is not really surprising that other countries should seek ways to counter American supremacy.*

*The essay translated/paraphrased below, written by, respectively, an MA student and a professor at the PLA's Academy of Electrical Engineering, was published in July 2006, and provides insight into the decision to show its ability to destroy satellites. The authors claim that the George W. Bush administration, disregarding the traditional American principle, set down by President Eisenhower, of supporting the freedom of outer space, has decided to try to bring space under American control. Whereas the Reagan "Star Wars" plan sought to defend only American territory, the Bush administration hopes to bring the entire universe into the American sphere of influence. This policy is motivated by an American desire for absolute security and also, the authors claim with perhaps less plausibility, a greed to monopolize the allegedly vast resources of outer space ("scientists" are cited to the effect that if the resources of the moon could be fully exploited, they would support humanity for 10,000 years). The essay concludes with a discussion of the constraints on American policy: the American plan to control space is enormously expensive, and although the United States is far ahead of all other countries in its space capacity, many other countries have the ability to adopt effective and relatively weak countermeasures. The American attempt to dominate space, like its attempt to dominate the world, is doomed to failure, but it also a source of tension as long as America keeps at it.*

*As an aside the authors themselves are not completely free of imperialist assumptions. Outer space is the "common property of all countries of the world," of the "entire human race." Do they discount the possibility of life on other planets?*

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# SHALLOW ANALYSIS OF AMERICA'S STRATEGY OF MILITARIZING OUTER SPACE

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Outer space is not a traditional area for strategy, but ever since the United States for the first time deployed an intelligence satellite outer space has been transformed into a war base. Former US President Kennedy once said: "Whoever controls outer space will control the globe." Presently the American government's strategic thinking on this issue has become increasingly clear. The American air force's Space Command Headquarters has issued a report, "Plans for 2020," stating: "Outer space has become a fourth vector of warfare, in addition to the land, sea, and air." "The advantages of space are gradually becoming coordinated with those of land, sea, and air and are leading to increasing effectiveness." This will lead to "American supremacy in each area." The American pursuit of supremacy in space has become an important component of its search for overall military supremacy. The American Space Command headquarters points out its long term plans for the twenty-first century without any attempt at all to conceal them: "By 2010 American companies' investment in space will total nearly 500 billion dollars. Just as a navy was necessary to protect trade in the eighteenth century, the military should be called upon to protect America's profits in outer space. American profits and advantages in outer space should be fully protected; and we also need to protect our freedom of navigation in outer space."

**1. Prominent points in the American military's strategy of the militarization of outer space.**

Since the start of the cold war there have been numbers of reports of American deployment of weapons in outer space; but it is the current Bush administration that has really impelled the United States to break through this “forbidden zone.” Recently the US Air Force presented Bush with a new strategy for air power, “Global Strike.” In order to accomplish this strategy, the United States should develop military spacecraft capable of carrying a guided missile with a a half-ton warhead. In answering questions from Congress, General (Lance W.?) Lord said that the Global Strike strategy will allow the US Air Force an “incredible ability to (destroy command centers or missile bases) anywhere on the face of the earth.” Once this plan is achieved, the United States will achieve the following three strategic objectives.

- 1) It will break through Eisenhower’s principle of freedom of space.

The basic constraints on American space policy were set in the 1960s. At that time the Soviets had taken the lead in sending satellites into space. In order to protect American interests in space, Eisenhower, who was president at that time, proposed the principle of freedom of space, saying that all countries had the right to use and explore outer space for “peaceful purposes.” All presidents prior to Bush basically set their policy within the constraints of this principle. The main military uses of space consisted of spy satellites, global positioning, warning, weather forecasting, and communications. The emphasis was the auxiliary function of gathering information for the sake of supporting land, sea, and air strategy.

The United States began to adjust its space policy after Bush took office. Beginning in 2004 the intelligence bureaus of countries within America’s defense sphere began making plans for “control of outer space.” The plans had two main aspects. One was to

use anti-communications systems to destroy other countries spy satellites; the other was to use spies to gather intelligence on other countries' methods of countering the American use of space technology. This plan compels American control over all near-earth orbits; it means that without American permission, no one can engage in intelligence collection using satellites in near-earth orbit. At present all satellites capable of observing the entire globe are in near-earth orbit. If the United States truly implements its plan for control of space all future activities for the development and exploration of space will be under American control. This implies that the United States has broken through the principle of freedom of outer space: freedom of outer space has been transformed into an American monopoly.

## 2). Breaking through the limitations on weapons in outer space

When compared with the Reagan administration's Star Wars plan, the Bush administration's plan not only advocates the active development of missile defense but also the development of long-range precision space-based weapons systems. During the Clinton administration the Americans supported a policy of "flexible control." Methods of control should be harmless, non-deadly, and reversible. A deputy Secretary of Defense in the Clinton administration once said that if it became necessary to use space weapons, their purpose should be limited to eliminating the enemy's power by technical means and not to achieving full-scale destruction. Thus, the United States could use a satellite as a "small paint brush" to cover up an enemy satellite's ability to see; or use a small satellite to interfere with the movement of an enemy satellite. Contrary to this policy, the Bush administration has promoted a more proactive policy, not excluding the physical destruction of other countries' satellites.

### 3) Breaking through the limitation of defense of one's own territory

The Star Wars program imagined during the Reagan era stressed the defense of America's own territory. The Bush administration, however, is implementing a plan for the control of outer space. Outer space itself has become an arena of struggle for the purpose of defending America's space capital and security. In January 2001 US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeldt said: The degree of United States dependence on the upper levels of the atmosphere is greater than that of other countries. It is necessary to prevent a "space Pearl Harbor." It is necessary to "eliminate threats from satellites, whether by reversible means or by destruction." This amounted to treating the whole universe as America's "borderland," bringing it within the scope of American defense.

## **2. Reasons for the Readjustment of American Space Strategy**

The United States has readjusted its space strategy, taking the path of the militarization of outer space, for the following reasons and considerations:

First, it is in order to achieve absolute military supremacy and absolute hegemony. The United States is expanding its superiority in conventional weaponry on land, sea, and in the air; but in addition it is necessary to enhance its space weaponry and achieve hegemony in outer space. Space weapons can replace weapons of mass destruction as another means of imposing a strategic threat. The threat posed by space weapons is no less than that posed by weapons of mass destruction. Thus, the space-based weapon called the "Rods from God" is intended to bring about destruction by hurling down pellets of titanium, tungsten, or uranium. These can travel at 11,587 kilometers per hour and can cause damage equivalent to a small atomic bomb. Space weapons can also serve to blind or even destroy enemy spy satellite systems, making the United States invincible

in the information war. As America sees it, to achieve absolute superiority in the dimensions of land, sea, air, and space will guarantee America's absolute military supremacy over all other countries. The United States will have nothing to fear from any enemy and will have a reliable shield guaranteeing both America's absolute security and its absolute hegemony.

Secondly, space weapons combine the functions and nature of both strategic and conventional weapons. They have the killing power of weapons of mass destruction as well as the versatility and adaptability of conventional weapons. They also have their own special advantages. Acting as conventional weapons, as unmanned weapons they can attack and destroy the enemy's unmanned (or sparsely-manned) weapons. They can minimize casualties on their own size while causing the enemy huge numbers of casualties. As strategic weapons they can be used mainly to attack the enemy's territory with greater precision than other long-distance weapons. And they not risk the radioactive contamination of the environment.

Thirdly, they serve to foster a monopoly over space resources. Up until now outer space is a vast undeveloped treasure store. There is greater material wealth for humanity in outer space. Scientists estimate that if all the moon's potential resources were developed, they could support humanity for 10,000 years. America's prime purpose in pursuing control over outer space and the militarization of outer space is to secure hegemony over outer space and a monopoly over its wealth. America thinks that in this way it will guarantee its everlasting power over all the earth, with no one able to stand against it.

Fourthly, they serve to maintain a monopoly over information from outer space. Outer space is the best base from which to obtain information concerning military matters, economics, or climate. Since there are no territorial or territorial sea boundaries in space it is difficult to define a “universal common sea.” As far as satellites are concerned there is nothing analogous to forbidding others’ airplanes from overflying one’s territory and there is no way to forbid precision spy satellites from looking at your territory. This implies that those countries that have control of the sky can “legally” spy when necessary on other countries or territories, with the widest latitude in gathering all kinds of information. America intends to use military means to guarantee a monopoly of information from space, limiting and even destroying other countries’ ability to gather information from space. In this way the United States will achieve the conditions and potential for complete, absolute, and everlasting superiority over all other countries.

### **3. Constraints on American Space Strategy**

The core of the American strategy for control of outer space is currently just a plan in fermentation, a kind of anticipation . It is yet to be seen whether it will become an active strategy and, if so, whether it can actually be implemented. Because of numbers of obstacles and difficulties it will be difficult for the United States to achieve its desire to achieve a monopoly of control over outer space. It might well die in the womb, or die aborting.

One: Outer space is the common property of the human race, not to be monopolized by any one country.

As long ago as 1979 the United Nations passed a convention guiding the activities of all countries concerning the moon and elsewhere in space, defining the common nature of

space resources. Although the United States, hoping to establish a monopoly of space, refused to sign the convention, it is still a part of universally recognized international law. It provides guidance on limiting the activities of any one country in space, and also implies constraints and limitations on American unilateral action. At a 1999 meeting concerning the prevention of the militarization of outer space, UN General Secretary Annan clearly stated: "We must prevent the improper use of outer space. We must not allow this war-torn century to pass its heritage to posterity, for at that time the technology available to us will be even more fearsome. We cannot sit idly by while outer space is transformed before our eyes into one more battlefield." In this Annan expressed the view of the United Nations and international society. Outer space belongs to mankind in common and should not be militarized; we cannot permit any country to use forceful means to seize and dominate outer space. America's plans to militarize and monopolize outer space violate the interests of international society and the human race and should be collectively resisted by all countries and all peoples.

Two, the costs are enormous and hard to sustain.

There are no limits to outer space. It encompasses the entire universe and is infinitely more vast than the earth and its atmosphere. In order for the United States to militarize outer space in order to achieve sole domination over it, it will have to invest huge amounts of resources in terms of advanced technological weapons systems. In order for the United States to maintain supremacy over all other countries in terms of information warfare and capacity in outer space, it will need enormously to increase its military expenditures. If other countries adopt countermeasures, the United States will have to invest even more. The anti-missile system is an example. The United States now

estimates it will have to spend 60 billion dollars, but in fact its new military expenditures will have to be even greater. Specialists believe that an anti-missile system will cost nine times more than the systems it is designed to counter. The minimum estimate for what it will take the United States to build a national anti-missile defense system is two hundred to three hundred billion dollars, with similar amounts required after it is built to maintain and update it. It will cost even more to build a complete space-based military system for both defense and attack. In its long-range projections for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the American space command has revealed that by 2010 the country's capital expenditure on space will reach five hundred billion dollars. And this is nothing but preliminary and partial investment. A fully developed space-based military system will impose hard to bear burdens on America's finances. With the slowing rates of growth of America's economy and the Bush tax cuts, federal receipts will decline, meaning there will be less money available to support strategic adjustments. The goals set are too high and there is insufficient money, so intensifying contradictions in the distribution of resources. There are perennial divisions in the American military stemming from the struggle for resources, and this can serve only to intensify the contradiction. This is a structural contradiction, one that is hard to resolve. The result will be to sink the United States into even greater difficulty.

Thirdly, there is a tendency toward the internationalization of space.

Outer space is the fourth area for mankind's survival and development. With the development of science, the challenging and conquest of space has become mankind's ideal and the goal of its effort. Especially since 1957, when the former Soviet Union put the first artificial satellite into outer space, all countries, especially those countries strong

in overall general capacity, have put great efforts into the development of artificial satellites and space navigation. The development of space science and technology, the exploration of the mysteries of outer space, ultimately to develop the capacity to utilize the inexhaustible resources of outer space and to open up that new frontier—these have all become major goals in the strategic development of all countries. International society has had some success in developing the sphere of space enterprise. A dozen or so countries have succeeded in developing spacecraft of all sorts and kinds. As of 2004, there were more than 5,5000 objects in outer space put there by various countries. There has also been outstanding cooperation in international society in the development of the space enterprise. The level of American space technology is far above that of any other country, but other countries are in pursuit. In some respects Russia still has the lead over America. It is under these circumstances that the international society has developed cooperation in the space enterprise in the joint quest for the resources of outer space. This is a necessary historical trend. An attempt by any one country to militarize space and to use force to hinder other countries in their appropriate space activities is bound to fail.

Fourthly, the strategy of the militarization of space will lead to bad consequences.

America's strategy of militarizing space is directed toward other countries with a space capacity. But the space enterprise is not merely a matter of the position and prestige of the relevant states, but also a matter of long-range strategic interest as well as a hallmark of state sovereignty. It is not something they will tolerate others encroaching upon. If the United States should dare to challenge others to an armed contest in space, that is tantamount to a declaration of war against all the other relevant countries. The others will undoubtedly use all means including military action on land, sea, air, and

outer space to defend themselves. Given its current military supremacy, it will be hard for the United States to avoid countermeasures by the other major nuclear powers. Should the United States begin a space war it can't emerge as a winner; rather, both sides will be the losers. At the same time, should a space war suddenly break out, the amount of space junk that will be created will bring immeasurable damage to all countries, including the United States. There will be serious damage to the human environment and a threat to the survival of the human race, including the Americans themselves. Therefore, the United States will not dare to start a space war; its military deployment in space is intended merely as a threat.

The American attempt to establish a military monopoly in outer space is a component of their larger strategic plan to dominate the world. It is an extension and expansion of their global strategy. Under current historical conditions, just as there cannot be another world war, in the same way the United States cannot succeed in its plan to establish a unipolar world. America's attempt to monopolize outer space will fail. A space war is avoidable. Outer space will forever be the outer space of the international community. Outer space will always belong to all of humanity. Be all that as it may, America's unilateralism and attempts to militarize space may bring about a tense situation and carry the potential of creating a crisis. America's moves in this matter are worth the attention and vigilance of all countries in the world. They show the urgent need for international discussion, agreements, and guidance toward the proper development of a law of outer space.

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