

KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE

Demilitarize and Prevent the Weaponization of Outer Space!

Militarization of Outer Space: Militaries all over the world rely on satellites for command and control, communication, monitoring, early warning, and navigation with the Global Positioning System. Satellites are used to direct bombing raids or to orchestrate “prompt global strike” capability, which is “the ability to control any situation or defeat any adversary across the range of military operations.” The 1999 bombing of Kosovo and the 2003 “Shock and Awe” assault on Iraq both involved the use of satellite-guided armaments.

Weaponization of Outer Space: While there are currently no weapons deployed in orbit, the United States is developing space weapon technologies, which can include ground-based systems designed or used to attack space-based assets, such as satellites, and weapons that travel through space in order to reach their targets. This includes elements of the US ballistic “missile defense” system which, as the February 2008 shoot-down of a falling satellite proved, can be deployed as an anti-satellite weapon.

Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space!

The overwhelming majority of United Nations member states are concerned that the weaponization of outer space will lead to an arms race. They insist that a multilateral treaty is the only way to prevent such an arms race. Each year in the General Assembly, member states adopt a resolution on the **Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)** by an overwhelming majority. In fact, every country in the world votes in favor of negotiating a treaty on PAROS—except for the US, which has voted “NO” for the past three years, and Israel, which has abstained. A PAROS treaty would complement the 1967 Outer Space Treaty for peaceful uses of outer space if it prevented space weaponization and programs, such as so-called “missile defense,” satellite-guided weapons launched from earth, and spy satellites collecting and using data for aggressive military purposes.

In the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the official body where UN disarmament treaties are negotiated, the United States has prevented any progress on PAROS negotiations. In 2008, Russia and China, which have always been strong promoters of the PAROS vote in the UN General Assembly, submitted a draft treaty to the CD on banning the weaponization of space. The US dismissed the proposal out-of-hand, characterizing the offer to make peace in space as “a diplomatic ploy by the two nations to gain a military advantage.”

We disagree. The purpose of negotiations is to prevent any nation from gaining a military advantage. It is critical that the US support PAROS and take up this urgent offer to start negotiations to keep space for peace. The whole world must bring pressure to bear on the United States to join with other nations to negotiate a treaty to keep space for peace. We must never permit the tragic expansion of the terror of war into a new frontier in space.

We are campaigning, demonstrating and fasting to prevent the weaponization and reduce the militarization of outer space. For more information and to join us, go to:

www.reachingcriticalwill.org | www.space4peace.org