

KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE

PAROS: Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space!



Fact and Action Sheet

Militarization of Outer Space: Space is already militarized. Militaries all over the world rely on satellites for command, control, communication, monitoring, early warning, and navigation with Global Positioning Systems. 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 both space-based and ground-based systems designed to attack space-based assets, such as satellites, and weapons that travel through space to reach targets on the ground, such as nuclear missiles. As the recent Chinese and US satellite shoot-downs have proven, ground-based ballistic missile systems can be used as anti-satellite space weapons. While the world has the 1967 Outer Space Treaty banning nuclear weapons in space, it does not prevent anti-satellite attacks from space or Earth with conventional weapons such as ballistic missiles. Currently there are no international treaties prohibiting the weaponization of space by the placement of conventional weapons in space to attack targets in space or on Earth, or by using ground based weapons to attack space assets.

PAROS Treaty: Every year since 1985, member states in the UN General Assembly have adopted a resolution to negotiate a multilateral treaty on the **Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)**, all except the US who abstained, effectively killing the resolution. For the past three years the U.S. became the first nation in the world to actually ***vote against*** the resolution, becoming openly obstructionist toward adopting any new treaty regarding space. A PAROS treaty would complement the 1967 Outer Space Treaty by preventing space weaponization programs such as space-based anti-satellite laser systems, ‘missile defense’ satellite-guided weapons launched from Earth, and spy satellites collecting and using data for aggressive military purposes around the world.

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, strong promoters of PAROS, submitted a draft treaty to the CD banning the weaponization of space. The US dismissed the proposal out-of hand, characterizing the offer to make peace treaties in space as “a diplomatic ploy by the two nations to gain a military advantage.” *We disagree.*

The purpose of negotiating PAROS is to prevent any nation from gaining a military advantage in space. The whole world must bring pressure to bear on the United States to join with other nations and negotiate a PAROS treaty to prevent a costly and dangerous arms race in space.

Costly Risk: The annual US space-security budget is about \$30 billion – “chump change” for the Pentagon but enough money to fund years of peaceful civilian space exploration. Missile defense and space-based weapons systems will cost trillions of dollars to deploy and operate. Debris produced by testing weapons systems and blowing up targets in space pollutes the orbital environment, threatening commercial and scientific satellites that are in orbit as well as risking the future use of space for generations to come. Can we afford to spend our limited planetary resources on expanding warfare into space and risk the future use of space when we are already struggling with many other political, economic and environmental crises on Earth? Can we afford not to try diplomacy first?

PAROS will be addressed again in the UN General Assembly in the October 2008!

Contact Congress and the Presidential candidates NOW and tell them to support PAROS and start international negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space!

For more information and to join us, go to: www.reachingcriticalwill.org www.space4peace.org
www.ucsusa.org/global_security/space_weapons/ www.cdi.org www.spacesecurity.org