

# Star Wars: The Future of Space Militarization

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## *Background of the Problem*

Since the dawn of satellites in space, citizens of the earth have been wary of the functions of satellites. After Sputnik launched in 1957, United States citizens wondered if the Soviets could now be spying on them. They also wondered if or how these satellites would affect the world. Fifty years later, countries and organizations around the globe send astronauts and satellites into space. Countries such as Russia, the United States, Japan, European Space Agency, and China among others have made significant contributions toward the increase of knowledge of the area known as space.

With the increase in the exploration of space comes an increase in the research into space-based weapons technologies. United Nations (UN) member states with military forces continually consider the impact of various threats. Space satellite pose one aspect of these threats. Increasing pressures on militaries globally force countries to consider weaponizing space. This may range from small anti-satellite weapons, to nuclear warheads in space to jamming of electronic signals, and even to the impact of "space junk."<sup>1</sup> All of these threats pose different levels of possible damage and must be examined by each country to determine how they might affect that country's interests.

## *What Has Been Done*

1958 – UN GA establishes ad hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space<sup>2</sup>

1999 – UN GA passes resolution calling upon governments "contribute actively to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective"<sup>3</sup>

2005-Present – UN Office on Outer Space Affairs passes resolutions regarding Space Laws<sup>4</sup>

2007 – Russia calls for a global pact against deploying weapons in space<sup>5</sup>

2008 – Various UN Committees and Subcommittees will continue to meet and discuss the issue<sup>6</sup>

## *Possible Solutions*

- Complete Ban on Space Weapons

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fas.org/main/content.jsp?formAction=297&contentId=311>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/cop\\_overview.html](http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/cop_overview.html)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.space.com/news/un\\_resolution\\_991103.html](http://www.space.com/news/un_resolution_991103.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24074&Cr=&Cr1>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/COPUOS/Legal/2008/index.html>

- Space Weapons Allowed only for Special Uses
- Reversal of Space Weapon policies

### *Study Questions*

What does your country have available to spend on space weapons?  
What would your country benefit from or lose if space weapons were legalized?  
How would your country react to an attack from space?  
Who owns outer space?

### *Possible Sources*

Federation of American Scientists

<http://www.fas.org/main/content.jsp?formAction=325&projectId=9>

UNOOSA

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/index.html>

UN General Assembly

<http://www.un.org/english/>

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