



POLICY BRIEF

WEAPONIZATION OF SPACE

By: Ambassador Robert Grey

Current policies toward weaponization of outer space are fatally flawed. They rest on the assumption that the expenditure of hundreds of billions of dollars in advanced weapons systems will give us complete dominance of outer space by military means and make our nation invulnerable to attack by weapons of mass destruction launched in the future by some other nation or by some group of terrorists. This policy is based upon the illusion that the United States, acting on its own, can create a political and military environment which can make this nation and the world more secure.

The simple reality is that no nation acting alone can do this in today's world any more than any nation acting alone could achieve this in the past. This is especially true in the arena of outer space. The weaponization of outer space – which will cost as much as 500 billion dollars – will make us more vulnerable, less secure, and will increase the risk of nuclear war.

- If we pursue prerogatives to develop the capacity to attack space satellites, others will develop similar programs. The US benefits from and relies upon space systems for intelligence purposes and to direct existing weapons systems. As our dependence on a secure space environment increases, we stand the most to lose should space be weaponized.
- Creating a vast array of space based military systems which would be very vulnerable to attack would result in a situation where a future President would have to use maximum force very early in a crisis situation to defend these systems. At a tremendous cost to ourselves, we would have created a situation which, rather than deterring a conflict, makes escalation in a time of conflict much more likely.
- Were we to move ahead with these systems, Russia and China would adapt their nuclear forces to meet this threat, making them more ready to react quickly in a crisis. This clearly undermines all of the progress to date to reduce the risk of a nuclear conflict.
- Space based systems mix nuclear and space forces in a way that increases the risk of accidents that could be mistaken for an all out attack.
- Such conflicts could arise which put our nation at risk even if we were not directly involved.
- Yet without a policy change we will proceed blindly down this path without having had a public debate and without seriously consulting other ways to increase our security. Arms control agreements and other cooperative measures are one way to address some of these concerns yet this

administration flatly refuses to even discuss some of these options with other nations.

For further reading, please see:

Air Force Space Command Strategic Master Plan FY06:

<http://www.peterson.af.mil/hqafspc/library/AFSPCPAOffice/Final%2006%20SMP--Signed!v1.1.pdf>

Visions for 2020

http://www.gs institute.org/gsi/docs/vision_2020.pdf

Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies:

<http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/space1.html>

Long Range Plan to Implement the Visions for 2020

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usspc-fs/lrp-fs.htm>

About the Author

Director of the Bipartisan Security Group, a program of the Global Security Institute, Ambassador Robert T. Grey, Jr. is a former U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, and was also Leader of the State Department UN Reform Team. Ambassador Grey was a Senior Fellow on the Council on Foreign Relations and Counselor for Political Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York. Ambassador Grey also served as Acting Deputy Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency as well as Counselor for Political Affairs, U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels.