

Weaponization of Space

What is the issue?

\n\n

China is making serious advances in weaponising the outer space.

\n\n

What is the Weaponization of Space?

\n\n

\n

- The weaponization of space includes placing weapons in outer space as well as creating weapons that will travel from Earth to attack or destroy targets in space.

\n

- e.g The placing of satellites with the intention of attacking enemy satellites, using ground-based direct ascent missiles to attack space assets, jamming signals sent from enemy satellites, using lasers to incapacitate enemy satellites and satellite attacks on Earth targets.

\n

- It is different from the militarization of space. The militarization of space assists armies on the conventional battlefield, whereas via the weaponization of space, outer space itself emerges as the battleground.

\n

- Due to these, space is now sometimes referred to as the “fourth frontier of war.”

\n

- Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Systems, which include long-range ICBMs, are used as an auxiliary system capable of destroying space-based assets.

\n

\n\n

What are China’s developments?

\n\n

\n

- China has been making impressive developments in its ICBM program.

\n

- These ICBMs aimed at and can target U.S. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) satellites.
\n
- In 2015 the U.S. Department of Defense’s report claimed that along with its civilian space program, China continues to develop a variety of capabilities including “development of directed-energy weapons and satellite jammers.”
\n
- China justifies that the loss of critical sensor and communications capabilities could damage the U.S. military’s ability to achieve victory or to achieve victory with minimal casualties.
\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

- US also recommend to plan, research, develop and deploy weapons systems to protect US interests and infrastructure in space.
\n
- The effect of this approach will result in an arms race in outer space as other countries may move to protect their interests against possible attack from the US.
\n
- The United Nations has adopted a number of resolutions calling for negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space.
\n
- The **U.N. Outer Space Treaty** provides the basic framework on international space law, saying that space should be reserved for peaceful uses.
\n
- India was one of the 18 members that formed an ad-hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at the United Nations.
\n
- India firmly believes in peaceful uses of outer space and has thus denounced space weaponization.
\n
- It is one of the leading voices in creating the Outer Space Treaty.
\n
- The proper way to solve the arms race in outer space is to develop multi-laterally negotiated controls on weapons in space through a new space treaty.
\n
- Such a treaty should,\n

- \n
1. Ban the testing, production, deployment or use of weapons in space
 2. Ban the testing, production, deployment or use of earth-based weapons which operate into space
 3. Require the notification of all planned space activities
 4. Establish monitoring and verification procedures
 5. Include procedures for resolving conflicts regarding military use of space and enforcement mechanisms for violations of the treaty.

- \n
- The view of earth itself from outer space presents a perspective of our planet as a unified, interconnected and unique centre of life should not be fought over or destroyed by the folly of war.
 - Thus, space in the 21st Century offers an opportunity to move towards a world of common security and disarmament rather than one of conflict and more arms races.

\n\n

\n\n

Category: Mains | G.S - III | Internal Security

\n\n

Source: The Diplomat

\n

