Weaponization of Space

What is the issue?

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China is making serious advances in weopanising the outer space.

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What is the Weaponization of Space?

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- 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.
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- 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.
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- 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.
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- Due to these, space is now sometimes referred to as the “fourth frontier of war.”
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- Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Systems, which include long-range ICBMs, are used as an auxiliary system capable of destroying space-based assets.
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What are China’s developments?

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- China has been making impressive developments in its ICBM program.
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- These ICBMs aimed at and can target U.S. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) satellites.
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- 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."
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- 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.
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What should be done?

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- US also recommend to plan, research, develop and deploy weapons systems to protect US interests and infrastructure in space.
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- 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.
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- The United Nations has adopted a number of resolutions calling for negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space.
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- The **U.N. Outer Space Treaty** provides the basic framework on international space law, saying that space should be reserved for peaceful uses.
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- India was one of the 18 members that formed an ad-hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at the United Nations.
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- India firmly believes in peaceful uses of outer space and has thus denounced space weaponization.
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- It is one of the leading voices in creating the Outer Space Treaty.
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- 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.
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- Such a treaty should,\n

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

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