Letters to the Editor

The Threat of Weapons in Space

I just read the cover stories in the latest Radiations. I'm appalled at the naivety displayed in these articles. I've been a member of Sigma Pi Sigma since my undergraduate days at William Jewell College (1967). I've worked in the defense industry my entire career and spent over 20 years working on the Space Based Laser, before that the Peacekeeper missile as well as most Navy surface missile systems. What we should fear is a nuclear holocaust or other weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological weapons).

The sad news, we already have weapons in space and have had for decades. They're called ICBMs. Any long range missile comes from space. I am very proud of the work I did on Space Based Laser and it is very unfortunate that politics (expressions similar to yours) shut the program down. I am currently consulting the services on developing laser systems that will be deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. These weapons will save soldiers lives by destroying IEDs before they have a chance to detonate. It's incredibly irresponsible of you to publish such biased articles with no technical credibility. Instead of a Space Based Laser swooping down on innocent children, your cover photo should show the weapon destroying an enemy missile in the boost phase, thus saving those precious children. Stick to publishing technical articles and leave the politics to others!!!!!

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I read with interest the article by Nina Tannenwald in Radiations on "The Threat of Weapons in Space." It is an important article and I consider her to be completely correct in raising this warning. Space is not the new "high ground" or "high frontier." It is part of our vast common heritage that should be preserved for all humankind, and not weaponized for the perceived benefit of any one state.

Weaponizing space is a no-win proposition. It will only lead to an arms race in space with potentially deadly consequences on earth. It will also increase the development of anti-satellite technology in an attempt to neutralize military advantages that may derive from putting weapons in space. The "high frontier," if weaponized, may turn out to be the "last frontier" for life.

Einstein warned, "The splitting of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." Weaponizing space is part of the old military paradigm that is leading us toward catastrophe. The new way of thinking is exactly as Tannenwald suggests: rise above militarization, prohibit weaponization in space, and make space a sanctuary, free of weapons.

The drive to weaponize space is putting humanity to a new test. The Russians and Chinese have been proponents of an international treaty prohibiting weapons in space. It is only the United States, with its advanced technological capabilities, that has failed to grasp the importance of such a prohibition and has pushed toward the colossal lunacy of weaponizing space.

The US position suggests a total eclipse of reason, and will only be stopped by the engagement of US citizens, and particularly by the scientific community. Thus, I applaud Tannenwald for her clear and unambiguous article on this issue.

-- David Krieger, President
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-- John Dooley
Physics Dept., Millersville University

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