

2.2 Space-to-Space Weapons Situation (Continued)

In August 1981, the Joint Chief-of-Staff (JCS) of the US issued an ASAT requirements document which set out the perceived requirements in the United States for a US antisatellite weapons system. This document contains a threat list of Soviet spacecraft at high altitude and at low altitude. Soviet satellites shown on the threat list were divided into four priorities including passive and active satellites.

The first priority for the US ASAT system is Soviet weapons systems on satellites and Soviet satellite surveillance systems capable of real-time targeting against US forces.

The number two priority is surveillance systems capable of targeting US forces, but not in real-time.

The third priority is Soviet support system directly supporting weapons platforms, i.e. communications and navigation satellites.

The fourth priority is satellites supporting Soviet forces that indirectly support the weapons platforms, i.e. national and major headquarters level communications.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense in the U.S. has directed the United States Air Force to develop an ASAT system capable of negating priority one and priority two passive threat satellites at low altitude. Soviet space weapons are active satellites and would not be included in this request.

The targets for a US ASAT system in order of priority are summarized in Table 2-6

In the August 1981 ASAT requirements document referred to above, the US Joint Chiefs-of-Staff estimated that the USSR will have six orbiting high-energy laser ASAT's by 1990, designed for the same mission as the first generation of launch, seek, maneuver, and kill ASAT weapons.