

3.3.2 The Participatory Status of an Outer Space Arms Control Agreement (Continued)

- (a) From a Superpower perspective, both the USSR and the US are likely to be sensitive to the possibility of a threat to spacebased assets resulting from third party activities and programs. In the outer space context, this concern may be heightened by the increasing reliance of both Superpowers on satellite systems and the inherent vulnerability of those systems to attack, even from relatively minor ASAT capabilities. There may, therefore be an incentive for multilateralization arising from a fear of medium to long term proliferation or treaty circumvention.
- (b) Non-superpower states who rely on satellite systems for various tasks may fear that these assets will become vulnerable to attack from Superpower outer space weapons. In addition, certain states such as Britain, France and China may fear that the development of spacebased Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems may erode the credibility of their independent nuclear deterrent. Hence, apart from a general assessment that the weaponization of outer space may be destabilizing, there is also a feeling that such a development would accentuate the asymmetry in strategic power between the Superpowers and other countries. Recognizing that a fear of proliferation or treaty circumvention may be a barrier to successful negotiations, an offer by certain non-superpower states to sign an outer space accord may enhance the chances of an agreement. In addition, the application of political pressure from allies, who in general terms are opposed to the weaponization of outer space, may encourage the multilateralization of an outer space arms control accord.

There are two final considerations which may be seen as increasing the prospects of a multilateral agreement:

- (a) On the assumption that the essential features of an agreement will be negotiated bilaterally between the Superpowers, as argued above, and that the Superpowers would retain the prerogative to