

## 2.2 Space-to-Space Weapons Situation (Continued)

A review by the US Government Accounting Office of the Defense Department plans for performing the ASAT function has revealed a USAF ASAT concept utilizing relatively low power maneuverable laser weapons. In the concept, seven weapons would be placed in low altitude waiting orbits and eight others would be placed near the geostationary orbit. The 15 satellites would meet the stated ASAT mission requirements.

An alternative US ASAT system would see a constellation of high power, long range laser weapons in fixed orbits. This alternative system would also have a capability for targets other than ASAT's.

## 2.3 Space-to-Earth Weapon Deployment

Targets in space for a spacebased weapon can be enumerated and ranked according to some priority, however primitive. Earth targets for a spacebased weapon are much more difficult to enumerate because they are a diverse assembly of strategic objects and locations, the destruction of which has meaning in the context of a military objective. A reading of the current literature reveals that seats of government, military and industrial complexes and large civilian population centers, though not necessarily in that order, are prospective earth targets. Isolated space support installations, for example, a control center for surveillance and tracking satellites, would also seem to be logical candidates. The location of these targets is well known and they are all immovable. That being said, further detailing of their size, numbers and location is not useful in the context of a conceptual study save to note that they are distributed around the globe.

Given the immense size of some of these targets as compared to a single satellite or even a cluster of satellites, the choice of effective weapons to be parked in space for eventual deployment against them is more limited than in the case for satellite targets.

A nuclear explosion in space is known to be an effective weapon in that the ensuing Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) would cause the destruction of communications and other electrical apparatus, perhaps even in primary power systems over many thousands of square miles. A nuclear