

e) Space Based and Space Directed Weapons

The development of weapon systems has now been extended to outer space.

Space based and space directed weapons may be grouped as follows: laser beam weapons, particle beam weapons and anti-satellite weapons.

Laser is the acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Lasers are light-energy sources which emit a highly focussed and concentrated beam that can be re-directed and recharged in a minimal amount of time, and can then destroy a specific target. With the use of reconnaissance satellites, the laser may be placed above the probable launching point of a missile and thus intercept it before the nuclear warheads separate.

Particle beam weapons consist of a stream of highly accelerated atomic or subatomic particles such as electrons, protons, neutrons or heavy ions. They can be distinguished by the kind of radiation they emit, which is capable of vaporizing metals.

Anti-satellite weapons can be aimed at a satellite from the ground, the air space or outer space. If aimed from space, the anti-satellite weapon can act in two ways. For example,