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Russia warns against WMD in space

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3 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Russia warns against WMD in space

BNE: Russia has given stern warnings it will take tit-for-tat steps if any country deploys weapons in space. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, speaking at the Baikonur space facility in Kazakhstan, did not mention the name of any particular country, but his message was clearly directed at the United States. Mr. Ivanov said: "If some state begins to realize such plans, then we doubtless will take adequate retaliatory measures." Russian fears are almost certainly sparked by George W. Bush's interest in America's "star wars" program. Initiated by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the plan to weaponize space has constantly been a thorn in Moscow's side. Russia has warned the U.S. for decades against any militarization of the heavens.

Although the United States is currently reviewing its national space policy, the stationing of weapons in space is not on its agenda. White House spokesman Scott McClellan did say that protecting American satellites and space systems is something that the U.S. must take into consideration. He said new threats to American space hardware have emerged in the past decade and steps must be undertaken to protect and ensure the security of all space programs. U.S. officials have nipped in the bud any new space arms control agreements. America is a signatory to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits deploying weapons of mass destruction in space.

WARM-UPS

1. TIT-FOR-TAT: In pairs, see how many “tit-for-tat” responses you can use against each other. Student A starts by telling Student B, “I’m going to take your pen.” Student B has to think of a tit-for-tat response (“If you take my pen, I’ll...”). Student A then responds with another tit-for-tat measure, and so on.

2. WMD: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with weapons of mass destruction. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Russia / tit-for-tat / Star Wars / WMD in space / space / satellites / thorns / the White House / future wars

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. SPACE: What will we be doing in space over the next century? In pairs / groups, discuss the likelihood of the following things happening. Are they good or bad things?

- a. Wars fought from space using weapons of mass destruction.
- b. Holiday resorts on the moon and tours in space.
- c. Space farms to grow all of the food our planet needs.
- d. Mining on Mars for raw materials.
- e. Space stations and space cities that will be inhabited by millions of people.
- f. Space prisons.
- g. Space highways that go from Brazil to Japan, from New York to Sydney, etc.

5. STAR WARS OPINIONS: In pairs/ groups, discuss how far you agree with these opinions.

- a. Star wars will become a reality.
- b. World War III will be fought from space.
- c. All countries should refrain from deploying WMD in space.
- d. Exploring the possibilities of space weaponry is a logical part of human nature.
- e. Russia is a lot more sensible than America when it comes to WMD.
- f. One day, “rogue” nations will have the capacity to fight from space.
- g. America must always stay one step ahead of other nations to keep world peace.
- h. We shouldn’t litter the heavens with space junk and WMD.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Russia has warned nations not to deploy WMD in space. | T / F |
| b. Moscow specifically warned George W. Bush. | T / F |
| c. Ex U.S. President Ronald Reagan started the star wars program. | T / F |
| d. Moscow said people who put WMD in space would not go to heaven. | T / F |
| e. America is currently updating its weapons in space agenda. | T / F |
| f. The White House said America must protect its satellites. | T / F |
| g. America has openly welcomed new space arms control agreements. | T / F |
| h. America signed the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| a. stern | set off |
| b. tit-for-tat | examining |
| c. sparked | installations |
| d. thorn | stymied |
| e. the heavens | pain |
| f. reviewing | outlaws |
| g. stationing | retaliatory |
| h. hardware | space |
| i. nipped in the bud | harsh |
| j. prohibits | deploying |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. stern | in Moscow's side |
| b. tit-for-tat | in the bud |
| c. his message was clearly | consideration |
| d. constantly been a thorn | steps |
| e. militarization of | be undertaken |
| f. the stationing of | warnings |
| g. take into | control agreements |
| h. steps must | weapons in space |
| i. nipped | directed at the United States |
| j. arms | the heavens |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

Russia warns against WMD in space

BNE: Russia has given _____ warnings it will take tit-for-tat steps if any country deploys weapons in space. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, speaking at the Baikonur space _____ in Kazakhstan, did not mention the name of any particular country, but his message was _____ directed at the United States. Mr. Ivanov said: "If some state begins to _____ such plans, then we doubtless will take adequate _____ measures." Russian fears are almost certainly _____ by George W. Bush's interest in America's "star wars" program. Initiated by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the plan to weaponize space has constantly been a _____ in Moscow's side. Russia has warned the U.S. for decades against any militarization of the _____.

clearly
facility
sparked
heavens
retaliatory
stern
thorn
realize

Although the United States is currently _____ its national space policy, the _____ of weapons in space is not on its agenda. White House spokesman Scott McClellan did say that protecting American _____ and space systems is something that the U.S. must take into _____. He said new threats to American space hardware have _____ in the past decade and steps must be undertaken to protect and ensure the security of all space programs. U.S. officials have _____ in the bud any new space _____ control agreements. America is a _____ to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits deploying weapons of mass destruction in space.

consideration
stationing
arms
signatory
nipped
reviewing
emerged
satellites

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'weapon' and 'space'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SPACE WARS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

stern
mention
doubtless
sparked
thorn
heavens

reviewing
agenda
satellites
decade
bud
signatory

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you read the headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do articles about WMD make you worried?
- d. Is this news good or bad?
- e. Are you afraid of an escalation in an arms race in space?
- f. Will weapons in space become an essential feature for the security of world peace?
- g. Is America a good world peacekeeper?
- h. Do you think Russia will ever join NATO?
- i. What could America do against a build-up of weapons in space by China and Russia?
- j. Would you like to journey into space?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. How did this news make you feel?
- c. Do you think the opinions of American and Russian people are the same on the issue of WMD in space?
- d. Which country has a more sensible arms program, Russia or America?
- e. Does Russia pose a military threat to the world?
- f. What is the most dangerous country in the world?
- g. Would the world be a more or a less dangerous place if nuclear powers gave up their WMD?
- h. Do you think World War III will ever happen?
- i. Should space be left as it is, and not used as a munitions dump?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

“WMD IN SPACE” ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space should go ahead. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A

You are the owner of the world’s largest weapons manufacturer. You desperately need both America and Russia to buy your products. You need your company to be first in space weapons technology. It is the future of warfare. You are very suspicious of the Russian military adviser.

Role B

You are a top Russian military advisor. The very last thing Russia wants is an arms race in space. Russia has no money. Russia fears America may rule the universe and attack nations it dislikes. Russia hates war – millions of Russians died in WWII. You want to stop America.

Role C

You are a top American military adviser. The need for America to rule the heavens is obvious. America must continue to be the world’s peacekeeper. The only way to do this in future is from space. All future wars would be over quickly using space weapons.

Role D

You are an anti-war campaigner. You detest greedy weapons companies. You think Russia and America should destroy their WMD immediately. You believe America and Russia are aggressors. Persuade everyone the money is better spent on reducing poverty, which will in turn make the world safer.

Role E

You are an alien from outer space. You strongly object to Earth people messing up your environment with their satellites, space stations and rockets. You cannot accept the idea of more junk. WMD are a no-no. Tell the Earthlings to stay out of space.

Change roles and repeat the role play.

After the role play(s), talk about whether you believe the arguments you gave while in your role? Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Russia warns against WMD in space

BNE: Russia has given stern warnings it will _____ - _____ - _____ if any country deploys weapons in space. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, speaking at the Baikonur space facility in Kazakhstan, did not mention the name of any particular country, but his message was _____ the United States. Mr. Ivanov said: "If some state begins to realize such plans, then we doubtless will take _____." Russian fears are almost certainly sparked by George W. Bush's interest in America's "star wars" program. _____ U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the plan to weaponize space has constantly been a thorn in Moscow's side. Russia has warned the U.S. for decades against any militarization _____.

Although the United States is currently reviewing its national space policy, the _____ in space is not on its agenda. White House spokesman Scott McClellan did say that protecting American satellites and space systems is something that the U.S. must _____. He said new threats to American space hardware have emerged in the past decade and steps must be undertaken to protect and ensure the security of all space programs. U.S. officials have _____ any new space arms control agreements. America is _____ 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which _____ weapons of mass destruction in space.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Russia's announcement. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. SPACE: Write your ideas on how space might be used in the future. Show your ideas to your classmates in your next lesson. Talk about the likelihood of these ideas actually happening.

4. LETTER TO GEORGE W. BUSH: Write a letter to American President George W. Bush about the future of America's star wars program. Tell him whether he should go ahead with it or not and give your reasons. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did your classmates write similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| a. stern | harsh |
| b. tit-for-tat | retaliatory |
| c. sparked | set off |
| d. thorn | pain |
| e. the heavens | space |
| f. reviewing | examining |
| g. stationing | deploying |
| h. hardware | installations |
| i. nipped in the bud | stymied |
| j. prohibits | outlaws |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. stern | warnings |
| b. tit-for-tat | steps |
| c. his message was clearly | directed at the United States |
| d. constantly been a thorn | in Moscow's side |
| e. militarization of | the heavens |
| f. the stationing of | weapons in space |
| g. take into | consideration |
| h. steps must | be undertaken |
| i. nipped | in the bud |
| j. arms | control agreements |

GAP FILL:

Russia warns against WMD in space

BNE: Russia has given **stern** warnings it will take tit-for-tat steps if any country deploys weapons in space. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, speaking at the Baikonur space **facility** in Kazakhstan, did not mention the name of any particular country, but his message was **clearly** directed at the United States. Mr. Ivanov said: "If some state begins to **realize** such plans, then we doubtless will take adequate **retaliatory** measures." Russian fears are almost certainly **sparked** by George W. Bush's interest in America's "star wars" program. Initiated by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the plan to weaponize space has constantly been a **thorn** in Moscow's side. Russia has warned the U.S. for decades against any militarization of the **heavens**.

Although the United States is currently **reviewing** its national space policy, the **stationing** of weapons in space is not on its agenda. White House spokesman Scott McClellan did say that protecting American **satellites** and space systems is something that the U.S. must take into **consideration**. He said new threats to American space hardware have **emerged** in the past decade and steps must be undertaken to protect and ensure the security of all space programs. U.S. officials have **nipped** in the bud any new space **arms** control agreements. America is a **signatory** to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits deploying weapons of mass destruction in space.