

PAX AMERICANA

and the Weaponization of Space

Denis Delestrac, Canada, France, 2009, color, HD, 85 min

Short Synopsis (120 words)

The prospect of Earth being ruled from space is no longer science-fiction. The dream of the original Dr. Strangelove, Wernher von Braun (from Nazi rocket-scientist to NASA director) has survived every US administration since WW2 and is coming to life. Today the technology exists to weaponize space, a massive American industry thrives, and nations are maneuvering for advantage.

PAX AMERICANA tackles this pivotal moment. Are war machines already orbiting Earth? Can treaties keep space weapons-free? Must the World capitulate to one super-cop on the global beat?

With startling archival footage and unprecedented access to US Air Force Space Command, this elegant, forceful documentary reveals the state of play through generals, space-policy analysts, politicians, diplomats, peace activists, and hawks.

Long Synopsis (365 words)

As if there weren't enough weapons here on earth, space has become the newest arena for countries around the globe to launch their struggle for supremacy. Denis Delestrac's film Pax Americana and the Weaponization of Space is packed full of some truly startling facts — everything from the "Rods of God" (space weapons that can launch from orbit) to the fact that fifty cents of every American tax dollar goes towards military spending. The astronomical costs of arming and policing the heavens (more than \$200 billion) has largely fallen to the US Air Force, but with China and other nations challenging American supremacy, there is the potential for a war to take place right over our heads.

Comparison of the space race to the sea battles of the 18th and 19th Century are apt, since so many global interests are at stake. As per usual, economics are at the heart of the struggle. Noam Chomsky draws analogies between the US weaponization of space to good old-fashioned colonialism in the tradition of empire. In the name of protecting commercial investment, the US has charged itself with being the arbiter of peace in space. But with the weapons industry replacing almost all other manufacturing in America, is this simply a ruse? Many experts unequivocally state that missile defense is the longest running fraud in the history of US defense. That it, in fact, disguises true American intentions to

dominate space as a means of dominating the entire globe. (Getting rid of the anti-ballistic missile treaty was one of the first activities undertaken by the Bush Administration.)

If a space war were to happen, the effects could prove catastrophic. Since there is no way to clean up debris and space junk, it stays in orbit, circling the globe at some 14,000 miles per hour. At this speed, even a pea-sized piece of debris has the capacity to destroy whatever is in its path. This includes satellites that regulate most of the world's information systems (everything from GPS to banking to media). But with China shooting down one of their own aging satellites, the race shows every sign of heating up. This time, the sky may indeed be falling.