***Old Dominion University***

***College of Arts and Letters***

***The Graduate Program in International Studies***

## **Doctoral Dissertation Defense**

**Alessandro Shimabukuro**

**The Right to Bear Space Arms: U.S. Resistance to Arms Control in Space**

Abstract

Many nations use satellites for a diverse set of economic, scientific and military purposes. The United States is the most efficient user of space based systems, benefiting greatly from the use of satellites, but is also one of its most dependent users. Potential adversaries have taken note of this dependence, and most importantly, its vulnerability. The United States views the weaponization of space (the development, deployment and use of space weapons) as a possible option in defending these assets. Considering that current technology and proven anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities consist of crude and relatively cheap ballistic missiles capable of destroying satellites in low Earth orbit, and that the consequent debris field generated from such strikes risk more American satellites than those of potential adversaries, why does the United States currently resist any arms control agreements on space weapons? Through the analysis of U.S. government documents and reports, academic research on U.S. military space policy and debates on U.S. power after the Cold War, this dissertation argues that current U.S. resistance to arms control agreements related to space weapons is an example of how primacy allows it to resist negotiations in favor of flexibility so as to preserve its preeminent position.

**Dissertation Chair: Dr. Regina Karp**

**Dissertation Committee: Dr. Simon Serfaty, Dr. Jonathan Leib**

*Batten Arts and Letters Building*

*Room 7009*

May 8th, 1:30 PM