

# Space Solar Power: An Overview

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# Outline

- Introduction
- History
- Selected critical advances since the 1980s
- Comparison of Leading Approaches to Space Solar Power
- Programmatic Activities
- Hyper-Modular SPS-ALPHA : some detailed numbers
- Summing up

# Why are Novel Energy Solutions important...? urgent need to solve Carbon Net-Zero challenge for the World ...

We must transition more than ~3 Billion individuals in “current economies” to net-zero carbon energy by 2050

AND

Provide Sustainable Energy to an additional ~6 Billion in “emerging economies” during this Century

## EURASIA (Western & Northern Asia)

Population Today: 0.93 Billion  
Energy Today : 19,100-kWh/person  
Population in 2100: 1.1 Billion

## CHINA

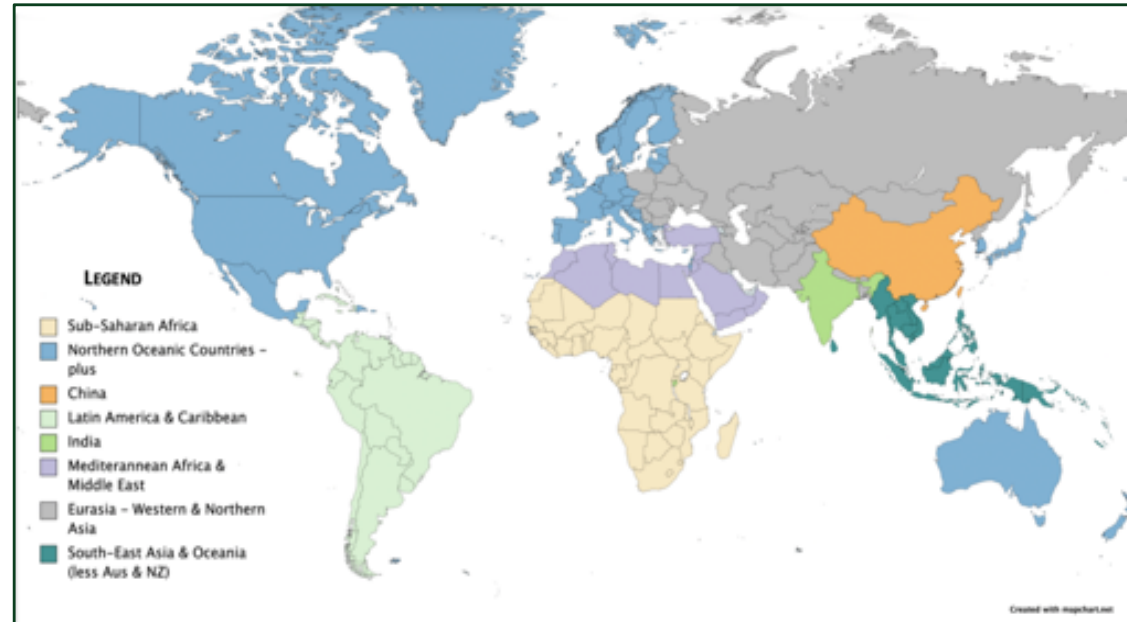
Population Today: 1.47 Billion  
Energy Today : 26,500-kWh/person  
Population in 2100: ~1.09 Billion

## NORTHERN OCEANIC

Population Today: 1.03 Billion  
Energy Today : 58,000-kWh  
per person  
Population in 2100: 1.1 Billion

## LATIN AMERICA & CARRIBEAN

Population Today: 0.65 Billion  
Energy Today : **11,000-kWh**  
per person  
Population in 2100: 0.68 Billion



## INDIA

Population Today: 1.45 Billion  
Energy Today : **7,800-kWh**  
per person  
Population in 2100: 1.45 Billion

## SOUTH-ASIA & OCEANIA

Population Today: 0.71 Billion  
Energy Today : **14,600-kWh**  
per person  
Population in 2100: 0.79 Billion

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

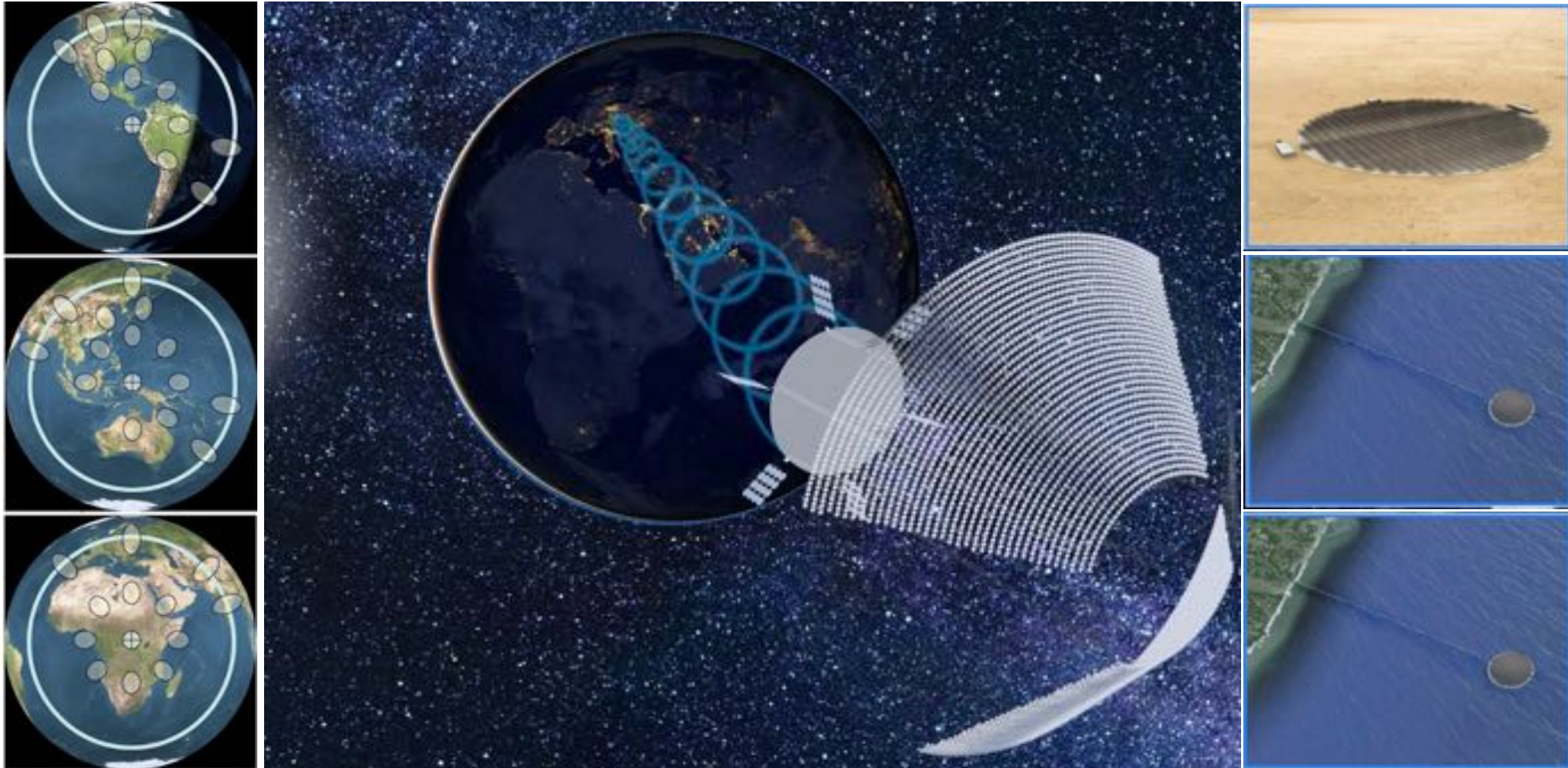
Population Today: 1.09 Billion  
Energy Today : **5,900-kWh/person**  
**Population in 2100: 3.7 Billion**

## MEDITERRANEAN AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

Population Today: 0.53 Billion  
Energy Today : 27,500-kWh/person  
**Population in 2100: 0.93 Billion**



# The Vision of Space Solar Power



# How Would Space Solar Power Work?



## THE SUN

- Can power 2,880 trillion light bulbs
- 1.4 million kilometer diameter
- The Sun has enough hydrogen fuel for billions of years



## SPS-ALPHA SPACE-BASED HARVESTING

- ~6 km reflector array
- ~1.8 km solar PV panels + wireless power transmitter array
- ~7 km backbone structure
- Modular, robotic construction
- Cheap to launch; less than \$1,000/kg
- 99.95% Available Power

## MICROWAVE ENERGY TRANSFER

- Precisely controlled transmission of energy
- Less than 20% of summer sunlight
- Can be “shared” across receivers and coordinated with ground-based solar



## GROUND STATION

- ~6km diameter (elevated 5-10 m)
- Outside metro areas
- Mesh RF ‘Rectifying Antenna’ system
- Uses batteries to modulate supply to the existing electricity grid



## EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- DC or AC fed into the local grid
- Resembles Hydroelectric Power – but...
- “Always” available
- “Shareable” across markets

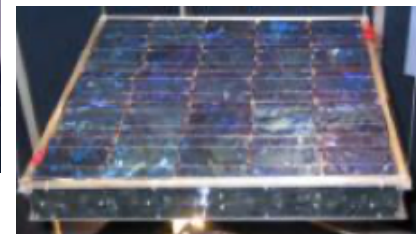


## HOMES AND BUSINESSES

- Base Load low cost electricity
- No carbon emissions
- Supports use at all hours of the day



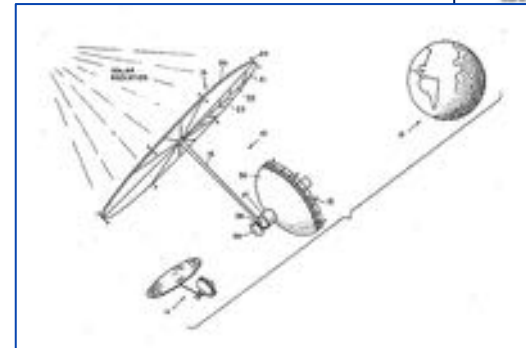
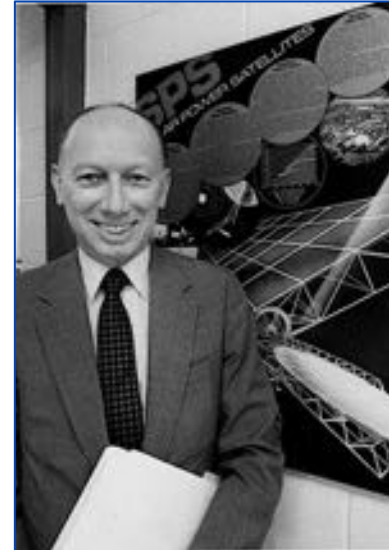
# End-to-End Demonstrations of SSP Energy Conversion Physics



# Outline

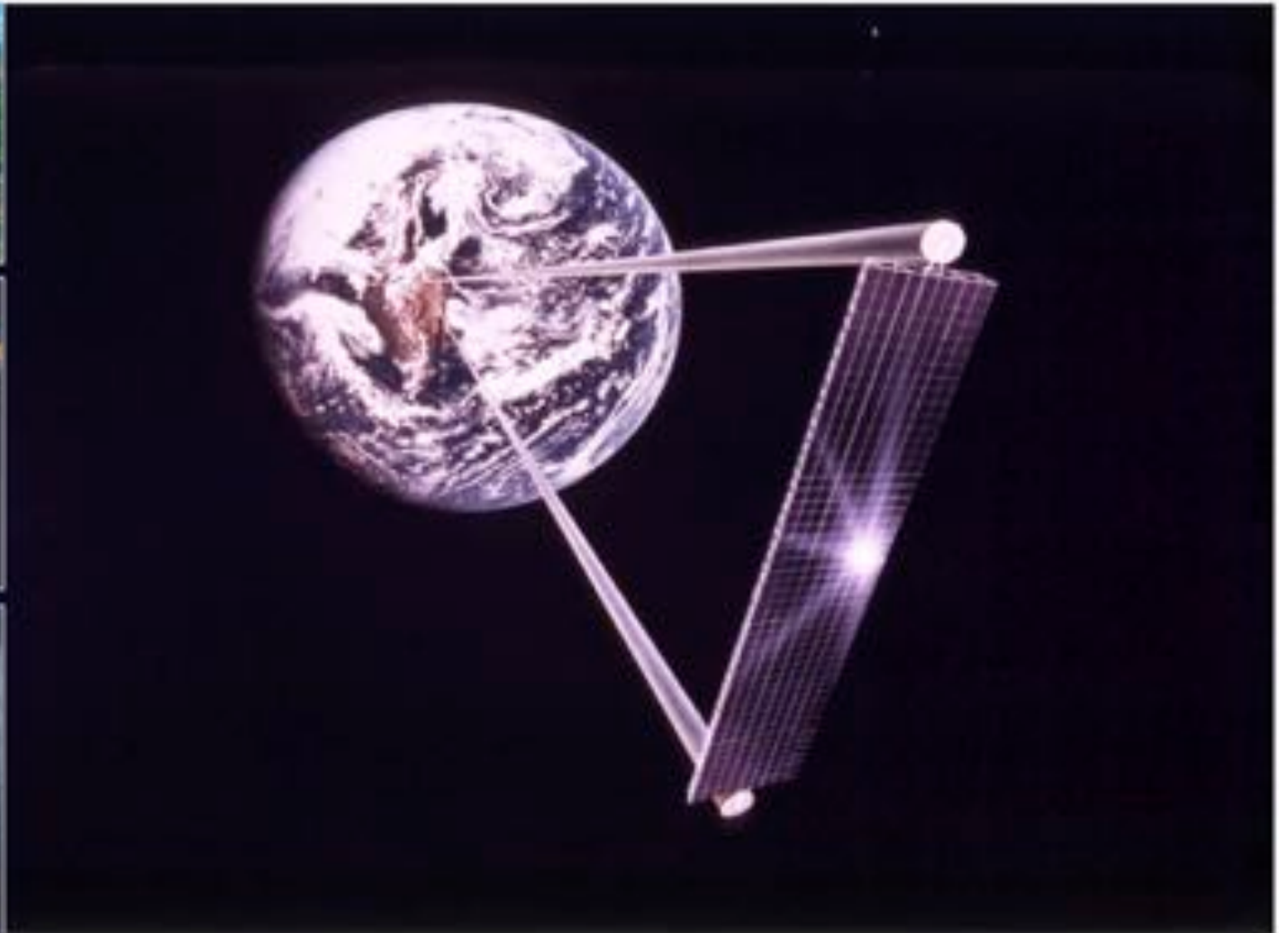
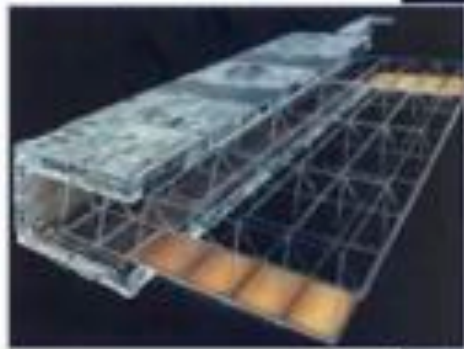
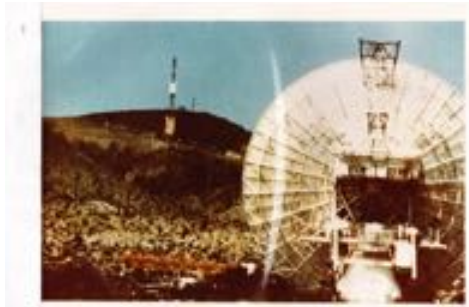
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# 1940s-1960s

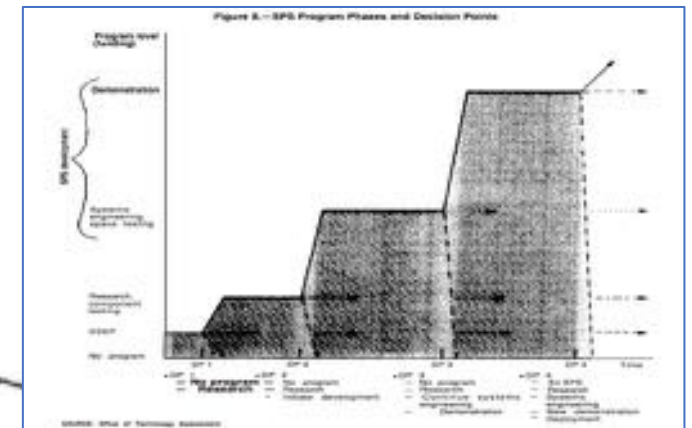
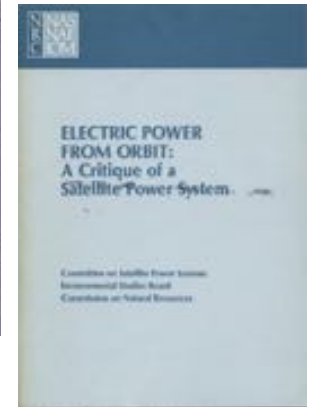
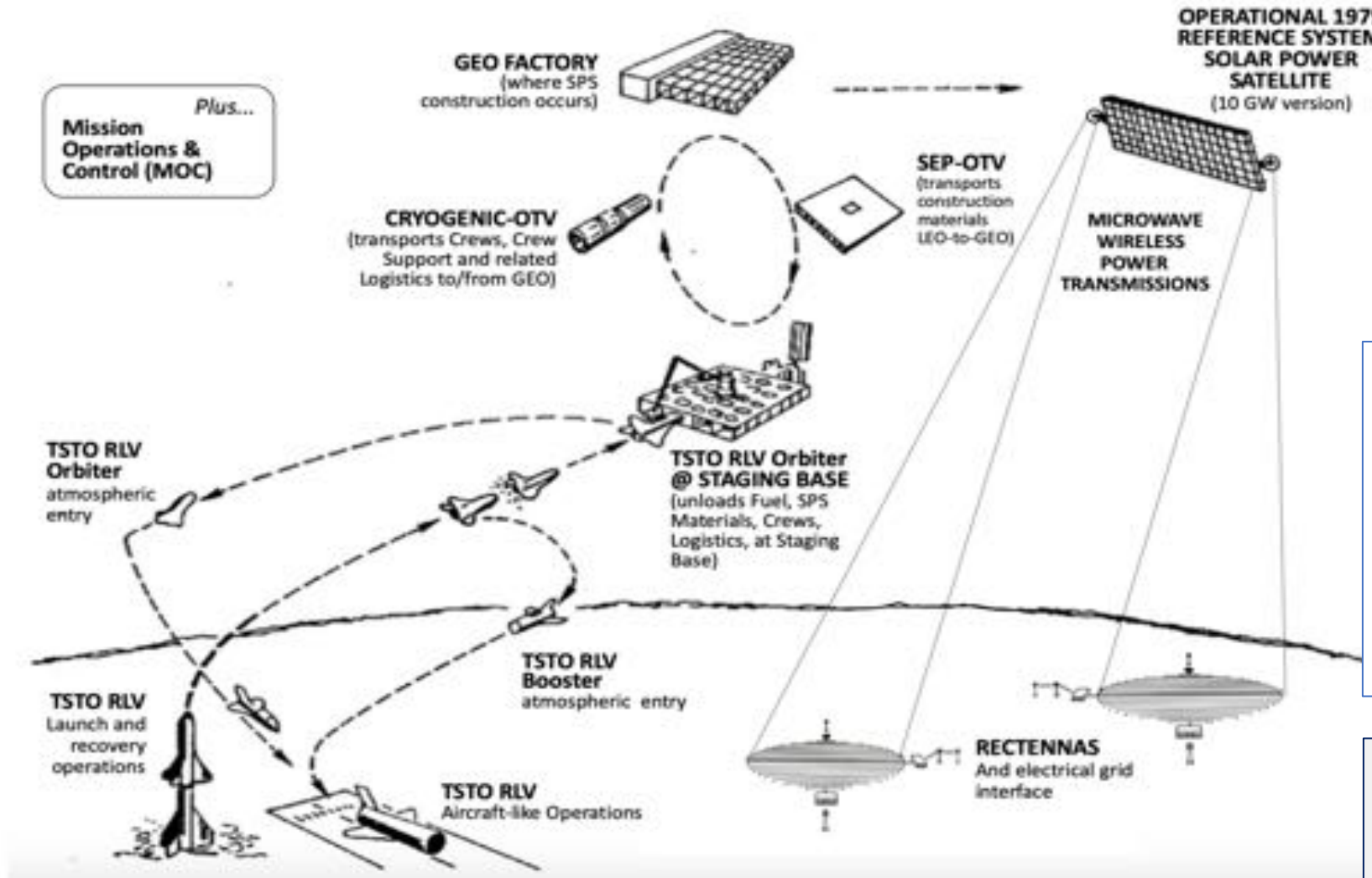




# 1970s-1980s



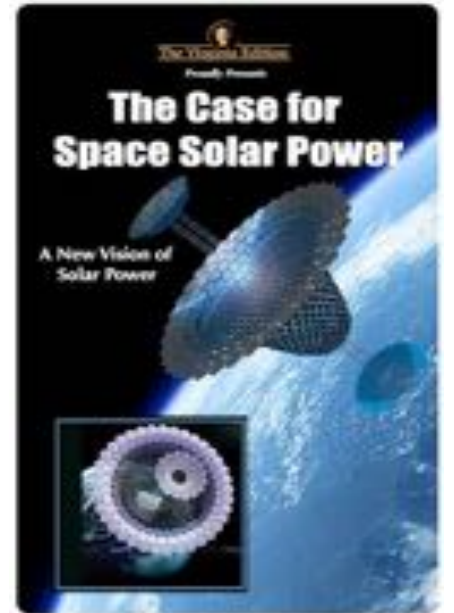
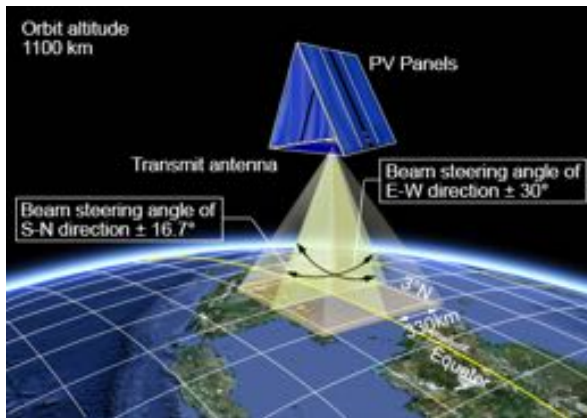
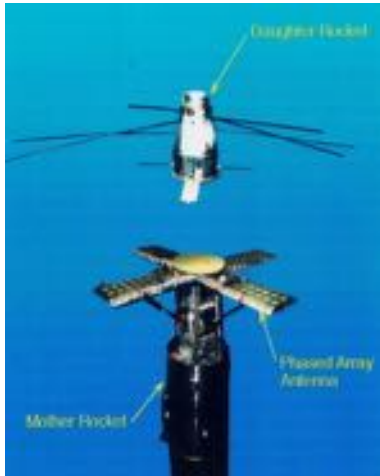
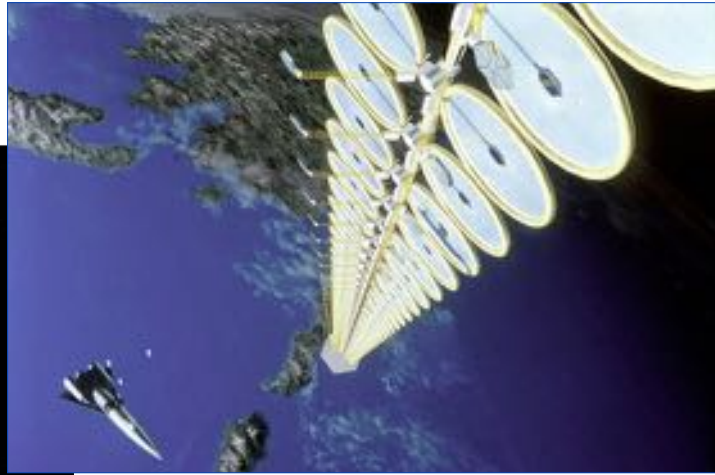
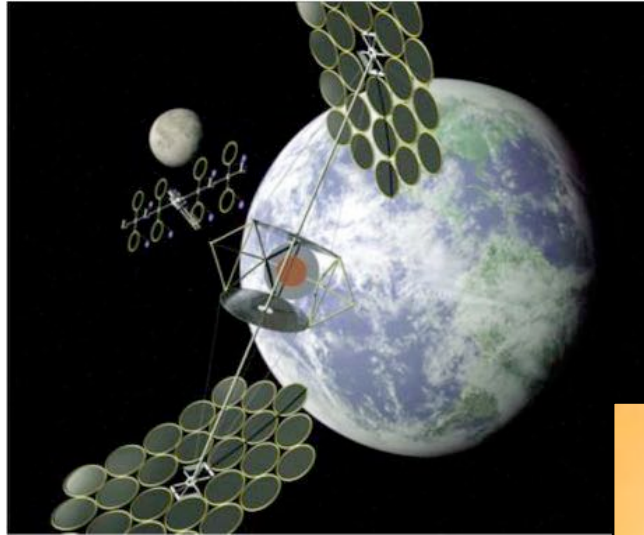
# 1979 Reference System - CONOPS



Using 1976 Technology  
Roughly 20 years &  
\$1,000 B to "First kW-hr"



c. 1990 to c. 2015





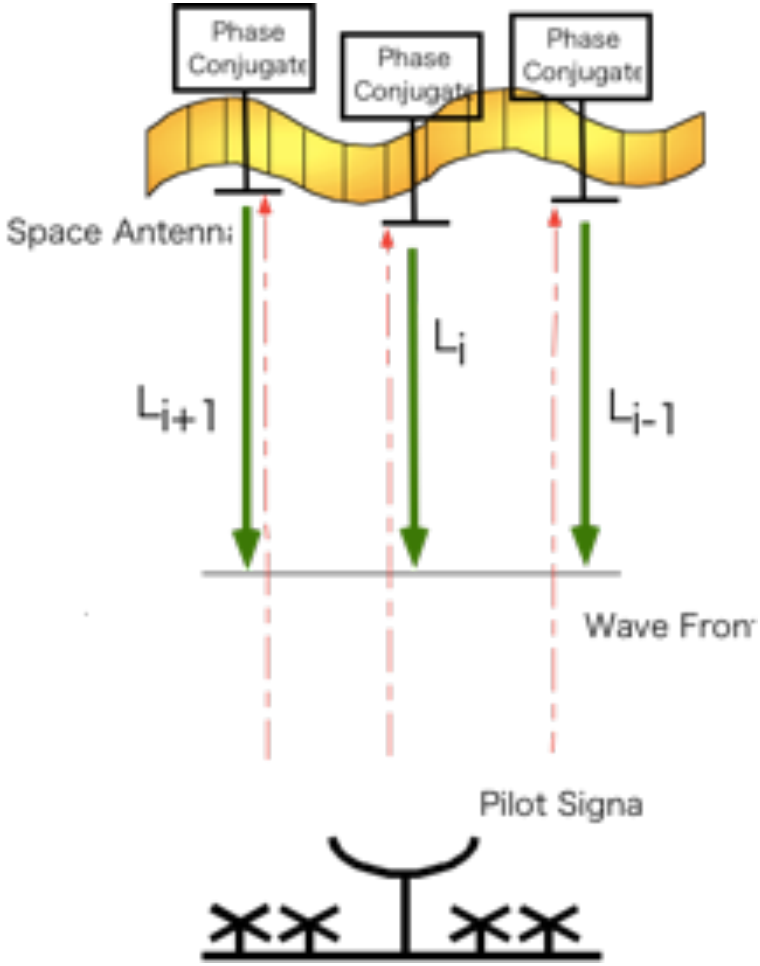
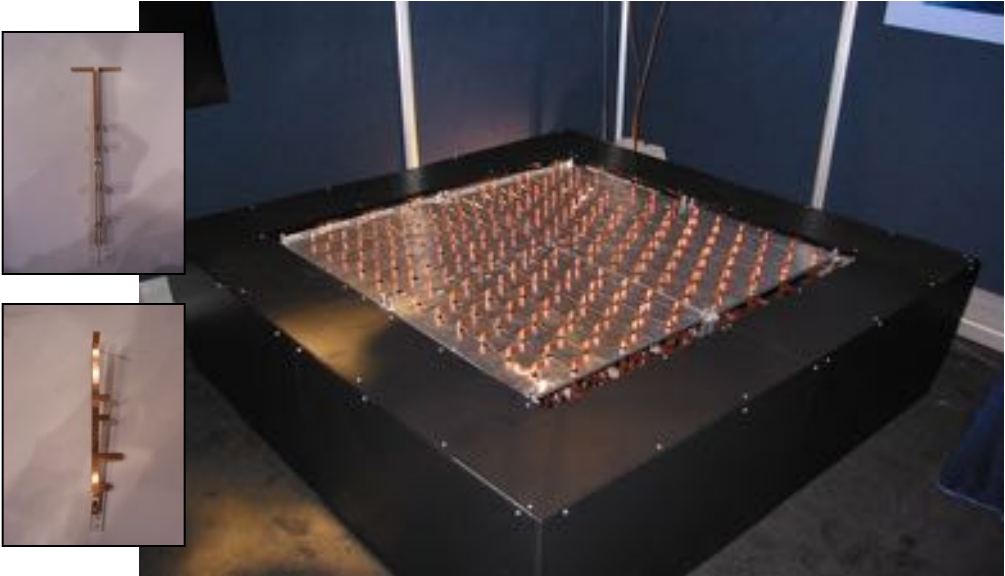
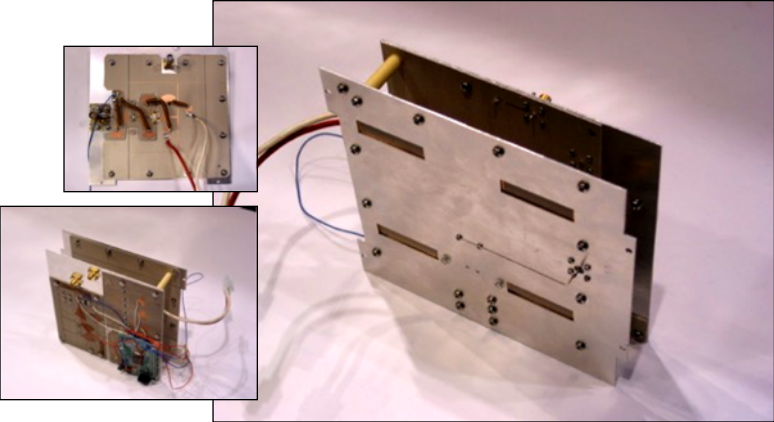
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Since 1980, multiple revolutionary advances...

- High-efficiency PV (30%-plus versus 10%)
- High-efficiency solid-state power amplifiers versus electron tubes (up to 70%-80% vs. 20%)
- Tele-supervised / semi-autonomous / automated robotics
- Low-mass, deployable reflectors
- Information, Not Structure
- Low-cost launch
- Low-cost / mass produced space systems

# Trading Information for Mass: Retrodirective Phased Arrays and Flexible Structures





# Realizing Low Cost Space Launch



## Past

Since ~1960s...  
LEO Launch Cost  
@ < \$20,000/kg

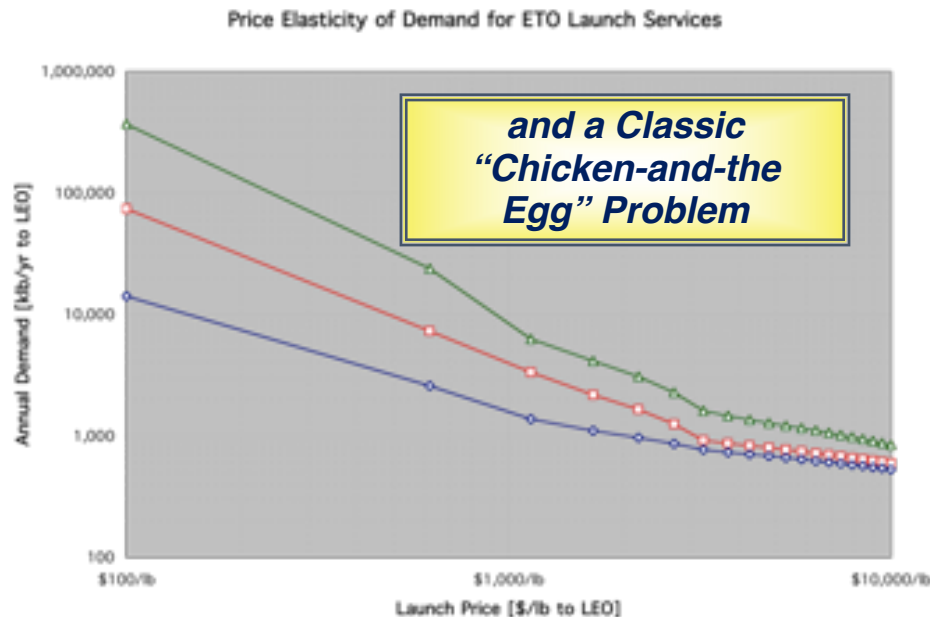


## Future

After ~2025 (?)...  
LEO Launch Cost  
@ ~ \$100/kg to  
LEO  
Reduction: >99%

## Present

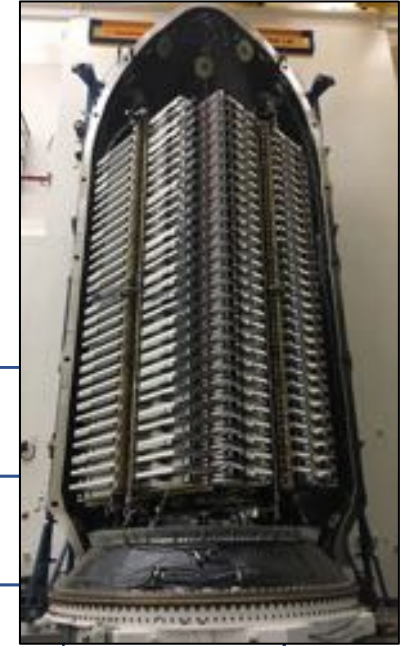
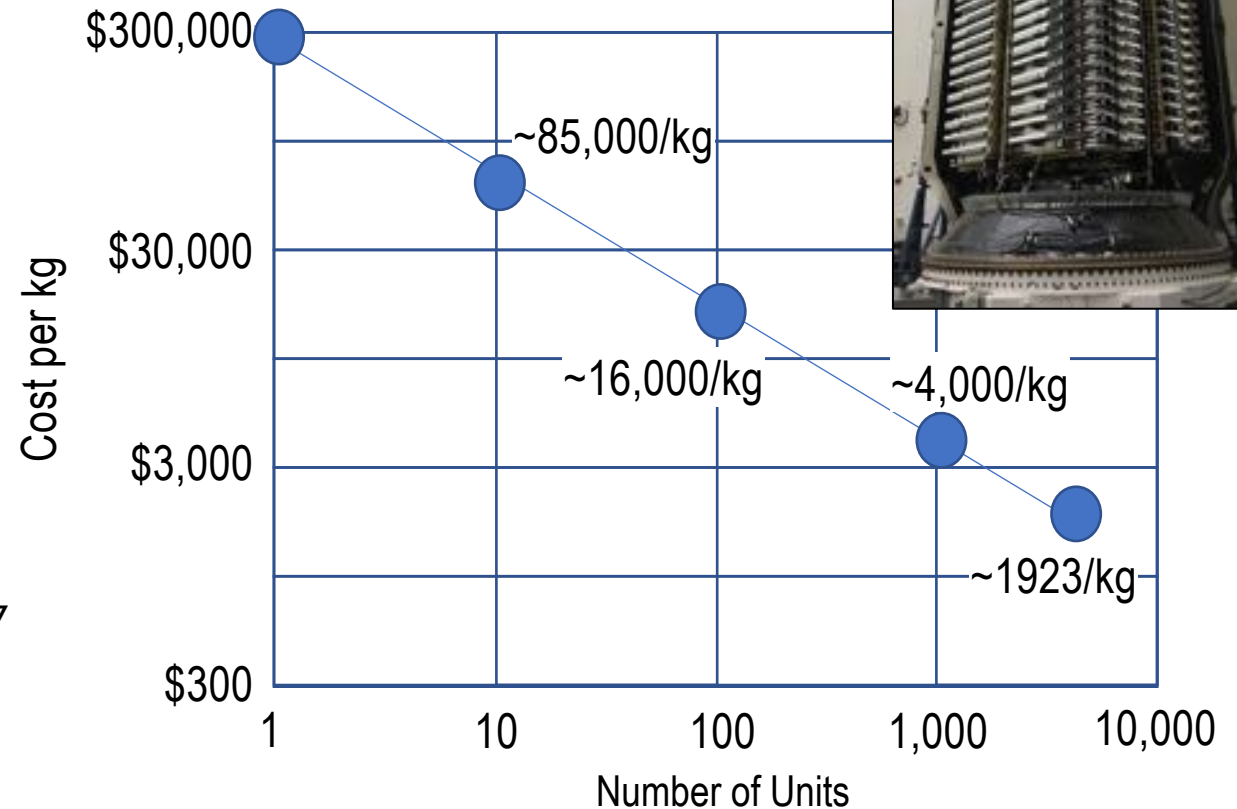
Since 2015...  
LEO Launch Cost  
@ < \$2,000/kg  
Reduction >90%



# Mass Production of Space Systems

- Description
  - Initial Constellation: 4,400 Satellites
  - RF Satellites
  - Solar-powered (@ ~5 kW)
  - Dry Mass: @ 260 kg
  - @ \$500,000 each)
- Manufacturing Capacity:
  - @ 120 Satellites / Month
  - @ ~30 MT / Month
- Estimated Development “CER”
  - ~\$200K – \$300K / kg
  - Estimated Manufacturing Curve: ~0.7

**HW Cost Reduction: >99%**



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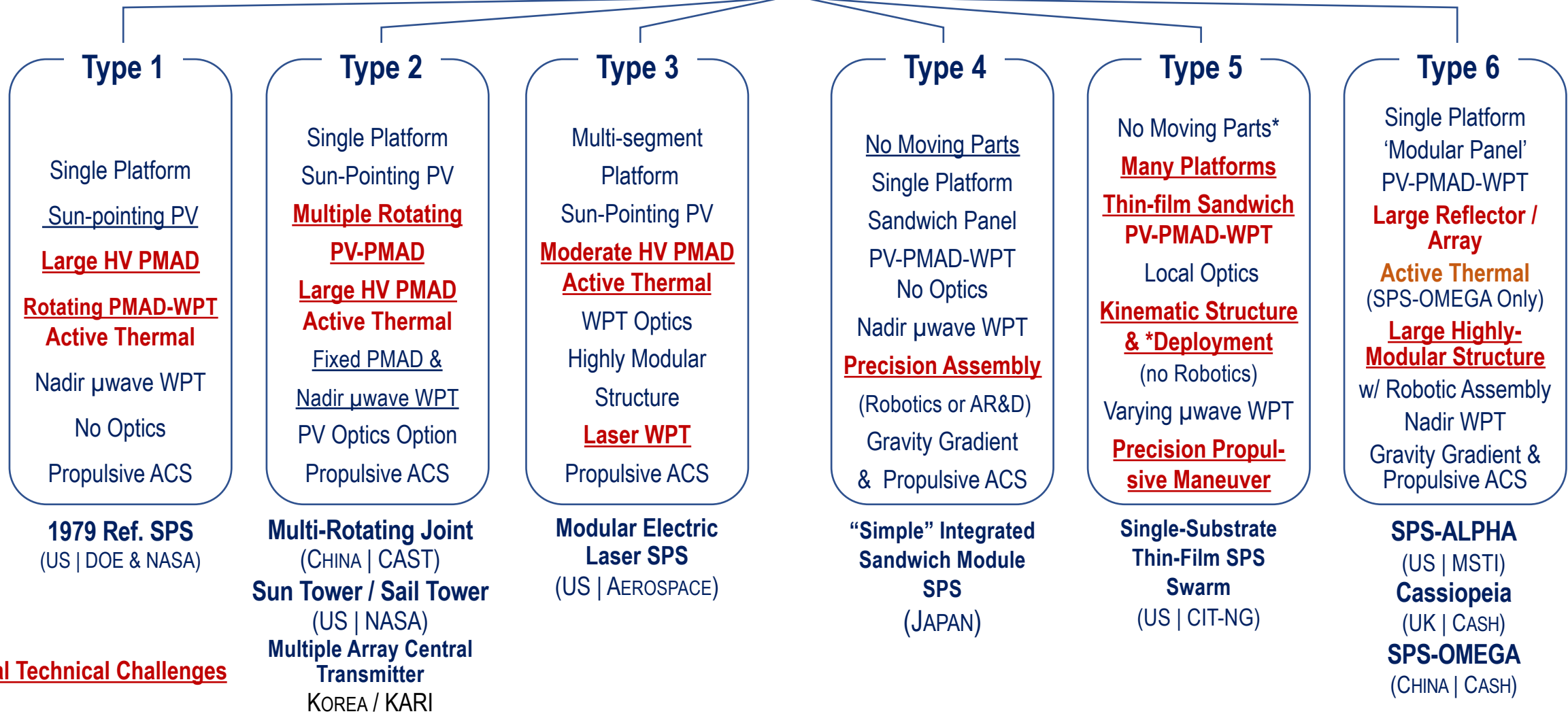


# Creating a Taxonomy for Solar Power Satellites (Design, Technology, CONOPs...)

- Critical Characteristics for Solar Power Satellite Platforms?
  - Frequency / type of power delivery from space to ground?
  - Voltage/Scale of the power management and distribution (PMAD) system
  - Use of rotary systems: with / without PMAD? Scale?
  - Active thermal or not?
  - Type of structural system: 'stick built'? large modular? thin-film?
  - Robotic assembly or kinematically deployed structural systems?
  - Type of solar power generation (SPG): PV, dynamic, solar-pumped, mirrors?
  - SPG input: solar redirection using Reflectors or not? Large single mirror or smaller heliostats?
  - One platform or more? Physically connected or not?

# SPS Taxonomy (1 of 2)

## Space Solar Power Major Platform Concepts Taxonomy

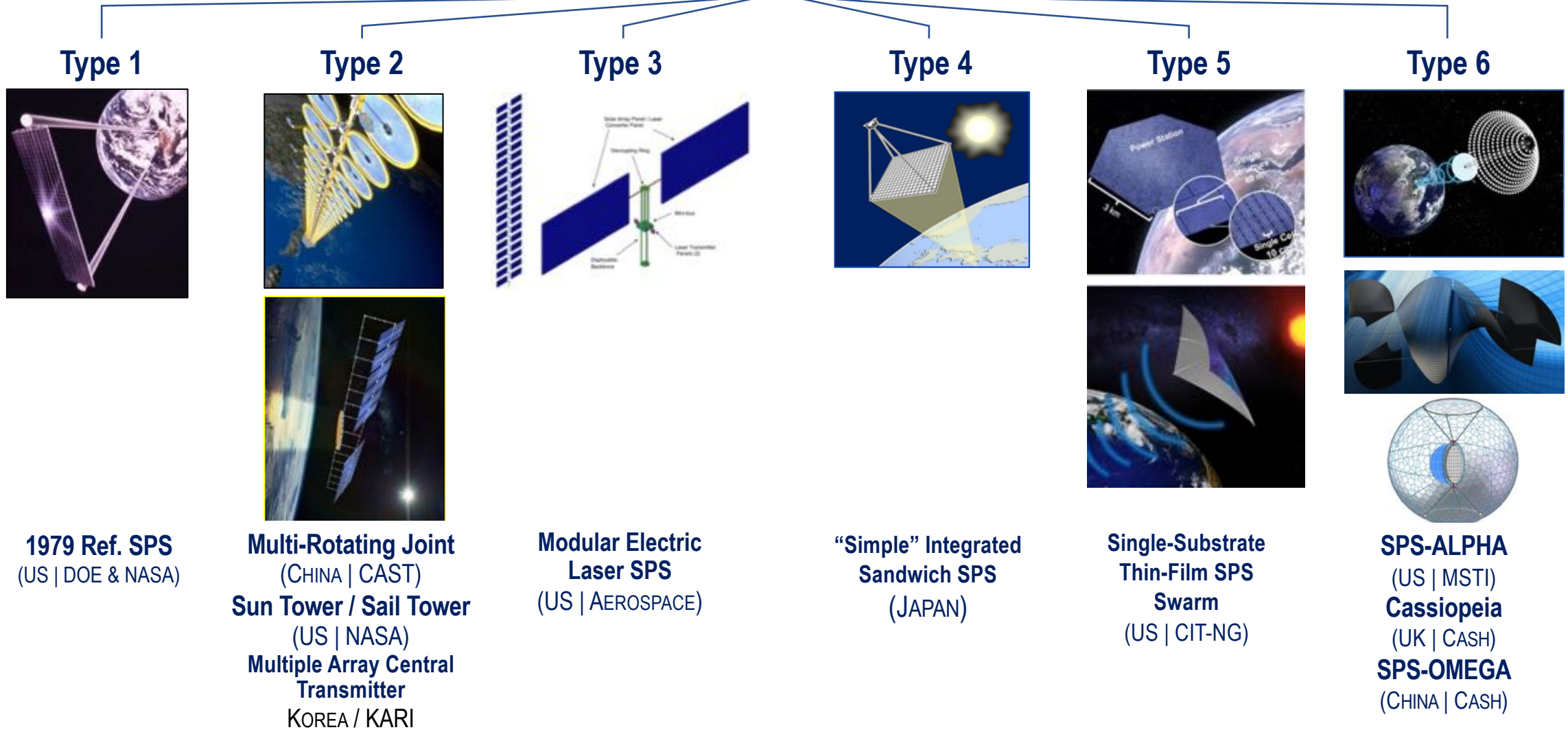


Special Technical Challenges

# SPS Taxonomy

## 2 of 2

### Space Solar Power Major Platform Concepts Taxonomy

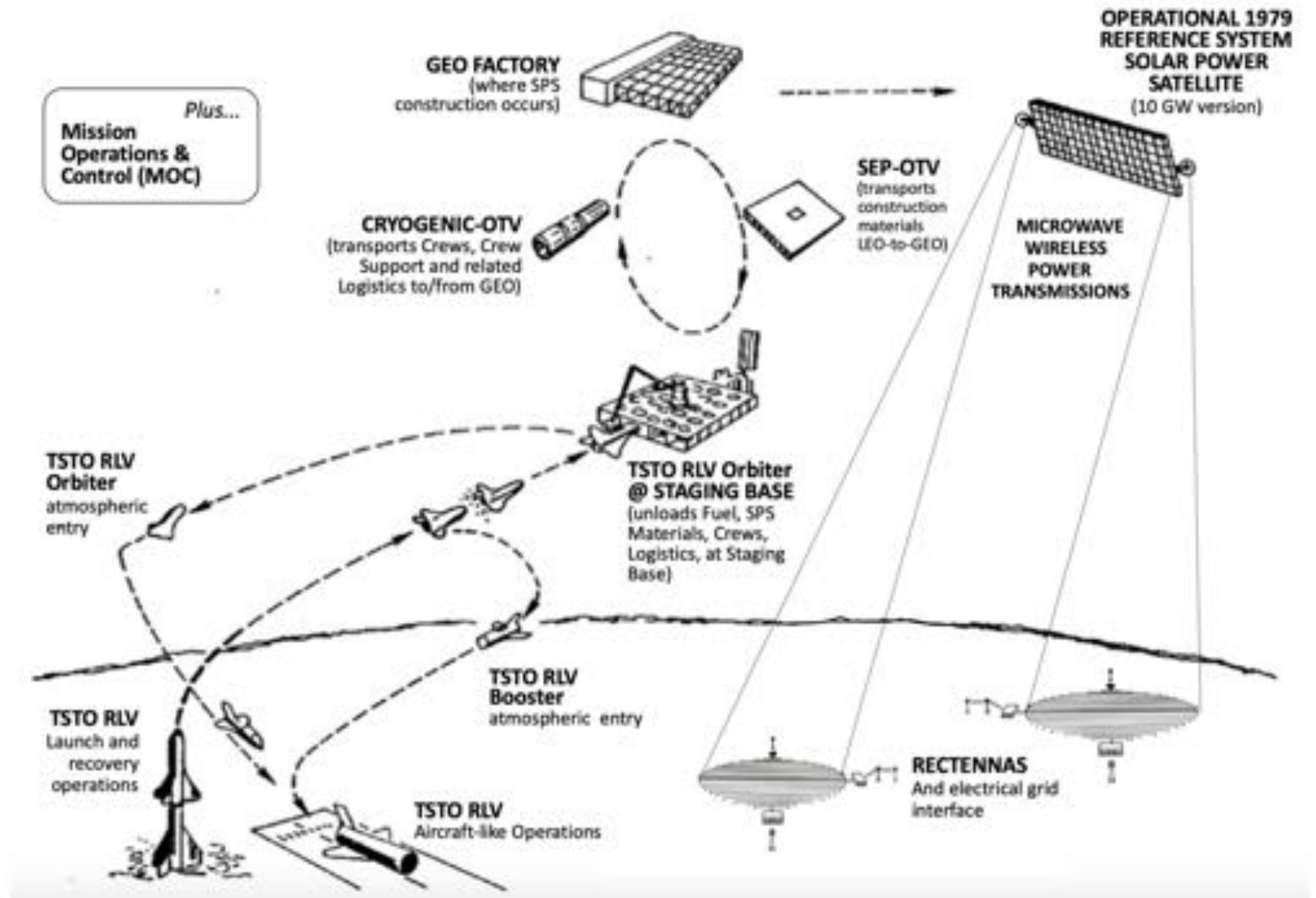
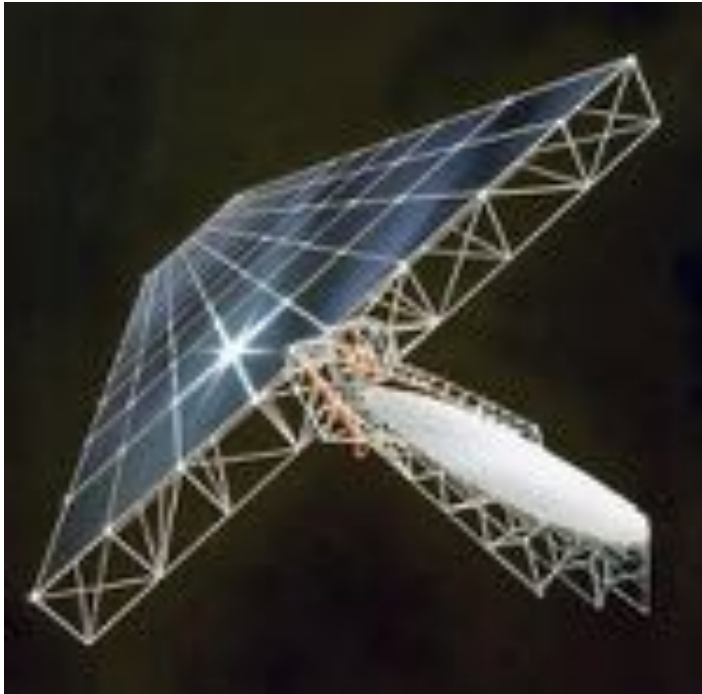


# Comparison of SPS Options: Common **Assumptions**

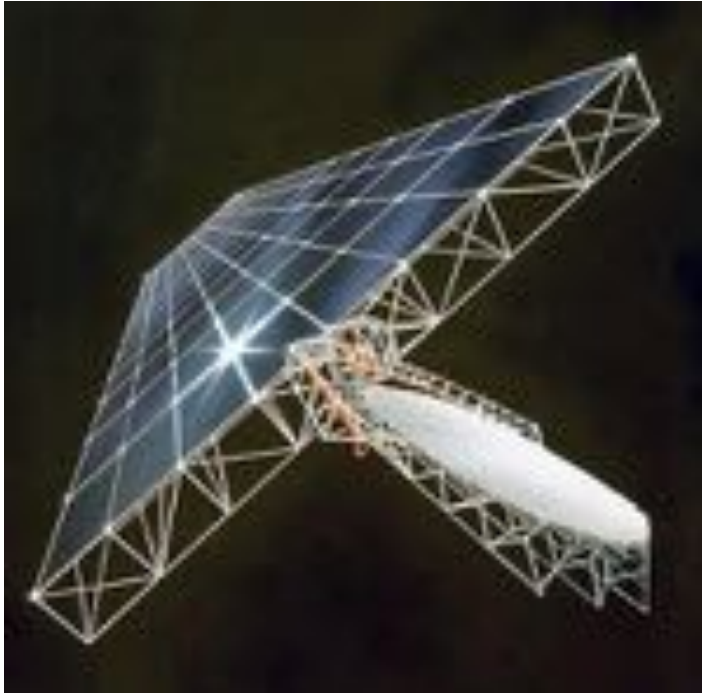
- Power Delivered to Grid @ 2 GW
- Lifetime: @ 30 years
- Total Energy Delivered (24/7 Cases): ~525,960,000,000 kWh
- Cost of Transport @ \$200 / kg (= Starship+Heavy Booster x 2)
- Operations in GEO (35,000 km distance for power transmission)
- Operations & Maintenance @ 3% of capital cost per year
- Cost of Money @ 5% / year
- Cost of in-space infrastructure to be used for 300 GW total SPS power delivered
- Cost of Receiver is the same for all SPS concepts, *and* small compared to space segment



# 1979 SPS Reference Concept – USA (DOE / NASA) / 2015 SPS Type 1 | CONOPS



# 1979 SPS Reference Concept – USA (DOE / NASA) | 1978 SPS Type 1 | Summary Assessment



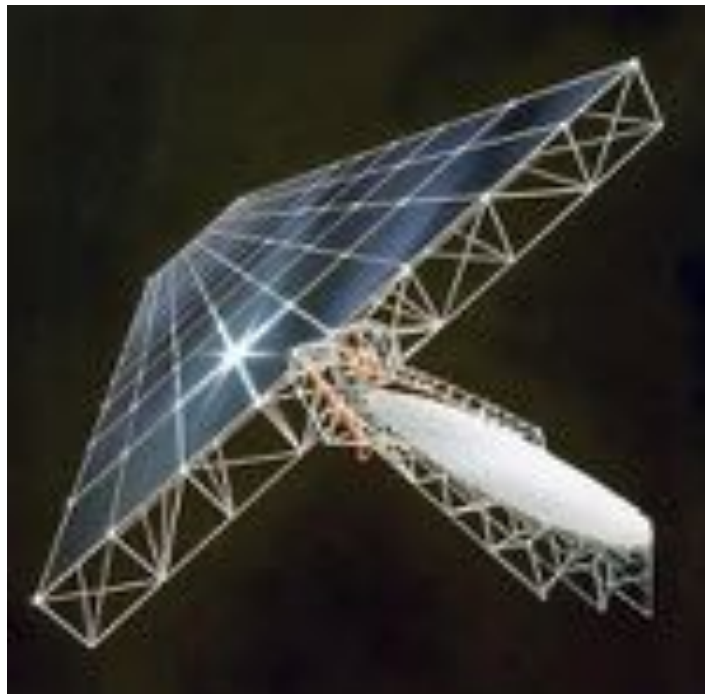
## PROS:

- Relatively simple architectural solution
- highly similar to conventional spacecraft
- Uses ISS-derived in-space infrastructure

## CONS:

- Highly challenging development program
- Factories in LEO and GEO required (Concept requires astronaut EVA for construction)
- 3 ETO systems required (booster, cargo, crew)
- Minimally Modular architecture – high cost per module
- High technology risk high-voltage PMAD required (many 1,000s of meters)
  - ✓ Scaling-up requires redesign of PMAD / Thermal systems

# 1979 SPS Reference Concept – USA (DOE / NASA) | 1978 SPS Type 1 | Details & Normalization\*



- Wavelength: 2.45 GHz
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - PV @ 10% (vs. 20% for Normalized case)
  - PMAD @ ~85%
  - WPT @ (2.45 GHz)
    - ✓ 80% Transmitter (magnetron)
    - ✓ 90% Rectenna
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Low...
  - ~10 MT / module
- Power Availability:
  - 99.95% @ 24 / 7
- Major In-Space Infrastructure
  - SEPS / Cryo OTVs
  - Space Stations for Workers
  - Factories (LEO & GEO)

\* Note: since the 1979 study, the ISS and Space Shuttle programs have provided a better baseline cost estimate; the revised figures are used here.

	BASELINE	NORMALIZED
POWER DELIVERED	~10 GW	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	2 * 1 km	~ 1 km
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	20 km	10 km
SPS MASS (MT)	~106,000 MT	~20,000 MT
SPS HW COST (\$)	\$869 B	~ \$160 B
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	\$2,813 B / SPS	\$4 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	\$99 B / SPS	~\$300 B / SPS
EST. SYSTEM COST	~\$3,894 B	~\$464 B
EST. O&M COST	~\$ 113B @ ~0.3% / yr	~\$420 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	N/A	\$696 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	~\$1.48 / kWh	\$3.00 / kWh

# Multi-Rotary Joints (MRJ) Solar Power Satellite – China | 2015

## SPS Type 2 | Summary Assessment



### PROS:

- Relatively simple architectural solution; similar to others
- Minimal up-front space infrastructure
- Use of common launchers
- Selected highly modular elements (PV, WPT)

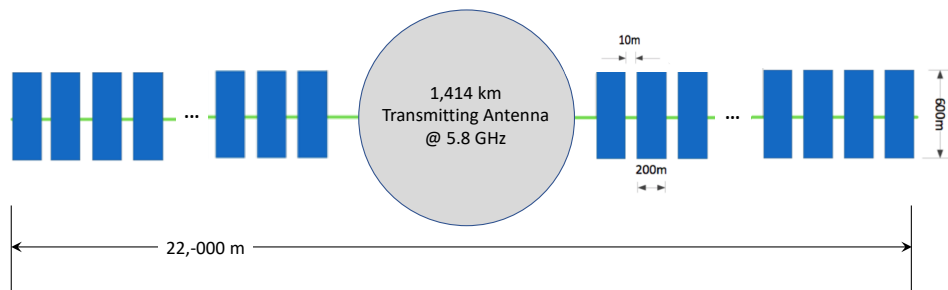
### CONS:

- Challenging development
- Requires large structural system
- Partially Integrated / Partially Modular architecture – higher cost per module
- High-voltage PMAD required (many 1,000s of meters)
  - ✓ Scaling-up requires redesign of PMAD / Thermal systems
- Requires precision free-flying robotics for assembly



# Multi-Rotary Joints (MRJ) Solar Power Satellite – China | 2015

## SPS Type 2 | Details and Normalization

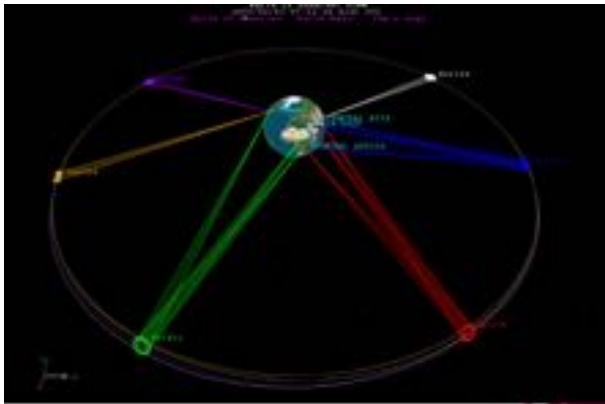
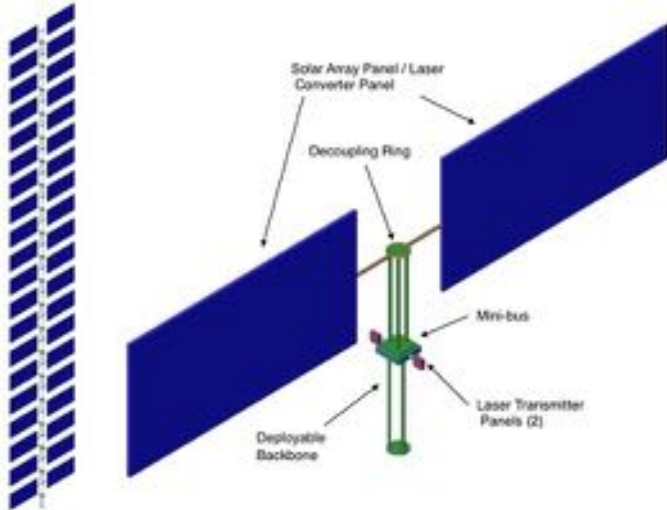


- Wavelength: 5.8 GHz
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - PV @ 30%
  - PMAD @ 85%
  - WPT @ (5.8 GHz)
    - 85% Transmitter (solid state)
    - 90% Rectenna
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Moderate
  - ~1 MT / module
- Power Availability:
  - 99.95% @ 24 / 7
- In-Space Infrastructure
  - SEPS OTVs
  - Free-flying robotics

	BASELINE	NORMALIZED
POWER DELIVERED	~1 GW	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	~ 1 km	~ 1.4 km
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	11.8 km	22 km
SPS MASS (MT)	10,000	20,000
SPS HW COST (\$)	\$9.1 B	~ \$18.2 B
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	\$10 B / SPS	\$4 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	\$3.8 B/SPS	\$7.6 B / SPS
EST. SYSTEM COST	~\$28 B	~\$30 B
O&M COST	~\$4 B @ ~0.7% / yr	~\$27 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	~\$36 B	~\$45 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	~24¢ / kWh	\$19¢ / kWh

# Modular Electric Laser Solar Power Satellite – USA | 2000

## SPS Type 3 | Summary Assessment



### PROS:

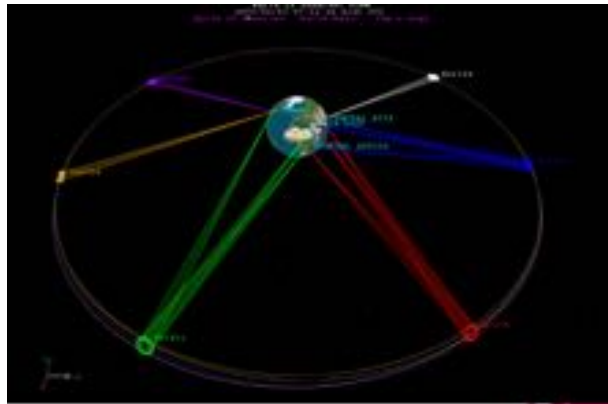
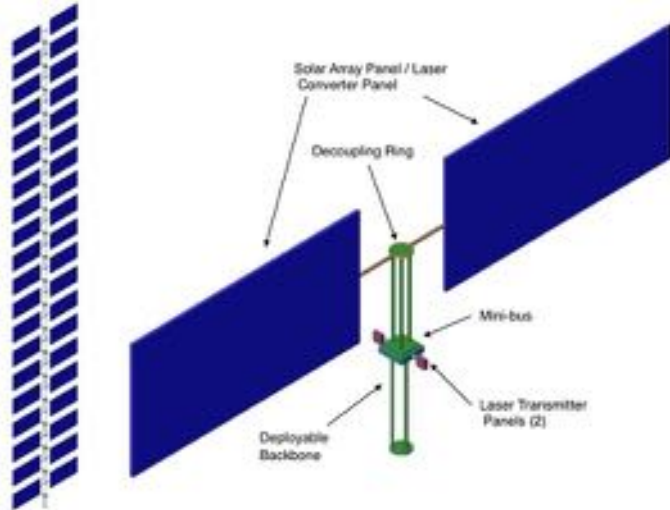
- Lowest cost for entry to deliver power from GEO
- No in-space assembly robotics or infrastructure required

### CONS:

- Low-to-medium Modularity architecture – higher cost per module
- High technology risk in optical systems required
- Partially Integrated / Partially Modular architecture – higher cost per module
- High-voltage PMAD required (many 1,000s of meters)
  - ✓ Scaling-up requires redesign of PMAD / Thermal systems
- Requires precision free-flying robotics for assembly

# Modular Electric Laser Solar Power Satellite – USA | 2000

## SPS Type 3 | Details & Normalization



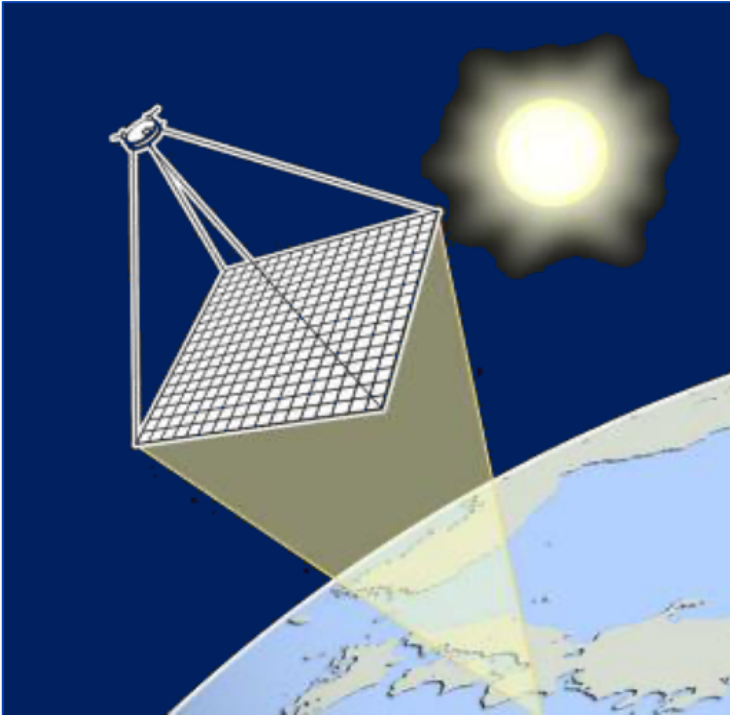
Note: HW costs from source questionable; normalized estimate based on HST / JWST

- Wavelength: near-Visible
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - Lifetime: 20 years (baseline)
  - PV @ 20%~30% efficiency
  - PMAD @ ~90%
  - WPT @ (Laser)
    - 60% Xmitter (solid state + Fiber + Optics)
    - 80% Atmospheric Absorption
    - 60% Tailored PV
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Low-to-Moderate
  - ~23,000 kg / module
- Power Availability:
  - ~65% of 99.95% (During Clear Weather; depends on location)
- Major In-Space Infrastructure: N/A
  - Not Required

	BASELINE	NORMALIZED
PEAK POWER DELIVERED	~1.2 GW	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	~3-5 m (single optics)	~3-5 m (single optics)
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	~1 km	~1 km
SPS MASS (MT)	11,000 MT	~18,400 MT
SPS HW COST* (\$)	~\$32 B*	~\$110 B*
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	~\$22 B / SPS	~\$4 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	N/A	N/A
EST. SYSTEM COST	~\$54 B	~ \$114 B
EST. O&M COST	N/A	~\$102 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	N/A	\$171 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	~40¢ / kWh (@ 20 yr Life)	74¢ / kWh (@30 yr Life)

# Simple Planar SPS – Japan | 2010

## SPS Type 4 | Summary Assessment



### PROS:

- Very simple architectural solution; similar to others
- Very highly modular architecture
- Ease of ground-based testing
- Low-voltage PMAD
- Simple robotic assembly

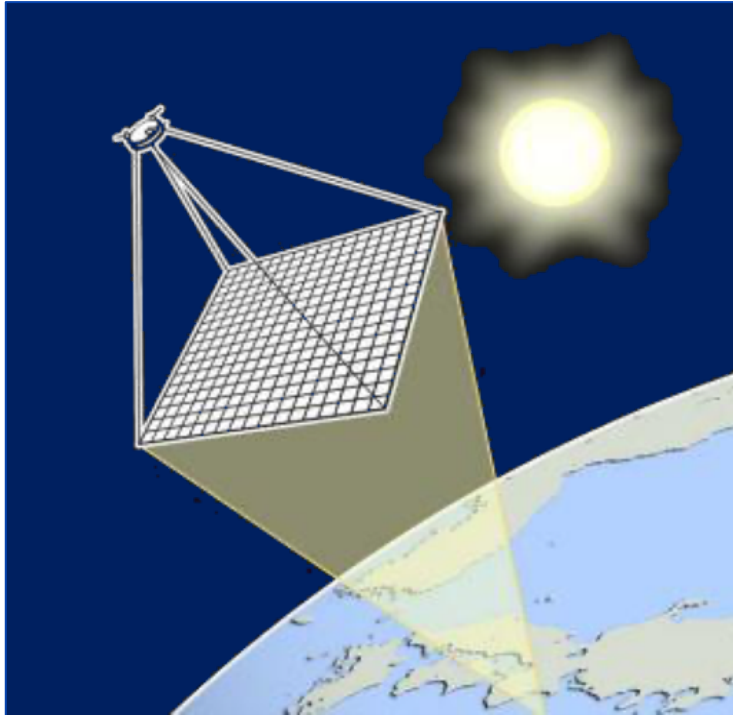
### CONS:

- Simplest development
- Daytime-only Power Generation @ ~25% per 24 hrs
- High estimated cost per kilowatt-hour for energy
- Requires large structural system
- Requires precision free-flying robotics for assembly



# Simple Planar SPS – Japan | 2010

## SPS Type 4 | Details & Normalization\*



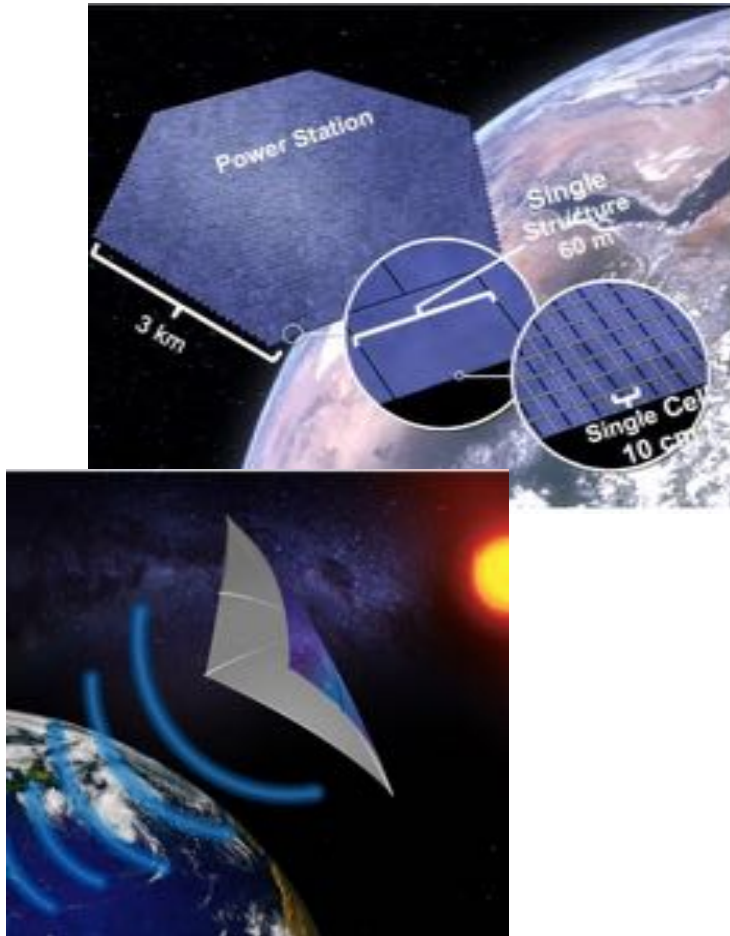
- Wavelength: 2.45 GHz
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - PV @ 20%
  - PMAD @ ~90%
  - WPT @ (2.45 GHz)
    - 70% Transmitter (solid state)
    - 85% Rectenna
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Very High
  - ~150 kg / module
- Power Availability:
  - ~25% @ 24/7
- Major In-Space Infrastructure
  - SEPS
  - Free-flying robotics

\* Note: Robotics are estimated roughly...!

	BASELINE	NORMALIZED
PEAK POWER DELIVERED	~500 MW	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	~1 km	~ 2 km
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	1 km	2 km
SPS MASS (MT)	4,700 MT	~18,800 MT
SPS HW COST (\$)	~\$5 B	~\$20 B
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	\$4.7 B /SPS	~\$4 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	~\$4 B /SPS	~\$4 B /SPS
EST. SYSTEM COST	~\$14 B	~\$28 B
EST. O&M COST	N/A	~\$25 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	N/A	\$42 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	~ 42¢ / kWh	72¢ / kWh

# Thin-Film Single Substrate SPS – USA | 2015

## SPS Type 5 | Summary Assessment



### PROS:

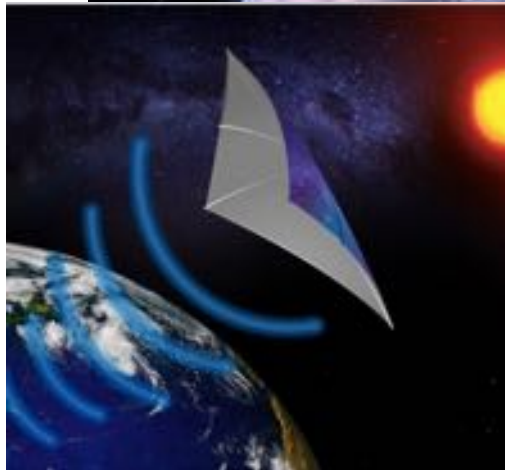
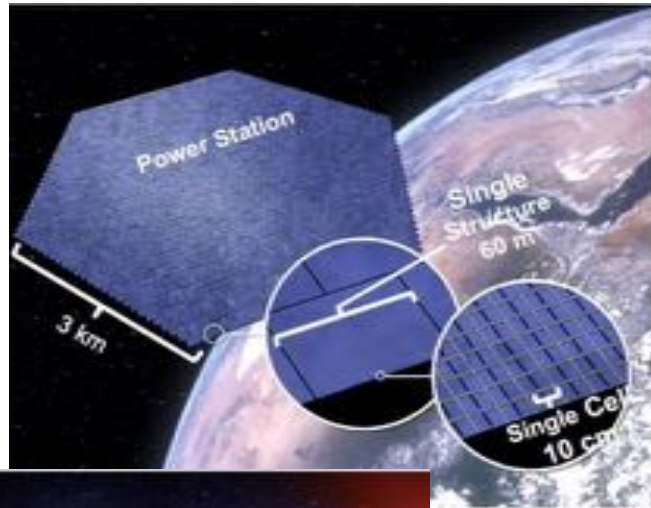
- Lowest mass per square-meter
- “No” in-space assembly robotics or infrastructure required

### CONS:

- Daytime-only Power Generation / ~40% per 24 hrs
- Low Modularity architecture – higher cost per module
- Requires large ‘flexible’ structural system
- Requires precision constellation with near-continuous attitude control / maneuvering required – but no definition
- Low efficiency for components on the thin-film material
- High-risk kinematically-deployed structural system
- Poor definition of refueling / in-space requirements

# Thin-Film Single Substrate SPS – USA | 2015

## SPS Type 5 | Details & Normalization\*



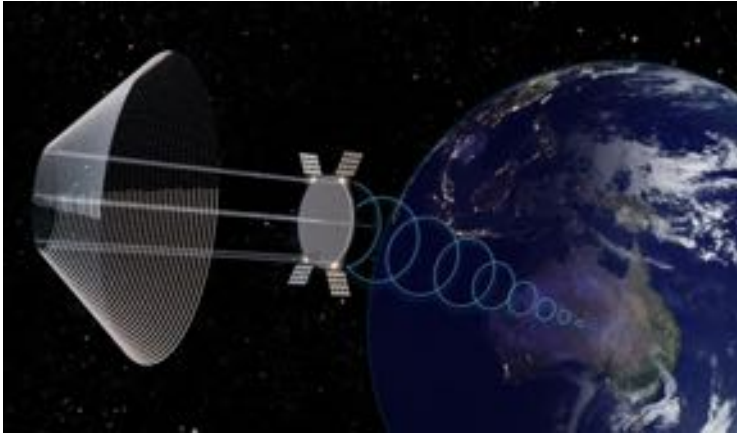
- Wavelength: 10 GHz
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - Lifetime: 15 years (baseline)
  - PV @ ~17%
  - PMAD @ ~100% (?)
  - WPT @ (10 GHz)
    - ✓ 50% Xmtrr (solid state)
    - ✓ 82% Rectenna
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Low @ ~2 MT per module
  - Base for 1 'Module' @ ~\$50M
- Power Availability:
  - Assumed to be ~40% @ 24/7 (w/ cosine losses)
- Major In-Space Infrastructure
  - Minimal
  - SPS 100% replaced at year 15
  - Direct launch to GTO

	BASELINE (15 YEARS)	NORMALIZED (30 YEARS)
PEAK POWER DELIVERED	~100 MW	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	~3 km	~3 km
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	~3 km	~3 km
SPS MASS (MT)	~700 MT (in ~350 modules)	~14,000 MT (in ~6,944 modules)
SPS HW COST (\$)	~\$18 B	~ \$157 B
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	~\$2 B/SPS	~\$3 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	N/A	N/A
EST. SYS. COST (2X FOR 30 YRS)	~\$20 B	~ \$320 B
EST. O&M COST	~6 B 0.02% / year	~ \$288 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	N/A	\$480 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	\$4.94 / kWh	~\$5.20 / kWh

\* Note: No definition of attitude control; No required infrastructure; HW estimate are 'goals' only; 2021 Update

# SPS-ALPHA Mk-III concept – USA | 2020

## SPS Type 6 | Summary Assessment



### PROS:

- Lowest mass per kWh delivered
- Lowest cost per kilowatt-hour for energy
- High modularity
- Common launchers
- No separate space infrastructure required
- Ease of ground testing / scaling up to larger SPS

### CONS:

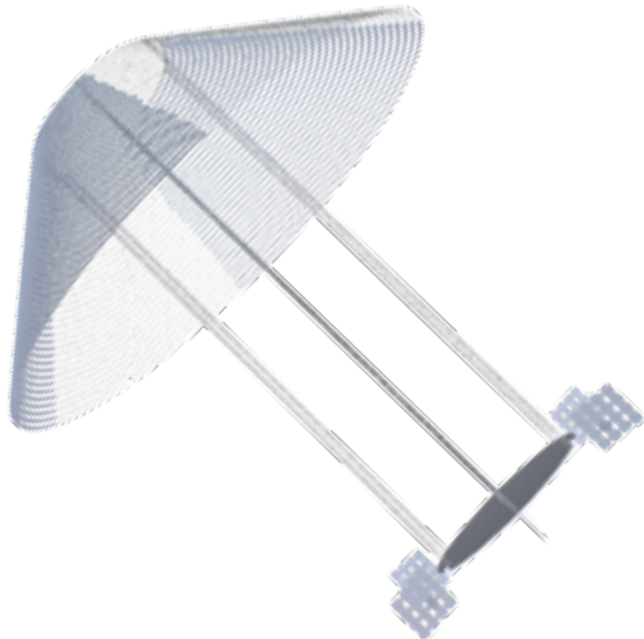
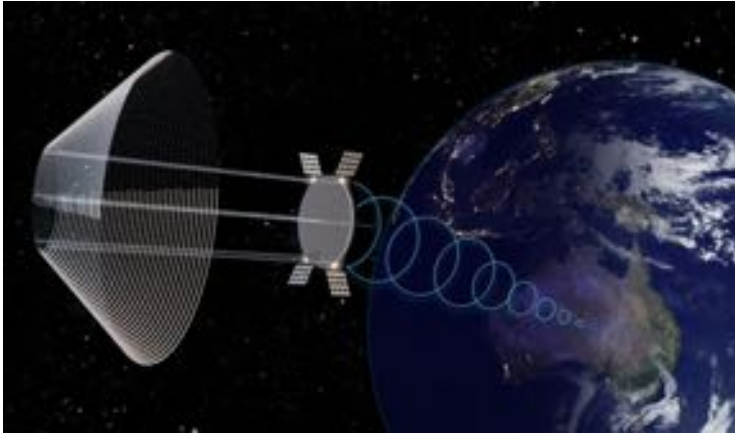
- Requires autonomous Heliostat control and operations
- Requires large structural system
- Involves Moderate technology risk in device efficiency requirements





# SPS-ALPHA Mk-III concept – USA | 2020

## SPS Type 6 | Details & Normalization\*

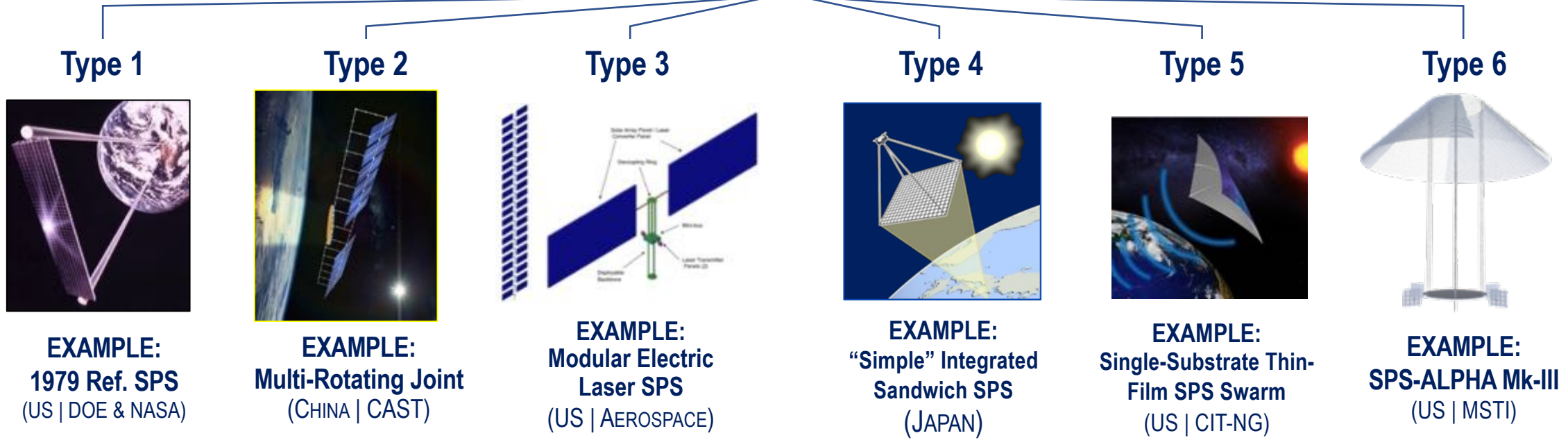


- Wavelength: 2.45 GHz
- Assumed Key Tech:
  - Robotic assessment of modular Systems
  - Independently pointed Heliostats
  - PV @ 40%
  - PMAD @ ~95%
  - WPT @ (2.45 GHz)
    - 70% Xmtr (solid state)
    - 85% Rectenna
- Assessed Modularity:
  - Very high modularity
  - ~5 kg (average) per module
- Power Availability:
  - 99.95 @ 24/7
- Major In-Space Infrastructure
  - None (incorporated into SPS hardware cost)

	BASELINE
PEAK POWER DELIVERED	~2 GW
TRANSMITTER DIAM (KM)	~1.7 km
MAX SPS DIMENSION (KM)	~7 km
SPS MASS (MT)	~7,500 MT
SPS HW COST (\$)	~\$4 B
TRANSPORT COST (\$/SPS)	\$1.5 B / SPS
EST SPACE INFRA-STRUCTURE COST	0
EST. SYSTEM COST	~\$5.5 B
EST. O&M COST	~\$5 B @ 3% / year
FINANCE COST	~\$8.3 B @ 5% / year
LCOE	~4-5¢/kWh

# SPS Comparison

## Space Solar Power Major Platform Concepts Taxonomy



"PLATFORM" MASS (MT)					
20,000 MT	20,000 MT	18,400 MT	18,000 MT	14,000 MT	7,500 MT
COST OF ENERGY DELIVERED (\$ / kWh ) OVER 30 YEAR LIFE					
\$3.00 / kWh	19¢ / kWh	44¢ / kWh	72¢ / kWh	\$5.20 / kWh	4-5¢ / kWh

# Outline

- Introduction
- History
- Selected critical advances since the 1980s
- Comparison of Leading Approaches to Space Solar Power
- **Programmatic Activities**
- Hyper-Modular SPS-ALPHA : some detailed numbers
- Summing up

- Evolving SPS Concepts
- Launchers
  - Starship+Booster @ \$100 / kg to LEO
  - Others: US (New Glenn), NZ (Rocket Lab), China, Japan (Honda, JAXA), UK (Reaction Engines Ltd.), ESA
- Evolving Market Context for SSP
  - Carbon Net-Zero Policy Goals
  - Isolated Commercial Ops (e.g., Mining) transition to EVs
  - Cis-Lunar / Lunar Surface Operations
  - CitiGroup Commercial Space Rept (SSP @ \$23B sales by 2040)
- R&D and Studies
  - AFRL SSP R&D "SPIDR" for military applications
  - CalTech SSP Technology Research
  - CAST & China : new labs, new national committee
  - UK Assessment of SSP – Creation of Space Power Initiative
  - Academic Studies (ISU, RMIT)
  - New Japanese SSP Objective
  - ESA Cost-Benefit Assessment (2021-2022 @ ~\$400K<sub>±</sub>)
  - NASA Cost-Benefit Study (just started)
  - IAA Permanent Committee on SSP (Workshop in September)

## Recent & Relevant...





# Outline

- Introduction
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# Hyper-Modular Architectural Approach

## Complex, "hyper-modular" architectures found in Nature...

Single genetic "individuals" comprising thousands to tens of thousands of "modules"

- Example: Ants – capable of forming structural systems from themselves
- Example: Bees – capable of navigation, cooperation and construction

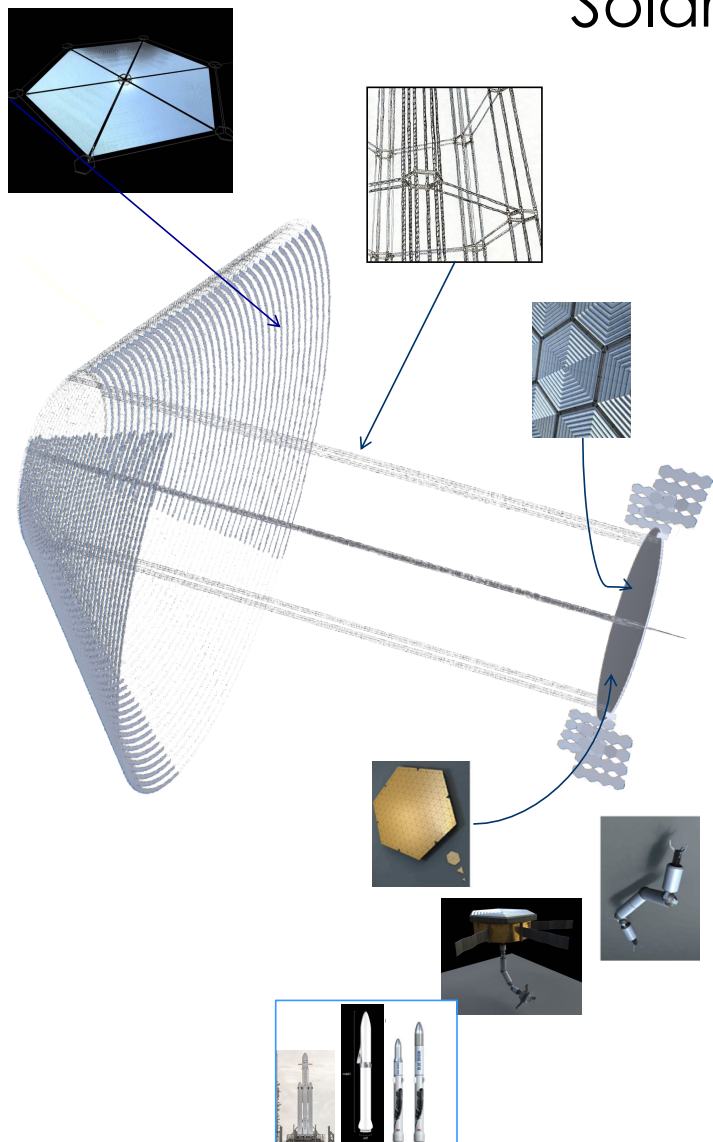
Diverse genetic "individuals" in a single community comprising 100s of species and many 1000's of individuals

- Example: coral reefs, composed of coral (living and skeletons of dead), fungi, algae, sponges, fish, worms, etc., etc.



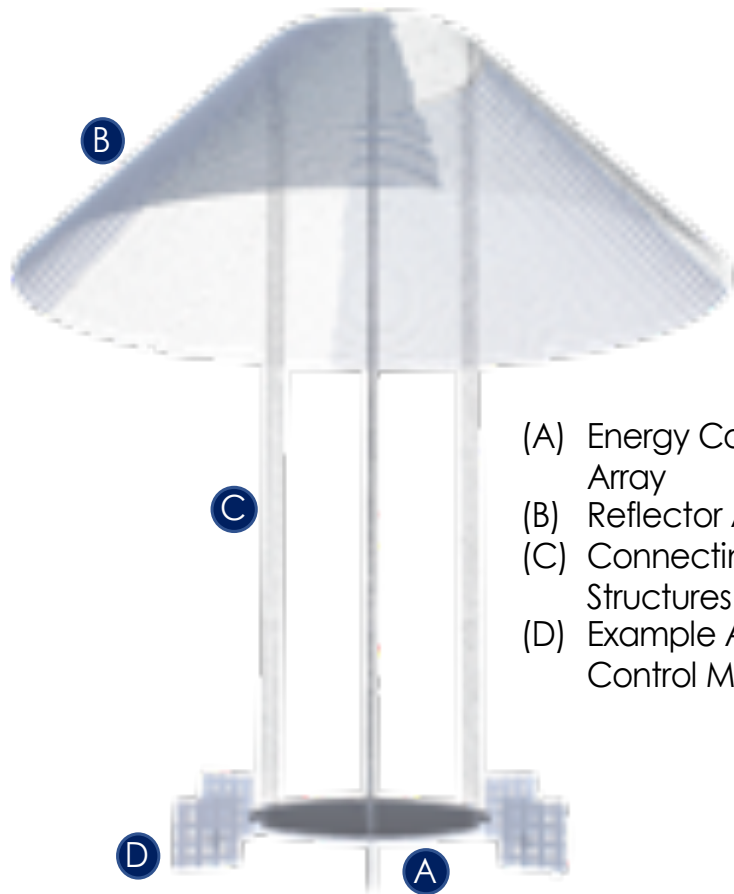
# Solar Power Satellite via Arbitrarily Large Phased Array

## SPS-ALPHA

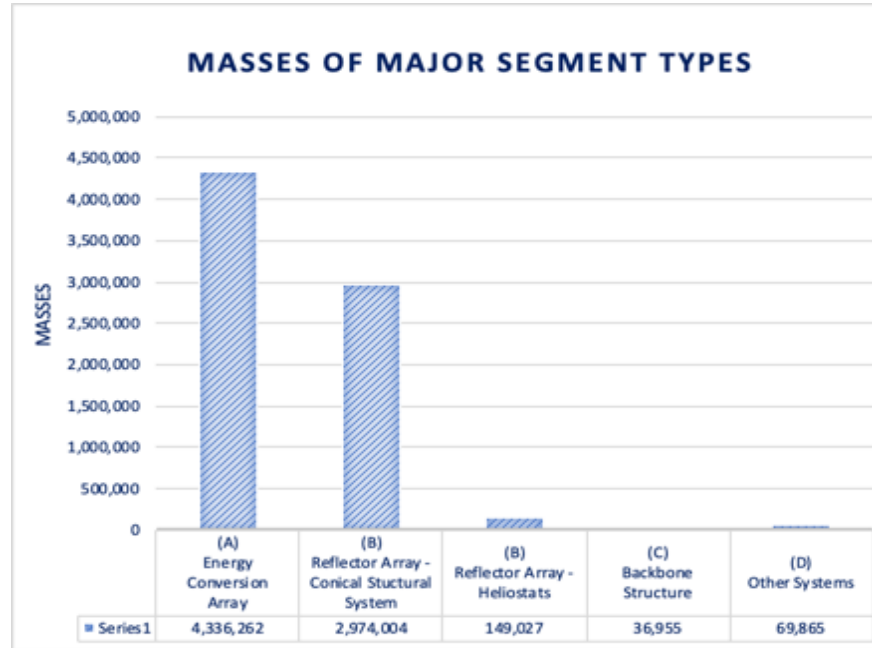


- SPS-ALPHA represents a novel physical / optical configuration that enables energy distribution by photons and local waste heat rejection...
- SPS-ALPHA intelligent modular elements include the following:
  - “Cubesat” sized modular interconnections
  - Deployable structural modules
  - Local solar power generation, management and distribution and thermal
  - RF payload modules
  - Deployable large thin-film reflectors
  - Mass-produced modular robots providing all manipulation
  - Stand-alone propulsion and attitude control modules

# SPS-ALPHA Highlights



- (A) Energy Conversion Array
- (B) Reflector Array
- (C) Connecting Boom Structures
- (D) Example Attitude Control Modules



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# Comparison: SPS-ALPHA / Receiver vs Hoover Dam



## SPS-ALPHA Receiver

Area: 1.0-to-1.5 x  $\sim 27 \text{ km}^2$

Capacity:  $\sim 2.1 \text{ GW}$

Annual Energy:  $\sim 18,000 \text{ GW-hours}$

## Hoover Dam

Catchment Area:  $\sim 435,000 \text{ km}^2$

Reservoir Area:  $\sim 640 \text{ km}^2$

Capacity:  $\sim 0.5 \text{ GW}$  (Ave; 2 GW peak)

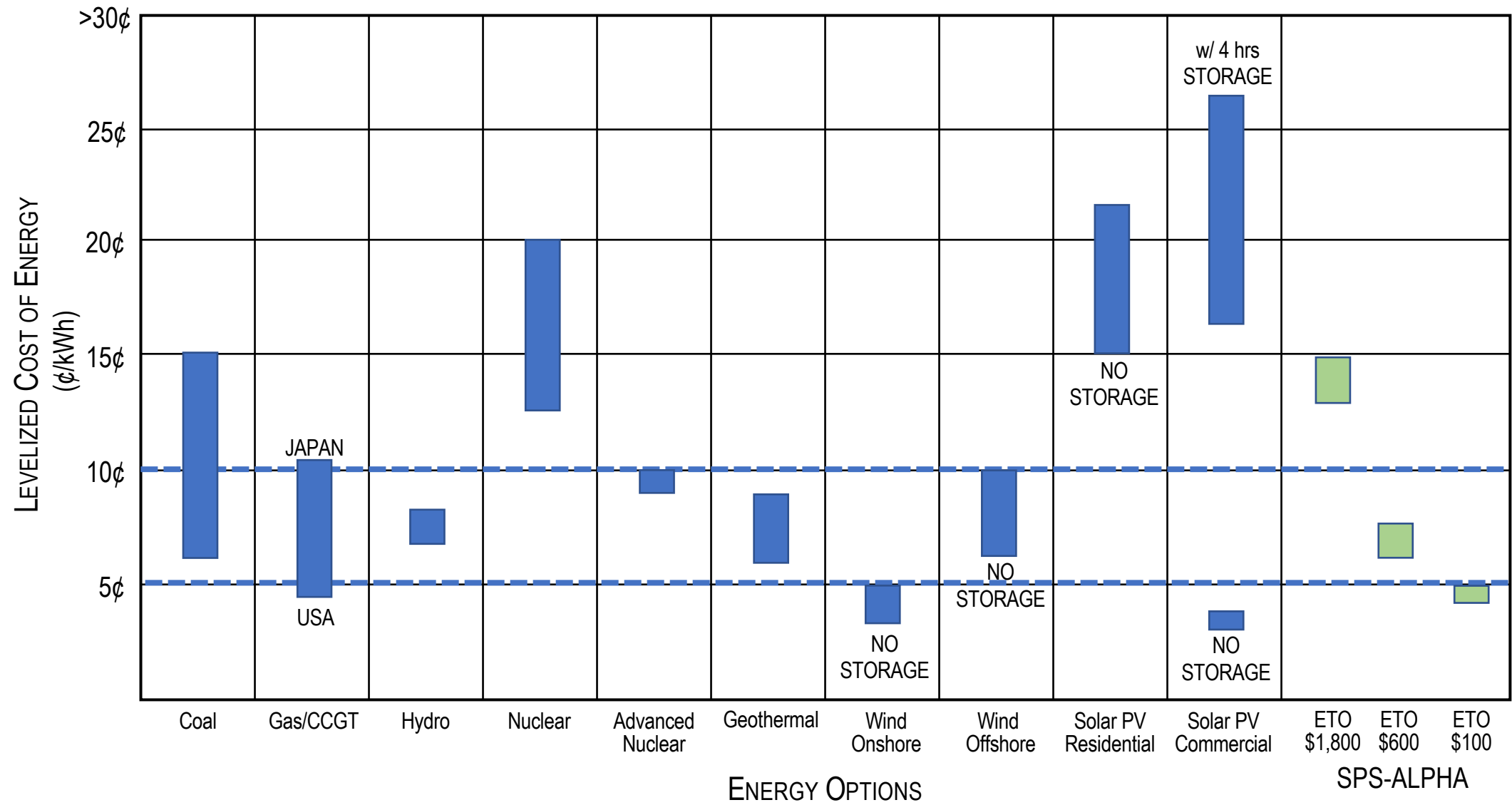
Annual Energy:  $\sim 4,000 \text{ GW-hours}$



Dam Investment:  $\sim \$ 50\text{M}$  c. 1931

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoover\\_Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoover_Dam) (19 Jan '22)

# Comparison of Energy Source Options (Lazard's 2021 – Plus IEA, etc.)



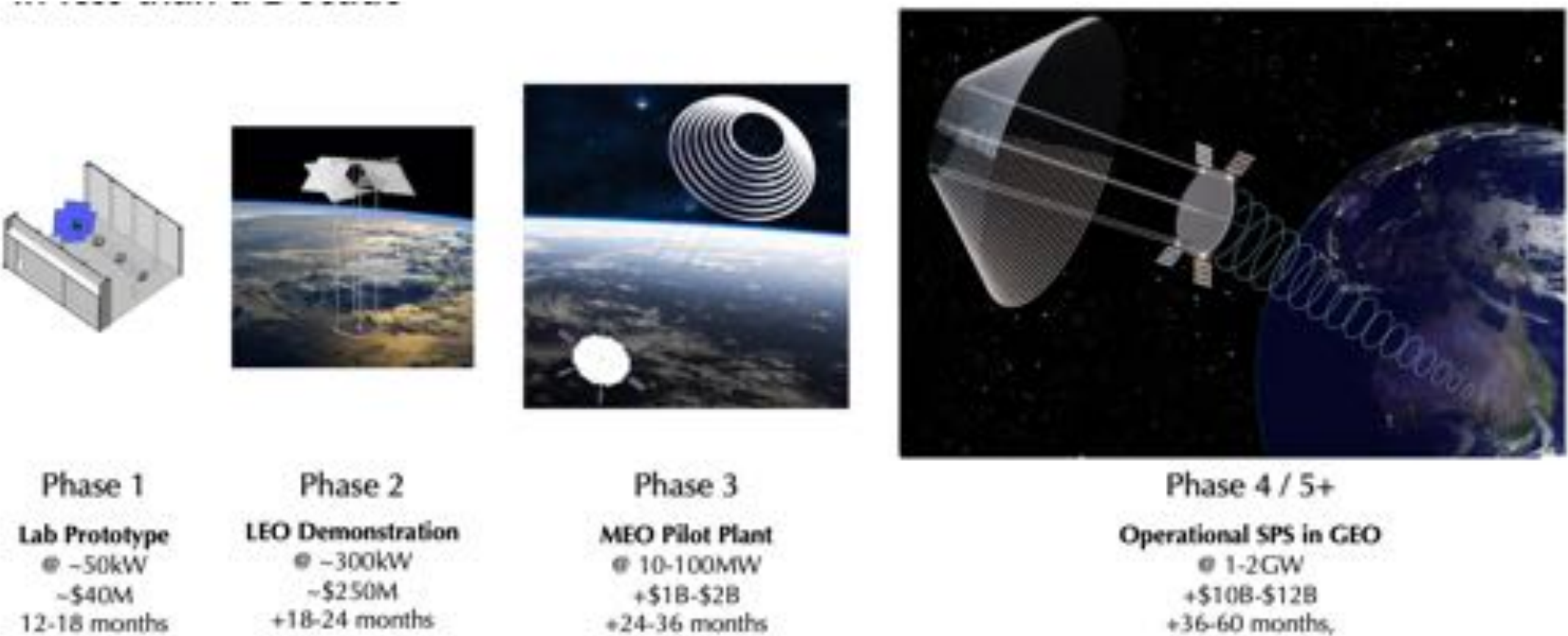
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# A Practical Near-Term Roadmap to SPS

Opportunity for the US to

- Lead the International Community
- Establish “rules of the road” for commercial Space Solar Power





# Potential "First System"

