



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

IN THE NEWS

Clemson University Researchers Work to Improve Lasers for Military Use

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By: Andrew Moore

Related Expert: Mark Gunzinger

Generally, a laser is expected to have more than 50 kilowatts of power to be used as a weapon. Within six to eight years, U.S. forces could begin using laser systems of more than 300 kilowatts, said Mark Gunzinger, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. The military is also weighing the possibility of mounting lasers on drones to shoot down ballistic missiles, said Gunzinger. But the lasers will have to be much smaller before they can be used in combat aircraft. Engineers are currently running into physical limitations on how much portable power can be produced, and ways of cooling the technology.