

White House uses humor to kill 'Death Star' petition

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With the US national debt standing at more than \$16 trillion, the White House says it absolutely cannot spend \$850 quadrillion on a "Star Wars"-inspired "Death Star" super-weapon.

Sensing a chance to show off its lighter side, the Obama administration paid tribute to legions of "Star Wars" fans with its playful rejection of the "Death Star" proposal submitted on its "We the People" petitions website.

"The administration does not support blowing up planets," wrote Paul Shawcross, an adviser on science and space to President [Barack Obama](#), rebuffing the request to secure funding and start building a "Death Star" by 2016.

"The administration shares your desire for job creation and a strong national defense, but a Death Star isn't on the horizon," he said in a posting headlined: "This isn't the petition response you're looking for."

The [online petition](#) had passed the 25,000 signatures needed to secure a [White House](#) response. The same website was used to try and deport British chat show host Piers Morgan over his criticism of US gun laws.

A plan to create the moon-sized super-weapon capable of destroying a planet with one [energy beam](#) would likely cost more than \$850,000,000,000,000, Shawcross noted.

"We're working hard to reduce the deficit, not expand it," he said.

Shawcross, the head of the science and space branch at the Office of Management and Budget, also joked that the Death Star, itself destroyed in "Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope," would be a bad investment.

"Why would we spend countless taxpayer dollars on a Death Star with a fundamental flaw that can be exploited by a one-man starship?" he quipped.

Though he concedes "the United States doesn't have anything that can do the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs," as "Star Wars" smuggler Han Solo claimed his Millennium Falcon had done, Shawcross boasts of other US exploits in space.

"We've got two spacecraft leaving the Solar System and we're building a probe that will fly to the exterior layers of the Sun," he wrote.

"We are living in the future! Enjoy it."

The statement ends with yet another nod to devoted fans of the "[Star Wars](#)" films: "Remember, the Death Star's power to destroy a planet, or even a whole star system, is insignificant next to the power of the Force."

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