

Solar power satellite factory in Monaco





Overview

Who invented solar power satellites?

Solar power satellites were invented by a Czech-American, Dr. Peter Glaser of Arthur D. Little, in 1968. Following several years of preliminary studies, and driven by the impetus of the oil crises of the time, a major study of power from space was conducted by the then newly created Department of Energy with the assistance of NASA.

What is a solar power satellite?

In the 1960s research in the fields of solar energy conversion technology and space technology led to the concept of the solar power satellite (SPS) to beam power from space to Earth. As conceived, the SPS would convert solar energy into electricity and feed it to microwave generators forming part of a planar, phased-array transmitting antenna.

How much power does a satellite produce?

Fig. 1 shows a summary of the 1980 “reference design” for such an SPS (NASA, 1980). The baseline satellite concept produces about 10GW of electrical power on the Earth, using a large (10 km by 15 km) solar array located in geosynchronous orbit.

How do orbiting satellites convert solar energy to electricity?

Orbiting satellites would collect solar energy and beam it to Earth where it would be converted to electricity (Figure 5.59). Several different methods are possible, including microwave, laser, and mirror transmission; however, the one that has received the most effort is the use of microwave beams or wireless power transmission.



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