Explanation of Vote by Garold N. Larson, Alternate Head of the U.S. Delegation to the UNGA First Committee, on Draft Resolution L. 40: Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, in Conference Room 2

U.S. Mission to the United Nations
Garold N. Larson, Alternate Head of the U.S. Delegation to the UNGA First Committee
New York, NY
October 29, 2009

AS PREPARED

Mr. Chairman, the United States did not participate in the Committee’s action on Draft Resolution L. 40, entitled “Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.” The United States will continue to play a leading role in advancing pragmatic and voluntary transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) for national security and related space activities.

Earlier this year, the United States and the Russian Federation exchanged information regarding the February 10, 2009, collision of a privately operated Iridium communications satellite with an inactive Russian military satellite. As a result of these exchanges, the U.S. and Russia agreed to commence discussions on opportunities for new bilateral space transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). The United States looks forward to further diplomatic and military-to-military exchanges with Russian experts in the coming months.

Over the past two years, the United States has had fruitful and forthright exchanges with European experts regarding the European Union’s proposal for a “Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.” Looking ahead, the United States will continue to work with the European Union in efforts to advance a set of voluntary TCBMs that is acceptable to the greatest number of countries.

In consultation with allies, the United States is currently in the process of assessing options for international cooperation in space as part of a comprehensive review of national space policy. This review of space cooperation options includes a “blank slate” analysis of the feasibility and desirability of options for TCBMs that enhance spaceflight safety and advance the national security interests of the United States and its allies, as well as of all spacefaring nations.

Mr Chairman, the United States looks forward to discussing insights gained from this Presidential review next year before this Committee during the 65th Session of the General Assembly. The United States also looks forward to engaging in substantive discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space agenda item in 2010 as a part of a consensus program of work at the Conference on Disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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