

As Prepared for Delivery

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Mr. Chairman, United States national security space policy is best characterized by continuity across many decades and U.S. Presidential administrations. This continuity includes the U.S. commitment to basic principles first advanced by the United States at the outset of the Space Age over half a century ago, and our support for the Outer Space Treaty, which we believe continues to provide the legal foundation to respond to the emerging challenges of the Twenty-First Century.

It has been the consistent policy of the United States to oppose arms control concepts, proposals, and legally-binding regimes that seek or impose prohibitions on the use of space for military or intelligence purposes. The United States also opposes any arms control proposals which fail to preserve the rights of the United States to conduct research, development, testing, and operations in space for military, intelligence, civil, or commercial purposes.

THE "THREAT OF WEAPONS" IN OUTER SPACE

There is much rhetoric about the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For nearly three decades, the United States has consistently pointed out that it is not possible to define the nature of a space-based "weapon." The United States also believes it is not possible to develop an effectively verifiable agreement for the banning of either space-based "weapons" *or* terrestrial-based anti-satellite (ASAT) systems. As we noted in CD/1847, to which we refer all interested parties, the Russian-Chinese draft treaty introduced in Geneva contains **no** prohibitions on the research, development, testing, production, storage, or deployment of *terrestrial-based* anti-satellite weapons. Therefore, the treaty would do nothing to impede the development of military systems such as the direct-ascent ASAT weapon that China flight-tested in January 2007.

RECALLING CHINA'S ANTI-SATELLITE FLIGHT-TEST

Mr. Chairman, the United States and other spacefaring nations remain concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding China's development of direct-ascent ASAT weapons. China's unannounced test in 2007 was a military action that generated over 2,750 pieces of orbital debris attributable to the intentional destruction of a space object. The debris cloud created by this intentional act means that China is now responsible for more debris in low Earth orbit than any other country. The debris will pose a hazard to human spaceflight and satellites well into the Twenty-Second Century.

We are very interested in hearing from China regarding its intentions for further development and testing of direct-ascent ASAT weapons. We are particularly troubled by the Chinese government's continued refusal to provide adequate responses to questions posed by the international community regarding China's military intentions for this and its many other counterspace programs. As the United States has noted repeatedly, a decision by the Peoples Republic of China to conduct another ASAT test would further undermine the credibility of the PRC's declaratory statements regarding the so-called "weaponization of space" and China's commitment to act responsibly in space.

All countries that benefit from the commercial and security-related activities in outer space should continue to register their concerns about the increased risk of collisions with debris from the test and make clear their opposition to any further destructive ASAT tests. The international community must discourage any additional such testing in space and make clear that there will be consequences for any such irresponsible actions and for any intentional endangerment of human spaceflight and other space activities.

In this regard, we note that senior Chinese government officials have made private assurances to the United States that China will not be conducting future ASAT tests. This commitment by China is an important step forward, and we expect China to live up to its word.

ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SPACE

Mr. Chairman, it is also our long-standing position that the existing in-force regime is sufficient to guarantee the right of all nations for access to, and operations in, space. This international legal regime includes the four "core" space treaties: the

1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968 Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention, and the 1974 Registration Convention.

International cooperation is also a fundamental element of the space policies of the United States and other responsible spacefaring nations. Although, as previously mentioned, we oppose legally binding space arms control proposals, the United States enthusiastically supports voluntary and concrete measures that address practical problems. For example, the United States has been a leading supporter of international cooperation to mitigate orbital debris and to preserve the space environment for future generations. However, our support for such “best practice guidelines” and voluntary transparency and confidence building measures stops if they are tied to proposals for legally-binding space arms control constraints and limitations.

The United States is pleased to support a recent initiative by France to establish an informal working group that brings together experts from the public and private space sectors to explore additional measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of space activities. As this group develops consensus on specific measures, the results can be forwarded to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for its consideration as part of a set of best practice guidelines for safe space operations.

The United States also is considering initiatives based on our long-standing support for voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures, commonly referred to as TCBMs. We have repeatedly noted in multilateral forums that some new TCBMs, implemented on a voluntary basis, have the potential to enhance satellite safety and reduce uncertainty in an evolving space security environment.

In this regard, we have welcomed the opportunity for trans-Atlantic dialogue with the European Union regarding proposals for a set of TCBMs that focus upon a pragmatic and incremental approach to space safety and security

ENHANCING CLARITY OF INTENTIONS AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE

In preparation for this year’s General Assembly, we again sought to work with Russia and China on a draft General Assembly resolution to explore the feasibility of new voluntary TCBMs. Unfortunately, we could not reach agreement. Russia and China refused to agree to a neutral TCBM resolution unencumbered by linkages to space arms control constraints and limitations. Instead, they unyieldingly insisted on linking expert evaluations of pragmatic

TCBMs to the commencement of pointless negotiations on an unneeded and unverifiable space arms control agreement.

The United States is also disappointed by Russia's continued inability to accept our invitations for experts from the Russian Space Forces to meet in Omaha, Nebraska, with their counterparts at United States Strategic Command. These invitations, which were relayed through diplomatic as well as military-to-military channels, are part of a U.S. - Russian Federation Military Interoperability Work Plan and seek to enhance mutual understanding of our respective countries' perspectives on space and defense issues. The value of such a thematic workshop on space is affirmed by Russia itself in its May 11, 2007, submission to the Secretary General; this noted that such a TCBM can "make a significant contribution to improving inter-State relations and the development of dialogue and cooperation between countries."

Mr. Chairman, it is in this spirit of cooperation that the United States seeks to sustain the principles that have helped to maintain international peace and security in outer space for the past half century. Working from a set of shared values and aspirations, the United States, Europe and other established and emerging spacefaring nations around the globe are confident in our vision for space and we are moving forward together. It is a world in which space leadership is defined not by imagined orbital spheres of influence or phantom menace of "space weaponization" – but by free flows of information, technological innovation, economic growth and the defense of freedom. For as President John F. Kennedy noted in 1962, "We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people."