

**Remarks of Frank A. Rose  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation  
U.S. Department of State**

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Thank you, Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies, Colleagues,

I am pleased to be able to join you here today to discuss the new U.S. National Space Policy. This policy, which was released just two weeks ago, is a statement of President Obama's highest priorities for space, and reflects the principles and goals to be used in shaping the conduct of U.S. space programs and activities. This new policy not only provides a foundation for going forward in our exploration and utilization of space, but also is a commitment by the United States to work cooperatively with the international community to preserve space for the benefit of all nations.

In the four years since the issuance of the previous U.S. National Space Policy, a number of developments have changed the opportunities, challenges, and threats facing the international space community. This new policy both accounts for those changes, and reflects the fact that space has become an even more important component of our collective economic and international security.

President Obama's National Space Policy places more emphasis on: expanding international cooperation and collaboration; encouraging responsible action in space; increasing use of commercial space goods and services; strengthening and energizing the U.S. space industrial base; enhancing openness, as well as pursuing new transparency and confidence-building measures; and protecting critical space capabilities.

Today I will highlight a number of aspects of our new policy. First, I will discuss our expanded focus on international cooperation. Second, I will discuss how the transformation of the space environment has led to a greater number of challenges, as well as to a greater need for increased stability in space. Third, I will explain how cooperation can contribute to strengthening stability in space. Fourth, I will explain the implications of our new policy for U.S. positions in the Conference on Disarmament. Finally, I will share our views on how all countries can contribute to preserving the space environment for future generations.

## **EXPANDED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Mr. President, a key element of the National Space Policy is that the United States will engage in expanded international cooperation in space activities. The United States will work with allies, friends, and partners around the world in enhanced cooperation in space science as well as in human and robotic space exploration. We also will pursue enhanced cooperative programs in the use of Earth observation satellites to support weather forecasting, environmental monitoring, and sustainable development worldwide.

In regard to space exploration, the United States will continue to operate the International Space Station in cooperation with our international partners, likely to 2020 or beyond, and expand efforts to utilize its benefits. The United States also will implement a new space technology development and test program, working with international partners and others to build and test several key technologies that can increase capabilities, decrease costs, and expand opportunities for future space activities.

An additional international initiative includes encouraging interoperability among U.S. and other nation's space capabilities, including continued efforts to ensure the compatibility and interoperability of global navigation satellite systems. Finally, we will work to extend the benefits of space to all humanity by enhancing collaborative efforts to collect and share space-derived information.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPACE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. President, the new space policy recognizes the transformation of the space environment as well as the evolution of our utilization of space. When the space age began, the opportunities to use space were available to only a few nations, and there were limited consequences for irresponsible or unintentional behavior. Now, we find ourselves in a world where the benefits of space permeate almost every facet of our lives. The growth and evolution of the global economy has seen an ever-increasing number of nations and organizations using space.

Space capabilities are being used to create wealth and prosperity, to monitor the Earth's environment and its natural resources, and to explore the unknowns of our solar system and beyond. Of equal significance, more nations are using satellites in ways to help maintain international peace and security. These include contributing to increased transparency and stability among nations and providing a vital communications path for avoiding potential conflicts. Furthermore, these space systems allow people and governments around the world to see with clarity, communicate with certainty, navigate with accuracy, and operate with assurance.

The transformation of the space environment also presents challenges. The interconnected nature of space capabilities and the world's growing dependence on them mean that irresponsible acts in space can have damaging consequences for all of us. Furthermore, decades of space activity have littered Earth's orbit with debris. As nations and commercial enterprises continue to increase activities in space, the possibility of another collision, increases correspondingly.

## **STRENGTHENED STABILITY IN SPACE**

Mr. President, these emerging challenges have increased the need for greater stability in space. Our new National Space Policy recognizes that such strengthened stability can most effectively be achieved through international cooperation. Increasing stability in space activities begins first with ensuring the long-term sustainability of the space environment through expanded international measures for orbital debris mitigation. Secondly, it depends on improving our shared situational awareness and understanding of who is using the space environment and for what purposes. Thirdly,

strengthening stability in space can be accomplished through improved information-sharing for space object collision avoidance, and fourthly, through the development of transparency and confidence-building measures to promote safe and responsible operations in space. I'd like to address these four topics next.

## **1. Orbital debris mitigation**

Orbital debris mitigation is essential to ensuring the long-term sustainability of space activities. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in her June 28, 2010 statement on the National Space Policy, "The United States plans to expand its engagement within the United Nations and with other governments and non-governmental organizations to address the growing problem of orbital debris and to promote 'best practices' for its sustainable use."

In addition, the United States will continue to lead in furthering the development and adoption of international standards to minimize debris, building upon the foundation of the United Nations Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. In collaboration with other space-faring nations, the United States also will pursue research and development of technologies and techniques to mitigate and remove on-orbit debris, reduce hazards, and increase understanding of the current and future debris environment.

## **2. Shared space situational awareness**

The new National Space Policy emphasizes the importance of space situational awareness – or SSA. It instructs U.S. Government departments and agencies to maintain and to integrate space surveillance – that is, the observation of space and of activities occurring in space – with space weather and other information to develop accurate and timely space situational awareness.

The new policy also directs U.S. Government departments and agencies to collaborate with other nations, commercial entities, and intergovernmental organizations to improve our shared ability to rapidly detect, warn of, characterize, and attribute natural and man-made disturbances to space systems. Such improvements illustrate the ongoing commitment of the United States to promoting the safety of flight for all space-faring nations.

### **3. Improved information sharing for collision avoidance**

In order to improve information sharing and help avoid collisions between space objects, the National Space Policy commits the United States to collaborate with industry and foreign nations to improve space object databases. It also encourages cooperation in pursuing common international data standards and data integrity measures.

Additionally, the policy calls for collaboration on the dissemination of orbital tracking information, including predictions of potentially hazardous conjunctions between orbiting objects. This is particularly important given recent collisions, such as the February 2009 collision between a privately operated Iridium communications satellite and an inactive Russian military satellite, as well as a plethora of near-collisions.

As part of an effort to prevent future collisions, the United States has improved its capacity to analyze objects in space, as well as our ability to predict potential hazards to spacecraft. I am pleased to report that, since December 2009, the Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California routinely screens all active satellites against every object in the satellite catalogue to identify close approaches. The United States also provides notification to other government and commercial satellite operators when U.S. space analysts assess that an operator's satellite is predicted to pass within a close distance of another spacecraft or space debris.

### **4. Transparency and confidence-building measures**

Finally, the policy states that the United States will pursue pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures – or TCBMs – to strengthen stability in space and to mitigate the risk of mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust. The United States will seek to ensure that any potential TCBM enhances U.S. and allied security.

## **PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE**

Mr. President, in a departure from the 2006 policy, the new National Space Policy also states that the United States will consider space-related arms

control concepts and proposals that meet the criteria of equitability and effective verifiability, and which enhance the national security of the United States and its allies. This approach is consistent both with long-standing and bipartisan U.S. space policy as well as with the verification standards that the United States has applied to other arms control agreements.

Of particular interest to this body, let me reaffirm that the United States continues to support the inclusion of a non-negotiating, or discussion, mandate in any CD program of work under the agenda item, "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space," known as PAROS. This was the basis of a compromise reached at the CD in May 2009.

### **CALL TO ALL NATIONS**

Mr. President, as a leading space-faring nation, the United States remains committed to addressing the challenges that have emerged as a result of the transformation of the space environment. This, however, cannot be the responsibility of the United States alone. As the first principle of our National Space Policy affirms, "[i]t is the shared interest of all nations to act responsibly in space to help prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust." The United States calls on governments around the world to work together to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space in order to preserve this right for the benefit of future generations. Furthermore, we urge all nations to conduct these space activities in ways that emphasize openness and transparency.

The United States also calls on countries to recognize and adhere to the principle that all nations have the right to explore and use space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all humanity, in accordance with international law. Consistent with this principle, "peaceful purposes" allows space to be used for national and homeland security activities. In this regard, the United States considers the space systems of all nations to have the rights of passage through, and conduct of operations in, space without interference. Consequently, we will continue to view the purposeful interference with space systems, including supporting infrastructure, as an infringement of a nation's rights, and act accordingly.

## CONCLUSION

Mr. President, from the outset of humanity's ascent into space, the United States has declared its commitment to enhance the welfare of humankind by cooperating with others to maintain the freedom to use and explore space. President Obama's new National Space Policy renews America's pledge of cooperation in the belief that, with reinvigorated U.S. leadership and strengthened international collaboration, all nations and peoples—space-faring and space-benefiting—will find their horizons broadened, their knowledge enhanced, and their lives greatly improved.

Mr. President, it has been a pleasure to address all of you today about a policy of which I am very proud. As President Obama has stated, this policy is a commitment by the United States to scientific discovery and technological innovation and manifests America's unyielding faith in the future – even during difficult times. Our new policy emphasizes our expanded focus on increased international cooperation, which will contribute to a more stable space environment, but it also calls on all nations to act responsibly to ensure the long-term sustainability of our space activities. The United States looks forward to our future work with all responsible space actors to create a more secure, stable, and safe space environment for the benefit of all nations.

Thank you, Mr. President.

