

**Remarks of Christopher L. Buck**  
**U.S. Deputy Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**  
**“Space Security: A Perspective from the United States of America”**  
**United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Annual Space**  
**Security Conference**  
**“Sustaining the Momentum: the Current Status of Space Security”**  
**“Panel 1: National Perspectives”**  
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Thank you so much for having me here today. Over the past six years, the United States has been pleased to co-sponsor these conferences, working closely with the team of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

It’s a pleasure to be able to join you to share a few thoughts on sustaining the momentum of recent space security initiatives. As this year’s conference focuses on the current status of issues and processes critical to maintaining space as a peaceful domain, I’d like to focus on one aspect in particular of U.S. diplomatic efforts to enhance the security of the outer space environment – that is, implementing international transparency and confidence-building measures to promote safe and responsible space activities. These efforts build on long-standing principles and goals of U.S. National Space Policy extending back over 50 years.

Today, there are tremendous changes occurring in the outer space environment, many of them are amazing developments that will benefit all mankind, but others have the potential to drag us back to the darkest days of the Cold War and potentially harm the outer space environment. We find over 80 nations and numerous government consortia, scientists, and commercial firms accessing and operating satellites for countless economic, scientific, educational, and social purposes. Space systems are of benefit to not only their immediate users, owners, and operators, but also to the global economy and security environment, as well as individual nations and societies.

At the same time, however, threats to space systems from debris or irresponsible activities are adding to this complexity. Furthermore, these threats may trigger dangerous misinterpretations and miscalculations and could be escalatory in a crisis or conflict. We are clearly concerned by Chinese and Russian pursuit of debris-generating weapon systems capable of destroying satellites in orbit, as we have noted many times in this forum and elsewhere. Furthermore, such activities are inconsistent with the calls by those same nations for the Conference on

Disarmament (CD) to negotiate unverifiable agreements to prevent the “weaponization of outer space.”

The United States will be responding to the September 2015 Russian and Chinese comments (found in CD/2042) on the 2014 U.S. analysis of their draft “Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space” (PPWT) in a document we will submit to the CD. Here I would note that the United States reiterates its view that the 2014 updated draft PPWT is fundamentally flawed, and we observe that nothing in CD/2042 satisfactorily addresses the many critical deficiencies in the draft PPWT that we previously identified. These deficiencies include: the scope of the proposal and absence of workable definitions for critical terminology; its lack of an effective verification regime or any prospects thereof; and, its failure to address the development of terrestrially-based anti-satellite weapons.

Preventing conflict from extending into space is a major goal of the United States. In this regard, the United States continues to advocate an approach that addresses critical near-term issues and concerns regarding orbital congestion, collision avoidance, and promoting responsible behavior in space. This approach places a priority on pragmatic steps that states can take immediately, including by implementing voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs), and fostering the further development of norms to enhance stability in space.

In particular, I would note that the United States is committed to implementing the recommendations of the 2013 consensus report on the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. Along with its G7 partners, the United States supports multilateral efforts to translate the GGE consensus recommendations into results. In particular, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor UN General Assembly Resolutions 68/50, 69/38, and 70/53. These resolutions, which were adopted by consensus, encourage Member States to review and implement, to the greatest extent practicable, the proposed TCBMs contained in the GGE report, and to refer the report’s recommendations for consideration by the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, and the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Over the past two years, both COPUOS and the CD have considered the GGE report’s recommendations, and we note that the Disarmament Commission recently considered adopting an agenda item on outer space in response to a proposal the the United States was pleased to co-

sponsor with Russia and China. We would hope that this proposal will gain consensus as soon as possible.

In October 2014, the United States submitted to COPUOS our views on the GGE report's recommendations as applicable to COPUOS and the ongoing activity of its Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS). COPUOS's work on space sustainability is a key initiative for the advancement of important GGE recommendations. It will therefore be essential for all 83 COPUOS Member States to play a constructive role in the completion of clear, practicable, and proven LTS guidelines when the Committee meets in June. COPUOS also can serve as a key forum for consideration of further technical measures for information sharing and capacity building to enhance spaceflight safety and sustainability.

The United States also will be sharing with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) a summary of our views and activities regarding TCBMs identified by the GGE that are relevant to the agenda of the CD. In this regard, we plan to submit a comprehensive paper to the CD focusing particularly on describing U.S. implementation of TCBMs identified by the GGE.

As information sharing measures, TCBMs can contribute to building trust and confidence among States by delivering clarity of intent about national space policies and military space activities, exchanging spaceflight safety information, and avoiding possible misunderstandings that in space could prove catastrophic. I'd like to provide you with some examples of the recommended TCBMs that the United States has been implementing:

- First, the United States for many years has published information on its national space policies and strategies, including the 2010 U.S. National Space Policy and the 2013 U.S. National Space Transportation Policy. Annually, the United States publishes its government expenditures for all Federal space activities in the *Aeronautics and Space Report of the President*. The United States participates in bilateral and multilateral space dialogues with other spacefaring nations, which offer the opportunity to respond to questions regarding both published U.S. Government policy statements and executive branch submissions to the U.S. Congress.
- The United States exchanges information on the basic orbital parameters of outer space objects in order to increase the accuracy of space object tracking.

This is accomplished by U.S. adherence to the terms of the Registration Convention and through the U.S. website, [www.space-track.org](http://www.space-track.org).

- Consistent with its voluntary commitment to the Hague Code of Conduct, the United States provides notification of planned space launches.
- The United States also notifies other potentially affected States of natural and man-made threats to space objects, whether from malfunction or loss of control. This notification is consistent with the long-standing U.S. commitment to ensuring spaceflight safety through both international space cooperation and specific standards, processes, and measures.
- In accordance with U.S. law, regulations, and multilateral commitments, the United States regularly welcomes visits by international observers to NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) spacecraft operations facilities. The United States also has invited military and civilian government experts to visit Department of Defense (DoD) spacecraft operations and U.S. Strategic Command's Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC) as part of military-to-military cooperation activities.
- The United States routinely provides expert-level participation in UN-sponsored space applications, science, and technology workshops, as well as bilateral and regional space workshops. This includes sponsorship of three ASEAN Regional Forum meetings on space security in November 2012, October 2014, and November/December 2015, as well as sponsorship of this UNIDIR conference on space security. These workshops have proven to be productive and informative fora for raising awareness and understanding of space systems and space activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

These are but a few of the actions the United States is taking to implement the GGE report's recommended TCBMs.

It is worth noting that the Conference on Disarmament considered the GGE report's recommendations in its discussions under the "prevention of an arms race in outer space" (PAROS) agenda item last August here in Geneva. We had a further opportunity to discuss the GGE report's recommendations at the joint *ad hoc* meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the UN General Assembly in October 2015.

The United States also welcomes efforts, within existing resources, to improve coordination on TCBMs for outer space activities in the United Nations system. In this regard, we welcome the long-standing efforts of the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs and its leadership of the annual UN Inter-Agency meeting on Outer Space

Activities. We also appreciate the increased engagement of the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs within the UN system on space TCBMs.

As the United States emphasized at last year's UNIDIR space security conference, the central assumption that guides U.S. efforts to promote cooperation in outer space is that a secure outer space environment is vital to each of our nations' securities, foreign policies, global economic interests, and the daily lives of our citizens. The United States has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability, stability, safety, and security of the space environment. We urge other nations to actively consider implementing the consensus recommendations of the GGE report and to work together to protect our long-term interests by safeguarding against risks to the space environment, space services, and applications. I look forward to our discussions today and tomorrow on these important topics.

Thank you very much.