
THE TIME TO ORGANISE SPACE IS NOW!

by
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Mr. Frank Rose, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Space and Defence Policy in the United States Department of State, recently wrote an interesting article in Space News titled "Addressing the Challenges of Space Security" & talks about the US National Space Policy "pursuing a comprehensive approach to the challenges in (the) space environment,* and the progress being made in discussions on the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities." Mr. Rose is a security expert, therefore his focus on space security is understandable. What is not understandable is why the international community, and first of all the US, wishes to address space traffic management and the preservation of the space environment through a diplomatic initiative that is mainly meant to put to rest a long-standing request from Russia and China to negotiate a treaty forbidding weapons in space.

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For almost three decades a debate has been raging between the US, on one side, and Russia and China, on the other side, regarding the banning of space weapons, the initial concern being an altered nuclear balance of forces among superpowers. The debate is better known as PAR, S 'Pre'vention of Arms Race in Outer Space, from the relevant draft treaty proposed jointly by Russia and China.

In 1987, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union outlawed development and testing of any missile defence system that was mobile, sea-based, or space-based. The debate was ignited later by US President R. Reagan's decision to launch the Missile Defense Program a.k.a. Star Wars in 1983. It encountered major technological difficulties and was later restarted in a diminished form a.k.a. Son of Star Wars by US President C. O. Bush after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the meantime, the US became increasingly concerned about the vulnerability of their on-orbit military and commercial assets to attack, for example, from small satellites below the detection threshold of US space tracking capabilities.

The compromise proposed by the international Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities is based on the following principles:

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is all this #o# ill pro' ide to the commercial and ci' il space community. Lery littleJ

The time to organise space is no , and it can be done 2uickly if the leading spacefaring countries finally gather the political ill to do so. There is a ' alid model of international cooperation, the +nternational #i' il A' iation , rganiMation 3#A, 4 that safeguards national so' ereignty hile effecti' ely achie' ing the results that e all itness daily in managing air traffic. The +#A, #on' ention as drafted and agreed to ithin a matter of months to ards the end of OO+, in #hicago, hen the military potential of a' iation as fully demonstrated and the ci' il a' iation e kno today as only a ' isionary6 dream. The +#A, #on' ention made a' iation into the success story e all kno .

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