



Promoting Cooperative Solutions for Space Security

***Exchange of Views Statement,
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
June 2009.***

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Secure World Foundation, I would like to congratulate you on your skillful leadership of this Committee. We also note the excellent work of the Office of Outer Space Affairs under the direction of Dr. Mazlan Othman. We are confident that the Committee and the Office will continue successfully to support the peaceful uses of outer space resources, especially for emerging space States.

Secure World Foundation is pleased, once again, to attend this Committee meeting as a permanent observer. Over the past year, we have worked hard to foster the peaceful uses of outer space and the long term sustainability of space activities. Today, I would like to summarize our activities over the past year in the three major themes in which we are active:

- **Space Security:** Developing the foundation for the effective management of space operations for a sustainable space environment and the peaceful uses of outer space.
- **Human and Environmental Security:** Maximizing the international cooperative use of space assets for the benefit of humanity.
- **Planetary Defense:** Promoting a unified international policy approach to protection of our planet from the threat of near Earth objects (NEOs).

Space Security

Mr. Chairman, since its inception in 2004, the Secure World Foundation has consistently expanded its portfolio in, and its support of, efforts to work toward the long term sustainability of space activities. We continue to be one of the major contributors to the field of space security in the non-governmental sector. Our engagement at both national and international levels has been steadily growing.

Highlights of our recent activities include our role as co-organizers in November 2008, with the European Space Policy Institute and the International Academy of Astronautics, a workshop entitled The Fair and Responsible Use of Space: An International Perspective. Attended by more than 60 high-ranking professionals, that conference examined the current space security situation and analyzed key challenges to achieving the fair and sustainable use of outer space. It also prepared a list of "10 Steps to Achieve Fair and Responsible Use of Outer

Space“(<http://www.espi.or.at>). Papers from the conference are being compiled, edited in the Springer book series, “Studies in Space Policy” and will be available by the end of this year.

Also in November, Secure World Foundation partnered with the U.S.-based Stimson Center to host a workshop in Bellagio, Italy, focused on improving dialogue between delegates of the Conference on Disarmament and the space sector. Discussions within this workshop centered on ways in which to further space diplomacy and to facilitate new diplomatic initiatives on space treaties and confidence building measures (<http://www.stimson.org>). We were very pleased that the current and immediate past chairpersons of this committee were able to take part in both November events and bring the interests and concerns of this committee to the discussions.

Early this year, following the February 10, 2009 accidental collision between the functioning Iridium communications satellite and the inoperable Cosmos 2250 communications satellite, Secure World Foundation was at the forefront of efforts to explain the circumstances of the collision to the public and to argue for improved international space situational awareness of objects in Earth orbit. Accordingly, in late March, Secure World Foundation partnered with the Eisenhower Center for Space and Defense Studies, the Center for Defense Information, the Marshall Institute, and Intelsat General to host the third international conference on space situational awareness, entitled “Improving Our Vision III”. The conference, attended by more than 140 participants, brought debris and astrodynamics experts from Europe and the United States together with policymakers and government officials to explore international solutions for improved space situational awareness. The technical and political hurdles are high but the end goal of increased space safety and security is worth a substantial effort by all spacefaring States. We were encouraged by the progress toward this goal that the conference demonstrated.

Human and Environmental Security

One of SWF’s key efforts centers on strengthening or developing the policies and institutions that improve the utility of space technologies in support of human security needs. Human security is a concept that was developed out of the experiences of the Cold War in which major power politics very often rode roughshod over the needs of individuals, communities, and small States. It involves seven aspects of individual human existence: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, community security, personal security and political security.

Earth observing, telecommunications, and satellite position, navigation, and timing (PNT) systems all have a role in improving human security throughout the world. In order to further our interest in promoting the effective use of these systems in support of human security, this January, Secure World Foundation entered into a partnership with *Imaging Notes* magazine, which has had a history of presenting informative articles on the applications of Earth imaging satellites to support human security needs. It is published in hard copy and also on line [<http://www.imagingnotes.com>].

Now as never before the world community operates sufficient numbers and varieties of satellite systems to make an enormous positive difference in the lives of billions of people

around the world. The benefits to society worldwide are potentially very great, yet space systems are not yet well organized to deliver these benefits efficiently and effectively. For example, many countries of the world face serious difficulties in providing sufficient fresh water for their citizens. Space systems can help in finding and managing the preservation of fresh water sources. In another example, the world's space agencies have demonstrated their ability to capture data from satellites soon after a natural disaster. However, in both examples, more needs to be done by the international community to make sure the acquired information reaches affected populations timely and in a form that they can use quickly and efficiently. We at Secure World Foundation believe that we can assist in improving the flow of benefits from space systems by helping to establish more effective institutional mechanisms for delivery of services and devising common international data policies for public good data and information.

Planetary Defense

Thanks to the work of many scientists around the world, we now have a much better understanding of the threat that asteroids pose to Earth and its peoples. Although the chances of suffering a major asteroid strike appear to be quite small, recent analysis of the 1908 Tunguska event, which destroyed a large swath of forest in Siberia has led scientists to believe that the chances for smaller, but still significant, asteroid strikes is higher than previously realized.

The large body of recent research on near Earth objects raises the following questions: If observers were to discover an asteroid headed toward Earth, whose job would it be to decide how to respond? Should space agencies attempt to deflect it into a safe orbit that would not threaten humanity? What methods should be used? If deflection is not an option, how should we organize the emergency response services that would be needed if the projected impact threatened populated areas? In order to reduce the potential serious negative effects of a future asteroid strike, all of these questions and more will need to be answered.

In order to further investigation into these questions, Secure World Foundation is partnering with the Association of Space Explorers on its efforts to develop a draft response plan for a NEO threat, elements of which have been presented to this committee several times. Further, this April 2009, SWF cosponsored a conference with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln Law School on the legal and policy concerns posed by near Earth objects. The following week it cosponsored, with the International Academy of Astronautics, the European Space Agency, NASA and other organizations, the 3rd Planetary Defense Conference in Granada, Spain. In both conferences the issue of finding the appropriate means for governing the response to a future asteroid impact was a major subject of interest.

The Secure World Foundation Vision

Secure World Foundation is a private operating foundation dedicated to maintaining the secure and sustainable use of space for the benefit of Earth and all its peoples. It acts as a research body, convener and facilitator to advocate for key space security and other space related topics and to examine their influence on governance and international development. The Foundation

believes that the challenge of sustaining the space environment into the future must be dealt with in a truly international manner.

We at the Secure World Foundation believe that today the path to development depends in large part on the benefits that space technology brings. There is a close link between maintaining the long term sustainability of outer space activities and human security. Coupled with this, the Secure World Foundation is a strong proponent of preventing global conflict from spilling into the space sector through the effective promotion of internationally accepted norms of behavior for further space activities. We also strongly support the other side of preventing global conflict from spreading to space: that greater predictability and knowledge of the state of the space environment can only help to lower tensions among space actors here on Earth.

Concluding Thoughts

The Secure World Foundation strongly supports the work of this Committee. Part of that support is provided through our website, <http://www.SecureWorldFoundation.org>, which we are constantly improving. On there you can find factsheets, position papers, and periodic newsletters, as well as other information of use to the delegates of this committee.

As the benefits of space activities expand and improve, keeping outer space available for peaceful activities and free of destructive weapons will become ever more important. As we move into the last half of the first hundred years of the space age, we have a unique opportunity to safeguard the secure and sustainable use of the space environment. Never before has humanity been so interconnected with the technology and capabilities to plan new space systems. The stage is set to design and implement comprehensive new international cooperative institutions and agreements that will provide a secure future for space and benefit for the Earth. We look forward to continuing to support the Committee's efforts to achieve such a future.

Many thanks.

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