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Peace in Space: Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (2)

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MISSILE LAUNCHES, MILITARIZATION, WEAPONIZATION: SECURITY IN SPACE

**Abstract**

States, clothed in the vestments of national sovereignty, and obliged to preserve their territorial integrity, have given critical attention to their policies and practices of national defense. In the United States the newly appointed Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has indicated that one of her three pillars of American foreign policy would be defense. The other two were diplomacy and development. Other highly placed public figures have assigned nuclear proliferation as a critical security issue

By 2009 advances in science and technology have resulted in the production of long-range missiles able to carry nuclear warheads. Recent testing of such satellites by China, including the destruction of obsolete national satellites in orbit, and the launching by North Korea of intermediate and possibly long-range missiles, has produced world-wide concerns. The United States had indicated ambivalence as to the extent of Iran's development of a nuclear arms program. By 2009 official U. S. spokesmen reported that reliable evidence indicated that Iran was pursuing such a program. Concerns have been expressed over the possibility that such States might attempt to place nuclear warheads in orbit having a long-term lifetime.

The foregoing and somewhat similar activities in other countries have focused attention on the attempted distinction between the concepts of militarization and weaponization. It has also opened the door to a fundamental effort to determine what is meant by each term and whether it can be meaningfully described, defined, and distinguished. Raised in this context are the intentions and courses of conduct of those who have the capability of launching missiles and satellites and placing such satellites in orbit, including the projected life-span of such satellites.

States, in order to impose effective prohibitions or controls upon such national activities, can do so by way of agreements, and in this instance because of the gravity of the problem, through formal legal undertakings with the same solemnity as those which accompanied the arms control and disarmament agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1972 down to 1999. It is well understood that written agreements, especially when of a constitutive nature, have a habit of changing their meaning over time. Solid examples may be found in the interstate commerce provision in the U. S. Constitution and the terms of Articles 2(4) and 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Such evolutions, based upon the wants and needs, interests and values of mankind, must be accepted. The present dangerous situation, however, calls for immediate community-based responsive action. The United States by taking the lead in such an endeavor might measurably repair its image as a supporter of the international rule of law principle.