



# Global Security Institute

Event Report

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Global Security Institute

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## **Advancing Cooperative Security in Space: A lunchtime consultation**

*by Rhianna Tyson,  
Program Officer*

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# Advancing Cooperative Security in Space: A lunchtime consultation

## Event Report

- Rhianna Tyson, Program Officer  
Global Security Institute

*New York, New York*

On February 9, 2007, the Global Security Institute (GSI) hosted a consultation in its New York office, entitled “Advancing Cooperative Security in Space.” Over 25 nations participated in this first of a series of such consultations, which facilitate discussion amongst interested governments and experts on advancing a cooperative regime in outer space and preventing a celestial arms race.



Moderated by GSI President Jonathan Granoff, this first consultation featured presentations by Ambassador Robert Grey, Jr., Director of the Bipartisan Security Group and former US ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and Dr. Jürgen Scheffran, a Senior Research Scientist in the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and co-founder of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation. Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament

Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, provided the opening remarks.

In setting the context for the discussion, Mr. Granoff, in his introductory remarks, affirmed the need for a cooperative security regime based on the rule of law. Cooperation and multilateralism, he stated, are essential to our pursuit of common security by addressing the global threats posed by nuclear weapons. This legally-based cooperation is a precondition for cooperation on addressing other universal threats, such as those posed by our climate or by social instability arising from gross disparities of wealth. Citing former Undersecretary of State John Holum, Mr. Granoff asserted that if unilateralism prevails over cooperation in the heavens, the nonproliferation regime will be the first victim. A legal regime promoting multilateral cooperation in space is absolutely imperative to our security here on earth.

Mr. Granoff also discussed “Vision 2020”, the US Defense Department's strategy for obtaining “full spectrum dominance” in outer space. Such unilateralism, Mr. Granoff asserted, runs wholly contrary to the national identity of the United States, a founder of the United Nations and a country which was created out of the struggle to stop the grandiose overreach of an empire, founding its own identity on checks and balances embodied in the rule of law.

It is with this guiding belief in multilateralism through the rule of law, stated Mr. Granoff, that the Global Security Institute is honored to host this gathering of governments to further advance a cooperative regime in outer space. The presentations and discussions that followed, in addition to providing an overview of the technical and political hurdles to this goal, demonstrated that what is needed is a Working Group of committed states to advance an effective set of principles which will guide such a process. This Working Group could commit to expend the necessary political capital to sustain a program of action to prevent weaponization and achieve



*Clockwise: Dr. Craig Eisendrath, Amb. Robert Grey, Jonathan Granoff, Amb. Munir Akram (Pakistan), Daniel Simanjuntak (Indonesia)*

a cooperative regime. Such a regime could be achieved in various ways, either through a protocol to the Outer Space Treaty, so-called outer space Rules of the Road, or a full-scale international treaty. Further explanation on these avenues is clearly needed. Towards this end, Mr. Granoff pledged, the Global Security Institute stands ready to assist interested states in promoting their venture.

## PANELISTS

**Under-Secretary-General Nobuaki Tanaka** opened his remarks by briefly discussing the significance of space in the age of the “Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)” and suggested that we may be in an era “in which outer space might become a battlefield.” Many applications of space technology, however, are dual use. As Mr. Tanaka pointed out, many technologies, originally designed for military purposes, “turned out to be gifts making our lives more comfortable and convenient,” such as weather forecasting, global communications and the global positioning system.

Mr. Tanaka also discussed the difficulties behind political solutions to the security threats posed by a militarized outer space. Definitional issues, for instance, such as what constitutes an offensive weapon, contribute to the stalemate of PAROS (the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space) talks in Geneva and led to “inconclusive results” of past negotiations on an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon ban. At present, however, Mr. Tanaka identified the linkage between PAROS and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) as “the largest single stumbling block” for space security negotiations.

Despite these challenges, however, Mr. Tanaka insisted that we must “fill in” the gaps in the existing space law, “especially with respect to the development, testing, deployment, or use of all types of weapons in outer space”; he admired the meeting as being the start of such a process.



*Clockwise from center: Mr. Khaled Shamaa (Egypt), Under-Secretary-General Tanaka, Dr. Jürgen Scheffran, and Dr. Randy Rydell*



**Ambassador Robert Grey, Jr.**, who has represented the United States at the United Nations in both New York and Geneva, asserted that unilateral actions in outer space are no more tenable than unilateral actions made in any other area of foreign policy. He noted that the benefits of outer space, like those posed by Antarctica, the seabed and other areas kept free from weapons of mass destruction, are guaranteed only through cooperation.

Noting the growing reliance on outer space- in particular for global communications and commerce- Ambassador Grey used several anecdotes from his long, distinguished career as a US diplomat to highlight the necessity of communications for national security and effective military operations. Without effective communication between central command and troops on the ground, war-fighting would descend into “total chaos”, and that, the ambassador maintained, “is when the fingers on the buttons get itchy”, increasing the risk of using nuclear weapons.

Ambassador Grey argued for the need to implement effective arms control measures in outer space; such measures, he said, are “not the ultimate solution, but a solution”. He claimed that, with a Democratic majority in the Congress, the funding for space weapons programs will be cut in the next two years, yet such cuts are not enough to protect outer space from the growing risks. Rather, he argued, what is needed is a clear vision that guides us forward. Such a vision can and should be formulated and promoted by a coalition of governments, such as the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). With respect to nuclear weapons, this coalition advanced principles and objectives, which, combined with their effective advocacy, helped achieve the successful negotiations of states parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2000. He urged that a similar group coalesce on this

issue and strategize ways of moving the issue forward in a multilateral setting. He praised the work of the Middle Powers Initiative in convening a consultation at the Carter Center in 2000 with the NAC, which helped communicate its message to the US administration; Ambassador Grey suggested that a similar process is in order regarding space.



**Dr. Jürgen Scheffran**, who was one of the authors of the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention, addressed both technical and political aspects of the weaponization of space and the efforts to prevent an arms race in the heavens.

In his discussion, he articulated the link between missile defense systems and ASAT satellite weapons, noting that the former have dual capability. Missile defense systems can deny access to space, attack satellites and ASAT weapons, which in return can attack them, constituting a “very complex interaction which can happen in a short period of time.”

Over the last 25 years, Dr. Scheffran noted, space-faring states such as Russia, China and the US, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have suggested a variety of steps that could be taken to limit the risks posed by the weaponization of outer space. These proposals range from modest confidence-building measures, such as Rules of the Road or a code of conduct, to more comprehensive arms control measures, such as banning weapons beyond a certain altitude, or banning steps in the life cycle of weapons research, development (R&D) and deployment.

An obvious and practical measure Dr. Scheffran noted support for is moratorium on the testing of space weapons. Such a measure, he argued, would freeze the current situation and give the international community time to develop political solutions.

Dr. Scheffran asserted that, regardless of which steps were taken now, a combination of measures must constitute a process by which governments and NGOs, including scientists and lawyers, discuss a long-term solution. Since 2007 commemorates the anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty (OST) and the launching of Sputnik, this year provides a good time to start such a process.

## **DISCUSSION**

The ensuing discussion was participatory of over 25 nations and notable experts, such as Dr. Craig Eisendrath, a consultant for GSI and co-author of the forthcoming book, “War in the Heavens,” which will be presented at a later consultation. The contributions from experts such as Dr. Eisendrath, who was a State Department official during the OST negotiations, provided historical and political context to the debate.

It was generally agreed that unilateralism is not a viable way by which to conduct a nation’s space policy, and that cooperation, based on the common interest of humanity principle found in the OST, is necessary. The missing element, it was often noted, is political will in either an organized fashion or high enough level to stop weaponization.

The links between the weaponization of outer space and the nuclear nonproliferation regime were made. It was pointed out that, as former Undersecretary of State John Holum once noted, the first victim of the weaponization of space will be the NPT; the cooperative vision of the oft-cited cornerstone of disarmament cannot survive a quest for space domination, the results of which will be an arms race in space and a failure of confidence in the cooperative security regime based on the NPT.

Some participants noted proposals to take the discussion of space out of the Geneva-based Conference on

Disarmament (CD); not all governments support this, and prefer instead to strengthen the beleaguered 65-nation forum. With such obvious linkages between nuclear and space weapons, the two must be addressed in the same forum; it need not necessarily be the CD, where the rule of consensus, many believe, is the culprit behind the ongoing deadlock in that forum.



Participants also broached the possibility of strengthening the legal regime protecting space from weaponization through an OST Review Conference, such as suggested by the independent Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (also known as the Blix Commission).<sup>1</sup> It was also noted, however, such a Conference may fall prey to some of the same hurdles holding up the CD unless a committed group of states initiated an Ottawa-like process.

One participant called into question the gravity of the threat as discussed by the panelists. Technically, he said, deploying such space systems is difficult, fragile and expensive and not seriously considered by a large number of states. Furthermore, he contested, the recent ASAT test by China demonstrates that a country's space system can easily be shot down, decreasing further the incentive to waste time and resources to deploy it in the first place.

Another participant disagreed, noting that there is a "tipping point" of debris caused by weapons testing; if debris hits other debris, the impact may create more debris, which in turn can hit other debris, constituting a self-perpetuating cycle of destruction from which there is no recourse. Such a threat compromises enormous economic interests which should be galvanized in support of a treaty regime to prevent weaponization and even weapons testing.

Other participants, while agreeing that the weaponization of space does pose a great risk, urged nonetheless that such a discussion to prevent further weaponization should not undermine discussions on other issues, such as an FMCT, nor should they be used as a pretext for not moving forward on other, perhaps "more ripe" issues.

Another participant asserted that now was the crucial time to negotiate on weapons in space, noting that the new US Congress, while willing to spend some money on research and development, will be much more loathe to spend money needed for deployment of such systems. The longer we wait to negotiate, he argued, the more ingrained corporate interests- such as that of weapons makers like Northrup Grumman or Raytheon- will be in seeing their R&D projects come to fruition. Once such corporate interests are ingrained, these contracts will become intractable. Therefore, he argued, these next two years present the best opportunity for reaching our goals.

Echoing Ambassador Grey's presentation, it was stressed that the Thirteen Steps of the 2000 NPT Review Conference would not have been achieved had there not been a New Agenda Coalition, and that in order to create similar momentum on the space weapons front, such a similar process must take place. It is premature to say what the forum will be- whether in the CD, a Review Conference of the OST or another forum altogether- but what is essential is a situation to galvanize political will.



As host of this event, Mr. Granoff urged participants to return to their missions with this issue firmly grasped and to set into motion a serious discussion within their capitols to form a Working Group amongst interested states to come up with an effective set of principles which will guide the process in whatever form it takes. Towards this end, Mr. Granoff pledged, the Global Security Institute stands ready to assist interested states in promoting this venture.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation #46 of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission: "A Review Conference of the Outer Space Treaty to mark its 40th year in force should be held in 2007. It should address the need to strengthen the treaty and extend its scope. A Special Coordinator should be appointed to facilitate ratifications and liaise with non-parties about the reinforcement of the treaty-based space security regime."

## LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

- “Time for US Values in the Heavens,” op/ed by Jonathan Granoff, February, 2007. Published in *CommonDreams* (<http://www.commondreams.org/views07/0210-22.htm>) and in the *Huffintgon Post* (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-granoff/time-for-us-values-for-b-41527.html>)
- “Policy Brief: Weaponization of Space,” by Ambassador Robert Grey, Jr., Director, Bipartisan Security Group: [http://www.gs institute.org/docs/08-04\\_WeaponizationofSpace\\_brief.pdf](http://www.gs institute.org/docs/08-04_WeaponizationofSpace_brief.pdf)
- “United States- Masters of Space? The US Space Command’s ‘Vision for 2020’,” by Jonathan Granoff and Dr. Craig Eisendrath:  
[http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Incompatible\\_Visions\\_w\\_appendix.pdf](http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Incompatible_Visions_w_appendix.pdf)
- “Space Weapons and the Risk of Accidental Nuclear War,” by Thomas Graham, Jr., Chairman of the Bipartisan Security Group, *Arms Control Today*, December 2005:  
[http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Graham\\_Space\\_ACT\\_12-05.pdf](http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Graham_Space_ACT_12-05.pdf)
- “Dual-Use in a New Security Environment: The Case of Missiles and Space,” Dr. Jürgen Scheffran, *INESAP Bulletin*, No. 26, June 2006: <http://www.inesap.org/bulletin26/art12.htm>
- Text of Under-Secretary-General Tanaka’s remarks are available at:  
<http://disarmament.un.org/speech/statements.htm>
- Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission report, “Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms,” is available at: <http://www.wmdcommission.org/>



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Participants List

1. Philipp Charwath, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Austria
2. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh
3. Jandyr Ferreira Dos Santos, Jr, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Brazil
4. Shannon-Marie Soni, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada
5. *H.E. Mr. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica\**
6. Khaled Shamaa, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Egypt
7. Janne Jaalas, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Finland
8. *Frederic Journes, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of France*
9. Bernard Heinze, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Germany
10. Lt. Colonel Mr. Ionnis Gerolynos, Military Advisor, Permanent Mission of Greece
11. *Ruchi Ghanashyam, Minister, Permanent Mission of India*
12. Daniel Simanjuntak, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Indonesia
13. *Sean McDonald, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Ireland*
14. Paolo Cuculi, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Italy
15. Noriyuki Nakano, First Secretary of Political Affairs, Permanent Mission of Japan
16. Zhanat Shaimerdenov, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan
17. Ms. Karen Mosoti, Legal Advisor, Permanent Mission of Kenya
18. Riedzal Abdal Malek, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Malaysia
19. Leon Rodriguez, Minister, Permanent Mission of Mexico
20. Ruud Niesink, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Netherlands
21. Meena Syed, Advisor, Permanent Mission of Norway
22. H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Pakistan
23. Khalil Hashmi, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Pakistan
24. Katarzyna Kukier, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Poland
25. *Igor Chsherbak, First Deputy, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation*
26. Ambassador Oh Joon, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea
27. Johann Paschalis, Counselor, Permanent Mission of South Africa
28. Juan Ignacio Morro, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Spain
29. Alex Pryanushko, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Ukraine
30. H.E. Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations
31. Randy Rydell, Senior Political Advisor, Department for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations
32. Niki Shah, Intern, Department for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations

*\*RSVPed but did not attend/sign in*