

**CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA:  
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Paper by Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations,  
Geneva, read out at *Session 8: Preventing Weaponisation of Space*

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Mr. Götz Neuneck,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank MIT, German Federal College for Security Studies, and Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg for inviting me to speak at this session. I am privileged to be part of such a distinguished panel.

"Space Age" evokes images of glamour, expedition and adventure associated with Sputnik, Apollo missions, and Star Trek. It also awakens dreams of humanity to transcend the limitations of our globe. Today, satellites orbiting around our planet influence lives of people all around the world. From television broadcast to GPS signals to weather forecast to financial transactions to reconnaissance of military activities – satellites have become indispensable in hundreds of millions of day to day decisions. Hundreds of satellites direct operations of the Internet and precision targeting by military weapons, to mention a few instances.

Space thus must remain a peaceful territory. It should not be militarized.

It is common interest of all mankind to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes. The UN Charter obligates us not to use or threaten to use force in international relations. That obligation includes member states' space activities.

Today, we see three distinct trends in regard to space:

*First*, space has become an international domain. Its management is therefore a multilateral responsibility. Today, more than 50 countries have their assets in space and several countries have launched satellites. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) assigns slots for satellites in a coveted geostationary band for which nations are competing with one another. Beyond the ITU's technical domain, we need collective and responsible stewardship of space to keep it peaceful.

*Second*, space is becoming congested. Since 1957, when Sputnik was put into space, the number of satellites has grown rapidly. This growth needs to be managed now and in the future.

*Third*, there is a growing risk that space will be militarized heavily. Weaponisation of outer space is not science fiction. Weapons in space would intensify wars on our globe. Therefore, measures to prevent an arms race in outer space would help avert a grave danger to global peace and security.

In October 2003, Theresa Hitchens, wrote: "It is fairly reasonable to expect that if a space arms race were to erupt among the United States, Russia and China, other emerging space powers would feel

pressured to also compete – in particular, India, Pakistan and Iran.”<sup>1</sup> We need “time out” in arms race in space because there are strong moves to leverage space for military purposes and to develop “counterspace” capabilities. Countries want to catch up and make up for the lost time. Besides, investment in military space technology will divert resources from other pressing and vital economic and social enterprises.

In Geneva, Pakistan in the context of the 65-member Conference on Disarmament (CD) associates itself with the positions of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) commonly known as the G-21. We particularly share the Group’s concern over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space. This trend (1) upsets strategic stability; (2) disrupts arms control processes; and (3) increases the risks of militarization of space and an arms race in outer space.

Pakistan cosponsors United Nations General Assembly resolutions on “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”. Last year’s resolution once again reaffirmed that space is a global commons meant for peaceful activity. It also underlined the importance and urgency of prevention of arms race in outer space and stated that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not guarantee the prevention of such an arms race. Therefore, there was a need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness. The General Assembly made three observations with regard to the Conference on Disarmament:

- The CD has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreements or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.
- The CD should complete the examination and updating of the mandate contained in its decision of 13 February 1992 and establish an ad hoc committee during the 2007 session. This did not happen.
- States conducting activities in outer space, as well as states interested in conducting such activities, should keep the CD informed of the progress of bilateral and multilateral negotiations on the matter.

As pointed out earlier, the role of space technology in our day to day life has become pervasive. Never before, information, intelligence, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation, and even political and strategic decision-making have been so dependent on space-based dual use technologies, which are themselves witnessing rapid growth. This growth would lead to weaponisation of outer space if countervailing measures are not taken. Moreover the distinction between civil and military uses, applications, and assets is theoretical. This perception in fact hampers cogent discussion on PAROS.

PAROS is not an issue solely linked to the negotiations for concluding a Fissile Material Treaty (FMT). It is not a parasitic issue, but an important subject which deserves attention on its own merit.

The objective of PAROS is preventative: to stem the induction of space weapons through surveillance and verification. The existing regime – comprising the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the

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<sup>1</sup> Theresa Hichens, *U.S Weaponization of Space: Implications for International Security*, 2 October 2003; [www.cdi.org](http://www.cdi.org)

1984 Moon Agreement, and the abrogated ABM Treaty of 1972 – has gaps which can only be addressed by a new legal instrument.

We have consistently argued that the time is ripe for focussed discussions and negotiations on PAROS. Possible elements of a treaty, presented by seven countries in 2002, are already on the table. Year after year, the UN General Assembly has adopted resolutions on PAROS. Proposals for a binding treaty, definitional parameters, verification measures, transparency, and CBMs have been put forward. UNIDIR-led conferences, the last held this year in March, have enhanced our understanding about the need and the means to block development and deployment of weapons in outer space.

Substantial work was also done in this regard by the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS from 1985 to 1992. Since 1992, diplomats inside and outside the CD as well as policy makers and officials of the military-industrial complex have discussed the definition, scope and applications of the proposed treaty on PAROS. In the past year, we have witnessed increased activity and debate on this subject. Governments, industry, civil society all have shown keen interest in ensuring exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

A discussion on three obligations – non-deployment, non-use of force or threat of force, and non-proliferation – embedded in a new treaty on the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space can form the basis for the work on a PAROS treaty. Papers presented by China, Russia, Canada and Sweden have further deepened our basic comprehension of the underlying concepts and issues. Russia has in fact circulated a draft text for a treaty and invited comments on it. The Russian delegation chose not to table the text in the CD this year. They might do so next year.

Recently, proposals have been made to examine the potential utility of a code of conduct or “rules of the road” for space faring nations. Codes of conduct, in fact, are useful interim measures and they must be explored, as they can help bring order. The codes of conduct, however, should not supplant the decades long quest for a PAROS treaty in the CD.

We also support suggestions to enhance and deepen the dialogue between various UN bodies with an interest in outer space, including the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the ITU, the CD and the UN General Assembly. A number of informal meetings are being organized by these forums but they do not lead to any substantive outcome. The “adjacency” of these organizations on outer space issues needs to be changed into a genuine synergy for a result oriented dialogue. Confidence building and transparency measures should culminate into a proper legal instrument.

Even as space faring nations promote more cooperation amongst themselves, some nations, in their military doctrines are placing greater emphasis on the security uses of outer space. Military doctrines that seek full spectrum dominance projected through and from space are counterproductive and jeopardize the security of all humanity. Defense capability is legitimate but aspirations for impregnable defenses tend to undermine deterrence, and lead to new instruments of war and to arms race.

Pakistan does not claim to be a space faring nation yet; but we are a space-threshold state. We are one of those countries which realized the importance of space technology rather early. Pakistan’s national space agency ‘SUPARCO’ (Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission) was established in 1961. We have indigenously developed two communication satellites which were launched in 1990 and 2001. Currently we are operating a leased satellite PAKSAT-I using the orbital slot of 38 degrees East longitude assigned to Pakistan.

SUPARCO provides such services as remote sensing, geographical information system, land surveying, and miscellaneous atmospheric science information. It also runs an Institute of Space Technology offering degrees in 'Aerospace Engineering' and 'Communication Systems Engineering'. The ongoing R&D work for peaceful uses of outer space involves the development of a satellite PAKSAT-1R and a Satellite Launch Vehicle. Like other countries Pakistan also relies heavily on the international network of satellites for communication and financial services.

The outer space usable for servicing the planet Earth is limited and prone to irreversible damage. Its judicious use is of paramount importance to all nations – the providers as well as users of space services. The continued prosperity and welfare of nations hinges on uses of space technologies. To jeopardize the security of such a vital and precious resource will indeed be a colossal mistake.

I thank you.

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