

**Roundtable with the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore
on Space Security Issues
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Verification and Compliance
March 5, 2012**

Thank you very much. Today's space environment has changed greatly since the dawn of the space age. Activities in space are no longer conducted only by a few governments, but many, and even those countries that are not space-faring benefit from space systems. We are dependent on space systems in ways our predecessors never imagined—for communication, navigation, financial activities, and scores of other activities worldwide. However, it is not only the users and uses of space that have changed. Earth's orbit is now littered with debris, the result of decades of space activity.

We believe that all nations must recognize that with the right to use and explore space comes the responsibility to protect space for future generations. Irresponsible acts in space today can have damaging consequences for both current and future space users. To ensure future safety, sustainability, stability, and security in space, we must work together now to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space.

The United States believes that, right now, the best way to move forward is to pursue near-term, voluntary, and pragmatic steps through transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). TCBMs are means by which governments can address challenges and share information with the aim of creating mutual understanding and reducing tensions between countries. Through TCBMs, we can address important areas such as orbital debris and collision avoidance, as well as increase familiarity and trust and encourage openness among space actors.

The United States already conducts a variety of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral TCBMs to encourage responsible actions in space. For example, we conduct regular Space Security Dialogues with traditional partners as well as with other established and emerging space-faring nations. Additionally, through United States Strategic Command, we provide notifications of potential orbital collision hazards to all government and private sector satellite operators, including over 450 to Russia and 250 to China in the past year. But while the United States is committed to addressing the challenges of operating in space, we recognize that we cannot do so alone.

The global reliance on space systems means that the challenges of operating in space cannot be addressed by a few parties, but must be recognized and tackled by many. To that end, the United States engages on space in a variety of multinational fora, from the U.N. General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament to the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The State Department will also participate actively in the Group of Government Experts (or GGE) on Outer Space TCBMs established by UN General Assembly Resolution 65/68.

It is our belief that one of the most beneficial multilateral TCBMs for strengthening stability in space could be the adoption of “best practice” guidelines or an international “code of conduct.” An International Code of Conduct could help establish guidelines for safe and responsible use of space, avoid collisions, reduce radiofrequency interference, and call out irresponsible behavior.

On January 17, 2012, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States has decided to join with the European Union and other spacefaring nations to develop an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. We believe that the European Union’s draft Code of Conduct is a good foundation for the development of a non-legally binding International Code of Conduct focused on the use of voluntary and pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures to help prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust in space. An International Code of Conduct, if adopted, would establish guidelines for responsible behavior to reduce the hazards of debris-generating events and increase the transparency of operations in space to avoid the danger of collisions.

Looking back at over half a century of space exploration, it is clear that the space environment has changed significantly, and will continue to do so. To protect the space environment and preserve its benefits for future generations, it is essential that all nations work together to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space. The United States looks forward to our future work with all responsible space actors to create a more secure, stable, and safe space environment for the benefit of all nations.

Thank you.