

Noting that the 1978-1979 negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union dealt with reaching agreement on a comprehensive ban, the UCS underlined the difficulties in verifying such a comprehensive ban and thus, addressed itself to the question of banning ASAT testing.

In contrast to the 1981 Soviet Draft Treaty, the UCS Treaty does not allow the use or testing of ground-based or space-based ASAT weapons. It also forbids the Parties from destroying any space object, including their own.

Though a ban on the use and testing in space of ASAT weapons cannot by itself protect satellites, it could provide a severe impediment to the further development of ever more capable ASAT weapons.

It should be noted that the ASAT limitations proposed by the UCS would not ban any ABM activity already permitted to both sides in the ABM Treaty. The initial ban on ASAT testing would be the first step and would then be augmented by a wider agreement to dismantle existing ASATs.

D. China Proposal

The most recent proposal for a new agreement on preventing an arms race in outer space was made by the delegate of China to the Conference on Disarmament.⁵⁴

The primary goal is to prevent the weaponization of outer space by banning the testing, deployment and use of weapons, weapon systems and components in outer space. Countries with the greatest space capabilities would bear a special responsibility for preventing the weaponization of an arms race in outer space and ensuring that space be used for peaceful purposes.

The proposal does not contain any specific treaty provisions but rather highlights several issues which would need to be addressed by such a Treaty. States Parties to the treaty would commit themselves not to test, deploy or use weapons, weapons systems or components of weapons systems in outer space. Consideration should also be given to a provision providing for permissible activities, thus helping to distinguish between activities that are prohibited and those that are not.

Definitions of terms such as "outer space", "space weapons", "weapon systems" and "components of weapon systems" should also be included.

Appropriate verification measures as necessary and appropriate are a key component of any future agreement. Mechanisms for consultations, clarification and possible dispute resolution in order to increase transparency and address suspicions should also be included.

The Chinese proposal certainly contains many similar suggestions to those advanced by countries such as Canada, Russia, Sweden and France. It is broader in terms of its application

⁵⁴ "Letter dated 9 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of China to the Conference on Disarmament Addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference Transmitting a Working Paper Entitled "China's Position on and Suggestions for Ways to Address the Issues of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space at the Conference on Disarmament", CD/1606.