

providing launching services at favorable prices, discussions on a prohibition of space-based weapons. This would satisfy those countries who favor negotiations in a more restricted arena, yet involve key players in this field.

Nothing would prevent the group of experts from inviting individuals from non-member G-8 countries but with a particular interest in the topic. Invited countries could include China, India and Brazil. This was in fact how the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) was originally created. It was created in 1984 in response to a recommendation from the Panel of Experts on remote sensing from space, under the aegis of the Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations Working Group on Growth, Technology and Employment.⁷⁶

Since its inception, CEOS membership has grown to encompass *all* the world's civil agencies responsible for Earth observation satellite programs, along with agencies that receive and process data. Some user organizations are also members. Thus, a more limited group of players having direct involvement in remote sensing are adopting international principles applicable to remote sensing and abiding by them, because all countries with a special interest are involved, norms of international law applicable to remote sensing can evolve through State practice.

In all cases, it should be remembered that any agreement reached (either bilaterally or amongst a more limited number of countries) should then be open for accession to other States.

Even such a "limited group" approach to negotiating a first ban on space-based weapons will be difficult to accept for the US. The role of the multilateral arms control forum is seen as a derivative one, the content of which is or will be defined by the nature of understandings reached by the US at a bilateral level with Russia. Recent press reports indicate a softening of position by Russia vis-à-vis the US national missile defense. Promises of economic incentives are thought to be the catalyst.

In Europe, the recent joint efforts of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Union (EU) on a Joint Strategy for Space has placed space issues at the highest political level. European members of the G-8 would thus probably favor the use of the G-8 as a vehicle for discussing space and security.

The G-8 option also offers another important advantage. Space systems and their utilization are becoming more closely integrated in a much broader political and economic strategy. Thus formulating space strategy is the task of institutions responsible for mapping out political and economic strategy. Inclusion of China, India and Brazil assures equitable geographic representation of countries with active space programs.

It should also be noted that a US official indicated that within the framework of the Joint Data Exchange Committee, a first step towards meeting the JDEC's objective of a multilateral regime, countries from the G-8 could be asked to join the JDEC.

⁷⁶ CEOS' goals are: (1) to optimize the benefits derived from space-based remote sensing through the cooperation of its members to provide services, policies, and products; (2) to provide assistance to members and users by acting as a focal point for the coordination of space-based remote sensing; and (3) to promote the exchange of technical information in order to encourage the compatibility of space-based remote sensing satellites. See <http://www.ceos.org>