

and possibly as part of the United Nations Secretariat.⁶³ The membership of the Centre would be open, on a voluntary basis, to all States possessing or using satellites. Since its main objective would be clearly confined to monitoring of the trajectory of Earth-orbiting devices, France suggested that the Centre could play a key role in building up confidence amongst States. The Center's principal function would therefore be to collect data for updating registration, monitor space objects, and conduct real time calculation of space object's trajectories. While the French proposal acknowledged that the existence of a database would increase transparency, it also recognized that the nature of this data-gathering was such that the protection of technological and military information would be a serious consideration.

VII. Pre-Launch Notification

In 1993, France proposed the establishment of a regime of obligatory prior notification of launches of space objects and ballistic missiles. The regime would be managed by an International Launch Notification Centre (ILNC). States Parties to this regime would transmit in writing to the ILNC "notification of launches of space launchers carrying satellites or other space objects and ballistic missiles which they had planned". The ILNC would be attached to the United Nations. Its primary functions would be:

- to receive notifications of launches transmitted to it by States Parties before each launch;
- to receive information furnished by states on launches actually carried out;
- to manage a data bank at the disposal of the international community.

The establishment of such a regime would increase transparency, and thus security, of space activities, and help to deal with ballistic missile proliferation.

Since this proposal was made, the US and Russia have signed a MOU for the Establishment of a Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) in Moscow for the exchange of information derived from each side's missile launch warning systems on the launches of BM and space launch vehicles⁶⁴. Appendix 2 to the MOU states that in the future, both Parties shall examine in the Joint Commission expanded data sharing globally, taking into account changes to the strategic situation in the world and the establishment of a multilateral regime for the exchange of notifications of launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles.

The Appendices to the MOU highlight the sensitivity both parties have on confidentiality of the data recorded. Mechanisms for dealing with ambiguities or uncertainties are provided for. In addition, decisions of the Joint Commission will be mandatory and binding.

⁶³ CD/937 and CD/PV.570 (1989).

⁶⁴ See *supra*, Chapter 1, p. 12.