

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

protected environment, a "keep-out zone". This might enhance the actual possibility of protecting satellites -- for instance against space mines -- in a considerable measure.

An international treaty that would provide for the protection of space objects would require a number of flanking measures, the observance of which would be in the interest of all concerned and exercise a considerable confidence-building effect. Such flanking measures are particularly conditioned by the "over-population" of outer space and the resulting risks of unintended collisions of satellites with space debris and other objects that are not fully traceable or with space objects which break out of programmed orbits.

Such flanking agreements could comprise the mutual contractual renunciation of interference measures, the observance of minimum distances between space objects -- especially important for the avoidance of interference with transmitting frequencies -- the limitation of approach velocities of space objects, and the establishment of consultation mechanisms in case of accidents and other unexplained events.

A new code of "rules of the road" for outer space could contribute in large measure to attenuating the effects of unintended escalation and to limiting the risks arising from misunderstandings in crisis situations. Additional rules that could be comprised in such a code might include: restrictions on very low altitude overflight by manned or unmanned spacecraft; new stringent requirements for advanced notice of launch activities; specific rules for agreed, and possibly defended, keep-out zones; grant or restriction of the right of inspection; limitation on high velocity fly-bys or trailing of foreign satellites; and established means by which to obtain timely information and consult concerning ambiguous or threatening activities.

In order to reduce uncertainty regarding the purpose of certain satellites and the tension likely to result from an unauthorized close approach, it might be useful to establish specific rules regarding inspection, high-velocity fly-by and trailing -- rules required by the increasing deployment density of space objects. Such agreements might allow close approach and inspection under certain circumstances (i.e. prior consent), or they might otherwise ban high-velocity fly-by and trailing -- either of which could be a prelude to satellite attack. There already exists a world-wide network of facilities designed to trace all satellites in their orbital course, and enabling States to be aware, in a comprehensive manner, of all activities in space. Satellites have aboard a multitude of sensors designed to report about their operability and any possible disturbances. If minimum distances would be agreed upon, these communication facilities would provide a prior warning mechanism, if ever the minimum distances are violated, so that satellites, should they already possess such sophisticated capabilities, could evade the approaching object. These possibilities would be particularly useful in the case of space tests or the deployment of any space-based weapon systems that are not directly directed against satellites.

The two main areas in which my delegation thus sees a fruitful field for the identification of "further measures", namely, a legal protection régime for satellites, and the further development of "rules of the road" in space,