

US SPACE POLICY FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP.

A. H. Sinclair

This presentation addresses the need for a “holistic” approach to Space Law in light of the current US Moon Exploration objectives. The mandate that created NASA was put into place by Eisenhower to redress the imbalance between military involvements for space and the peaceful usages of space for civil society interests. Various treaties have attempted to address the legal status of outer space. However the more current treaty initiatives at the UN around the recommendations of PAROS (Prevention of an Arms Race in Space) have reached something of an impasse. To date virtually all countries subscribe for PAROS with the sole exception of the US. One reason the US declines endorsement of these recommendations is that US space based systems are viewed as both vulnerable communications assets and as valuable military ones, therefore high ground availability for the defense of the national space assets precludes the exclusionary usage clauses within current PAROS recommendations.

There is in fact a very reasonable way around this divergence of interests, one that would enhance and optimize current space law. Such legislative expansion would not only be of great benefit to the lunar exploration program, but would also support US technological interests, US foreign policy objectives and a host of innovative near earth orbit implementations for global development. The answer to the problem could be found within US initiative for a comprehensive “active” or utilization based International Space Systems Treaty (ISST) Preparation and ratification of ISST would create an international platform that would not only compliment and empower the distinctive PAROS resolutions, but would also give further prospects for international participation into the strategic space based security essentials, thereby creating an international space security architecture, which is a valid objective for current US Space Policy, the ITAR directives and the prospects for collaborative international space research and development agendas.

What does this have to do with the Moon? ISST would support a general and wide-range of space-based implementations, hence the possibility of a taking up a “holistic” approach and a more democratic interpretation for space development. Within an ISST utilization platform the initiative for moon exploration would be phased in as an international or a global enterprise. One which would offer a formal working basis for the pooling of multiple expertise, the burgeoning commercial interests and all Space Agency resources at the international level

The next Space Shuttle could certainly be an International Space Shuttle, integrating the best possible features that would be readily available from combined resources. Such a shuttle would have standardized components and could be readily duplicated, perhaps giving rise to an entire fleet of compatible Shuttles with operating bases in US, Russia, China, India, Japan and elsewhere. More equipment would speed up the lunar program, as would more funding, more public and governmental support and so on

Within a comprehensive and utilization based space treaty, moon exploration could be undertaken as international moon exploration, giving the peoples of this world much hope for a hospitable and benign future world. Likewise the future moon base would be an international moon base sharing responsibility and the accruing collective benefit for the peoples of a world in crisis.

Finding a way to achieve a balance of interests for the various subscribing space agencies within ISST and addressing the manifold and complex space utilization and space exploration objectives is not an easy task. It is not an impossible one either. If we are to perpetuate Eisenhower’s vision of NASA as being primarily a humanistic resource, the establishment of a genuine and rational treaty basis to address the prospect of formative and global space security structures becomes highly relevant. The task of empowering innovative near earth observation capacities, upholding essential space based communications and enabling tremendous and formally associated developmental potentials will take a leading role in a future world.

We must investigate space policy in an integrated, considered and appropriate way. Standing at the dawn of the Information Age looking towards the moon, we remember those preemptive words “One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” This statement still holds true for us all today. US space policy should directly address the preparation of an International Space Systems Treaty and an associated utilization platform that comprehensively enables the valuable and inspiring aspects of space development, for both the earth and the moon, for both global security and global development, for the community of nations and for a newer and a kinder world.