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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
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Vienna, 19–28 June 2024
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
**Ways and means of maintaining outer space for
peaceful purposes**

**Working paper on the use of “megaconstellations” of
commercial/civilian spacecrafts and systems for undeclared
purposes submitted by the Russian Federation**

Submitted by the Russian Federation

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* [A/AC.105/L.337](#).



Use of “megaconstellations” of commercial/civilian spacecrafts and systems for undeclared purposes

Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation

1. The exploration and use of Outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind¹.
2. States shall carry out activities in the exploration and use of Outer space «in the interests of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding.»²
3. New challenges for the Security of Space Operations (SSO) and the Long-term Sustainability of Outer space activities (LTS) have arisen due to the increased number of space operators (state, non-state, including private/commercial) in the mostly used low Orbit area (up to 2000 km) of the near-Earth space.
4. A serious challenge for SSO and LTS is an extremely dangerous trend of the use by certain States of satellite systems and the related ground infrastructure, including commercial civilian systems, to support intelligence and combat operations of foreign armed forces and to interfere into the internal affairs of sovereign States.
5. To «assist» Ukraine, certain States actively engage various space systems for intelligence and information support of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF), including to discover places of dislocation, routes of movements and actions of the Russian troops, provide secure communication channels to mobile subscribers, transfer flight missions data to high-precision weapon carriers. Most of the «space-related» information transmitted to Kiev comes from civilian (commercial) satellite systems such as “Starlink” and Eutelsat.
6. Information received from the specified «commercial» satellites is used, among other things, to plan and hit civilian targets on the territory of the Russian Federation.
7. The above mentioned space systems enhance the combat capacities of UAF. In this regard, the Russian side has all the grounds to consider them as legitimate targets to be destroyed, along with other foreign weapons and military equipment supplies to Ukraine. The Russian Federation side has repeatedly and officially stated this in 2022-2023.
8. Since the space systems are critically important to provide socially significant functions (broadband connection and the «global» Internet, prevention and elimination of consequences of natural disasters, supporting banking operations etc.), the termination of their normal functioning can lead to unpredictable consequences.
9. In relation to the above mentioned, there is a need to launch a focused dialogue within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space aimed at raising awareness of the problems associated with:
 - Increased workload of the low-Earth Orbit;
 - Growing risks of accidents, collisions and space debris;
 - Emergence of new, non-state actors and the increase in the number of space services that may have both civilian and military users;
 - The use of commercial/civilian space systems, including their ground infrastructure, to support intelligence and combat operations of foreign armed forces and interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

¹ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1967 Outer Space Treaty), article I.

² Ibid, article III.

10. The Russian Federation believes that the member States of the Committee could contribute to the achievement of a collective agreement by identifying common approaches to ensure SSO and LTS by consolidating a comprehensive understanding of the problems associated with the deployment of “megaconstellations” of commercial/civilian spacecrafts in the near-Earth space and the use of their related ground infrastructure to enhance combat capabilities of foreign Armed Forces and interfere into the internal affairs of sovereign States, as well as to encourage the development of guidelines or frameworks, the application of which will facilitate the identification of acceptable solutions and the implementation of effective practical response measures.
