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(*address withheld*)

President-elect Barack Obama
Presidential Transition Team
Washington, DC 20270

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Space Militarisation and Weaponisation

Dear President Barack Obama,

If the financial hiccough that began as a low rumbling on September 11, 2001 is now a gastronomical inconvenience, then the proliferation of space weapons will be the Ebola virus. The negative effects of a collapsing economy in terms of humanity's history will be relatively short; a space race to arms against other countries will set a sinister precedent, which would foreshadow an enduring dystopian winter. Eisenhower sought to obviate such a future in writing:

There are about to be perfected and produced powerful new weapons which, availing of outer space, will greatly increase the capacity of the human race to destroy itself. If indeed it be the view of the Soviet Union that we should not go on producing ever newer types of weapons, can we not stop the production of such weapons which would use or, more accurately, misuse, outer space, now for the first time opening up as a field for man's exploration? Should not outer space be dedicated to the **peaceful** uses of mankind and **denied to the purposes of war**? That is my proposal.

– President Dwight D. Eisenhower, January 12, 1958
Letter to Nikolai Bulganin, Chairman, Council of Ministers, U.S.S.R.

Advocating space dominance argues from fear and ignorance, not from confidence and reason. Ignoring political ramifications, technical challenges, and personal opinions of orbital swordplay, we cannot overlook one obvious truth, humorously summarised thusly:

Space is big – *really big* – you just won't believe how vastly, hugely mind-bogglingly big it is. You may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space.

– Douglas Adams, 1979

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Any preemptive military stranglehold on space will fail, as it would involve jurisdiction jousting, introduce authoritarian ascension, and imply a tactless threat.

- ★ **Jurisdiction jousting.** Space cannot be controlled by a lone country without eradicating all space programmes of competing nations, which is absurd. Making machines withstand the unforgiving environment of space is difficult enough, without having to harden them against assault. Instead, garner protection through cooperative inclusion, rather than exclusion and domination.
- ★ **Authoritarian ascension.** A government that attempts absolute sovereignty over space will evoke international ire. Embargoes and economic instability would ensue. Imposing autocratic rule would instigate an era of tense, hostile relations between space-capable nations, likely ending in counter-aggression and war.
- ★ **Tactless threat.** Increasing space-based military influence, for defensive or facilitative purposes, is a hostile maneuver that will, inevitably, trigger an arms race. Ground and orbital surveillance should be sufficient to deter attacks; hostile offensives, from or in space, must be treated as a declaration of war.

Assisting NASA with Pentagon R&D might lead to victory in a moon race against China. It might also lead to an arms race. Winning either is a loss.

Competition of this magnitude is redundant and seclusive. It is redundant for two countries to spend billions of dollars, and countless hours of labour, to achieve similar outcomes when loftier ambitions, like Mars, await. It is seclusive because space avails an opportunity to unite disparate states for a greater purpose: humanity's conservation.

Humankind has no backup. Geology, astronomy, and Hiroshima dramatically demonstrate our tenuous foothold on existence. Ensuring our survival and continuation must trump our egos. Eisenhower's original recommendation for NASA echoes these thoughts:

I recommend that aeronautical and space science activities sponsored by the United States be conducted under the direction of a civilian agency, except for those projects primarily associated with military requirements. I have reached this conclusion because space exploration holds promise of adding importantly to our knowledge of the earth, the solar system, and the universe, and because it is of great importance to have the fullest **cooperation of the scientific community at home and abroad** in moving forward in the fields of space science and technology.

Moreover, a civilian setting for the administration of space function will emphasize the concern of our Nation that outer space be devoted to peaceful and scientific purposes.

– President Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 2, 1958

Special Message to the Congress Relative to Space Science and Exploration.

The United States must renounce space armaments with such vehemence, vivaciousness, and veritable venom that *all* countries will have heard it so distinctly as to think that they thought it themselves! By extending an alliance on space exploration to every nation, by actively seeking international cooperation, an imperative message is sent.

It is *your* government, Mr. President, that must show us the steps to peace. And that message is ample change to inspire a world.

With my deepest respect,

Dave Jarvis

cc: Michael Griffin, NASA Administrator
Michael Ignatieff, Member of Parliament