

Dateline city: Washington, D.C.

Source: e-Parliament

FIRST ONLINE GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY HEARING WILL FOCUS ON SPACE SECURITY

On September 14 the US Congress will be the scene for a new departure in international politics. A group of democratically elected legislators from ten countries will hold a joint parliamentary hearing, webcast live to enable participation from journalists worldwide.

The hearing will focus on the future of outer space, and in particular on the possible deployment of weapons in space. The use of space weapons is under consideration by the US Air Force and is becoming controversial. Proponents see such weapons as essential to protect satellites. Critics argue that space-based weapons could also be used offensively, and could trigger a new arms race in space.

According to the organisers, this will be the first of many international parliamentary hearings on different issues to be organised by the e-Parliament, a new global forum made up of democratic lawmakers. The aim of the e-Parliament is to enable legislators to form international networks on issues of common interest, and to help spread and implement innovative policy ideas.

Participants in the Washington hearing represent differing viewpoints, and include several members of the US House Armed Services Committee, as well as the Chairs of Foreign Affairs and Defense Committees, or other leading legislators, from the parliaments of Australia, Brazil, Britain, Denmark, European Parliament, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Mexico and Norway.

Experts presenting to the legislators will include: Ambassador Henry Cooper, former Director of the US Strategic Defense Initiative Organization; Prof. Everett Dolman of the US Air Force; Theresa Hitchens of the Center for Defense Information; and Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute.

PANEL OF LEGISLATORS: Lyn Allison (Australia), Kwame Ampofo (Ghana), Aroldo Cedraz (Brazil), Terry Everett (USA), Air Marshal Lord Garden (UK), Ana Maria Gomes (European Parliament), Bjørn Hernæs (Norway), Silvia Hernández (Mexico), Jakob Axel Nielsen (Denmark), Loretta Sanchez (USA), Gustavo Selva (Italy), Mac Thornberry (USA), Curt Weldon (USA), Hayashi Yoshimasa (Japan).

NOTE: Webcast link and information at www.e-parl.net. Hearing 10:00-12:00 US Eastern Time (14:00-16:00 GMT), and a dialogue between legislators 13:00-15:30 Eastern. To submit questions to experts or legislators, or request information or press release at end of meeting, email info@e-parl.net before September 14. Questions during event via webcast link. If attending in person, conference begins 09:30am, Room 2105, Rayburn Building, Capitol Hill. Contact tel: +44 20 89812989 (011 44 20 89812989 from US) or +44 1233 813796.