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Author: Mr. Jason R. Bonin
Singapore, Republic of, jrbonin81@gmail.com

SPACE COOPERATION AND COMPETITION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC: A TWICE TOLD TALE – OR
THRICE?

Abstract

Space cooperation can provide numerous benefits in each of its political, social and economic contexts in what can only be described as a virtuous circle. Yet, it may also prove a means of securing a particular state's own interests in a region of continuous political and economic change. Despite a multiplicity of space-faring states in the region, space cooperation is still in its formative stages in the Asian region. This paper analyzes the particular forms, both present and emerging, of intra-regional cooperation in Asia. The paper identifies two particular organizations, the Beijing-based Asia-Pacific Space Research Organization (APSCO) and the Japanese initiative, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF), for analysis, identifying their structures and composition as well as initiatives in the region. It presents each organization as offering a competing framework of influence within the region. These two organizations are then discussed in light of a third interest – that of the United States, demonstrating how US membership projects its own interests into the region as a means to counterbalancing regional developments.