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LEGAL ISSUES OF RELEASING SATELLITES IN OUTER SPACE

Abstract

Due to a size of a satellite which became much smaller in recent years, a ground-based launch is not the only mean to place space objects into orbit. While a conventional ground-based launch still dominates the market, other means of launching e.g, air based launching as well as releasing satellites from Space Shuttles and the International Space Station have been successfully undertaken. The international law governing outer space, namely, the Outer Space Treaty and the Liability Convention do not address adequately non-ground based launches and the damage caused in outer space such as the unsuccessful release of a satellite resulting to damage to other space objects in orbit. Fault-based liability is applied for such damage; however, no further details are established, consequently, remedies may not be provided in case of damage incurred to other space objects in orbit. This article examines the legal issues concerning a releasing and deployment of satellites in outer space and associated liability issues.