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SOME LEGAL ISSUES BASED ON THE CASE OF “PHOBOS-GRUNT” PROBE

Abstract

Russia’s Mars probe Phobos-Grunt, carried the Chinese Mars orbiter Yinghuo-1, was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on Nov. 9, 2011. But a few hours later, the Mars probe failed to conduct an orbit-change due to an ignition failure of the main engine. In the end the debris of the probe crashes into Pacific Ocean on Jan.15, 2012. A multi-lateral cooperation like this usually involves the effort from more than one nation and is therefore more complicated. This paper tries to analyze, in light of the “Phobos-Grunt” Mars probe case, the identification and assumption of the liabilities involved in the damage sustained from fallen space object debris. In addition, this paper will also introduce the relevant legal regimes in the space legislation and policy of some countries that implement the rule of state liability that are already provided in the “Liability Convention”, and the third party liability insurance.