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NON-PHYSICAL DISRUPTION OF SATELLITES OR ITS FUNCTIONS: A THREAT TO  
SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF A STATE.

**Abstract**

Advancements in space technology are in contrast with the obsolete international laws governing space activities. With progress in space technology, reliance on space systems is growing rapidly and in near-future States, globally are expected to be more dependent on space system for diverse applications. Also, with increasing involvement of private players and outburst in venturing into space exploration and exploitation, it is expected that space technology will become more sophisticated, complex and readily available to States at large. However, at present, with existing international regulations and definitional problems with the *corpus juris spatialis* numerous questions pose great challenge *vis-à-vis* the advanced use of space systems. The central theme of this paper is - how non-physical disruption of satellite or its functions pose threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State. Increased dependency on space technology for military and non-military purposes can act as a great threat to the systems based on such technology for instance, communication, navigation, infrastructure etc. Once a satellite is targeted and disrupted in ways discussed in this paper, States may become vulnerable tactically, economically and territorially which are conditions, akin to war.

The position as of now remains unclear as to whether non-physical interference with the satellites or its functions constitutes *use of force* and whether *damage* under Liability Convention covers non-physical damage. Jurists have often opined distinctly with their own convictions and no consensus exists in this regard as to interpretation of International Space Law. Such form of disruption poses greater challenge in view of identifying its source, method and above all, establishment of intention in doing so. Since all technology is vulnerable to technical glitches it may always be one's argument that any disruption caused to and from a space object or a grounded object is merely a technical glitch while costing the victim State a large ordeal. The problem is multi-faceted and invokes general principles of international law, international humanitarian laws, in particular international space law and the international telecommunication union regime along with in depth analysis of existing and foreseeable means of non-physical disruption of satellites for tactical purposes.

This paper proposes to elaborate on problems arising due to definitional aspects, applicability of international humanitarian law, existing and foreseeable methods of non-physical disruption of satellites or its functions and critically analyzing the principle of non-military use of space in view of the aforesaid problems.