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Peace in Space: Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (2)

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SPACE SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: KEY TO A NEW SPACE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Abstract

The security and safety situation in Outer Space is changing. There are new incidents and players, like the Chinese ASAT test in January 2007, the Iridium / Cosmos collision and the first launch of a Iranian satellite in February 2009. The new US administration under President Obama is striving for a new national space policy. As far as we know today, some of the cornerstones of the new US space policy will be the minimizing of space debris and preventing a weaponization of space. These goals are ambitious and require finding the consensus of all other space actors. Realistically, diplomacy works only in small steps.

This presentation proposes to use Space Situational Awareness (SSA) as a first confidence building measure towards more transparency and stability in Outer Space. Space Situational Awareness is generally understood as the comprehensive knowledge of the population of space objects, of existing threats, risks and the space environment. A coordinated effort of sharing such (SSA) information seems a plausible first step of an international security cooperation before advancing to more ambitious goals.