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THE FIRST BASIC SPACE PLAN OF JAPAN: WHAT WILL BE CHANGED?

Abstract

This paper addresses, analyzes and evaluates the contents of the first Basic Space Plan to be made in accordance with Article 24 of Basic Space Law (Law No. 43) effective since as of 27 August 2008. Basic Space Plan is scheduled to be released in May, 2009. Basic Space Law, the first national legislation in Japan, was adopted in order to promote Japan's space activities comprehensively and systematically. Although Japan is one of the space-faring nations, its record on space commerce is meager, to say the least. Japan has never conducted a commercial space launching nor does it have a private remote sensing satellite in operation. In face of the era of space industrialization, lawmakers in Japan decided to tackle the situation by adopting a law to obligate the government to help the private aerospace sector advance its space business. In addition, Japan's long-term interpretation of "peaceful uses" of outer space as "non-military" became increasingly difficult to maintain because the demarcation of civil and military use of space has been blurring. That had to be also addressed through the legislation. Strategic Headquarters for Space Development (Article 25- Article 34 of Basic Space Law), chaired by Prime Minister, is now in the process of making the first Basic Space Plan with the help of the working group to consider it, established in September, 2008. As a member of the above-mentioned working group, the author would like to explain the contents of the Basic Space Plan as concretely as possible. Then as a researcher in this field, the author analyzes and evaluates the Basic Space Plan in terms of the impact on space commerce, security use of space, space application for the benefit of the citizenry, space diplomacy and space science as an aspiration for the future generation.