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

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TCBMS OVER THE MILITARY USES OF OUTER SPACE

Abstract

In the early 1990s, the application of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) to space activities was explored by the UN Secretary-General to strengthen existing international space law in the context of space security. In 1993, a report was launched by the Group of Governmental Experts over the application of CBMs in outer space for the purpose of the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), based on the proposals presented by Member States to the CD PAROS Committee. Although the report did not use the term "transparency", its conclusion was in line with UNGA resolution "Transparency in armaments" of 1991 in focusing transparency through information exchange, providing that "1. an increased level of openness and transparency in the field of armaments would enhance confidence, promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security."

The term "transparency" entered into the space arms control lexicon since 2006 when the UNGA adopted a series of resolutions entitled as "Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space activities" confirming the importance of CBMs as a conductive means of ensuring the attainment of the objective of PAROS. In that year, there were two UNGA resolutions for voting over PAROS and TCBMs in outer space activities. Both resolutions were supported by a majority of Member States as 160 (the former) and 158 (the latter) States in favor, while the U.S. was against and Israel was abstained to both resolutions. Such a voting result might exemplify the difficulty in treaty-making for space security

To control the military uses of outer space by TCBMs covering the placement of conventional arms in Earth orbit and the use of force in outer space, the legal implications of CSBMs are studied and their lessons from the UN Register of Conventional Arms are examined to improve the application of TCBMs to space security.