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Space policies and programmes of international organizations with particular regard to the participation of developing countries (2)

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GLOBALIZATION, MULTI-POLARIZATION, AND RISING SECURITY CONCERNS: CAN SPACE PROGRAMMES CONTRIBUTE TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND PROGRESS?

Abstract

Since the end of the Cold war, new players have emerged from the process of globalization, slowly reshaping international politics. Regional powers are progressively asserting themselves in what becomes a multi-polar world, raising stability concerns. In times of crises, nation states tend to fall back and distrust one another. An expanding globalization combined with economical and security threats brings along mistrust. Though, since the global financial crisis of September 2008, governments of industrialized nations have come together to find mitigating measures.

In the space community as well, new crises have drawn the attention of actors on the international scene. Discussions about security and freedom of access to outer space have gained new momentum in the light of recent events such as this year's collision between two satellites, or last year's Chinese unilateral testing. The nations of Europe proposed a new code of conduct regarding space debris mitigation. Russia and China introduced new treaties proposals at the UNCOPUOS, highlighting a new impetus in space security issues across the globe.

If space activities have been emblematic of the apogee of the most dramatic arms race experienced by humanity, there might be room for alternative views, namely that of a technology entailing also a pacifying dimension. Security threats faced by nations in today's world go beyond conventional military interpretations. Mission statements of many armed forces worldwide have evolved to encompass a broader spectrum of activities, such as peace-keeping, humanitarian and disaster relief operations. The rationale behind ambitious space efforts in some emerging countries is a cause for alarm among traditional world powers, yet the recent trend towards consultation around space weaponization and other security issues highlights the gathering potential of space activities.

History shows that mankind already avoided the fatal outcome of a nuclear holocaust when the space programmes of the two blocks reached their peaks. This paper will show how space activities may provide humanity with another chance to come to grips with its ongoing struggle to preserve peace, to protect its current living environment, and to create or find a new habitat for the sake of the generations to come.