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LEGAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CHINA'S MANNED SPACE PROGRAM

Abstract

Initiating its manned space program in 1992, China's technologies and activities in this field have been developing at a rapid rate and have gained many achievements over the last decade. China is the third country in the world that has developed manned spaceflight independently. Due to the fact that manned space activities involve huge investment and complicated technologies, they are normally undertaken by means of cooperation among the space powers. Although, till now, China's international cooperation in this respect is rather limited in numbers and only relates to partial elements of the whole project, it is undeniable that Chinese government consistently advocates carrying out active and practical international cooperation in space activities and explicitly recognizes that promoting international cooperation in manned space activities is an inevitable trend. Consequently, it can be reasonably anticipated that China will strengthen cooperation in manned space activities with the other space faring nations in near future. It is important to emphasize the legal parameters to international cooperation in manned space program because legal regimes facilitate the resolution of legal issues and make scientific and technical cooperation between the parties proceed more smoothly. Aiming at giving a consolidated foundation for the future international cooperation, the researchers of this paper attempt to identify and analyze the major legal issues, including registration, liability, intellectual property rights, jurisdiction and control, under the frameworks of the International Space Station and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization.