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SPACE SECURITY AND SPACE SAFETY: TWO CONCEPTS TO BE DISTINGUISHED

Abstract

Literature of space policy and law of recent years has coined the concept of space security as, “a secure and sustainable access to, and use of, space and freedom from space-based threats“. This presentation proposes to distinguish between space security and space safety, similar to the distinction used in aviation. Therefore, space security should cover aspects of space weaponization and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as foreseen in the UN Conferences of Disarmament. Conversely, technical aspects, like the mitigation of space debris should be addressed as space safety. The Chinese anti-satellite test of 2007 has shown that space weapons and the generation of space debris can be linked. However, the (future) legal instruments governing space security and space safety should be kept apart. Some reasons for that can be identified in an analysis of arguments following the U.S. missile strike against the disabled ‘USA 193’ satellite in 2008.