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THE CHINESE/RUSSIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN
SPACE: AN ANALYSIS

Abstract

The past two years have witnessed a renewed commitment by China and Russia to promote the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) by legal and diplomatic means. In particular, this commitment has resulted in the submission of an updated version of the Draft Treaty on the Prevention of to the Conference on Disarmament on 10 June 2014 and the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution 70/27 on 'No first placement of weapons in space' on 7 December 2015. Despite the criticism that these two initiatives have received they represent an important development in the international effort to avoid the weaponization of outer space for at least three reasons: 1) a crescent number of States, especially within the United Nations General Assembly, has supported them; b) they combine both a hard law and a soft law approach to PAROS; 3) they have the merit to maintain the often neglected PAROS issue at the center of the diplomatic agenda of States. In the light of the above the purpose of this paper is to analyze the content of the updated Draft PPWT and of Resolution 70/27, evaluate their positive features and shortcomings, and assess their chances to provide a meaningful contribution to a more secure outer space.