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WILL INTERNATIONAL SPACE COMPETITION GO TO SPACE WARFARE?

Abstract

International space competition and international space cooperation alternates with each other three times during the first 60-year international space activities. Nowadays, it has become one of the characteristics of the present era that intense competition and cooperation are inseparably intertwined. It is analyzed in this paper why there is no space warfare so far and whether space warfare will happen in the near future. Firstly the international space activity status is summarized as follows: (1) space cooperation widely added into space development strategy; (2) rapidly growing up and competition of commercial space; (3) establishment of space military alliance; (4) competition on drawing principles of international space behavior and building international space organizations. Secondly, looking for historical lessons, we can identify four primary trends that helps states avoid direct conflicts in space: (1) fragility of space; (2) expensive space weapons; (3) fear of conflict escalation; (4) advantages of space cooperation. Finally, the risk level to erupt into space warfare will upgrade because of: (1) dilemma of international space cooperation; (2) adjustment of states nuclear strategy; (3) development of space technologies and space weapons; (4) theory studies of space deterrence and cross-domain deterrence.