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BRAZIL AND USA: THE TECHNOLOGY SAFEGUARD AGREEMENT TO OPEN ALCANTARA
LAUNCH CENTER TO THE GLOBAL MARKET

Abstract

Brazil is one step closer to becoming a “Launching state”. It has two launch sites namely Alcântara Launch Center (CLA) and Barreira do Inferno Launch Center (CLBI), as well as makes, assembles and tests sounding rockets, satellites and rocket engines. The CLA, inaugurated in 1990, is capable of launching solid fuel sounding, research vehicles and satellites into low Earth orbit and it is ready to launch small commercial rockets. It is run by the Brazilian Air Force and it is located on the Brazilian northeastern coast near the border with Equator. This localization increases the Center safety conditions and allows for lower launching costs. The CLBI, built in 1965, is also located on the Brazilian northeastern coast and maintains close cooperation with the European Space Agency as a tracking station for all Ariane launches from Kourou. A large number of countries could be interested in using the CLA due its favorable geographic position near the Equator which allows save fuel for satellite launches. At present, a lot of companies are interested in launching small satellites at a lower cost from the CLA on its northeastern coast. After concluding recently the technology safeguard agreement with USA in order to protect sensitive American space launch and satellite technology, Brazil is ready to become a new hub in the space industry. It hopes to get a piece of the 300 billion a year space launch business by drawing USA companies interested in launching small satellites at a lower cost from its Alcantara base. However, some issues need to be analyzed in order to manage the space activities in its territory, e.g., the approval of its national space legislation and among other factors. The objective of this paper is to analyze the issues and possible outcomes of this safeguard agreement which will put CLA to the global market and will open opportunities for greater cooperation in aerospace and defense between the two countries.