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“PRINCIPLES FOR COOPERATIVE ADR”: A VIABLE PATH FOR REMEDIATION OF HIGH MASS  
DERELICT OBJECTS IN CROWDED LOW EARTH ORBITS?

**Abstract**

There is no debate today that reducing the collision risk presented by the most concerning large derelict objects in Low Earth Orbits must begin soon. Those objects have been identified and roughly ranked in order of highest priority, and commercial technology subject to still-needed refinements exists to remediate them, but planning among principal stake-holding countries has been stymied by legal, political, national security, economic and funding hurdles. Although the most dangerous objects are Russian rocket bodies left in orbit consistent with then-common international practice (thus arguably without fault) before commercial space emerged, agreement on principles of cooperation among a handful of participating nations will be necessary to accomplish meaningful, efficient risk reduction. The Artemis Accords reflect one nation’s expression of principles to facilitate cooperative exploration of the Moon and deeper space among countries who share common views about space use, to be implemented through bilateral agreements. Could a similar set of principles and process, lightly referred to as “Debris Accords”, or more seriously, “Principles for Cooperative Debris Remediation (ADR)”, frame an alliance among “like-minded” nations for reducing risk and increasing opportunity in space through cooperative removal of many of these dangerous objects, thus contributing to space sustainability for future generations? If so, what would those principles be, how would they be implemented, who should participate, and who should lead their development?