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TRANSPARENCY AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES: BUILDING BLOCKS OF STM

Abstract

Space law-making today exhibits a growing preference for international, non-binding instruments and domestic policy or legislation. Space security in particular, has become a deeply divided subject of deliberation at UN fora. This can be attributed to rising competition in the global space sector and political dynamics between lead actors.

This paper thus argues that a space traffic management system first requires a strong foundation to rebuild trust and confidence between stakeholders. Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) can be used as building blocks to develop an effective, equitable and coordinated system. In particular, the author proposes establishing a notification and communication mechanism for rendezvous and proximity operations (RPOs). The difficulty in distinguishing between RPOs for civil and military purposes, in addition to the growing need for RPOs in space debris mitigation, makes it critical to establish fundamental thresholds for such conduct.

Keywords: TCBMs, RPOs, space security