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SPACE CONTRIBUTION FOR A COMPLETE NATIONAL SITUATIONAL AWARENESS - THE
ROLE OF THE SPACE SURVEILLANCE AND TRACKING

Abstract

A particular operational environment situational awareness cannot be disconnected and unrelated from the adjacent environments situational awareness, either the maritime, aerial, land, cyber or space. In 2019, NATO has considered the existence of 5 operational environments (or domains), being Space environment the latest one. Although the latter is not yet fully covered by the majority of the Strategic Concept of the most of the National Defences' doctrine, it is unquestionable that it's necessary to define it as a joint capability and of transversal interest to all the other domains, with plenty of work undergoing towards the definition of a Space Strategy. In such sense, Portugal, led by its MoD, has been developing an autonomous capability for surveillance and tracking of objects in orbit, called Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST), constituting itself as the first governmental capacity in the area of Space. This dual and joint capability will allow to collect data on the activity of objects in orbits close to Earth, processing them and generating information relevant to the provision of services that contribute, in a cooperative manner, to the safety of outer space as well as the gathering of information of public interest (at the level of civil protection entities) or information of strategic interest. This paper starts on the concept of Situational Awareness, will focus on the Space Situational Awareness and the different perspectives of several world key players in the Space domain and finally will approach the SST capability and the objectives, from the perspective of an European country such as Portugal, in a dual-use synergy.