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DELIBERATELY CREATING DEBRIS ON ORBIT: BUILDING UPON EXISTING NORMS TO
ELIMINATE THIS THREAT TO SPACE SECURITY AND STABILITY

Abstract

Deliberating creating debris on orbit through destructive anti-satellite (ASAT) tests harms all space stakeholders, both in terms of operators and users of space data. The debris created by these tests is long-lived and threatens all, both allies and foes of the launching state. There is growing agreement about how this is irresponsible behavior, building into an international norm, seen via unilateral and multilateral actions. This paper will discuss the threat to space capabilities that destructive ASAT tests pose, trace the evolution of the gelling of this norm through unilateral declarations and discussions at the United Nations, demonstrate how the commercial sector is also concerned about this through the industry statement of support that SWF coordinated, and look ahead to how a legally-binding agreement might emerge to ensure that space is safe, sustainable, and stable for all.