"Red Lines" vs. Norms: Two Different Attempts to Achieve Space Security

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Promoting Cooperative Solutions for Space Security

- Red lines: What are they? How do they work?

- Pros/cons of red lines

- Legal regimes for space

- Norms of behavior for responsible space actors: Why follow them?

- Examples of emerging norms

- Pros/cons of norms

- What are red lines? What do they hope to achieve and avoid?

  – Declarations that certain, specified acts by an opponent will automatically trigger a punitive response

  – Hope to deter unwanted behavior

- What is needed for them to work?

  – Clear strategic communications with adversary

  – Spectrum of responses spelled out ahead of time

  – Decision-making authority to take action when required

  – Ability to closely monitor the situation

  – Evaluation and ranking of space assets in terms of worth/value

  – Capacity to change them if circumstances warrant it

  – Capability to carry out responses to red lines, and the belief by others that you will do so

– Pros

- Can clarify priorities

- Force policy-makers to think through actions

- Signal to opponents likely responses and thus avoid making space unsustainable in the long-run

- Possibly could be effective during a crisis if used in a very limited way

– Cons:

- Assets outside of red line are seen as fair targets

- How do you determine what is protected in space?

- May cut down freedom of response by policy-makers

- May end up increasing ambiguity instead of decreasing it

- Already ambiguity surrounding space legal regime

- Logistical issue: SSA capability relatively limited, so decisions may be made with incomplete information

- 1967 Outer Space Treaty

- 1968 Rescue Agreement

- 1972 Liability Convention

- 1974 Registration Convention

Norms of behavior for responsible space actors

- Why follow norms? Because they are in the state's best interest; if not, won't follow
  - By agreeing to certain rules, states would clarify responsible and irresponsible actions

- Factor in that space is global commons, so need all space powers contributing

- Space-related examples of norms of behavior

- Examples of creating norms

- North Korea: an example of abiding/ignoring norms for satellite launch

- What happens when space actors defy norms?

- Why do norms matter?

- Pros
  - Can establish effective behavior that will allow space-users to continue to receive benefits from space
  - Could lay groundwork for later legal agreements along the same lines
  - Avoid sticky discussions that such legal regimes would necessitate at this time

- Cons
  - No legal obligation to follow through on norms of behavior
  - May handle the easiest issues to resolve internationally, which may not be what's needed to ensure space usable in the long-run
  - Don't cover all contingencies/fill in the blanks currently existing in existing space regulatory regimes

- Questions?

- Thank you!

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