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Abstract

The Outer Space Treaty and the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have served the world space community well and now done so well for over a half century. The problems of space, cooperation and regulatory control mechanisms are becoming more complex. There are many more space-faring nations. There are many more members of the U.N. COPUOS that makes decision-making by consensus more difficult. Some 75% of space-based activities in terms of capital investment are by private commercial entities yet they are not directly a part of the formal regulatory process. Currently some nations are engaging in developing what might be considered space weapons and forming so called "space forces." The problems of space debris, space situational awareness, and space traffic management seem to present major regulatory problems. Indeed the issue of recognizing outer space as a global commons seems to be a topic of some debate. The key to the future of space cooperation and collaboration would be to develop a global regulatory framework that everyone accepts. Collaborative projects such as the International Space Station has helped, but now activities on the Moon seem to be more competitive than collaborative at this time. The development of transparency and confidence building measures has helped, but is this enough? Clearly more collaborative space projects rather than competitive ones would help. This paper seeks to identify the top issues that lead to outer space as a contiguous area and explores feasible actions to promote more global collaboration and more effective regulatory framework going forward.

A short bio

Stevn Freeland is Professor of International Law at Western Sydney University, Australia where he specializes in International Criminal Law, Commercial Aspects of Space Law, Public International Law and Human Rights Law. He was Dean of the School of Law at Western Sydney University from 2017-2019. He is also Visiting Professor at Universities and Special Advisor of Governments in many Countries, as well as a Member of several Space Law Institutions worldwide. He sits on the Editorial Board of the Australian International Law Journal, and similar journals and publications in several Countries. He has authored approximately 300 publications on various aspects of International Law and has been invited to present over 1100 expert commentaries by national and international media outlets worldwide on a wide range of legal and geopolitical issues.