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

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• 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/cons of Red Lines

— 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/cons of norms

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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