India’s Space Development: Joining Other Scorpions in a Bottle?

Perception & Perspectives

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* Disclaimer: The views presented are strictly my own
Security dilemma: a situation in which actions by a state intended to heighten its security, such as increasing its military strength or making alliances, can lead other states to respond with similar measures, producing increased tensions that create conflict, even when no side really desires it.
The Problem

• Scorpions in a Bottle: The capability to deny another country its space assets increases the sense of security for the possessing country, but lowers it for others. When many countries posses that capability, tensions heighten for all.
  – Actions based on changing geopolitical situation
  – Analogy to nukes
  – When is a technology a deterrent?
  – Increasingly recognized goal of space sustainability
India’s Expanding Space Efforts

EXCEPTIONALISM: Manned Space is Difficult in Democracies
Dual-Use Technology

- Technology that has both civilian and military applications; with difficulty distinguishing between offensive & defensive use within the military applications.

INTENTIONS: Technology doesn’t tell intentions…so how do outsiders determine?

Regimes
Actions
Why Might India Expand Its Space Activities?

Broadly Based Security Needs
Asian Space Race?...

Techno-nationalism

• Techno-nationalism is the 21st century equivalent of earlier developmental nationalism stemming from colonial subjugation. (China’s one child policy) In today’s version national power is enhanced through technological achievement.
  
  — “Now people will realize we don’t only make clothes shoes” Yan Xuetong, 2003
  
  — “India and China are vying for leadership in a competitive marketplace of people & knowledge industries. It’s about developing technology, talent & markets, all of which has stimulated Chinese technology: sensors built for space have ended up in GPS systems, washing machines & other products.” 2008
  
  — “It was a historic event that gave pride to the Indian public.” Indian PM Singh after lunar launch in 2008.
Force Enhancement: Militarization...Weaponization?

- India possesses multiple rocket/missile systems
- Less (perceived) separation between civil-military programs
- India has its own reconnaissance satellites
- Naval Communications Satellite
- Space Command Efforts (Space Cell)
- ASATs? (Contradictory statements/Rhetoric)
Expanded U.S. -India Cooperation: An Exceptionalist Position?

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<th>U.S.</th>
<th>India</th>
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<td>• Access to $30 Billion defense market</td>
<td>• Technology w/o the non-proliferation norms required of other countries</td>
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• Post 9/11 – sanctions against India in place since 1998 lifted; export items restricted to India reduced from 159 to 2.

• “We are not members of the NPT and we are not subscribers of the MTCR. Yet, if there is to be nuclear and space cooperation, how does America cooperate with a country like India, even if they see merit in it? Since we are not party to the instruments that exist to deal with nonproliferation or missile technology, there is a conundrum. Our answer is we are what we are.” Former Indian Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal, 2002
What We (Think We) Know

- India’s expanded space program going beyond utilitarian
- Manned spaceflight
- Dual-use technology with military applications
  - U.S. facilitating without usual requirements
Concern: How to Avoid Unintended Consequences

* Protection of Global Commons – Regimes
* India has been reluctant to join Regimes
* So, perceived options?