

## **Where are we now? Given the legal and political realities of current space security issues, what are the next steps needed?**

**John B. Sheldon, Ph.D.  
Senior Fellow in Security Studies  
Canada Centre for Global Security Studies  
Munk School for Global Affairs  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada**

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- Thanks to UNIDIR, Secure World Foundation, the Simons Foundation, Chatham House, and sponsor states for allowing me the privilege to speak here today. It is always a pleasure and honour to be in Geneva to discuss these important issues.
- So, where are we now?
- We often forget that many of the issues in space security that we contend with have been with us for many decades, and have vexed the most intelligent and far-sighted individuals from many countries.
- I have been a participant in this conference for several years, and progress in some areas has been remarkable, in other areas not so much.
- Against that historical context, we can broadly measure progress. What progress has been made can be attributed to changes in the geostrategic, economic, political, and technological context over the past twenty or so years.
- The geostrategic, economic, and political changes of the past two decades, with the sudden end of bipolar geopolitics, the rise of China, the emergence of the BRIC's, and the geopolitical shift underway since 2001, coupled with the interdependent combination of miniaturization in microelectronics and the exponential increase in micro-processing power has enabled the manufacture of smaller and cheaper, yet increasingly capable, satellites that in turn has seen upwards of 60 countries to date enter the space arena. Not so long ago this was unthinkable.
- In this same time period we have witnessed unparalleled growth in commercial space activities and revenues, primarily in satellite communications and space applications that have wider economic impact, such as the application of global navigation satellite services (GNSS) in various sectors, but also in commercial remote sensing and, increasingly, new commercial launch providers. In the past year alone, the global space economy has generated measurable revenues upwards of U.S. \$312 billion, and this

figure only includes the revenues made by commercial space providers, not the revenues enabled by space in other economic sectors.

- These two trends have triggered tremendous progress in widening the space security debate, and in spurring organic initiatives, as demonstrated by the good work of the Satellite Data Association (SDA), to make space operations better and safer. Further, these trends have also triggered a number of regional and international efforts for space capacity building in telecommunications, GNSS, and remote sensing for economic, social, humanitarian, and security applications. From regional banks and organizations (e.g. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, African Union, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation) through to UN initiatives such as the space-based information for disaster management and emergency response programme (SPIDER), have all done much to aid technical capacity building in emerging space powers.

- Less progress has been seen in resolving and reconciling differing perspectives and perceptions of space-based and derived-security dilemmas and the issue of so-called space weapons.

- Before we beat ourselves up over the lack of progress on these matters we should remind ourselves that these are the problems that have vexed the best and brightest since the early 1960s.

- Our current impasse is due to the usual fundamental differences in world views and grand strategic politicking among the great powers compounded by the two trends already described. Indeed, sometimes the space security debate among great powers has an air of unreality where the trends of emerging space powers and commercial space are either ignored or unwillingly used as pawns in age-old arguments.

- Space arms control has always had a sense of mission impossible, and today is no different, but the challenges of establishing a new space security regime (assuming that a new regime is universally desired) are more profound now than at any previous time in the space age, as we seem to try to engage in the futile exercise of seeking out a grand bargain that will somehow guide and capture the various trends and interests not only in train, but whose implications we have yet to fully understand.

- This all said, while traditional arms control approaches flounder, the new context we find ourselves in has sufficiently broadened the diplomatic horizon to allow alternative approaches such as the proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities to come to the fore. ICoC itself is certainly innovative, but has suffered from self-inflicted wounds over the past few years due to a lack of leadership and missteps in consulting emerging space powers in its drafting. One wishes Ambassador Bylica the best of luck as he seeks to bring leadership back to the ICoC process.

- So that's where we are. What are the challenges we face in bringing the perspectives of emerging space powers and commercial space providers more prominently into the long-standing space security debate?

- The first challenge is to step up capacity building in emerging space powers beyond technical matters to include legal and policy expertise capacity. This capacity building includes important measures such as ensuring that national space policies and activities meet international treaty obligations, but also the more complex challenges of integrating national space policies into wider national political, economic, social, and national security interests - something that even established space powers find challenging even at the best of times.

- This kind of capacity building will better enable more emerging space powers to meaningfully engage in space security debates in this and other forums. But before any of us fall into the trap that any one of the established space powers can somehow unilaterally dominate or shape this kind of capacity building, a word of warning: as emerging space powers acquire, develop, and integrate more sophisticated space capabilities into their national contexts we will see these very same emerging space powers discover that they acquire new national interests that hitherto they never knew they had. This means that in the years to come our task of reconciling differing world views on space security will only become more challenging.

- The second challenge is to incorporate the views and best practices of the commercial space sector into the space security dialogue. This challenge is perhaps one of the hardest nuts to crack given the resistance by some established space powers to take commercial experiences into account, but as the global space economy grows with each passing year due to increasing application of space capabilities to economic sectors around the world, these established space powers are going to find it increasingly difficult to ignore the influence of commercial space in the space security debate.

- It is with the growth of commercial space that we see the more troubling glimpses of unreality in the space security debates. We speak of establishing norms in space, and certainly the diplomatic community is actively engaged in trying to identify transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) through the work of the ICoC open consultative process, the forthcoming Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) report, and the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) Working Group of the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities that in turn might embed themselves as long-term norms. Yet while I do not wish to diminish the sincerity and importance of these tracks, the commercial space community has established a set of norms for safe space operations under our very noses, as Stewart Sanders from the SDA explained to us yesterday. We would be foolish in the extreme if we ignore or dismiss the important achievements made in the commercial sector that has ably demonstrated that best practices (norms) can be agreed upon in an extremely competitive environment without any of the stakeholders having to surrender core

sovereign interests. If we do not see lessons here then there really is little cause for optimism.

- With these challenges identified, what might be our next steps?

- First, through existing bodies mentioned previously, as well as through the efforts of NGOs such as UNIDIR, Secure World Foundation, and other partners, continue to build up technical, legal, and policy capacity in emerging space powers so that they might play a more prominent role (and in turn press their own interests more effectively) in the various diplomatic forums that deal with space security matters. This will require the great powers to assist emerging space powers as they have been doing out of their own interests, but also require the great powers to exercise restraint. Capacity building is one thing; to use capacity building as a crude lever to garner political support on other issues will likely backfire in the coming years as emerging space powers will be able to seek out other mentors if they find that their own interests are compromised.

- Second, it is better to bring commercial space interests into the fold now, perhaps using a multi-stakeholder approach in various forums, than to blindly oppose its irresistible rise only to then have commercial interests dominate what are ultimately matters of paramount importance to matters of state. It is my belief that if any sector in the space community that has ably demonstrated that it is a responsible stakeholder it is the commercial sector. At the technical level the commercial sector is already a major contributor, but in the search for political solutions to what ails us it would be a gross injustice and the height of hypocrisy to exclude commercial viewpoints any further.

- In conclusion, in a number of areas we have come a long way. Emerging space powers and the commercial space sector are permanent features and prominent actors in space activities and the space security debate. Enhanced capacity building along with the exploration of a multi-stakeholder approach to reconciling competing perspectives on space security interests will not only better ensure that the interests of these actors are better represented, they will also greatly enrich what has become, in many ways, a stale and tired debate. The established space powers - especially China, Russia, and the United States - are faced with a tremendous opportunity both as individual self-interested actors as well as collectively - to demonstrate enlightened leadership on these matters. We should all hope that such leadership shall be forthcoming.

- Thank you.