

“Space Security”

By

V. Siddhartha

Former sometime Secretary, Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India

A presentation made to participants
in the

Third Disarmament and International Security Affairs
Fellowship Programme

at the

Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service
New Delhi

18 January 2023

Space is a *Province* of Mankind

- “Space” has not been bequeathed by mankind to itself as its “common heritage”. It is, as the oceans are, a non-bounded, propertied *territory* -- albeit beyond national jurisdictions -- and, therefore, a non-Westphalian *province*
- Because access to that province is limited to those who have the technological means to reach it, Space has been cartelised by the practice of post-colonial bad habits of domination and control. These are effected through self-assigned privileges of access *via* the necessary technology (MTCR), and Space-weapons-sifted hierarchical power orders (*e.g.* demonstrated ASAT-capability).
- And so this province of mankind: Is *competed* for by states who are capable of reaching it; is *contested* amongst them for orbit-places in the province; has *satellites* that have been electromagnetically *disrupted* in their function by non-owners and even *target-destroyed* by their owners.

Space is also *Congested*

....besides being *Competed* for, and *Contested* in, Space is also *Congested*: Not to say clichéd, as in: ‘The Space sanitation issue is *at the tipping point*’.

- Except that ‘*at the tipping point*’ is true because our collective careless slovenliness in near-Space has made it vulnerable to ‘cascade debrification’ – that is, collisions between extant debris and fragile active satellites -- or other debris -- cause more debris, which cause
- Even such inadvertent damage or destruction to active satellites can result in loss-of-service, which can translate to *a security issue* for people – or a military -- relying on that Space-based service.

Thus, we see that Space Security ...

- ... Cannot be segmented-away from the *nonrecolonised* governance of Space* as a fragile *province of all mankind*

[* See also: Siddhartha, V., “An *Indra* Doctrine for the Governance of Space”, ISSSP Reflection No. 62, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, 2022. “I have broken up countless treaties made on Earth, in the sky and further up in the heavens: But not a hair on my head was disturbed”. *Indra*, the warrior-god in *Aitherya Brahmana*, Rg Veda, *circa* Five Thousand years before present]

- ... Can be advanced only by Space-farers abnegating any “dominance” model for such governance; *be active* as ideational and operating equals – and not as a contesting superintendents of other space-faring nations, old, new or up-coming -- and *place* the governance of that ‘*province of all mankind*’ in the *anti-dominance Trusteeship** of that global institution which -- for all its known infirmities -- is the only one that represents all of mankind: the **United Nations**.

[*See: The Governance of Outer Space: Repurposing the trusteeship council of the United Nations ISSSP Reflections No.60, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, 2021]

Thank you
for your patience