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The "peaceful purposes†principle in outer space and the Russia–China PPWT Proposal

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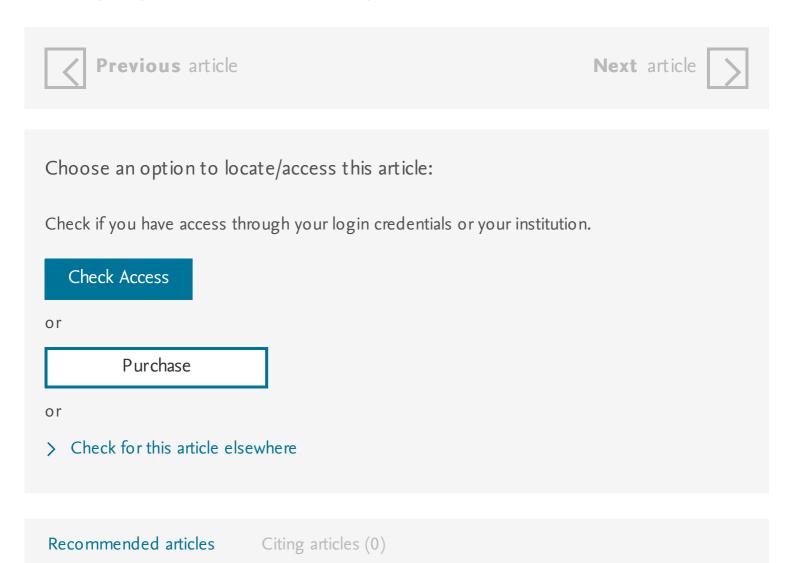
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Abstract

Using the global commons for "peaceful purposes†is agreed upon among states in principle but disputed in substance. While non-militarization has been superceded by the doctrine of non-aggression, the latter, as a necessary rather than sufficient condition for "peaceful purposesâ€, is tested to its limit by the pressing issue of space weaponization. An international treaty to plug the gaps of the Outer Space Treaty should be negotiated. This would require the prohibition of both weapons in outer space and anti-satellite weapons on Earth. The Draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, proposed by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament, is an effort in this direction. However, divided views are held on several issues arising from the draft treaty, e.g. the efficiency of the current regime of outer space law, definitions of "weapons in space†and "threat or use of forceâ€, and verification. A primary reason for US

opposition to the draft treaty are security concerns over its space assets. However, exercising the right of self-defense is excluded from the obligations of disarmament and this is explicitly affirmed in the draft treaty.



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