JUMPSTARTING SPACE DEBRIS REMEDIATION/MITIGATION

Joan Johnson-Freese*
Professor, Naval War College
joanjohnsonfreese@gmail.com

The views expressed in this article are the author’s alone and do not represent the official position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.
Complexity of Space Governance

Issues: Multilateral - Unilateral

From: “Protecting Space As a Global Commons”
To: “Application of Ostrom’s Principles for Sustainable Governance of Common Pool Resources to Near-Earth Orbit”
Educating Decision-Makers versus Packaging:
- “Moral Imperative”
Academic Stovepipes Undermine U.S. Security

By Joan Johnson-Freese and Thomas M. Nichols | 14 Apr 2011

BRIEFING

The United States faces a serious but silent intellectual crisis: U.S. national security have separated into two tribes of specialists, technical and nontechnical, who are not communicating with each other. The implications of the divide between experts in science and technology on one hand and experts in politics on the other are far-reaching. If the United States policymaking community cannot bridge these communities, we risk making mistakes with repercussions running all the way to war.

While hardly a golden age of national security policy decision-making, the Cold War had boundaries on science and politics, both of which served the overall goal of a winning -- a war with the Soviet Union. For better or for worse, the scientists, military officers and civilian strategists of the national security establishment worked yoked together toward this common purpose.
NIKE DOCTRINE

- Multilateral challenges must first be addressed nationally: unilateralism
  - Perhaps multilateral institutions should synthesize rather than create solutions (IADC)
- Limitations: won’t work in some areas (negative economic implications/national security), but could in others
NIKE DOCTRINE

• Move From:
  – I’ll do X if you will too
  – I’ll do X if you will do Y
  – I’ll do X after we define key terms and/or agree on prevailing treaty articles
  – Forming a committee...conducting a study...having a series of meetings
  – Finding agreement between
    • I’ll do X
    • I’ll do Y
    • I’ll do Z

BEFORE anyone will take action
Nike Doctrine

• TO:
  – Countries make unilateral declarations of what they will agree to, and take responsibility for.
  – As a consensus forms -- multilateral forum for a more formal agreement
  – In doing so, you don’t have to wait on or persuade others, but take action on your own.

• For US, shows strategic leadership (geopolitical implications) AND action it wants to promote

• For Russia, China, India, others etc...shows responsibility as a spacefaring nation

BRAGGING RIGHTS
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Define priorities
  – As long as subject matters experts disagree, politicians don’t have to act

• Encourage (unilateral) action, for example:
  – US will not conduct high altitude impact tests
  – US will provide access to data on non-operational space objects
  – US will conduct one ADR mission by 2014

JUST DO IT!