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CYBER WARFARE AND SECURITY OF SPACE ASSETS: UNRAVELLING THE CHALLENGES
CONCERNING ATTRIBUTION IN LIGHT OF THE VIASAT ATTACK

Abstract

On 10th May 2022, in solidarity with the EU and other partners, the US formally blamed Russia for the cyber-attack on Viasat's KA-SAT satellite internet network. This incident rocked Ukraine and many parts of Europe in January when Russia's invasion of Ukraine had just started to manifest in reality. This formal statement follows months of investigation. Now that the findings have been disclosed, there is a serious need to reconsider the role of International Space Law regarding cyber-attacks and their potential adverse impact on the space assets and, in turn, the security of outer space. The Viasat attack per se did not threaten the safety of the outer space environment, but numerous experts emphasise that such future possibilities should not be undermined. This paper explores the legal challenges associated with attribution, focusing on the Viasat cyber-attack findings. The author also provides solutions that could be useful for the international community.