

# INDIA'S ASAT TEST A RESPONSE TO GROWING SPACE THREATS: FRANCE

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

Alexandre Ziegler

Stating that defence and offensive space technologies are being developed with various aims of spying, gaining control, deactivating service and destroying, French Envoy in India Alexandre Ziegler has supported India's Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test as a response to these growing threats.

"India shared the same observation and desire to act, which is actually reflected in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of the ASAT missile test on March 27 this year. It is obvious that it was a clear response to an assessment of growing threats in the outer space. And that's an assessment that we share..." Mr. Ziegler said addressing the 5th Kalpana Chawla annual space policy dialogue organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) that began on Monday.

## Debris concerns

He also observed that outer space has become an "arena of rivalry between major powers."

At the same time, he said there was common concern on space debris. Satellites today have to avoid almost 6,00,000 debris of over 1cm travelling at speed faster than a bullet, he stated.

On March 27, India shot down a live satellite in the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) of 300 km using a modified interceptor of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Officials had stated that the LEO was particularly chosen to minimise space debris.

India and France, which have been cooperating in the area of space for several decades, had announced the setting up of a constellation of satellites for maritime surveillance of the Indian Ocean. Mr. Ziegler said as part of this, the two countries are co-developing a constellation 10-15 satellites that could help "monitor the maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean."

## Maritime surveillance

"It is part of the joint vision that we signed. It is a civilian project," he stated.

In this regard, Rod Hilton, Deputy High Commissioner of Australia, said his country was keen to be part of the broader maritime security cooperation and was working with India and France.

"We have signed technology cooperation agreements with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and space situational awareness is part of that," he said.

As space gets increasingly crowded, Mr. Ziegler also called for the need to regulate space traffic on the lines of air traffic or railways. He said France shares India's view on the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and said, "We therefore refuse any destabilising arms race, which would be detrimental to all of us."

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