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Contemporary aspects of the Rescue Agreement turning 50

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Foreword:

"My new national strategy for space recognizes that space is a war-fighting domain, just like the land, air and sea."

**Donald Trump
President of the United States.**



If outer space becomes a domain of war, like land, air, and sea, it is possible and even probable that the 1968 Rescue Agreement will have to face many crucial new problems, much more than in the past.

Being our time another time, will it not be the case of updating the Rescue Agreement and make it many times more effective??

**Astronauts,
Cosmonauts and
Taikonauts, as envoys
of mankind in outer
space, deserve
all possible assistance**

**The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 (Art. V),
ratified by 105 States and
signed by others 25.**





Imagine a Space War

**The Rescue Agreement has today
95 ratifications and 24 signatures.**

**It is the second UN space treaty more
ratified, after the Space Treaty.**

**It has also two declarations
of acceptance of rights and obligations.**



The Rescue Agreement is created to assist all “personnel of a spacecraft” [cosmonauts, astronauts and taikonauts] in danger situation and return them safely and promptly to their launching State, as well as the damaged or lost space objects.



The Rescue Agreement clearly distinguishes the norms referred to the personnel of a spaceship from those related to space objects and its components parts.

**Articles 1-4 referred to personnel.
Articles 5-6 to space objects.**



**Space debris are space objects
and their components lost in space**



Personnel, on one side; space objects, on the other.

The Rescue Agreement distinguishes the norms on the personnel of a spaceship from those related to a spaceship and their components parts.

But personnel and space objects have something in common: they must be returned to the launching State “safely and promptly.”

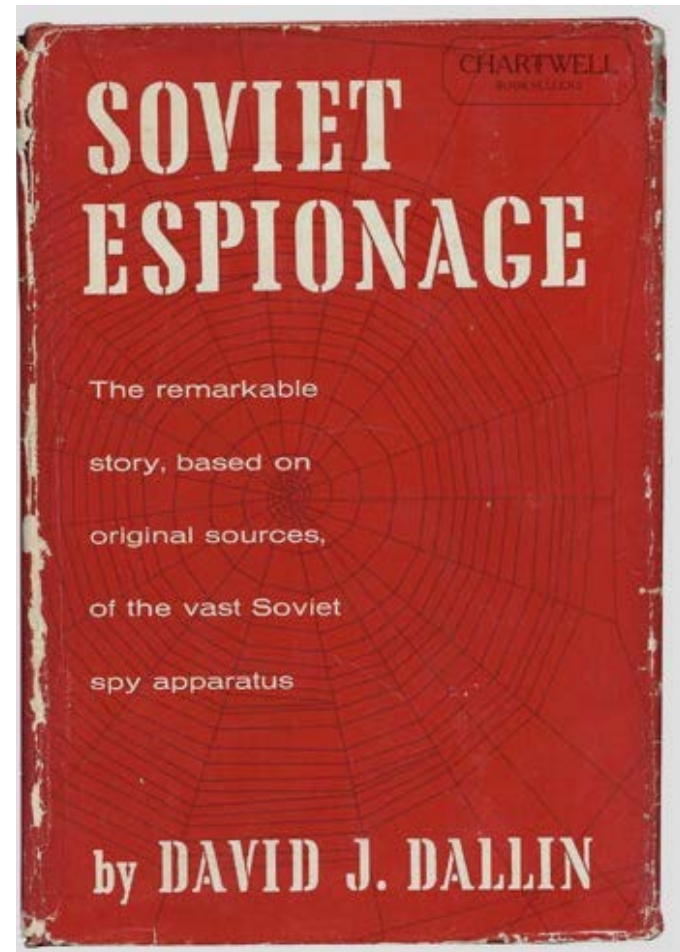
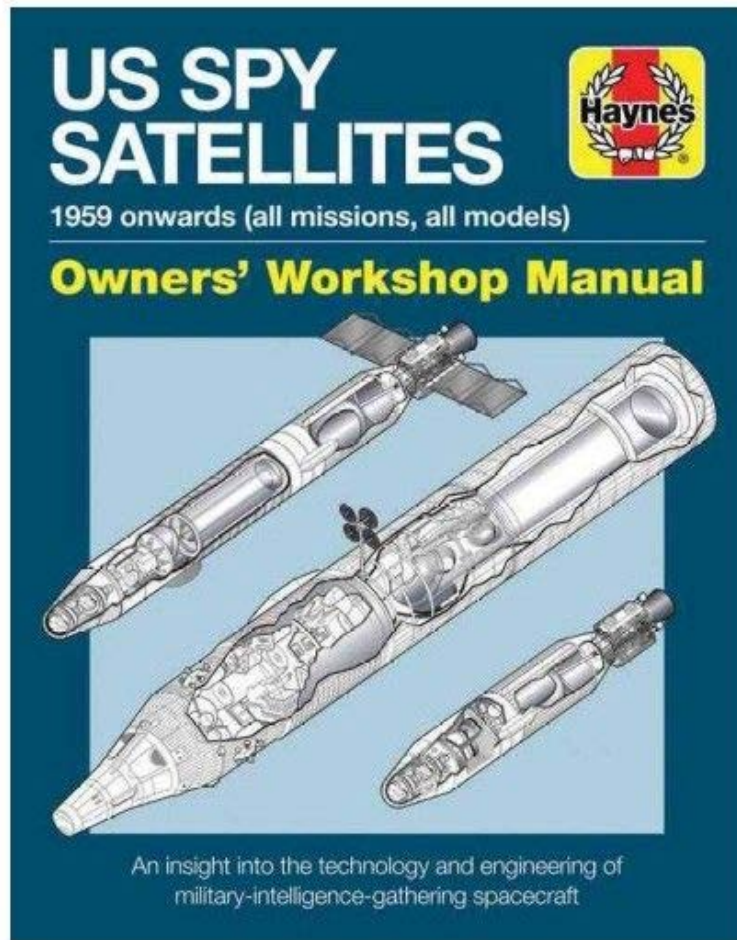




Why “safely and promptly”?

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.”
Albert Einstein

USA and USSR (Russia) use to fear and practice acts of espionage.



The return of personnel and space objects is required by both humanitarian reasons and practical strategic interests.

The humanitarian reasons are understandable.

But why practical strategic interests?

Because, living in a Cold War, the only two superpowers then competing, USA and USSR, feared and practiced acts of espionage, already common at that time.



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Taking advantage of an accident, distress, emergency or unintended landing, one superpower could press the personnel of the other superpower to reveal essential details of their activities, mainly scientific and technological.

The space object of one superpower could also be examined by the other superpower to know the scientific and technological solutions contained therein.



The Rescue Agreement favors the participation of the launching State in the rescue operations.

Its Article 2 says:

“If assistance by the launching authority would help to effect a prompt rescue, or would contribute substantially to effective search and rescue operations, the launching authority shall cooperate with (...) a view to conducting the search and rescue operations with greatest effect.”

This provision was invoked by the USSR when its Cosmos 954, a nuclear-powered surveillance satellite, fell on Canadian territory.

Canada did not allow the USSR participation in the rescue operations of the Cosmos 954. The Rescue Agreement was not observed.

The Clause of Request

The launching authority must request the return – not of personnel – but of the space objects and their components parts.

The request of a certain space object depends upon of its strategic-practical value.



Conclusion (1)

The Rescue Agreement is a kind of “Sleeping Beauty Awakens”, as wrote Professor Frans von der Dunk in 2008, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1968 agreement.

To Professor, “the Rescue Agreement has remained somewhat of a sleeping beauty, attracting much less attention than the other four UN-based treaties.”



Conclusion (2)

Today, we live in a more dangerous Second Cold War.

It is urgent to update agreement on the rescue and return of space personnel and space objects in case of accidents.

The new agreement should focus primarily on the goal of constructing a truly peaceful and cooperative world.



This would be a sleeping beauty really awaking.



Many thank for your enchanted attention.