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Russian Scientists Are Developing 'Lasso' to Round Up Space Debris – Reports

April 17, 2019



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Russian scientists are proposing pulling space debris out of Earth's orbit using a device that has been called a "space lasso."

Around 7,200 metric tons of space debris capable of damaging satellites or spacecraft currently orbit the Earth, scientists estimate. Several proposals on how to deal with the growing issue have been collected ahead of the three-day space debris conference hosted by the Russian Academy of Sciences that starts on Wednesday.

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"A transport docking module ... is separated on a cable from a launch vehicle, docks with the space debris, then the cable is pulled," reads one proposal drafted ahead of the conference.

The launch vehicle then pulls the debris out of orbit, according to the proposal authored by Russian scientists.

The state-run RIA Novosti news agency dubbed the proposed device "space lasso."

Other ideas include equipping the International Space Station (ISS) with lasers to pulverize the debris, which scientists say could reduce the amount of sunlight that reaches the Earth.

The proposals follow successful tests by a European satellite of a harpoon skewering space junk at close distance in February.

Russia plans to build space debris monitoring stations in Chile, Mexico and South Africa in 2019-2020, Interfax cited public procurement data as saying last month.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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