

Commercial Debris Removal

Eugene Levin

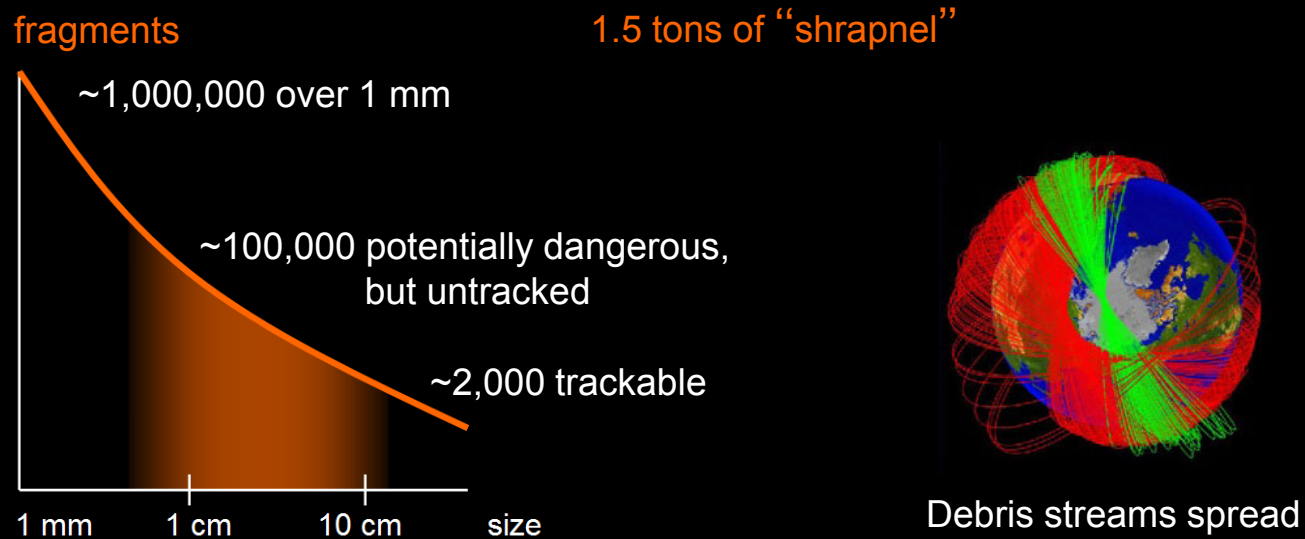
3rd International Interdisciplinary Congress on
Space Debris Remediation

Montreal, Canada, November 11-12, 2011



Unintended ASAT

- The fallout from Cosmos-Iridium similar to Chinese ASAT test

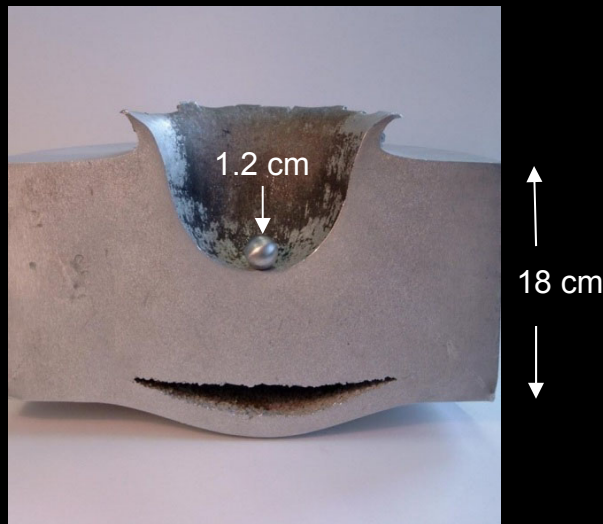


- LEO debris: a slow-release random-target ASAT system

Why “Shrapnel” is a Problem

- 30-50 dangerous untracked fragments for each tracked one
- Centimeter size fragments can do serious damage

ESA hypervelocity impact test



www.esa.int

Shuttle radiator damage, 2007



Catastrophic Collisions

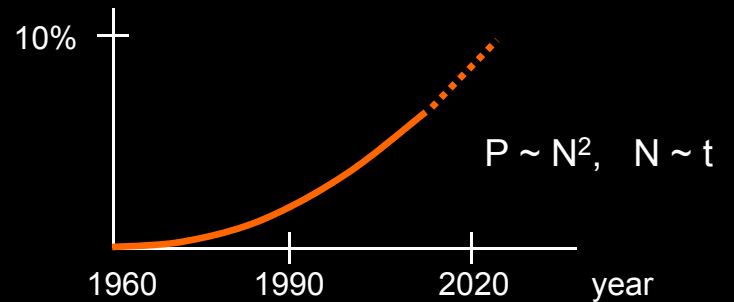
- “Shrapnel” is produced in explosions and collisions
- Collision probability is growing

Delta II
second
stage



wikipedia.org

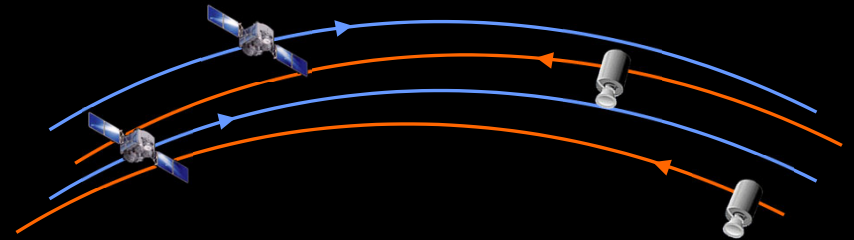
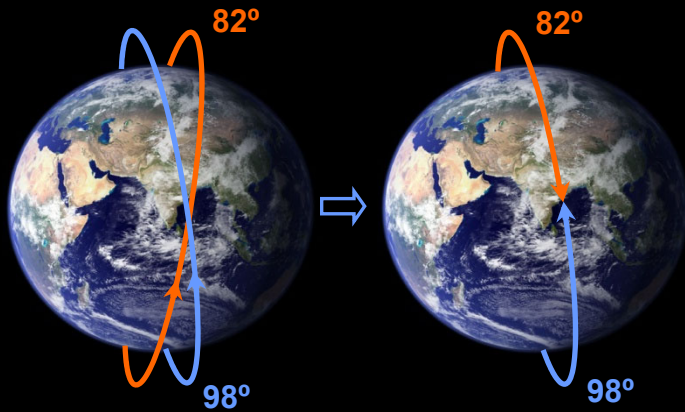
Probability of a catastrophic collision per year



3U CubeSat

Head-on Traffic

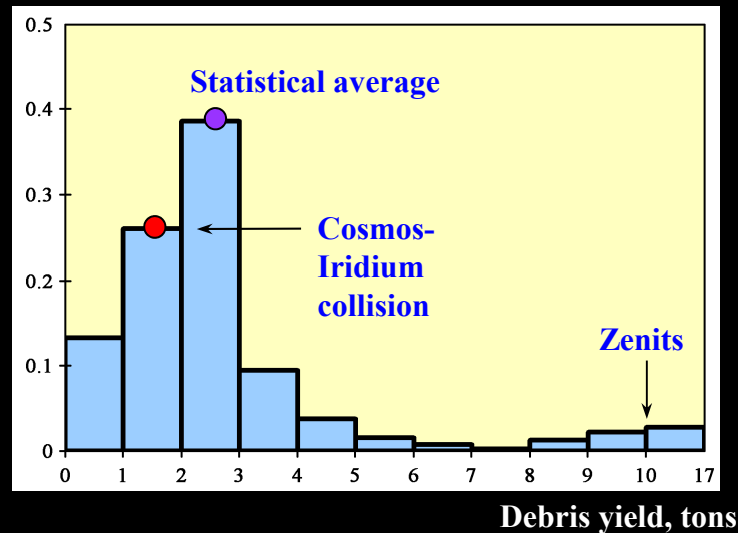
- Inclination pairing between Sun-sync and 81-83° orbits



Next Catastrophic Collision

- Statistically, like 2007 ASAT and Cosmos-Iridium combined

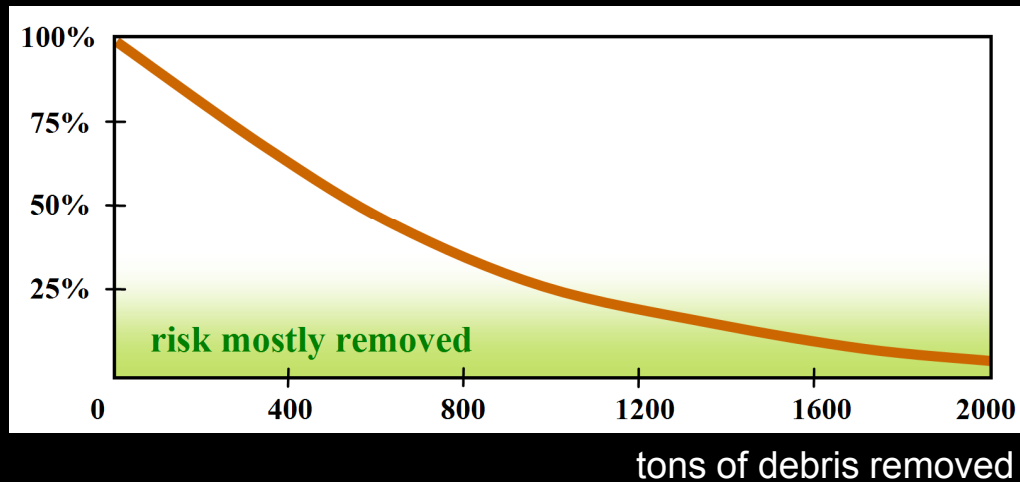
Fraction of collisions



How Much to Remove

- Statistical yield of fragments in collisions: $R = \sum M_n \cdot P_n$

Debris generation potential

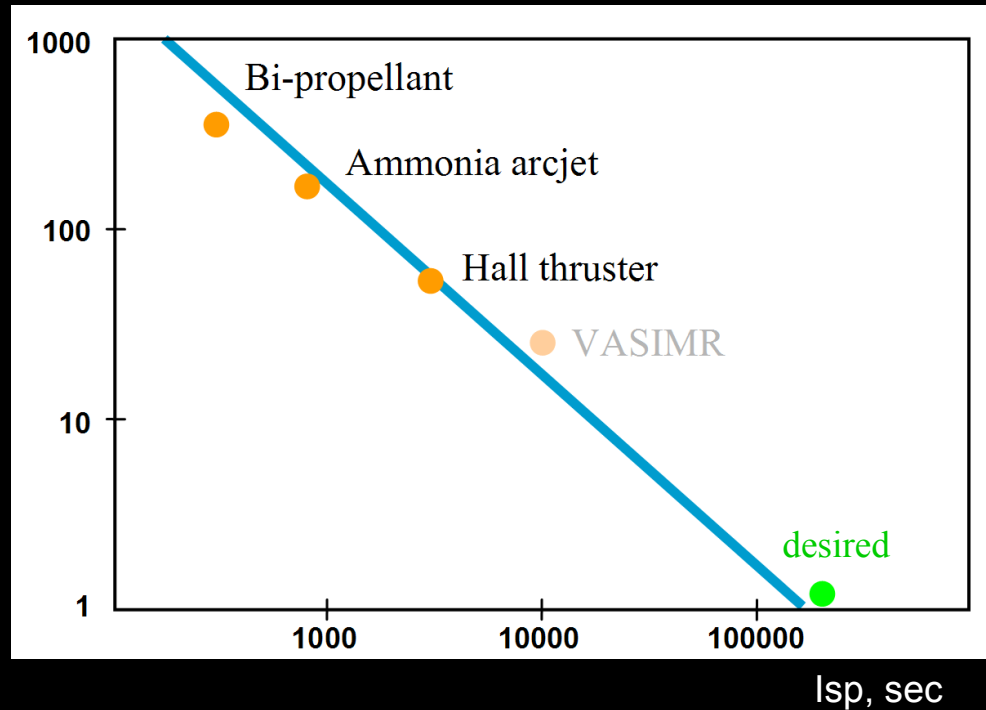


- Small-scale removal won't make a difference
- Need wholesale removal

How Much to Launch

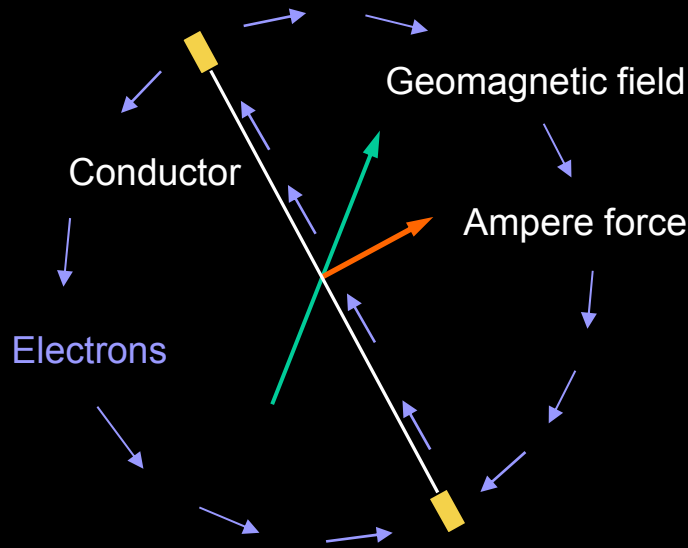
- 2200 dead satellites and spent stages all over LEO, 2000 tons total
- Too demanding for rockets

Estimated mass to launch, tons



Electrodynamic Propulsion

- Propellantless, electrical, solar powered

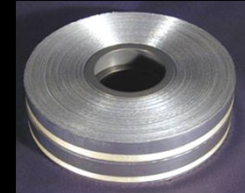


Electron emitter



Hollow cathode

Electron collector



Aluminum tape

- Circuit closing demonstrated in orbit by Plasma Motor Generator in 1993 and Tethered Satellite System in 1996

How to Think About It

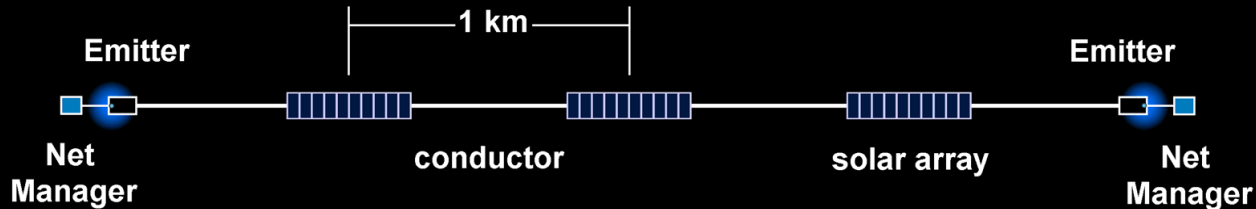
- Like sailing in the ionosphere



Key West, 2006

- NRL Tether Electrodynamic Propulsion Cubesat Experiment (2012)

Electrodynamic “Garbage Truck”



- ElectroDynamic Debris Eliminator (EDDE)
- Only 100 kg, two fit into one ESPA secondary payload slot
- Nano-satellites “taped” together, but can move tons

Reinforced aluminum tape



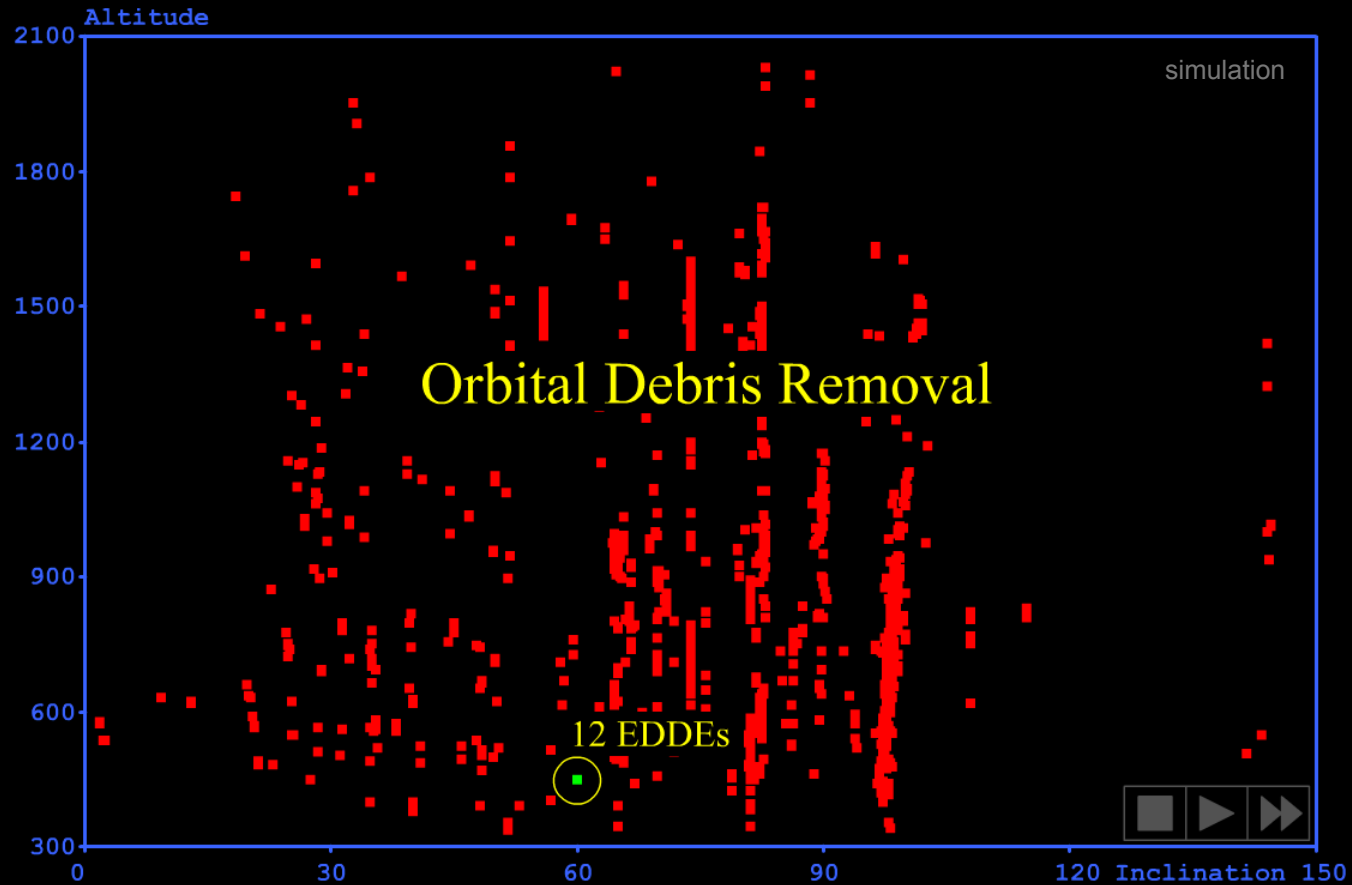
www.tetherapplications.com

ESPA ring



www.csaengineering.com

Wholesale Debris Removal

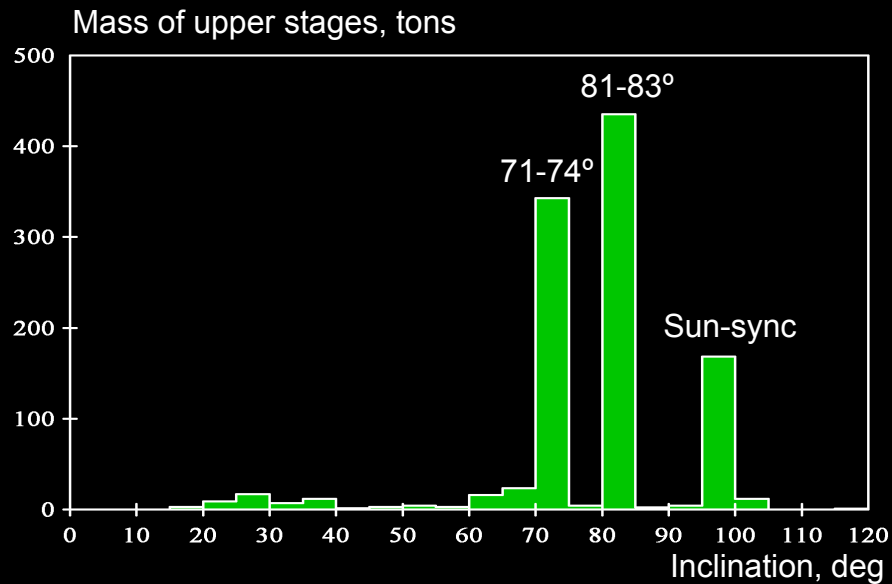


View at <http://www.electrodynamictكنولوجies.com/animations.php>

Debris Collection



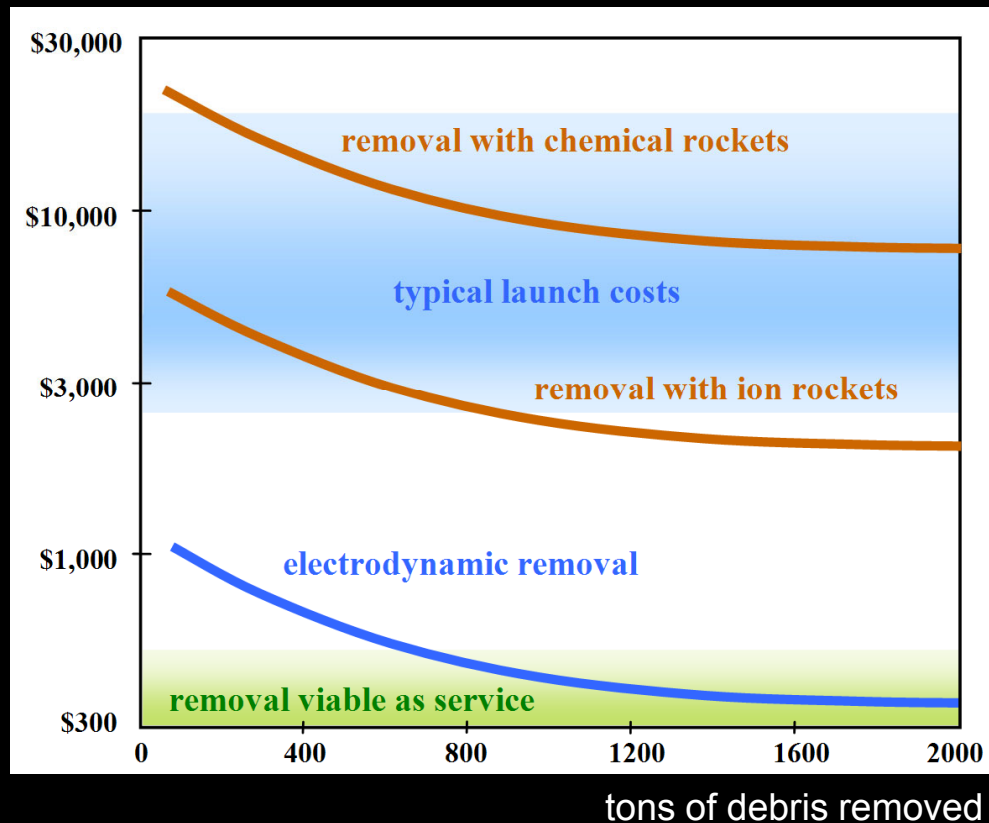
- Avoid mass reentry
- Can use 1000 tons of mostly aluminum in upper stages



Commercial Service

- Removal should cost much less than launch to make economic sense

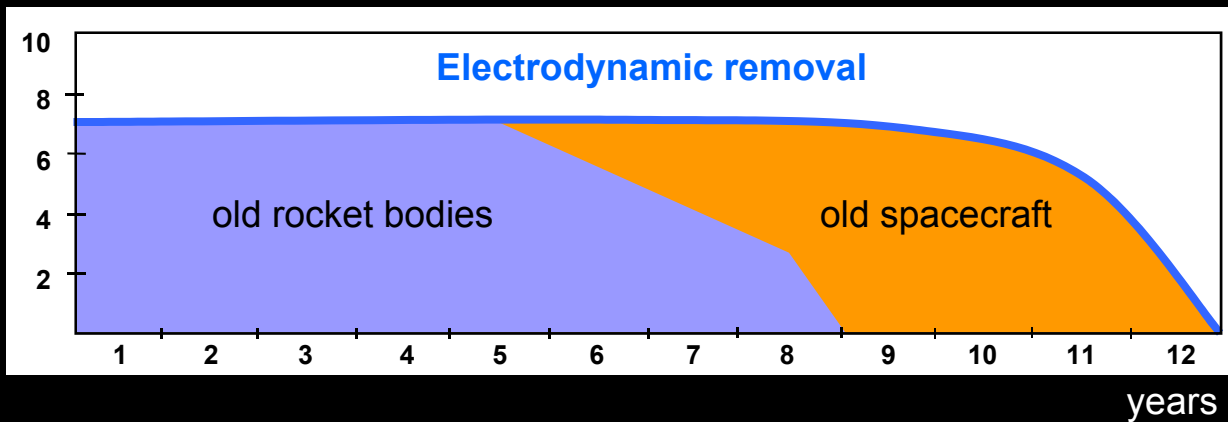
Cost per kg of debris removed



Wholesale Removal Campaign

- If the IADC member agencies decide to share the expense

\$M per agency per year



- Competitive bidding from service providers

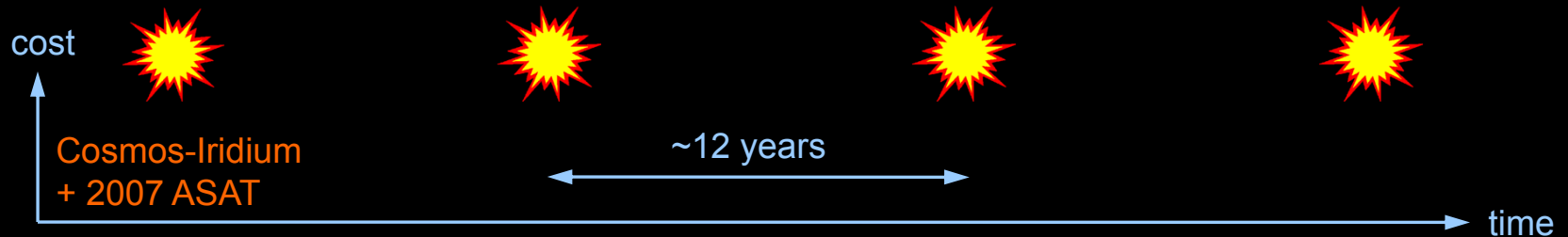
New Rules

- Legacy debris: states paying for its removal set rules going forward
- New debris: promptly remove spent stages and failed satellites
- Prototype: 25-year rule in U.S., but much shorter grace period
- Enforcement: participating states supervise their subjects
- Standard practice of removal will redefine fault
- Core group: states represented in IADC
- Enabler: affordable debris removal service
- Mechanism: salvage contract for each object



Three Scenarios for LEO

- Doing nothing



- Selective removal with rockets



- Wholesale removal with electrodynamic vehicles

