



DISEC - Study Guide



GA 1: Disarmament and International Security Committee

Agenda Item: Addressing the militarization of outer space and preventing an arms race.

Under Secretary General: Asya Tülpar
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Letter From Secretary General

Dear All,

It is my utmost privilege to welcome you to HASALMUN'26. As the Secretary General, I am honored to invite you to a conference of rigorous debate and to the pursuit for collaborative solutions to the most pressing challenges of today.

We gather at a time when the complexities of international relations require more than just superficial understanding. Today's leaders must navigate a world where the historical precedents are met with unprecedented modern crises.

Whether you are steering protocols in the General Assembly or responding to the demand of a crises, your role these couple of days will be vital.

We as the Secretariat have worked tirelessly to ensure that this conference is everything you expected, and more.

As you prepare for your positions and refine your resolutions, I encourage you to approach each session with courage and the intent to collaborate. I look forward to seeing the spirited dialogues and fruitful debates you will bring to our conference.

With warmest regards,

Duru Oral

Secretary General



Letter From Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

My name is Elif Asya Tülpar, I will be your Under Secretary General and if you guys have any questions just write me a e-mail :meliketulpar01@gmail.com

I hope all of you have an amazing time.

With the best regards,

Elif Asya Tülpar

Letter From Academic Assistant

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to our committee; DISEC, also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I believe that in the wake of the crisis the first committee of the General Assembly plays a pivotal role in maintaining World Peace so in order to address the issues of our modern World we sought to choose an agenda that fits the situation.

Like stated in the introduction to the agenda item, humans are curious creatures and we have always looked for ways to reach space. Now that we have done that we wish to establish sovereignty over it like we do with pretty much anything else.

As the board of this committee we wish you all to take part in meaningful discussions, formulate thought striking debates and at the end write a comprehensive resolution paper but even more important than that we want all of you to have fun.

I hope you all enjoy this committee as much as we did creating it.



With kind regards,

Tolga Demirel - +90 537 214 91 03 / demireltolga2019@gmail.com feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns! *Note: footnotes at the end of some pages are for words that have a potential to be not to be known by many so make sure to read those first if you have any questions, also show some love to the formatting that took a long time!*

Introduction to the Committee

GA:1 DISEC is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

The first committee of the General Assembly plays a key role in global disarmament and peace. As a delegate you will be discussing important topics regarding global peace in the context of disarmament and at the end will be writing a resolution paper to address and attempt to solve these issues.

Due to being a General Assembly Committee DISEC doesn't have the ability to impose sanctions or enforce decisions but its work plays an important role in international policy making by passing well-structured resolutions that seek to address issues in relation with the agenda item.

Introduction to the Agenda Item

As curious creatures humans have always been fascinated by the dreams of going to space and exploring beyond our own World and ever since April 12th 1961¹ our dreams of exploring the cosmos have become a reality.

In the context of disarmament space has a very crucial role. Since the dawn of humanity we have been consuming the resources of our own planet and ever since the Industrial Revolution this consumption has skyrocketed.

Consumption comes at a price of course, our World is finite and so are its resources. Now we are at a time where our planet is slowly running out of resources and there might soon be wars being fought for the sake of taking control of key resources such as water, fossil fuels etc.

¹ **April 12th 1961:** Date the first human Yuri Gagarin was sent to space, beginning of a new era for human civilization.



With these changes space has become/is slowly becoming a key point of interest. In theory one who has control over the realm of space would also have a monopoly over its resources, essentially controlling the World's resources in the long run.

Beyond that another area of concern is the idea of the placement of orbital weapons in space. This severely undermines global safety and peace. Being able to put weapons in orbit would create negative results for the satellites in orbit and our planet. These weapons would be able to sabotage and destroy satellites in orbit at any given moment meaning communications systems around the World could be cut in the blink of an eye. Other than that, being able to fire from orbit would give states the ability to strike any location at any given time at will.

This agenda calls for countries to establish boundaries, regulate the acts of putting weapons in orbit and most importantly, work together. This agenda questions whether or not current disarmament policies in place could keep up with an arms race in space and what could be done to prevent such a thing. In the end, your goal is to keep pushing forward while collaborating with each other to reach a mutual agreement that's for the benefit of global World peace.

Key Terms and Definitions

Dual-Use Technologies: Dual-use technologies are goods, software, and technologies designed for commercial/civilian use that can also be applied to military, defense, or intelligence purposes. Key examples include artificial intelligence, drones, advanced computing, and aerospace technology.

Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Weapons: Anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic or tactical purposes. Although no ASAT system has yet been utilized in warfare, a few countries (China, India, Russia, and the United States) have successfully shot down their own satellites to demonstrate their ASAT capabilities in a show of force.

Directed Energy Weapons (DEW): Directed energy weapons (DEWs) are systems that emit highly focused energy—including lasers, microwaves, and particle beams—to damage or destroy targets at the speed of light. Primarily used for countering drones, missiles, and vehicles, they offer a low-cost, precise alternative to traditional munitions.

Global Commons: Global commons is a concept to describe international, supranational, and global resource domains in which common-pool resources are found. They are "areas that lie outside of the political reach of any one nation State. Global commons include the earth's shared natural resources, such as the high seas (international waters), the atmosphere and outer space and the Antarctic in particular.



Space Situational Awareness (SSA): Space Situational Awareness (SSA) is the practice of tracking, characterizing, and predicting the positions of natural and artificial objects in Earth's orbit, such as satellites and space debris, to ensure safe space operations. It involves monitoring the space environment, including space weather, to mitigate risks of collisions and disruptions to infrastructure.

Strategic Ambiguity: In the context of global politics, a policy of deliberate ambiguity (also known as a policy of strategic ambiguity or strategic uncertainty) is the practice by a government or non-state actor of being deliberately ambiguous with regard to all or certain aspects of its operational or positional policies. This is typically a way to avoid direct conflict while maintaining a masked, more assertive, or threatening position on a subject (broadly, a geopolitical risk aversion strategy).

Jamming: Radio jamming is the deliberate blocking of or interference with wireless communications. In some cases, jammers work by the transmission of radio signals that disrupt telecommunications by decreasing the signal-to-noise ratio. The concept can be used in wireless data networks to disrupt information flow. It is a common form of censorship in totalitarian states, in order to prevent foreign radio stations in border areas from reaching the country.

Spoofing: In the context of information security, and especially network security, a spoofing attack is a situation in which a person or program successfully identifies as another by falsifying data, to gain an illegitimate advantage.

Historical Background

1. The Cold War Era (1950s - 1980s)

The Cold War was a period of international geopolitical rivalry between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR) and their respective allies, the capitalist Western Bloc and communist Eastern Bloc. It began in the aftermath of the Second World War and ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Cold War Era was also the birthplace of the famous space race. However the space race wasn't purely for "exploration" purposes, it was ultimately linked to establishment of space based military technologies and the development of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs).

1.1. Early ASAT Testing

- 1.1.1. Soviet Union:** The Soviet Union tested its first Orbital Anti Satellite Weapons technology in 1968. Beyond that, the Soviets were also running a program with the title of "Istrebitel Sputnikov (Destroyer of Satellites)" with the goal of developing orbital anti satellite technology.





- 1.1.2. United States:** In the late 1950s, the US Air Force started a series of advanced strategic missile projects under the designation Weapon System WS-199A. One of the projects studied under the 199A umbrella was Martin's Bold Orion air-launched ballistic missile (ALBM) for the B-47 Stratojet, based on the rocket motor from the Sergeant missile. Twelve test launches were carried out between 26 May 1958 and 13 October 1959, but these were generally unsuccessful and further work as an ALBM ended. The system was then modified with the addition of an Altair upper stage² to create an anti-satellite weapon with a 1770-kilometre (1100 mi) range. Only one test flight of the anti-satellite mission was carried out, making a mock attack on the Explorer 6 at an altitude of 251 km (156 mi). To record its flight path, the Bold Orion transmitted telemetry to the ground, ejected flares to aid visual tracking, and was continuously tracked by radar. The missile successfully passed within 6.4 km (4 mi) of the satellite, which is suitable for use with a nuclear weapon, but useless for conventional warheads.

The use of high-altitude nuclear explosions to destroy satellites was considered after the tests of the first conventional missile systems in the 1960s. During the Hardtack Teak test in 1958 observers noted the damaging effects of the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) caused by the explosions on electronic equipment, and during the Starfish Prime test in 1962 the EMP from a 1.4-megaton-of-TNT (5.9 PJ) warhead detonated over the Pacific damaged three satellites and also disrupted power transmission and communications across the Pacific.



²**Altair upper stage:** The Altair was a solid-fuel rocket with a filament-wound fibre-reinforced epoxy resin casing, initially developed for use as the third stage of Vanguard rockets in 1959.



2. The Outer Space Treaty (1967)

The Outer Space Treaty was considered by the Legal Subcommittee in 1966 and agreement was reached in the General Assembly in the same year (resolution 2222 (XXI)). The Treaty was largely based on the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, which had been adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1962 (XVIII) in 1963, but added a few new provisions. The Treaty was opened for



signature by the three depository Governments (the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) in January 1967, and it entered into force in October 1967. The Outer Space Treaty provides the basic framework on international space law, including the following principles:

- the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all mankind;
- outer space shall be free for exploration and use by all States;
- outer space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means;
- States shall not place nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on celestial bodies or station them in outer space in any other manner;
- the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes;
- astronauts shall be regarded as the envoys of mankind;
- States shall be responsible for national space activities whether carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities;
- States shall be liable for damage caused by their space objects; and
- States shall avoid harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies.

2.1. Applicability in the 21st Century:

Being primarily an arms control treaty for the peaceful use of outer space, the Outer Space Treaty offers limited and ambiguous regulations to newer space activities such as lunar and asteroid mining. It is therefore debated whether the extraction of resources falls within the prohibitive language of appropriation, or whether the use of such resources encompasses the commercial use and exploitation.



Seeking clearer guidelines, private U.S. companies lobbied the U.S. government, which in 2015 introduced the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act of 2015 legalizing space mining. Similar national legislation to legalize the appropriation of extraterrestrial resources are now being introduced by other countries, including Luxembourg, Japan, China, India, and Russia. In addition, the U.S. has led the creation of a series of bilateral agreements known as the Artemis Accords that seek to clarify a number of issues related to the Outer Space Treaty, including the use of space resources. This has created some controversy regarding legal claims over the mining of celestial bodies for profit.



3. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), derisively nicknamed the Star Wars program, was a proposed missile defense system intended to protect the United States from attack by ballistic nuclear missiles. Before this global security was dependent on “Mutually Assured Destruction” (MAD), this refers to the idea of neither side starting a war because both would be completely annihilated. Then US President Ronald Reagan found this idea completely unacceptable and launched the SDI which offers a more strategic approach to global security. The goal of the SDI was to intercept and destroy incoming missiles before they reached their targets using space-based weaponry.



This system introduced concepts like; space-based lasers to shoot down incoming missiles, particle beams to disable the electronics on warheads and kinetic kill vehicles that would autonomously collide with missiles at high speed to destroy them.

The SDI was heavily criticized because it threatened peace in outer space by proposing orbital weapons for “strategic defense”. As a result the SDI was never finished and fully deployed. The



SDI increased the global tensions between US and USSR by jeopardizing³ the balance of power between the two powers, however it also led to many scientific discoveries in computer processing and missile defense systems.

4. Modern Era

In the modern era an arms race in space is not just a dystopian idea but a reality. In recent years some World powers such as the US have signed directives towards more offensive doctrines and plans to militarize space are being made. Following section will detail what different World powers are doing for this purpose.

4.1. Space Force - Space Warfighting framework (USA):



“We secure our nation's interests in, from, and to space.”

-Mission statement of the United States Space Force

Before the creation of the space force, matters related to space were being handled by the United States Air Force Space Command. The United States Space Force (USSF) was created on 20th of December 2019 with the goal of protecting US assets in space.

Nowadays, the United States Space Force (USSF) is tasked with monitoring over 40.000 objects in space, managing satellite operations and developing orbital military technologies. However in 2026, the role of USSF changed with the Space Warfighting framework.

“It is the formative purpose of the Space Force to achieve space superiority—to ensure freedom of movement in space for our forces while denying the same to our adversaries.”

-Quote from USSF Space Warfighting framework, foreword section

The Space Warfighting framework establishes basic principles for effective combat in space. This framework has changed the space force from a defensive organization to a combat-ready one.

³ **Jeopardize:** To put something in danger, to threaten.



This document establishes concepts such as the Proliferated⁴ Low Earth Orbit with the goal of creating a network of American satellites in low Earth orbit and Offensive and Defensive Counterspace with the goal of developing the ability to disrupt an adversaries ability to use space against US through cyber and electronic means.

4.2. **Dual-use Robotics - FOBS (China):**

In recent years, China has severely increased its space offensive effort through the usage of many new technologies. Even though robotic arms on some of their satellites are for “maintenance and servicing” these **dual-use robotic arms** could also be used for capturing and stealing enemy satellites. Intelligence reports in 2026 suggest that China is creating **Fractional Orbital Bombing Systems (FOBS)**. These are essentially missiles that stay in low-earth orbit for a long time before dropping down on a target, making them much harder to track and intercept.

4.3. **Mythos - Nuclear ASAT (Russia):**

Besides physical technologies, Russia has also approved the usage of cyber attacks for space militarization. **Mythos** is an AI system that can automate the hacking of satellites in space. This system could hack an extensive number of satellites in short notice meaning the system could effectively neutralize entire communication networks in the blink of an eye. Alongside Mythos, Russia is also known to be pursuing an **on-orbit nuclear anti-satellite weapon** that could fry the electrical systems of all satellites in an orbital plane⁵.

Motivations For Outerspace Militarization

The militarization of outer space provides several strategic advantages for states in terms of national security, technological development, and global influence. Space-based military assets such as surveillance satellites, missile warning systems, and secure communication networks allow governments to detect threats early, improve intelligence gathering, and coordinate defense operations more effectively. These systems strengthen deterrence by discouraging hostile actions from rival states, as nations with advanced space capabilities often hold a significant strategic advantage. Additionally, military investment in space contributes to technological innovation in aerospace, navigation, and telecommunications, many of which later benefit civilian sectors. As economic activities in space continue to expand, including satellite services and future resource exploration, states also view the protection of their assets and interests in orbit as increasingly

⁴ **Proliferated:** increase rapidly in number; multiply.

⁵ **Orbital plane:** The orbital plane of a revolving body is the geometric plane in which its orbit lies.



important. Therefore, while outer space militarization remains controversial, many policymakers argue that it is necessary for maintaining security, stability, and strategic balance in modern international relations.

Space offers unique advantages to the state fighting in the war. Among them, global access is preeminent⁶. Because space is borderless, there are no normative barriers impeding access to any point within space. Thus, space represents the apogee⁷ of what combat commanders have sought for centuries, "the high ground." The extent to, and period during, which air and terrestrial activity can be observed from space depends on an array of factors: sensitivity and/or power of the sensing system, weather on earth, number of satellites performing the function, type of orbit, and so forth. However, at least in principle, from space there is no point on the earth's surface or in the airspace lying above it that is immune from space observation. Should space-based weapons be developed, the same exposure would apply to earth-based targets.

Space also provides continuous and long-term observation. Unlike aircraft or ground vehicles, spacecraft are not affected by mountains, roads, weather, or air density. Their movement is controlled by orbital mechanics, which means they can travel very fast and stay in orbit around Earth for many years. As a result, spacecraft can move at extremely high speeds and orbit the earth for long periods, years in some cases.

However, there are also some limitations. Satellite paths are predictable, so enemies can hide their activities when the satellite is not passing overhead. In some orbits, a satellite can only observe a specific area for a few minutes at a time. Only geosynchronous satellites—those that move at the same speed as Earth's rotation—can stay above one fixed location continuously.

The Potential Impact of Space Militarisation on International Security

Countries are developing military satellites, anti-satellite weapons (ASATs), missile warning systems, and surveillance technologies to protect their national interests and strengthen their global influence. As a result, space is slowly becoming a new strategic battlefield.

One major impact of space militarisation is the increasing risk of war and conflict escalation. Today, many countries depend heavily on satellites for communication, navigation, intelligence gathering, and military operations. These systems are essential for national security, which

⁶ **Preeminent:** Having paramount rank, dignity, or importance

⁷ **Apogee:** Peak, maximum.



makes them highly valuable targets during times of tension. If one country attacks another country's satellites, it could quickly lead to military retaliation on Earth. For example, in 2007, China conducted an ASAT test by destroying one of its inactive weather satellites. This demonstrated China's ability to target critical space assets and created global concern, especially for United States policymakers. It also encouraged major powers to strengthen both offensive and defensive space capabilities.

Another serious issue is the possibility of miscalculation in space. Since satellites are central to modern warfare, even a small threat to one country's space assets may be interpreted as an act of aggression. This can lead to pre-emptive strikes or rapid retaliation. According to political scientist Kenneth Waltz and his theory of structural realism, states in an anarchic international system act defensively to protect themselves. This creates a security dilemma: when one state increases its military power for defense, other states feel threatened and respond by doing the same. In space, this means that testing or deploying weapons can trigger fear and suspicion among rival powers, increasing instability instead of security.

Space militarisation also contributes to a new arms race among major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia. Each country seeks strategic superiority by developing advanced technologies such as ASAT weapons, hypersonic systems, and orbital defense platforms. John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism explains that states compete for power because they cannot fully trust one another. For example, the creation of the United States Space Force in 2019 reflected growing concerns over Chinese and Russian space activities. Similarly, Russia's 2020 ASAT missile test showed its ability to disable enemy satellites and increased tensions between global powers.

Although the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons in space, it does not strongly regulate conventional weapons such as ASAT systems. This legal gap allows states to continue military development in space with limited restrictions. Without stronger international laws, the risk of uncontrolled competition and accidental conflict becomes much higher. The absence of enforceable regulations makes it difficult to prevent an arms race in orbit.

Another major consequence is the challenge to international cooperation and global stability. Space has traditionally been seen as a global commons where countries could cooperate peacefully. Projects such as the International Space Station show how international collaboration can benefit science and humanity. However, increasing military competition between the United States, China, and Russia weakens trust and reduces willingness to cooperate. Accusations of secret military testing and satellite interference create suspicion and damage diplomatic relations.

Because Earth depends heavily on satellites for internet, banking, transportation, weather forecasting, and emergency services, any conflict in space would have serious consequences on the ground. Destroying satellites could disrupt civilian life, weaken economies, and even trigger wider wars. Security scholar Barry Buzan argues that instability in one security sector often



spreads into others. Therefore, conflict in space could quickly affect political, economic, and military stability worldwide.

One of the most serious challenges is the militarisation of space itself. According to the Secure World Foundation's 2022 Global Counterspace Capabilities Report, more countries are developing both defensive and offensive space technologies to strengthen their national security. In addition to major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia, countries like France, India, Iran, Japan, and North Korea are also investing in counter-space programmes. This includes technologies such as anti-satellite weapons (ASATs), military surveillance satellites, jamming systems, cyberattacks, hacking, and spoofing. As the number of valuable targets in orbit increases, malicious activities in space are becoming more likely, raising the possibility of future military conflict.

The development of dual-use technologies makes this challenge even more dangerous. Some technologies designed for peaceful purposes can also be used for military aggression. For example, a robotic arm created for removing space debris could also be used to capture or damage another country's satellite. Such actions may be seen as direct threats and could trigger strong military responses. Without an internationally recognised legal framework to control extra-terrestrial weapons, competition between major powers may grow into a full-scale space arms race.

Another major problem is space debris, which directly threatens both civilian and military space operations. As countries launch more satellites and spacecraft, outer space becomes increasingly crowded with defunct satellites, broken rocket parts, and fragments caused by collisions or ASAT missile tests. These objects travel at extremely high speeds and can seriously damage active satellites or spacecraft. In 2021, Russia conducted a direct-ascent ASAT test that destroyed one of its old satellites in low-Earth orbit, creating thousands of dangerous debris fragments. Similar tests by China, India, and the United States have also increased the amount of orbital debris. This creates a constant danger for satellites that support communication, banking, GPS navigation, and national defense systems.

Closely connected to this issue is the challenge of space traffic management. The number of satellites launched in recent years has increased dramatically. According to the European Space Agency, the number of satellites launched in 2020 and 2021 is comparable to the total number launched since the Soviet Union first sent Sputnik 1 launch into orbit in 1957. However, there are still no universally accepted "rules of the road" for satellite movement, orbital positioning, or collision prevention. There is no strong international regulation for satellite launches, orbital positions, or even future space mining rights. Without clear coordination, the risk of accidental collisions and diplomatic tensions becomes much higher.

The increasing commercialisation of space also creates new security concerns. Private companies are becoming more powerful actors in outer space, sometimes even more active than



governments. For example, SpaceX has launched thousands of active satellites and controls a major part of global satellite infrastructure. Commercial space activity has grown rapidly and is expected to continue expanding in the coming decades. While this creates major economic opportunities, it also makes regulation far more difficult. Private companies may act across borders without strong international oversight, creating a “free-for-all” situation in already crowded orbital zones. This weakens state control and increases the possibility of misunderstandings and security risks.

Perhaps the most important challenge behind all these problems is the lack of regulation. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 remains the main international agreement governing activities in outer space. Although it prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons in space, it does not properly address modern challenges such as ASAT weapons, cyber warfare, private commercial expansion, or advanced military technologies. It also lacks strong enforcement mechanisms. This legal gap has allowed countries to continue developing military capabilities in space with limited restrictions. As a result, unilateral actions and national strategic interests often replace international cooperation and peaceful use.

These challenges directly support the broader argument that space militarisation threatens international security. The lack of regulation, the growth of military competition, and the increasing vulnerability of space infrastructure all increase the possibility of conflict escalation on Earth. Since modern societies depend heavily on satellites for communication, transportation, military defense, financial systems, and emergency services, any conflict in space would have serious global consequences.

In conclusion, the militarisation of space presents serious risks to international security. It increases the likelihood of war, encourages arms races, weakens global cooperation, and threatens international stability. As outer space becomes more strategically important, stronger international agreements and updated legal frameworks are necessary to prevent conflict and preserve space as a peaceful domain for all humanity.

Treaties and Frameworks in Governing the Militarisation of Space

The militarisation of outer space has become one of the most serious concerns in modern international security because space is no longer used only for peaceful scientific exploration, communication, and research. Today, outer space plays a central role in military strategy, intelligence gathering, navigation systems, missile warning systems, surveillance operations, and national defense planning. Satellites are now essential for both civilian life and military operations, which makes them highly valuable strategic assets. As major powers continue to develop anti-satellite weapons (ASATs), military satellites, cyber capabilities, and advanced counter-space technologies, the possibility of conflict extending into outer space becomes much



more realistic. Because of this growing danger, international treaties and legal frameworks are expected to regulate state behavior, prevent military escalation, and preserve outer space as a peaceful domain. However, while several treaties and institutions exist, many experts argue that these frameworks are no longer strong enough to deal with modern space security challenges.

The most important legal foundation of international space law is the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, commonly called the OST. It remains the most significant and widely accepted agreement governing activities in outer space. The treaty was created during the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union were competing intensely in both military and technological fields. Its main goal was to prevent outer space from becoming another battlefield for nuclear confrontation. The treaty clearly states that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all humankind. It prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in orbit around Earth, on the Moon, or on any other celestial body. It also bans military activities on celestial bodies and declares that no country can claim ownership over outer space, the Moon, or other planets.

One of the greatest strengths of the Outer Space Treaty is its near-universal acceptance. More than one hundred countries have signed and ratified the agreement, including all major space powers such as the United States, Russia, and China. This broad participation gave the treaty strong legitimacy and helped establish important international norms about peaceful space use. For decades, the OST successfully prevented the direct deployment of nuclear weapons in space and reduced the risk of outer space becoming a nuclear battlefield. It also created the legal principle that space should be treated as a global commons rather than national territory, encouraging cooperation in scientific missions such as the International Space Station and other multinational projects.

Despite these important achievements, the Outer Space Treaty has major weaknesses, especially when dealing with modern military technologies. The treaty was written in the 1960s, when space technology was still in its early stages. At that time, concerns mainly focused on nuclear weapons and territorial claims, not on the highly advanced military technologies that exist today. The treaty mainly bans weapons of mass destruction, but it does not clearly prohibit conventional weapons in space. This means that countries are still allowed to develop and deploy anti-satellite weapons, military surveillance systems, electronic jamming tools, cyberattack capabilities, and advanced orbital technologies without technically violating the treaty. This is one of the biggest loopholes in modern space law.

Anti-satellite weapons, commonly called ASATs, are one of the clearest examples of this problem. These weapons are designed to disable or destroy satellites, which can seriously damage a country's military operations and civilian infrastructure. Modern warfare depends heavily on satellites for GPS navigation, communication, intelligence gathering, missile detection, weather forecasting, and financial systems. If a country destroys another country's



satellites, it could create immediate military escalation both in space and on Earth. For example, in 2007, China conducted a direct-ascent ASAT test by destroying one of its inactive weather satellites. This demonstrated China's ability to strike important space assets and caused major concern for the United States and other countries. It also created thousands of dangerous pieces of orbital debris that still threaten spacecraft today. Similar tests were later carried out by India, Russia, and the United States. Because the Outer Space Treaty does not specifically ban ASAT weapons, these actions remain legally difficult to challenge.

Another major weakness of the treaty is the lack of enforcement mechanisms. The OST depends almost entirely on trust, diplomatic pressure, and voluntary compliance. There is no international authority or "space police" responsible for enforcing the rules or punishing violations. If a country chooses to ignore parts of the treaty or interpret them in a self-serving way, there are very few direct consequences. This becomes especially dangerous during periods of geopolitical tension when states prioritize national security over international cooperation. In a highly competitive international system, countries may view military space development as necessary for survival, even if it increases global insecurity.

This problem becomes even more complicated because the treaty uses broad and often vague language. Many important terms are not clearly defined. For example, while the treaty bans weapons of mass destruction, it does not provide a complete definition of what qualifies as such a weapon beyond mentioning nuclear weapons. It also raises questions about what counts as being "in orbit." If a weapon is launched into space but does not complete a full orbit around Earth, is it still a violation of the treaty? These legal ambiguities allow states to interpret the rules differently based on their own interests. This weakens international trust and makes conflict prevention much harder.

Modern technology also creates the problem of dual-use systems. Many space technologies can serve both civilian and military purposes depending on how they are used. For example, satellites designed for debris removal or satellite repair may also be used to interfere with or capture another country's satellites. Robotic arms, orbital maneuvering systems, and close-approach satellites can all be justified as peaceful tools while still having offensive military potential. This makes legal regulation extremely difficult because it is often impossible to determine whether a technology is defensive, commercial, or aggressive until it is actually used.

The Moon Agreement was introduced to strengthen the Outer Space Treaty and provide more detailed legal control over celestial bodies such as the Moon and other planets. It declared that the Moon and its natural resources are the "common heritage of humanity" and prohibited military activities there. In theory, this agreement aimed to prevent competition over lunar territory and future resource conflicts. However, in practice, the Moon Agreement has been largely ineffective because very few countries accepted it. Only a small number of states ratified the treaty, while major space powers such as the United States, Russia, and China refused to join.



Without participation from the strongest space-faring nations, the agreement has almost no practical influence on international behavior. Its failure demonstrates how difficult it is to create strong global rules when major powers fear limits on their strategic freedom.

Beyond formal treaties, the United Nations has also tried to address space militarisation through diplomatic initiatives. One of the most important efforts is the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) project. PAROS aims to stop the weaponization of space through international negotiation and diplomatic cooperation. It has been discussed for many years within the Conference on Disarmament, which is responsible for major global disarmament discussions. The idea behind PAROS is to prevent states from placing weapons in space and to stop military competition before it becomes uncontrollable. Although the goal is widely supported in principle, actual progress has been extremely slow.

The main reason for this slow progress is the unwillingness of major powers to accept legally binding restrictions that could weaken their military advantage. Countries such as the United States often resist agreements that may limit their strategic flexibility, while China and Russia promote treaties that Western countries often see as incomplete or politically motivated. This reflects a larger problem in international relations: great powers often place national security above collective security. In an anarchic international system, states do not fully trust each other, and they fear that accepting restrictions may leave them vulnerable if rivals do not follow the same rules. This creates a classic security dilemma where efforts to increase national security actually make everyone feel less secure.

Several United Nations bodies also support peaceful space governance. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs helps countries develop legal systems for peaceful space cooperation and supports access to the benefits of outer space for sustainable development. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space played an important role in creating the original space treaties and continues to support peaceful cooperation. However, issues related to militarisation are mainly discussed within the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, the Conference has experienced serious deadlock for decades. Since 1996, it has failed to produce major agreements or even reach consensus on important agendas. This institutional paralysis shows how difficult collective security becomes when states prioritize individual national interests.

In 2008, China and Russia proposed the PPWT, or the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects. This proposal aimed to ban weapons in outer space and prevent attacks against satellites. On paper, it appeared to be a major step toward stronger legal regulation. However, the United States and many Western countries rejected the proposal, arguing that it failed to address existing ground-based ASAT systems already developed by China and Russia. Critics also argued that the treaty's language was too narrow and would allow certain military capabilities to remain



untouched. This disagreement again showed how mistrust between major powers blocks meaningful progress.

Recognizing the difficulty of creating completely new treaties, the international community has recently shifted its focus toward responsible behavior rather than only formal weapons bans. One important example is the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), created in 2021. Instead of trying to negotiate a perfect new treaty, the OEWG focuses on building common norms, transparency, and confidence-building measures. It invites all UN member states to participate, along with experts from industry, academia, and civil society. The goal is to define responsible behavior in space, reduce misunderstandings, and create stronger trust between states.

This change in focus is important because the biggest danger in space often comes not from the technology itself, but from how it is perceived. A satellite moving close to another satellite may be conducting repairs—or preparing an attack. Without communication and transparency, countries may assume the worst and respond aggressively. Misinterpretation can be extremely dangerous in an environment where military decisions happen quickly and strategic assets are highly sensitive. By focusing on behavior, communication, and trust-building, the OEWG may offer a more realistic path toward long-term stability.

Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are especially valuable because they help reduce fear and suspicion. These may include sharing information about satellite launches, notifying countries before military tests, clarifying the purpose of close satellite maneuvers, and creating communication channels during crises. While these steps may seem small compared to full treaties, they can significantly reduce the risk of accidental escalation. In many cases, preventing misunderstanding is more important than banning a specific weapon.

The rise of private companies in space also creates new legal challenges that older treaties were never designed to manage. Companies such as SpaceX, Blue Origin, and other commercial operators now control large satellite constellations, launch services, and communication systems. Private actors can influence global security without being traditional state actors. Existing treaties focus mainly on governments, leaving major gaps in how private companies should be regulated internationally. This makes future legal reform even more urgent.

The growing number of countries involved in space also changes the discussion. Space is no longer limited to a few superpowers. Middle powers, developing states, and private actors all have increasing access to orbital technology. This makes universal agreement more difficult but also more necessary. Countries have different priorities: some focus on banning weapons, others prioritize debris management, dual-use technologies, or commercial regulation. Reaching common ground requires continuous dialogue rather than simple legal declarations.



The future of space governance may therefore depend less on one perfect treaty and more on gradual cooperation, trust-building, and shared norms of responsible behavior. Stronger legal frameworks are still necessary, but law alone cannot solve the deeper problem of strategic mistrust between major powers. Without political willingness, even the strongest treaty can fail. The challenge is not only writing better rules, but creating enough confidence between states that they are willing to follow them.

The militarisation of space shows how international law often struggles to keep pace with technological development. The Outer Space Treaty was revolutionary for its time, but the world it was written for no longer exists. Today's reality includes cyber warfare, private satellite empires, anti-satellite missiles, orbital robotics, and growing strategic competition between major powers. Existing frameworks provide an important foundation, but they are not enough to prevent future conflict on their own. Space governance now requires updated legal systems, stronger institutions, clearer definitions, better enforcement, and a greater commitment to cooperation among all actors involved.

Countries Policies Upon The Agenda Item

United States

The United States is the most influential actor in outer space due to its advanced technology, strong military presence, and the world's largest budget for space programs. For decades, the U.S. has viewed space as a key part of its national security and global leadership. Former President Donald Trump stated in 2019 that "Space is the world's newest war-fighting domain," showing how seriously the United States sees space as part of modern military strategy.

One of the clearest examples of this policy was the creation of the United States Space Force (USSF) in 2019. This became the sixth branch of the United States military and is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping military personnel for operations in space. At the same time, the re-establishment of the United States Space Command strengthened America's operational and war-fighting capabilities in the space domain. While the Space Force focuses on preparation and development, the Space Command handles active military operations and strategic planning.

The United States views the growing military space programs of China and Russia as major threats to both national and global security. The increasing number of satellites launched by rival powers, along with their development of ASAT weapons and cyber capabilities, has pushed the United States to strengthen its own counter-space capabilities. These include both kinetic



weapons, such as anti-satellite missiles, and non-kinetic systems such as ground-based jammers, cyber operations, and electronic warfare technologies.

Even though the United States tested ASAT weapons in the past, the last major Earth-launched ASAT missile test took place in 2008. In 2022, Washington announced a ban on destructive direct-ascent ASAT missile testing and called on other countries to adopt similar restrictions. This was seen as an attempt to reduce dangerous space debris and create international norms for responsible behavior. The United States Department of Defense also introduced new space policies based on responsible conduct in orbit, focusing on transparency, deterrence, and stability.

The United States policy can therefore be described as a combination of military preparedness and norm-building. While it continues to invest heavily in military space dominance, it also supports international discussions on responsible behavior in order to reduce accidental conflict and preserve long-term strategic stability.

China

Over the last two decades, China has become one of the strongest economic, technological, and military powers in the world, directly challenging U.S. dominance in both Earth-based and space-based operations. President Xi Jinping has described becoming a “space power” as part of China’s long-term national dream, making space development a central part of Chinese strategic planning.

Although China officially states that it supports the peaceful use of outer space, it also strongly recognizes space as a critical battlefield in future wars. Chinese military thinking sees space dominance as essential for victory in modern warfare. Chinese strategists believe that the United States has gained major military advantages because of its strong control over space systems such as satellites, surveillance platforms, and navigation networks. Because of this, China views strengthening its own space capabilities as necessary for both defense and strategic competition.

In 2015, China created the Strategic Support Force (SSF) under the People's Liberation Army. This force was specifically designed to deal with modern threats in outer space, cyberspace, and electronic warfare. The SSF is divided into two major parts: the Network Systems Department, responsible for cyber operations and electronic warfare, and the Space Systems Department, responsible for launches, satellite operations, surveillance, and tracking.

China has developed both kinetic and non-kinetic counter-space capabilities. These include direct-ascent ASAT missiles, downlink jammers, cyber tools, and ground-based laser systems. In 2007, China conducted one of the most significant ASAT tests in modern history by destroying its own FY-1 weather satellite in low-Earth orbit. This test created thousands of pieces of dangerous orbital debris and demonstrated China’s serious anti-satellite capabilities.



Chinese space technology has continued to develop rapidly. In 2022, the Chinese satellite Shijian-21 was observed moving another inactive satellite into a graveyard orbit. While this was officially presented as a debris-cleaning operation, the same co-orbital technology could also be used to interfere with active satellites. This shows how dual-use technologies create uncertainty and suspicion in international relations.

China's policy focuses on strategic competition, military modernization, and reducing United States dominance in space. At the same time, China often supports international treaties such as PAROS and PPWT that call for stronger limits on weapons in space, although it can be argued that China also continues expanding its own military capabilities while promoting these agreements.

Russia

Russia remains one of the most important space powers in the world due to its historical leadership during the Cold War and its continued military focus on outer space. The former Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1 launch, and sent the first human into orbit, giving Russia strong prestige in global space politics.

Russia sees space as both a symbol of national power and a major strategic military domain. Like China, Russia believes that U.S. military success depends heavily on its dominance in space, especially through satellites used for communication, intelligence, missile defense, and battlefield coordination. Because of this, Russia considers the development of counter-space capabilities essential for balancing American influence.

In 2015, Russia created the Aerospace Forces, which include the Space Forces as a dedicated military branch focused on securing Russian access to space and defending Russian orbital assets. Russia continues to develop advanced counter-space technologies such as ASAT missiles, electronic warfare systems, jammers, and laser-based satellite disruption systems.

One of the most controversial examples was Russia's ASAT missile test in 2021, where it destroyed one of its own defunct satellites in low-Earth orbit. This created thousands of dangerous debris fragments and was strongly criticized by the international community for threatening astronauts and satellites. However, from Russia's perspective, such testing demonstrates military readiness and strategic deterrence.

Russia has also developed the Peresvet laser system, a mobile ground-based weapon designed to interfere with or disable enemy satellites. In addition, Russian military forces have used advanced electronic warfare systems in conflicts such as Syria, where they reportedly disrupted hostile drone control systems.



Russia publicly supports stronger international arms control agreements for outer space and has worked with China on proposals such as the PPWT. However, its continued testing and development of military space weapons creates a contradiction between diplomatic statements and actual military behavior. Russia's policy reflects both support for formal regulation and active participation in military competition.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO, as the world's largest military alliance, also plays an important role in the discussion of space militarisation. Although NATO itself is not a single state, its collective security structure makes space policy highly important for international security.

In December 2019, NATO officially recognized space as its fifth operational domain, alongside land, sea, air, and cyberspace. This decision showed that the Alliance now considers space an active area of military planning and strategic defense. In 2020, NATO also established a Space Centre at Allied Air Command in Germany to improve coordination and planning for space-related operations.

Space is extremely important for NATO because the Alliance depends heavily on satellites for surveillance, navigation, force positioning, missile warning systems, secure communications, and military command. Without reliable access to space systems, NATO's collective defense would become much weaker.

In recent years, NATO has increasingly identified China and Russia as major challenges to space security because of their growing counter-space capabilities. The Alliance worries that ASAT weapons, jammers, cyberattacks, and satellite interference could threaten the freedom to operate in space and weaken NATO's deterrence systems.

However, NATO does not seek to become a direct weaponized space actor itself. Instead, it focuses on protecting member states' access to space and improving coordination between allies. NATO's role is often described as balancing deterrence with restraint while remaining strong enough to defend space assets without directly accelerating the militarisation of space.

European Union

The European Union is also one of the major actors in outer space, although its approach is generally more focused on strategic autonomy, regulation, and peaceful cooperation rather than



military confrontation. While military decisions are still mostly made by individual member states, the EU sees independent access to space as an important strategic asset.

The EU has invested heavily in major space programs such as Galileo, EGNOS, and Copernicus. These systems provide satellite navigation, Earth observation, surveillance, and early warning capabilities that support both civilian and military operations. For example, Galileo improves independent European navigation without depending entirely on U.S. GPS systems, while Copernicus supports environmental monitoring, border security, and defense intelligence.

The EU recognizes that space infrastructure is highly vulnerable to cyberattacks, debris, and military interference. Because of this, the Union strongly supports stronger international rules, transparency, and responsible behavior in outer space. It places major importance on space surveillance and tracking systems to protect satellites and prevent collisions.

Unlike the United States, China, or Russia, the EU does not emphasize military dominance in space as its main objective. Instead, it supports strategic autonomy, legal regulation, and peaceful access to orbital resources. However, because space systems are increasingly dual-use, even European civilian programs have important security implications.

The EU therefore acts as both a strategic actor and a diplomatic advocate for stronger governance. It supports updated international law, multilateral cooperation, and peaceful use while also investing heavily in technologies necessary for long-term security and independence.

Questions to Be Answered

1. How can the General Assembly prevent the militarization of space without hindering space exploration and innovation?
2. How can Dual-Use technologies that could be utilized for acts of war in space be regulated?
3. What measures can be taken in order to prevent cyber attacks in the domain of space?
4. How can existing treaties and measures be changed or altered to better fit the current state of space exploration and innovations?
5. How can international co-operation be strengthened for the sake of ensuring responsibility for military actions in space?
6. How would space based assets and legal mechanisms need to be altered for the sake of preventing an event like Kessler Syndrome?
7. What are the possible risks of implementing AI into orbital warfare and how could these be prevented?



8. How can the international community effectively track space based assets with the goal of detecting those that could be utilized for warfare and subterfuge?
9. With private companies entering the domain of space, what could be done to prevent them from militarizing space?
10. How can countries protect their space assets such as satellites without the usage of offensive tactics?
11. Are current space treaties like the Outer Space Treaty strong enough to stop the militarisation of space?
12. How do the United States, China, and Russia increase tensions and the risk of war in space?
13. What new rules can be created to keep outer space peaceful and prevent future space conflicts?
14. What new international regulations, confidence-building measures, and cooperative frameworks should be developed to reduce space debris, manage space traffic, and ensure the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space?

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