

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**“Addressing the Ongoing Militarisation of Outer Space and
Its Implications for International Security”**

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Definitions of Key Concepts

These are some terms that we recommend you understand and research prior to the MUN to have a better understanding of our debate. They may vary depending on your country's ideology.

Militarisation of Outer Space: The militarization of space involves the development and use of military technology and weapons in Earth's orbit and outer space.¹

Weaponisation of Outer Space: There is no universally accepted definition of space weapon; however, weaponization of outer space generally refers to the proliferation, testing, deployment and use of weapons or counterspace capabilities located in or directed towards space or space systems.²

Outer Space Treaty (OST): The Outer Space Treaty (OST) is defined as the foundational international agreement governing the peaceful use and exploration of outer space, which aims to prevent harmful contamination of celestial bodies and ensures freedom of exploration by States. It has been a critical instrument for global aims to prevent harmful contamination of celestial bodies and ensures freedom of exploration by States. It has been a critical instrument for global governance of outer space activities since its entry into force 50 years ago.³

Dual-Use Technology: Refers to application of technology both in civilian and military targets.⁴

Space Debris: Space debris (also known as space junk, space pollution, space waste, space trash, space garbage, or cosmic debris) are defunct human-made objects in space – principally in Earth orbit – which no longer serve a useful function⁵

Anti-Satellite Weapons (ASATs): Anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic or tactical purposes.⁶

¹ <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/military-history-and-science/militarization-space>

² <https://spacesecuritylexicon.org/terminology/weaponization-of-outer-space>

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/outer-space-treaty>

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<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/ginacody/research/spnet/Documents/BriefingNotes/EmergingTech-MilitaryApp/BN-19-Emerging-technology-and-military-application-Oct2020.pdf>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_debris

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-satellite_weapon

Space Security:Space security is concerned with the relationship among space objects and activities, and the maintenance of international peace and security, and disarmament, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space.⁷

Arms Race in Space:An arms race occurs when two or more groups compete in military superiority. It consists of a competition between two or more states to have superior armed forces, concerning production of weapons, the growth of a military, and the aim of superior military technology.⁸

Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs):Confidence-building measures (CBMs) or confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) are actions taken to reduce fear of attack by both (or more) parties in a situation of conflict.⁹

Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs):Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are a set of tools designed to display, predict and discipline states' behaviour with respect to maintaining the security of space.¹⁰

Geostationary Orbit (GEO):A geostationary orbit, also referred to as a (GEO), is a circular geosynchronous orbit 35,786 km (22,236 mi) in altitude above Earth's equator, 42,164 km (26,199 mi) in radius from Earth's center, and following the direction of Earth's rotation.¹¹

Space Traffic Management (STM):STM encompasses the means and the rules to access, conduct activities in, and return from outer space safely, sustainably, and securely.¹²

⁷ <https://spacesecuritylexicon.org//space-securityterminology>

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms_race#:~:text=An%20arms%20race%20occurs%20when.aim%20of%20superior%20military%20technology.

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confidence-building_measures#:~:text=Confidence%2Dbuilding%20measures%20\(CBM\)s.in%20a%20situation%20of%20conflict.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confidence-building_measures#:~:text=Confidence%2Dbuilding%20measures%20(CBM)s.in%20a%20situation%20of%20conflict.)

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[https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2016SpPol...37..134R/abstract#:~:text=Transparency%20and%20confidence%2Dbuilding%20measures%20\(TCBMs\)%20are%20a%20set.maintaining%20the%20security%20of%20space.](https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2016SpPol...37..134R/abstract#:~:text=Transparency%20and%20confidence%2Dbuilding%20measures%20(TCBMs)%20are%20a%20set.maintaining%20the%20security%20of%20space.)

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geostationary_orbit

¹² https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-space/space-traffic-management_en

Background Information

It is highly desirable for world peace that outer space be used for purposes that benefit all of humanity. Currently, there is a risk of anti-satellite testing and military satellites that increase the likelihood of armed conflict. It is important to remember that space contains scientific and communication technology essential to our society. A treaty on outer space was established in 1967, prohibiting weapons dangerous to humanity and affirming that space should be used for peaceful purposes. Achieving all of this required cooperation among nations. Currently, the militarization of outer space poses a threat to peace, and only through dialogue, collaboration, and mutual respect can an arms race be avoided.

The race for outer space began in 1957 with the launch of *Sputnik 1* by the Soviet Union, the first satellite in history. This was followed by the US's *Voyager 1*, their first satellite. After that, a constant struggle between the US and the Soviet Union began to develop new technology to be able to ultimately colonise space. This began when the Soviet Union sent the first man into space, Yuri Gagarin, aboard the *Vostok 1* in 1961, marking the beginning of a new age of space exploration, followed by the *Apollo 11* mission by the US, where Neil Armstrong became the first human to step foot on the moon. After this, many more countries developed rockets and shuttles to send humans into space and to the moon on missions like India, North Korea, and other superpowers. Nowadays, space exploration has become a lot more common, with some satellites and cameras even leaving the solar system. Space travel has even become a luxury recreational activity for the higher classes, culminating in the present issue of the militarisation of outer space.

With the rapid advance of technology, countries will begin to focus on establishing prominent footholds in outer space. This may cause an increase in hostilities between countries, especially those who already have complicated relations on Earth. The action taken in outer space will determine the future of diplomacy and maybe establish hegemonic superpowers in outer space. This might pose a threat to global peace, as tensions might rise due to the need to control outer space. This makes this topic of the utmost importance, as the Earth is continuously developing and outer space will progressively become a necessity for countries, shaping the future of diplomatic relations, and to maintain peace, this committee should develop a resolution that benefits all.

Case Study

China's Anti-Satellite <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-anti-satellite-test>

Case Study: China's 2007 Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Test

In January of 2007, the People's Republic of China destroyed one of its own inactive weather satellites in Earth orbit by completing an anti-satellite test by using a ground-launched missile. In consequence, more than 3,000 pieces of orbital waste were generated, increasing space blockage significantly in one of its regions, heavily used for civilian, scientific, and military satellites. This event marked China as the third state to demonstrate a successful kinetic ASAT capability but created a massive international concern due to its potential consequences for the peaceful use of outer space.

The traditional use of space is to support functions, such as communication and surveillance, toward the development of capabilities designed to deny or disrupt access to space. However, the test demonstrated a shift from this traditional use of outer space. Although the weapon was launched from Earth, its effects were space-based, illustrating how outer space can be exploited for military purposes without a firm and established legal framework, which could raise concerns not only in terms of international law, but also how this can affect the future uses of outer space.

The test highlighted the vulnerability modern states have due to a dependency on satellites for military missions and operations, GPS trackers for navigation, financial structures and even topics like radars and imagery to properly respond to crises and disasters. Satellites and outer space infrastructure have become the backbone of modern society and putting them in danger would greatly affect life on Earth. A military conflict on outer space would cause complex damages in the Earth's orbit, with hazards such as debris, which might cause damages to other satellite's hulls and integrity, jeopardising systems previously mentioned. Furthermore, conflicts in outer space would likely transcend the physical space and alter diplomatic relations between countries, especially superpowers, some, with nuclear capabilities. This would put the whole world in danger.

The anti-satellite test of 2007 proved there are many flaws in the control and governance of outer space, and many nations found loopholes in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, where it states that positioning WMDs in

outer space is strictly prohibited, however there is no mention of anti-satellite weaponry or testing of conventional arms. The ambiguity posed by this allowed the test to proceed without issues, giving the UN reason to open up a GA debate, discussing the prevention of another race in space, this time with weapons. The objective was to build confidence between the UN through signing new treaties and establish clear norms on space domain to ensure sustainable development and long-term security both in outer space and on Earth.

As a whole the China's 2007 ASAT test proves the importance of the collective work of the international community to regulate or end the use of outer space, in order to tackle legal gaps that could potentially harm other states and societies in the long run. The need for transparency and moderation is highlighted, so that future technological developments help keep outer space safe and sustainable for everyone.

Past U.N. Action

- Resolution A/RES/42/33 was created by the UN and aims to curb the danger of militarization in outer space. This resolution seeks to promote peace in space through negotiation. In this regard, the Conference on Disarmament in Outer Space (PAROS) is noteworthy. Prevention of an arms race in outer space.¹³
- Resolution A/RES/44/112 reflects the concern of nations regarding a potential space arms race, calling on countries to act responsibly to prevent conflicts. The resolution emphasizes negotiation as the fundamental means to curb the space arms race. It is now clear that the objectives have not been achieved, as the same challenges (PAROS) persist and no progress has been made toward the intended goals.¹⁴

¹³ [Digital Library](#)

¹⁴ [Digital Library](#)

Possible Moderated Caucuses

During moderated caucuses, your aim should be to propose topics that your delegation believes are important to discuss. These caucuses could be focused on the entire topic, which would make the debate more general, or they could be focused on a specific topic instead (e.g. personal freedoms). Remember that during the moderated caucus as well as in consultations of the whole, delegations are guiding the debate and choosing what should be discussed, so your aim as a delegation should be to propose topics, as well as participate in any debate in order to express your country's opinion, and make your voice heard.

Furthermore, remember that if you have planned any topic for a moderated caucus or a consultation of the whole, you should also think about the speaker's time, as well as the duration of the motion.

Some examples of topics that could be discussed are the following (the following topics can be used):

1. Clearing up and defining potential aggressive action in outer space and its potential consequences on global politics.
2. Transparency on outer space operations by national and international agencies.
3. Division of territory and resources in outer space to create equitable frameworks for all nations.
4. The exposure of personal data by international surveillance and military satellites in outer space.
5. Ensuring the security and health of outer space workers and astronauts.
6. The risk of global shutdowns and the protection of satellite networks.

Bloc 1 – Pro-militarisation / security-oriented.

This bloc is led by space powers such as the United States, Russia, China, India, France, United Kingdom and NATO members. They aim to treat space as a military strategy, since satellites are essential for navigation, intelligence and missile defences and communications. Their interest is to develop strong and advanced technologies to protect their space assets, including ASAT weapons.

Bloc 2 – Anti-militarisation / peaceful-use

This bloc mainly includes Global South and neutral countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Switzerland, Austria, Costa Rica and New Zealand. Their primary interest is to preserve outer space as peaceful and free from weapons and military confrontation. They are often represented through organisations like the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. They firmly oppose ASAT testing and fear it will increase inequality and allow powerful states to dominate space security.

Possible Resolution Points

When writing resolutions your aim should be to reflect the position of your bloc, through the clauses written, for the preambular clauses, your aim should be to describe the position of your bloc on the subject, if your bloc's stance is in favor of preserving freedoms, then the preambular clauses should reflect that. However the Operative Clauses have to be focused on the specific measures your bloc believes that should be implemented.

Below, you will find some examples of operative clauses for your resolutions, do not copy the clauses used as examples literally, however clauses with similar language can be used:

1. Commands all countries to annually report their space military activities, in order to maintain trust and prevent conflict.
2. Requires all countries launching satellites to pay a small fee, which will be used to help developing nations.
3. Mandates nations to notify each other when satellites come near to prevent disagreement
4. Declares unwarranted surveillance by military satellites a breach of personal privacy and a violation to rights of digital privacy.
5. Bans the use of location tracking devices by military operations in outer space used to monitor, restrict or target movement of individuals.
6. Affirms that the disruption of communication services would be considered a violation of the human right of information and expression.

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