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Study Guide

LEGAL Committee

Veronika Rysová and Stela Šprincová

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COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION

The Legal Committee (otherwise known as The United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee or C6) is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. It is the main forum for considering international law and other legal issues concerning the United Nations. While international law-making negotiations take place in multiple UN-specialized bodies, discussions related to general international law are usually held at the Legal committee.

One of the main items is an annual report of the International Law Commission. This is a subordinate body of the General Assembly, created in 1947, which assists the GA in the discharge of art. 13 of the United Nations Charter. The Sixth Committee also receives and considers reports of other supplementary of the General Assembly in legal matters.

The Sixth Committee also works on other legal issues that are referred by the Bureau of the Assembly on an annual or biannual basis. These include the annual resolution on “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”, under which the General Assembly adopted several important international conventions in the fight against terrorism.

The C6 meets every year for six weeks in parallel with the General Assembly’s annual session, with its work beginning after the general debate and finishing by mid-November. Before the work of the committee begins, the GA assigns a list of agenda items to be discussed. Usual agenda items include The promotion of justice and international law, Drug control, Crime prevention, and others.

First Topic: Creating guidelines for the North Pole to deter illegitimate territorial claims and prevent commodity theft

Veronika Rysová

Topic introduction
Over the past few decades, the North Pole and its surrounding Arctic region have become the point of interest of many countries. As melting ice opens new opportunities in this region such as access to the previously frozen natural resources and newly formed shipping routes many Arctic countries have begun to submit their territorial claims over certain parts of the region, hoping to extend their EEZs and control the newly found resources and possibilities and profit from them. However, with this new competition new issues are raised as some territorial claims are controversial and overlap with other countries' claims. This leads to various conflicts and a tense atmosphere between the Arctic states.

Key terms

North pole
The North Pole is the northernmost part of the Arctic region, located in the middle of the Arctic Ocean. Unlike the South Pole, it does not lie on any landmass and is covered only in ice, which is continuously moving and changing based on temperature.

Arctic circle
The Arctic Circle is one of the two polar circles located on our planet. One is in the northern hemisphere, while the other is in the southern. The Arctic Circle is an imaginary parallel that marks the southern boundary of the whole Arctic region. This parallel passes through various countries—Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada, USA, Denmark (through Greenland), and Iceland—making them into Arctic countries bordering the whole Arctic region.

International waters
International waters, also known as the high seas, are all the oceans and seas behind countries' borders, no country law applies there and they belong to no sovereign nation. International waters begin behind countries' EEZs and go deep into the open water. A big part of the Arctic region falls under international waters and thus no country can directly claim it as its own, however, there are certain ways to extend EEZs and therefore change the status of such waters. Currently, many Arctic countries are attempting to do so which raises many discussions about whether it ought to be allowed or not.

UNCLOS
The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, also known as the UNCLOS, is a treaty that was created between 1973 and 1982 during the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea. The treaty sets the standards and principles of international maritime law and defines the legal framework for the oceans and seas.

Lomonosov ridge
The Lomonosov Ridge is a mountain chain located under the Arctic Ocean, it is a subject of conflicts between Russia, Canada, and Denmark, all three countries claim the Lomonosov Ridge as the extension of their continental ridges, and thus, they wish for the CLCS to pronounce it as theirs.

Hans Island
Hans Island is a small uninhabited island located between Canada's Ellesmere Island and Greenland. For many years there has been a dispute over the ownership of this place between Canada and Denmark, however in the year 2022 Canada and Denmark split the island equally between themselves.

Beaufort Sea
The Beaufort Sea is one of the seas located in the Arctic region and under its shelf there can be found many natural resources such as petroleum or gas. Besides that, the sea is home to several beluga colonies and some other sea species. The USA and Canada are in conflict over the ownership of the sea as their EEZs overlap in that area, but despite their conflict, they are also trying to protect its nature by implementing various laws preventing overfishing in this region.

EEZ
The Exclusive economic zone also known as the EEZ is an area beyond countries' land covered in ocean or sea and goes up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) offshore. Within the EEZs, the country has an exclusive right to use natural resources such as wind, water, or other resources located there. If a country wishes for larger EEZs they have to officially apply for it to the UN and it has to be proved that the underwater land is an extension of their own.

CLCS
The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) is a body that falls under the UNCLOS. States wishing for larger EEZs (EEZs going beyond 200 nautical miles) have to submit their request to this specific commission. The CLCS experts then evaluate all the data provided by the applicant state and then they decide whether to grant the request or not.

Arctic states
Arctic states are states that have their territories located in the Arctic Circle or their land and sea go up to the Arctic region. There are eight states fulfilling such

demands which are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the USA. These states together form the so-called Arctic 8.

Arctic Council
The Arctic Council is a council including the Arctic states and representatives of indigenous people living in the Arctic region, those are the permanent members however this council includes observer countries as well, for instance, China. The purpose of the council is cooperation between Arctic 8 and indigenous people, protection of the arctic environment, resolving other issues regarding this region, and sharing of scientific research.

Northeast Passage/Northern Sea Route
The Northeast Passage is a passage that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It goes around the Arctic side of Russia and Norway and it used to be frozen, however, due to global warming the new path is slowly forming and bringing new alternatives to already existing routes such as the Suez Canal. In the future, it is a new possible trade route that would connect Asia and Europe making travels between the two continents less expensive and time demanding. This future opportunity raises the interest of all the Arctic states and it brings new conflicts over the territory as well.

Northwest passage
Northwest Passage is another newly formed route that is recognized as a part of the international waters, however it technically flows through Canadian waters. It connects Asia and America replacing the Panama Canal. For many years now there has been a conflict between Canada and mainly the USA about how many vessels can pass through the passage and whether it belongs to Canada or not. Canada wants to control the number of ships passing through the passage as they claimed it as their territory, but the USA disagrees.

Transpolar sea route
The Transpolar sea route also known as the Trans-arctic route is potentially another route going straight through the Arctic region deep in the international waters. Currently, it is reachable only by heavy icebreakers, but in the future thanks to global warming normal ships will be able to pass through as well.

Overview of the topic
The North Pole is the area located at the northernmost global pole, it is a middle part of the Arctic region and it represents almost 6% of the earth's surface. The Arctic region is a place bounded by the Arctic Circle (imaginary parallel) and it is composed of seas, oceans, islands, and ice. The whole Arctic region has a total area of 14 million km^2. Most of it is a constantly moving sheet of ice without any landmass largely uninhabited by humans. It is surrounded by one of the world's oceans, the Arctic Ocean. As mentioned before it is composed mainly of ice which holds approximately 20% of the world's freshwater resources. However, due to

global warming, the ice keeps retreating and freshwater is blending in with the salt water from the ocean. This poses an enormous threat and scientists are frightened that at this pace the ice will melt completely in 30 years from now. The Arctic region is mostly located in the international waters, thus it ought to belong to no one and it should be preserved as an international heritage for the upcoming generations. However, some countries are actively trying to extend their territories to this region.

As mentioned before the Arctic region might be ice-free by the year 2050 and despite this bringing some undesirable effects on the ecosystem it is also revealing many new opportunities. Among these are for instance newly formed paths, new scientific discoveries (there's scientific research going on continuously in the Arctic region, with all arctic countries cooperating), and newly revealed natural resources, mainly oil and gas. It is estimated that the Arctic holds up to 13% of the world's oil and 30% of the world's natural gas reserves and other resources like metals. However, this percentage is only an estimate and no scientist can declare it as certain. Also, thanks to the melting, some new roads are revealed such as the Northwest Passage and Northeast Passage. These paths will shorten the shipping by approximately two weeks, saving many costs and they would bring many advantages to the country which would control these waters including military advantages and profits from charges of the transit.

However, no country can directly claim the Arctic region as their own as it is part of the international waters, but there are certain ways which enable it to legally extend a country's territories within this region. According to the Convention on the Law of the sea, a country can claim territory beyond their land up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) which is then called the EEz (exclusive economic zone) and if they wish to extend it further, they have to prove to the CLCS that the land under the water is extension of theirs by providing the scientific evidence which is then judged by the experts. Then, if approved by the mentioned commission, it belongs solely to the applicant country. Such places can be exploited only by one sovereign state. There are only a few states that can extend their territory to the Arctic region and use its advantages as they are closest to it – Canada, USA (through Alaska), Norway, Denmark (through Greenland), and Russia. All mentioned countries except for the USA have the right to exploit the Arctic natural resources within their extended EEZs as it was already approved by the CLCS, however, they try to extend their territories even beyond that and own as much of the Arctic region as possible. However, some territories overlap and are controversial, which leads to many conflicts and disputes between all the mentioned countries. These countries also form the Arctic 8 alongside Iceland, Finland, and Sweden.

There are other countries that are actively engaging in the Arctic business, these are mainly the UK and France which are investing in projects all around the North Pole, hoping it will bring them a huge profit. Another country trying to have a

huge impact within this region is China which even claims to be an almost arctic country and sees many opportunities there. China is also creating many new projects and initiatives relating to the Arctic region, mostly through an alliance with Russia.

Although some countries attempt to exploit the region as ecologically as possible there is still a lot of waste that alongside global warming keeps destroying the Arctic nature and ecosystem. Ice is disappearing faster, making the Indigenous people into climate refugees (many Indigenous people are living in the Arctic region, including several different tribes, mostly around the Arctic Circle as it is still on some landmass) and sea levels are slowly rising. Animals are also severely affected, mainly the sea once, who are disoriented, hurt and often dying. This whole thing poses a big threat. The geopolitical tension between Arctic states is increasing while global warming is causing irreversible damage to the whole region.

Timeline of the topic

Cold War – The military importance of the region was first recognized during the Cold War between the USA and the USSR. Both superpowers sought there for an opportunity to establish their military bases and place their ballistic missiles to achieve an advantage over each other.

20th century

During the 20th century, there were first claims by the Arctic countries over the territories of the Arctic region, first disputes arose and the first committees regarding this topic were formed

1925 - Canada is the first Arctic nation to extend its territory to the Arctic region, extending its borders up to the North Pole. Other Arctic nations followed shortly after in response, the first being the USSR claiming many islands

1984 – First territorial disputes started occurring, one of them being the dispute over Hans Island between Canada and Denmark. In 1984 Denmark submitted its claim over the island resulting in Canada doing the same.

1994 - UNCLOS enters into force specifying how and to which extent a country can claim some water-covered territory beyond its borders as its own

1996 - establishment of the Arctic Council for the Arctic 8 to resolve conflicts between them and to promote cooperation in scientific research and with Indigenous people

1998 - the UK became one of the observer countries in the Arctic Council

21st century

During the 21st century, the conflicts over the territories of the Arctic region are becoming more tense, more countries getting involved and people are beginning to notice the dangers of global warming

2000 - France gets an access to the Arctic Council, being another observer country
2001- Russia submits the claim over the Lomonosov Ridge, an area of interest of other two countries Canada and Denmark
2007 - Russia plants a flag on the bottom of the Arctic ocean claiming the North Pole. Many countries started with various strategies to claim the Arctic territory as their own, Russia for example sent submarines to the bottom of the North Pole to gather some substances for research and to plant a Russian flag there claiming it. This action was viewed as childish by some countries and in the end, it had no effect at all.
2012 - China declared itself a near arctic power and requested an observer status in the Arctic council
2013 - China's request to have observer status in the Arctic Council is granted, enabling China to participate in important Arctic matters but without the right to vote
2013 - Canada submits claim over the Lomonosov ridge
2014 - Denmark submits claim over the Lomonosov Ridge trying to disprove claims made by Russia and Canada
2020 - Temperature rapidly rises, and scientist starts with warnings about its negative effects
2022 - Russia is suspended from the Arctic Council as it has a war conflict with Ukraine
2022 - Canada and Denmark agreed about the disputed Hans Island, splitting it equally between themselves

Past actions
1982 - The agreement between Canada and Denmark which solved the problem of many disputed areas between both countries excluded the Hans island
1991 - US and Canada agreement
1991 - Arctic 8 signed AEPS which is an agreement on environmental protection of the Arctic
2008 - Ilulissat declaration signed by USA, Russia, Canada, Denmark, and Norway ensuring the protection of the arctic ecosystem, stressing the already existing legal framework for territorial claims
2011 - Norway and Russia agreement over disputed areas, enabling both countries access to the natural resources without any more conflicts
2021 - The Central Arctic Ocean fishing moratorium was signed by various countries prohibiting commercial fishing in the Arctic area before it even started, making it impossible to use this region for profits from overfishing
2022 - Canada and Denmark solved the question of Hans Island, splitting it equally between themselves

Major parties

Russia
Russia is one of the Arctic countries that is actively trying to extend their EEZs within the Arctic region as further as possible, the Russian government sees there many unique opportunities. There are many places where missiles can be placed and there are other possibilities (there are rumors about Russian military training belugas and seals into spies, one already appeared at the coast of Norway with a "mysterious harness"). Also, if the ice retreats completely Russia would lose one of its natural walls serving as protection from the West, therefore it's safer to have it as its territory. However, currently, due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, Russia is excluded from the Arctic Council which makes it impossible to participate in important meetings regarding various issues relating to the Arctic region. Russia supports its claim over a big part of the Arctic mainly by the fact that it borders around 50% of the whole region.

Denmark
Denmark is connected to the Arctic region through its autonomous territory Greenland. Like other countries, Denmark is also trying to find sustainable ways to use natural resources in the Arctic region by implementing various strategies and making plans for the future. However, despite all this effort Denmark still struggles with conflicts with Russia and Canada over the Lomonosov Ridge.

Canada
Despite the fact that Canada is also very interested in the Arctic area and its advantages, they also think of the environment, trying to protect it by prohibiting oil drilling in marine protected areas and introducing many new strategies. Canada is also in conflict with various countries over areas in the Arctic region that overlap. For instance with the USA over the Beaufort Sea or with Russia and Denmark over the Lomonosov ridge.

Norway
Norway as one of the Arctic 8 is actively trying to extend its EEZ within the Arctic region. As it is closest to Russia and their territories overlap there have been many conflicts between the two countries over the last few years, the majority of them being about certain islands. However, most of them have already been successfully resolved with peaceful resolutions.

USA
As a part of the Arctic 8 the USA has the right to get involved in all Arctic matters and extend its territory within the Arctic region as an extension of Alaska, however, it is the only country that has not done so yet. The USA however still has strong opinions about certain situations resulting in conflicts with Canada, for instance, over the Northwest Passage and transits through it. When it comes to the ecological side of the issue the USA has been implementing various strategies

about exploitation of natural resources for a while now, their sustainability depending on the current government and its plans. The USA also belongs among countries being the most concerned about the Russian-Chinese activities in the Arctic region.

Iceland
Iceland is another Arctic country although it hardly borders the Arctic region. Iceland owns only one territory that stretches out directly to the Arctic region which is Grimsley island. However, due to its close location to the Arctic Circle and its membership in the Arctic Council, it still plays a big part in all Arctic matters including for instance shipping through the region.

Sweden
Sweden is one of the eight countries having a place in the Arctic Council as its northernmost territory (Lapland) lies within the Arctic Circle. Lapland is a region that stretches out beyond the Arctic Circle and it covers the land not only of Sweden but also of Norway, Finland, and Russia making it an important part of the Arctic region. It is also home to one of the tribes of Indigenous people living in the Arctic region.

Finland
Finland is the last country entitled as an Arctic country as almost 50% of its territory lies beyond the Arctic Circle, the Lapland region being its biggest part. Finland is also one of the permanent members of the Arctic Council having a crucial role there, protecting the Arctic nature and ecosystem as it has economic importance to this country.

China
China is one of the countries which is very interested in the Arctic region. The Chinese government is investing in projects there calling itself a near arctic state and demanding an observer status in the Arctic Council. Besides that it is closely cooperating with Russia as it needs the support of a real Arctic state, creating new initiatives such as the Belt and Road initiative or planning of the Arctic Silk Road. China is also sending icebreakers into the Arctic region and keeps on discovering new military possibilities in this region.

France
Despite the fact that France is not an Arctic country at all, some of its overseas territories are close enough to it to raise the interest of the French government in this region. France sees opportunities within this region, trying to increase its influence thereby promoting ecological plans and investing in projects which are currently happening in the Arctic region. It is also one of the countries having an observer status in the Arctic Council.

UK

The UK is also one of the countries not being close enough to be titled as an Arctic country, however, it is one of the closest non-arctic countries. Like France, the UK is also trying to achieve some influence in this region, as they are realising the geopolitical importance it has. Besides that the UK plays a big part in the scientific research happening in the Arctic. The UK also has alongside China and France observer status in the Arctic Council.

Questions the resolution should answer

How to divide the Arctic region?

- How to ensure that no country is profiting too much from the Arctic and its natural resources becoming the new world superpower?

- Should it even be divided or should it be preserved as an international heritage?

- According to what countries should have the right to claim the territory? - Are the current committees and laws for such thing sufficient or should there be more sophisticated ones?

- What to do with the territories that overlap? - How to decide which countries are entitled to such territories?

- How to decide which country should own the new routes? - What should be the guidelines for entry and passage?

- The question of the Beaufort Sea, Northwest Passage, Lomonosov Ridge

- How to ensure the Arctic region is not used for military advantage which would endanger other countries?

How to ensure the safety of indigenous people and animals?

- creating guidelines for the safety of the environment, ecological exploitation

Conclusion

For many countries it would be strategically advantageous to own the Arctic region and many countries already attempted to do so, however, it tends to be difficult to decide the ownership of some territories, especially when they are controversial. There are certain cases when claims about specific territories submitted by different countries overlap. This leads to many still unresolved conflicts between various countries. Despite the fact that these conflicts are still only on the diplomatic level it can easily lead to an open war conflict if it escalates enough as the tension between the Arctic countries is already increasing. These disputes go deep into our history and continue for a long time, some of them being already resolved but with new ones occurring. Except for this threat, there are also other problems such as global warming caused mainly by careless exploitation of the region. This is resulting in a reduction of the amount of ice in the Arctic region while it increases the sea levels. Although the retreat of the ice is

revealing many new opportunities and chances for countries to make a fortune, it also poses an enormous threat to the whole Arctic ecosystem. The whole situation in the Arctic region is getting more extreme every day and needs to be solved as quickly as possible.

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Second topic: Preventing the militarization of space and advocating for peaceful utilization of outer space

Stela Šprincová

Introduction

Ever since humans discovered they could enter the skies, they have been attempting to explore them. We dived into the dark abyss and mapped everything we could. We have invented incredible technology, which has been developing and moving us forward for a long time. Modern society hugely relies on space orbits; they are the most useful element of space. Orbits house massive constellations of satellites which are crucial for communications, observing the earth below, and generating useful data on the world.

Unfortunately, many nations have already successfully destroyed their de-orbiting satellites with missiles launched from Earth, and it's only a matter of time before a nation may attack the satellites belonging to another nation during wartime. Attacks like this could mean space warfare, leading to hazardous scenarios, such as the Kessler syndrome. The UN has to do everything in its power to prevent this from happening.

Key Terms

Earth Orbits

The Earth is an object in space that has mass and gravity. So, due to the laws of physics, the gravity of the Earth (or any space object) attracts other space objects and they begin to get pulled together. If those two masses are drawn together with enough momentum, they can sometimes begin to orbit each other.

Objects with similar mass orbit each other with no distinct center, while smaller objects orbit larger objects. Earth has elliptic orbits, also known as Kepler orbits, which have the center of mass that's being orbited at a focal point of the ellipse. We can see this with the Moon, satellites, rockets, or natural space objects orbiting our Earth.

Low Earth Orbit (LEO)
Low Earth Orbit is one of the closest orbits to Earth's surface; it extends between the altitudes of 160 km to 2000 km above the ground. The LEO is home to the ISS, as it is simpler for astronauts to travel a shorter distance. It can also be used for satellite imaging. However, the LEO satellites are challenging to track from ground stations because they move so fast across the sky. So they often form a large constellation launched to construct a net around Earth.

Medium Earth Orbit (MEO)
MEO is an orbit located between LEO and GEO. Satellites in this orbit do not follow specific paths around Earth, thanks to this, it is the most populated orbit. The satellites differ in type, but the most commonly used in MEO are navigation satellites, such as the European Galileo system.

Geostationary Orbit (GEO)
GEO is often used by satellites that need to continuously stay above a particular place on Earth, such as telecommunication satellites, or weather monitoring satellites. As the name suggests, satellites in GEO appear to be stationary over a fixed position. This is because they follow Earth's rotation, and they travel at the exact same rate as Earth.

Sun-synchronous orbit (SSO)
Satellites in the SSO orbit, which travel over the polar regions, are synchronous with the Sun. Thanks to this, the satellite always visits the same location at the same local time. Scientists use imaging from these satellites to compare how a place changes over time. This can help predict the weather and monitor natural emergencies like forest fires or inundation.

Transfer orbits and geostationary transfer orbit (GTO)
Transfer orbits enable satellites and other space objects to transfer from one orbit or another. They are usually used for transferring a satellite or a spacecraft to a further orbit, as it is energetically simpler to send it circling away rather than use massive portions of energy from built-in motors. GTO is one of the most prevalent transfer orbit.

Orbital spaceflight
Orbital spaceflight is a spaceflight in which a spacecraft is placed on a trajectory where it can remain in space for at least one orbit. To do this around the Earth, it must be on a free trajectory which has an altitude at perigee above 100 km. To remain in orbit at this altitude necessitates the spacecraft to achieve orbital velocity. To orbit 200 km above Earth, a

spacecraft must traverse 28,000 km/h. This exceedingly high speed makes orbital spaceflight technically complex and therefore expensive.

Suborbital spaceflight
Suborbital spaceflight, in contrast to orbital, necessitates much lower speeds. A suborbital rocket doesn't have to attain orbit. Instead, it will fly to a certain height and then descend back down once its engines are turned off. To reach 200 km above Earth, a suborbital vehicle needs to fly at 6,000 km/h. This speed is slow compared to orbital spaceflight, however, it is still much quicker than a commercial airplane, which flies at around 925 km/h.

Kármán Line
Kármán line is a boundary separating Earth's atmosphere and distant space. It was defined by engineer and physicist Theodore von Kármán when he tried to comprehend the limits of aerospace design. The line is neither precise nor well defined but is often taken to encircle Earth at an altitude between 80 to 100 km above mean sea level.

Kessler syndrome
Kessler syndrome is a nightmare scenario, where the amount of junk in orbit around Earth reaches a point where it just generates heaps of space debris, causing massive problems for satellites, astronauts, and mission planners.

Overview of the topic
The militarization of space seriously threatens global peace, security, and stability. As technological advancements enable countries to extend their influence into space, the risks of conflict in this new frontier grow. Preventing the militarization of space and ensuring its peaceful utilization is critical for the future of international relations, global security, and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. This goal requires strong international agreements and cooperation and a shift in how nations and private entities view space—as a shared domain, not a battleground for geopolitical competition.
Efforts to prevent the militarization of space began early in the space age. With the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, in 1957, it became clear that space would play a pivotal role in military and civilian endeavors. By the mid-20th century, the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in the Cold War, leading to fears that space could become the next major domain for warfare. These concerns spurred the negotiation of international treaties aimed at governing activities in space. The most important legal document in this regard is the Outer Space Treaty (OST) of 1967, signed by over 100 countries.

Despite the OST and other agreements, the potential for space militarization has grown as nations have developed technologies capable of disrupting or attacking satellites and other space-based infrastructure. The development of ASAT weapons by countries such as the U.S., Russia, China, and India has raised concerns about an arms race in space. These technologies threaten not only military assets but also the civilian and commercial use of space, as the vast majority of satellites serve dual-use purposes—providing both military and civilian functions such as GPS, communications, and weather monitoring.

Current Threats to Space Peace

Space Weapons and Anti-Satellite Technology: One of the most pressing concerns in the militarization of space is the development and testing of anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. These weapons are designed to disable or destroy satellites, which are critical for communication, navigation, surveillance, and military operations. Both kinetic ASAT weapons, which physically collide with satellites, and non-kinetic options, such as cyberattacks, jamming, and directed energy (laser) weapons, present significant risks.

Countries like the U.S., Russia, and China have demonstrated the capability to destroy satellites, which not only creates space debris but also sets a dangerous precedent for space conflict. The destruction of even a single satellite can create thousands of pieces of debris, endangering all space-faring nations' assets. The fear is that the continued development of ASAT capabilities will lead to an arms race in space, similar to the nuclear arms race of the 20th century.

Dual-Use Technologies: Many of the technologies used for peaceful space exploration or civilian purposes have military applications. For example, satellites used for Earth observation can also be used for intelligence gathering and military surveillance. Similarly, rockets used for launching payloads into orbit can be modified to carry weapons. This dual-use nature of space technology complicates the task of separating peaceful from military space activities and necessitates stronger regulations and transparency.

Space-Based Missile Defense Systems: The possibility of placing space-based missile defense systems or weapons in orbit is another significant concern. Although the OST prohibits nuclear weapons in space, there are no clear prohibitions on the deployment of conventional weapons. Some nations have proposed or explored the idea of placing systems in orbit capable of intercepting or disabling ballistic missiles. Such developments could destabilize international security by increasing tensions and incentivizing nations to preemptively militarize space to protect their own interests.

Private Sector Militarization: With the rapid growth of the commercial space sector, private companies like SpaceX, Blue Origin, and others have

begun to play an increasingly significant role in space exploration and infrastructure development. While these companies are primarily focused on civilian projects—such as satellite internet, space tourism, and planetary exploration—they often work in tandem with governments. Many commercial satellites serve military functions as well, blurring the lines between civilian and military use of space assets. The involvement of private companies introduces new challenges for space governance, as these actors may have their own strategic goals, complicating international efforts to prevent the militarization of space.

International Cooperation and Space Politics

International cooperation is key to preventing the militarization of space. Space, as a global commons, cannot be governed by any single nation or group of nations. Instead, space governance requires multilateral diplomacy, in which countries work together to establish norms, treaties, and codes of conduct that promote the peaceful use of space. Organizations such as the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Conference on Disarmament play crucial roles in facilitating international discussions on space security and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

However, space politics complicates these efforts. Major powers like the U.S., China, and Russia see space as a strategic domain, crucial for national security and technological superiority. The competition between these nations could potentially lead to space becoming a new front for geopolitical rivalry. To avoid this, it is essential to foster greater dialogue, transparency, and cooperation between space-faring nations, as well as to involve emerging space powers in discussions about space security.

Course Correction: Moving Towards a Peaceful Future

Preventing the militarization of space and advocating for its peaceful utilization is a complex challenge that requires proactive measures from governments, international organizations, and the private sector. A course correction is needed to move away from the trajectory of space as a potential battleground and towards space as a domain for scientific exploration, international cooperation, and shared prosperity.

Key steps for this course correction include:

Strengthening and expanding international treaties that prohibit the weaponization of space.

Developing confidence-building measures among nations to ensure transparency in space activities.

Promoting space diplomacy to resolve disputes and reduce tensions related to space-based assets.

Encouraging the peaceful and cooperative use of space through joint scientific missions, shared infrastructure, and multilateral projects like the International Space Station (ISS).

Timeline of the topic

Space Race

The space race was a 20th-century struggle between the USSR and the US. The pursuit of both was the domination of space flight technologies. This competition was a part of the Cold War between the two nations. The race began on 2 August 1955, when the Soviet Union responded to the US announcement of their similar intent to launch artificial satellites.

Osoviakhim and Paperclip

Operations Osoviakhim and Paperclip were Soviet and US secret operations and intelligence programs. Both nations moved former Nazi German specialists (engineers, scientists, and technicians) to their respective test centers. The aim was to transplant research and production research centers such as the V-2 rocket, and collect as much material as possible from test centers.

The US moved 1600 scientists, while the USSR moved 2,500 scientists + around 4000 more family members, totaling over 6000 people.

International Geophysical Year

International Geophysical Year (IGY) was an international scientific project that lasted from 1 July 1957 to 31 December 1958. IT marked the end of a long period during the Cold War when scientific interchange between East and West had been seriously interrupted. Both the Soviet Union and the US launched artificial satellites for this event; the Soviet Union's Sputnik 1.

Sputnik 1

The Sputnik 1 spacecraft was the first artificial satellite successfully placed in orbit around the Earth and was launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome at Tyuratam in Kazakhstan, then part of the former Soviet Union. It also reached Earth orbit and was visible from the ground at night as a first-magnitude object, while the small but highly polished sphere, was more difficult to follow optically.

R7 Semyorka

The R-7 Semyorka was a Soviet missile developed during the Cold War and the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile.

Yuri Gagarin

Was a Soviet cosmonaut who in 1961 became the first man to travel into space.

Apollo 11

On November 9 1967 Saturn V rocket carrying three Apollo 11 astronauts launched from Cape Kennedy. And, after four days of traveling to the Moon, the Lunar Module Eagle, carrying Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon.

Armstrong exited the spacecraft and became the first human to walk on the moon. As he did so, in front of an estimated 650 million people watching, he proclaimed “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

So, in 1969 when Apollo 11 landed on the surface of the lunar surface, the United States won the race to the Moon, and for many Americans, the Space Race itself.

Salyut 3

Salyut 3 was a Soviet space station launched in June 1974. It was the second Almaz military space station, but the first such station to be launched successfully. It was included in the Salyut program (the first space station program, undertaken by the Soviet Union) to disguise its true military nature. Due to the military purpose and nature of the station, the USSR was reluctant to release information about its design, and the missions relating to the station.

Starfish Prime

Starfish Prime was a United States of America high-altitude nuclear test, a joint effort of the Atomic Energy Cómmission and the Defense Atomic Support Agency. It was launched in July 1962 from Johnston Atoll and was the largest nuclear test conducted in outer space, and one of five conducted by the US in space.

ASAT tests

1980 USA tests

ASATs were generally given low priority in the US until 1982 when information about a successful USSR program spread in the West. A crash program followed, which developed into the Vought ASM-135 ASAT, based on the AGM-96 SRAM. The system carried on a modified F-15 Eagle, which was launched in January 1984. However the first, and only, successful interception was on 13 September 1985.

1980 Soviet tests

In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union also started developing a counterpart to the US air-launched ASAT system. They used MiG-31D ‘Foxhounds’ as the launch platform. The system was called 30P6 “Kontakt”, the missile used was 79M6. Other experiments included Rikhter R-23 and 11F19DM Skif-DM/Polyus.

2007 Chinese test

On 11 January 2007, China conducted an anti-satellite missile test. A Chinese weather satellite—the FY-1C (COSPAR 1999-025A) polar orbit satellite of the Fengyun series, at an altitude of 865 kilometers, with a mass of 750 kilograms —was destroyed by a kinetic kill vehicle traveling with a speed of 8 km/s in the opposite direction. It was launched with a

multistage solid-fuel missile from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center or nearby.

Indian tests

On 27 March 2019, India tested an anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) during an operation code-named Mission Shakti. The target of the test was a satellite present in a low Earth orbit, which was hit by a kinetic kill vehicle. The ASAT test utilized a modified anti-ballistic missile interceptor code-named Prithvi Defence Vehicle Mark-II which was developed under Project XSV-1. The test made India the fourth country after the United States, Russia, and China to have tested an ASAT weapon.

International Space Station

The International Space Station (ISS) is a multi-nation construction project that is the largest single structure humans ever put into space. It is an orbital laboratory and has hosted more than 250 astronauts since 1998.

Past Action

Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space

Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space is a document from December 1963. It was the first legal document concerning outer space. It has been a foundation for several legal documents that issue outer space.

The Outer Space Treaty 1967

The Outer Space Treaty was considered by the Legal Subcommittee in 1966 and an agreement was reached in the General Assembly in the same year. 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 Outer Space Treaty provides the basic framework for international space law. However, over the years the technology has developed significantly and the treaty is outdated and insufficient.

The Rescue Agreement 1968

The Rescue Agreement was considered and negotiated by the Legal Committee from 1962 to 1967. Consensus agreement was reached in the General Assembly in 1967 and the Agreement entered into force in December 1968. The document elaborates on elements of articles 5 and 8 of the Outer Space Treaty.

The Space Liability Convention 1972

The Space Liability Convention is a treaty from 1972 that expands on the liability rules created in the Outer Space Treaty. In 1978, a nuclear-powered Soviet satellite Kosmos 954 crashed in Canadian territory which led to the only claim filed under the convention.

The Registration Convention 1976

The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 and went into force in 1976. The document requires states to provide the UN with details about the orbit of each space object.

The Moon Agreement 1984

The Agreement was considered by the Legal Committee from 1972 to 1979, it was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979, but it only entered force after July 1984 when Austria ratified the Agreement. The Agreement extends the Outer Space Treaty, especially on the provision applied to the Moon and other celestial bodies.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

The UNOOSA is an office of the UN Secretariat that promotes and facilitates peaceful international cooperation in outer space. The Office was established in 1958 to assist and advise the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is a United Nations committee whose main task is to review and foster international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as to consider legal issues arising from the exploration of outer space.

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space document is a 1981 UN resolution that reaffirms the fundamental principles of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and advocates for a ban on the weaponization of space.

Country Positions

USA

The U.S. promotes the peaceful use of space and supports voluntary norms for space governance, but it also prioritizes national security by maintaining military dominance in space. The establishment of the U.S. Space Force in 2019 reflects its commitment to protecting space assets and countering threats. The U.S. opposes binding treaties like the PPWT due to concerns about verifiability, focusing instead on preventing space militarization through transparency and responsible behavior.

Russia
Russia advocates for international treaties to prevent the weaponization of space and has co-sponsored the PPWT with China. However, it continues to develop military space capabilities, including ASAT systems. Russia views U.S. space military developments, such as the Space Force, as threats, which drive its defense measures. Despite promoting peaceful space use, Russia's actions reflect its desire to safeguard national security in space.

China
China publicly supports peaceful space activities and has called for binding international treaties to prevent space militarization, co-sponsoring the PPWT. However, China is expanding its military space capabilities, having tested ASAT weapons and developing dual-use technologies. While China emphasizes cooperation through the UN, its actions, like other space powers, reflect concerns over securing space interests amidst growing U.S. and Russian competition.

France
France promotes peaceful space exploration through the European Space Agency (ESA) but has also recognized space as a domain of strategic importance by creating its Space Command in 2019. France supports international dialogue on space norms and transparency but is cautious about binding treaties that may limit its defense capabilities. It seeks a balanced approach between ensuring security and supporting peaceful uses of space.

Britain
The UK is committed to the peaceful use of space and is a key member of the ESA. However, it has also bolstered its military space capabilities by establishing UK Space Command and developing its National Space Strategy. While supporting transparency and space traffic management, the UK prefers voluntary codes of conduct over binding treaties to ensure flexibility in safeguarding national security in space.

India
India advocates for the peaceful use of outer space and is a supporter of disarmament. However, its 2019 ASAT test demonstrated a shift toward developing military space capabilities as a deterrent. Despite this, India's space program, led by ISRO, focuses on civilian applications and international cooperation, emphasizing multilateralism in space governance to prevent the weaponization of space.

Questions a resolution must answer

How can the current international legal framework be strengthened to prevent the weaponization of space?

Should new treaties or agreements be drafted to address modern challenges like ASAT weapons and space-based missile defense systems?

What norms or codes of conduct should be established to guide responsible behavior in space?

How can we address the issue of space debris and its potential to heighten military tensions?

How should the rising role of private companies in space be regulated to prevent militarization?

Conclusion

The future of space depends on the collective efforts of the global community to preserve it and its peacefulness. By advocating for the peaceful use of outer space, strengthening international laws, fostering international cooperation, and addressing the challenges posed by new technologies, we can ensure that space remains a domain for peaceful exploration and shared advancement. The vision of space as a peaceful frontier is not only in the interest of security but also in humanity's long-term survival and prosperity.

This is the end of this document.