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# Revising Treaties on the Militaryization of Outer Space

GA1 - Caitlin Baltussen



**Forum:** General Assembly 1 (GA1)

**Issue:** Revising treaties on the militarization of Outer Space

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### **Introduction:**

Throughout history countries have had various arms races and power battles on land. However, nowadays, with the constant advancement of space technologies, there is a threat of an arms race and as a consequence the militarization of outer space. When looking at this issue there have already been talks about treaties and actions to prevent higher consequences regarding both arms races and in general, military use of outer space.

### **Key terms:**

**ASAT:** Anti-satellite weapons are space weapons that are mentioned many times when it comes to the militarisation of Outer Space and the technologies that come with it. These weapons destroy satellites for planned purposes.

**Militarisation:** The supplying of military materials, such as personnel, equipment's, and weapons. In outer space this could be seen as space technology, like ASAT weapons.

**Outer space:** When reading more about space there could be varying levels of space mentioned. Outer space is the area beyond earth's atmosphere specifically, that which contains the wide range of stars and planets. Even this space could be split up in varying levels, depending on how close the area of space is to different space bodies, such as earth.

**Disarmament:** A great decrease in military power with the reduction of weapons and personnel. Disarmament could also suggest the complete removal of military personnel and weapons.

**Proliferation:** Fast growing or increase of an idea or object. This can be seen with threats, such as the threat of war, or objects such as space technologies.

**Revising:** To change or amend a work after reviewing the work again.

**LEDC:** This stands for Lesser Economically Developed Countries. This has a similar definition to when calling a nation/country a developing country as they are less strong economically and have generally less power in international settings, such as MUN.

**MEDC:** This stands for More Economically Developed Countries. This has a similar definition to when calling a nation/country a developed country as they are stronger economically and have generally more power in international settings, such as MUN.

## **Background:**

In 1957 the first object was launched into space by the Soviet Union. Two years later the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer space in the UN was created and two years after that, the first human was launched into space – again by the Soviet Union. Following these major advancements in space exploration and technologies came many different treaties throughout the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Outer Space Treaty, Launch Registration Convention, and the Moon Treaty.

Since 1985 the Conference of Disarmament has established a committee related to a PAROS treaty and have tried to examine more issues such as the protection of satellites (legally) as well as nuclear power systems in space. The US decided not to engage with this committee and has gone against the idea of multilateral agreements like this in the past. This large disagreement could be a cause to why this treaty has not been officially established yet.

After many years of technological and political space development, the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs has laid out that the “five United Nations treaties on outer space” are: the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, the Registration Convention, and the Moon convention.

In this same webpage (see the IMPORTANT OUTLINE, in sub-section relevant treaties) five legal principles and declarations were outlined such as the: The Declaration of Legal Principles, The Broadcasting Principles, The Remote Sensing Principles, The Nuclear Power Sources Principles, The Benefits Declaration. All of these resolutions (principles and declarations) and treaties were written before the year 2000.

This does not mean that the United Nations has not been working on space development world-wide as many different national space organisations have been established, such as the one of Azerbaijan, the Philippines and Ecuador individually. The [National Space Law Database](#) covers these in more detail.

## Stakeholders:

**USA-** has the highest amount of money to spend on space programs. They have also developed a space military force, the United States Space Force (USSF). However, they have neglected PAROS treaty talks.

**China-** recognizes exploring space as an important goal. They see the space presence and influence as an area to surpass the USA and the western world. China has established a Strategic Support Force (SSF) to work with Chinese involvement with space and recognizes it as key in the growth of Chinese military power. China has already been testing space technologies.

**Russia-** is a leader in the space related technologies. The government has been continuously seen space as an area where conflict can and will arise, preparing space technologies and weapons. They also have their own Space Forces.

**France-** has created a Space Defence Strategy document, outlining French protocol regarding space military situations and the possibilities of defending to protect French resources and Offensive Space Control (OSC).

**NATO-** The military alliance has created its own space branch whilst also creating a type of space policy.

**EU-** Sees space as a vulnerable area with the need of regulation and has invested highly in various space programs with focus on both civilian and military areas.

**UN-** Has had meetings to call for treaties on the weapons in space, for example in an arms race and space debris. Some organisations that focus on space within the UN are the: COPUOS, the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament.

## Relevant treaties, resolutions, documents:

IMPORTANT OUTLINE : <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties.html>

[https://treaties.unoda.org/t/outer\\_space](https://treaties.unoda.org/t/outer_space) (Outer space treaty, 1967)

[https://www.unoosa.org/pdf/gares/ARES\\_14\\_1472E.pdf](https://www.unoosa.org/pdf/gares/ARES_14_1472E.pdf) (Resolution 1472 (XIV), 1959)

<https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/convention-on-the-registration-of-objects-launched-in-outer-space/> (Launch Registration Convention, 1976)

<https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/agreement-governing-activities-states-moon-and-other-celestial-bodies-moon-agreement/> (Moon Agreement, 1984)

<https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/proposed-prevention-arms-race-space-paros-treaty/> (PAROS Treaty, being discussed)

<https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-banning-nuclear-test-atmosphere-outer-space-and-under-water-partial-test-ban-treaty-ptbt/> (Partial Test Ban Treaty, 1963)

## Previous Attempts:

### International Agreements:

As seen with the Relevant Treaties, Resolutions and Documents, there have been many attempts to prevent the militarisation of outer space through the general Outer Space Treaty or more specific treaties/agreements, such as the Launch Registration Conventions, which ensures the registration of any object launched into space (including weapons). The Moon Agreement also helps with a measure of militarisation of space, by preventing the militarisation of the moon, in particular. The difficulty with these agreements is that most of them are from the 1960-1980's whilst space advancement has continued rapidly since and new space technologies as well as weapons have been developed since, and not included in these treaties or agreements.

## Possible Solutions:

### International Agreements:

Though some treaties, resolutions and agreements have been accepted by a number of countries, some documents are still being discussed in an international

setting such as the PAROS Treaty, in the Conference on Disarmament. A large step towards revising the existing treaties is to see what the modern weaponry and situation is as many of these treaties were made more than 20 years ago.

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