

United Nations Office For Outer Space Affairs



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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Delegates, Club and Team Advisors, Parents, and Any Other MUN Folks,

It is my esteemed privilege to welcome you all to Davis Model United Nations Conference XXIII! My name is Brody Andrews, and I am honored to serve as your Secretary-General for the 23rd DMUNC. On the weekend of May 2-3, 2026, delegates will have the opportunity to engage in fruitful debate and cooperation, and hopefully, make lifelong connections.

As a senior at UC Davis, this will be my final DMUNC and my final Model UN Conference. I've been to over 30 conferences in the eight years I've been doing MUN but nothing I've gotten to do in my Model UN career has been as rewarding as DMUNC. Last year I got the opportunity to serve as the Director General of DMUNC XXII and it brought me so much joy to watch a massive number of future leaders bring their imaginative ideas to important debates. Thank you all for the opportunity to watch the magic unfold again, I truly cannot wait to see and be inspired by all of you in May.

I joined MUN my freshman year in high school and I could not be more grateful for the experiences it has brought me. Having been in your position I know how simultaneously nerve-wracking and exciting a MUN weekend can be. Whether this is your first conference or your 100th I'm happy you chose to come to DMUNC. In college, MUN has only become a larger part of my life. Not only has MUN afforded me educational and competitive opportunities, but it has also brought me lasting relationships with incredible people who continue to push and support me every day.

As someone who has done Model UN for so many years, I've had all the classic MUN experiences. Every author's panel, crisis update, closing ceremony celebration, and moderated caucus speech led me to DMUNC and I couldn't be happier. As graduation looms large, I want to remind all of you of the amazing joys that MUN can bring and all of the exciting things college has in store for all of you. When you love MUN, it loves you back. The skills you will improve, friendships you will form, and knowledge you will gain from even one MUN conference is enough to make having to explain what a crisis committee is to your non-MUN friends worth it.

I have had the honor of serving as the Director General of DMUNC XXII and as the crisis director for DMUNC XXI's The Muppets committee and DMUNC XX's Star Wars JCC on the Rebels side. With three DMUNCs and countless more conferences under my belt, I feel confident that my experience and passion will help make DMUNC XXIII a truly memorable conference. However, none of this would be possible without the hard work of the CONSEC and staff members who have worked tirelessly for months to prepare for DMUNC XXIII. Running DMUNC is in *no way* a one person job and I am eternally grateful to every single DMUNC staff member. My greatest thanks goes to my Director General Mae Tyson who has stepped up at every turn in extraordinary ways. Thank you Mae, CONSEC, head chairs, crisis directors, and all the DMUNC staff.

Delegates, we have been planning this weekend since August of 2025 and we're so excited for you to enjoy it. I encourage you to read through your committee background guides thoroughly and formulate collaborative resolutions. I look forward to the thought-provoking ideas that each of you will bring forth to your respective committees. Good luck! We truly can't wait to share this with you.

Sincerely,

Brody Andrews | Secretary-General

Davis Model United Nations Conference XXIII

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD CHAIR:

Greetings delegates,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to pen this welcome letter for you delegates. I would like to take this opportunity to go off on another tangent, coming off somewhat of a travesty on the podium, having seen my fair share of losses very recently.

Firstly, I hope what attracted you to the conference is not our social media, or the invite, but the craving of the 2-second eye flicker, the butterflies in the stomach, the feeling of hot iron running rampant in ones cheeks-something that I just experienced; something that is found nowhere else, unique to the 56 second walk up to the podium.

Secondly, I expect that you have made the journey, whether it is in miles from one corner of US to Davis, or the short one from your bed to the laptop desk, looking to strike the perfect balance between the emotions that come with the desire of winning an award and the lively spirit that burns while searching for true friendships. If not, adjust your compass, or this short journey shall be very bumpy and unenjoyable. Another important lesson I have taken away from my show on the podium.

Lastly, remember the fact that this time too shall pass, a takeaway from the 300-seconds spent speaking on the dais, so strive to fill up your memory lane with whatever you do in the duration of these three days because, take it from me, wooden gavels and glass shields give in eventually-only memories remain evergreen.

Wishing you the very best of luck.

Onwards & Upwards.
Hashim Majeed Aulakh

The Armament of Outer Space and the Outer Space Treaty (1967): History, Contemporary Developments, and Drawbacks

Introduction

Outer space has turned into a strategic zone of international relations, where it was an area dominated by peaceful exploration, into one of the hottest fields in international relations. What started in 1957 with Sputnik 1 as the emblem of scientific success has now become a complicated game where military strength, national security, and technological rivalry meet. Modern civilization has become dependent on satellites, which are now vital in providing the fundamental services in electronic money transfer, GPS positioning, and military activities, as well as disaster information and rescue management.

The increased dependence on space-based infrastructure has naturally generated the interest of the military. The risk of using weapons in space, especially the mass destruction ones, triggered the international community to adopt the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, which categorically prohibited the use of weapons in space and on heavenly bodies. Nonetheless, militarization and gradual armament of outer space have persisted to develop under this milestone legal framework, but have been growing at a massive pace in recent years. The paper discusses the historical trend of outer space armament, explores the principles and restrictions of the Outer Space Treaty, documents the modern militarization with several examples, and assesses the significant disadvantages and threats of these tendencies.

Historical Development of the Armament of Outer Space

The history of armament in outer space cannot be discussed outside the context of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. When Sputnik 1 was launched on October 4, 1957, it was immediately proven that the same rocket technology applied to space exploration applications can also be used to launch nuclear warheads across continents. This dual character involved that since its beginning, the space age was tied in competition of nuclear deterrence and military strategic competitions.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, both superpowers investigated the possibility of arming space. The United States reflected on putting nuclear weapons into orbit to fasten deployment and come up with space-based missile defense mechanisms. The Soviet Union also had similar ideas, considering space superiority as a vital element of strategic equality. Ancona (2025) further points out that space was an extension of the geopolitics on land, where superiority in technology was felt to be a critical aspect of national security and global influence (Ancona, 2025). There was the fear that unregulated access to space by all arms might cause a destabilization of the entire nuclear deterrence structure.

In the 1980s, attempts at weaponizing space again moved on with President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly referred to as Star Wars. This was an ambitious program that saw a missile defense system based in space, which would intercept missiles launched by the Soviets. Martin (2025) describes that despite the shortage of technical ability and expenses, which reduced the whole existence of SDI to theory, it showed that political aspiration was constantly challenging the limits of acceptable conduct in space and accelerated expediency in the research of technologies that are still pertinent today (Martin, 2025). These moments in history have pointed out why we should have international regulations, in order to make sure that we have no unchecked arms race beyond the earth anymore, providing the political impetus to classify a binding international pact.

The Outer Space Treaty (1967) and the Ban on Weapons of Mass Destruction

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 may be viewed as the milestone of the international law of space and the pathfinder of the international space weaponization avoidance process. The official name of the treaty was the Treaty on Principles that Govern Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and the treaty became operational on October 10, 1967. More than 110 countries, including all the leading space-faring countries, have ratified it.

The most important provision of the treaty is given in the fourth article, which expressly prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction in any orbit around Earth, the Moon, or any other heavenly bodies. The article also outlaws the setting up of military bases, installations, and fortifications on celestial bodies, which should be used only for peaceful purposes (Su, 2023). Under Article I, it is determined that the exploration and exploration of outer space shall be conducted in the interest and on behalf of all countries, and shall be the domain of all mankind. This principle is an idealistic outlook of space as a place that is above national competitions.

There are, however, some severe limitations in the treaty. Most interestingly, although it prohibits weapons of mass destruction, it does not prohibit conventional weapons and anti-satellite systems. Military satellites, such as reconnaissance, communication, navigation, and early warning, are absolutely legitimate. Freeland (2023) mentions that this compromise made it possible to gain a wide range of acceptance but also provided legal gaps that still complicate the issue of space security to this day. Moreover, the treaty does not have adequate verification and enforcement procedures, with most of its primary reliance on voluntary adherence to treaties as opposed to binding regulations.

Militarization Versus Armament of Outer Space

To analyze the present space security, it is critical to understand the difference between armament and militarization. Militarization can be considered as the use of space resources to contribute to military activities on the ground, such as the collection of intelligence, response to surveillance, navigation, and communications. These have been standard practices since the early days of the space age and are regarded as lawful within international law.

Armament is the act of using or deploying weapons that are specifically intended to cause hate, dismantle or harm to an object in space or to strike people on the earth using a weapon in space. Although the Outer Space Treaty prohibits the use of weapons of mass destruction, it does not outlaw the use of conventional weapons and anti-satellite systems. Su (2023) further supposes that such a legal differentiation has enabled states to develop a significant list of military opportunities in space without breaking treaty commitments on the record (Su, 2023).

Ancona (2025) asserts that this ambiguity has helped bring about a slow normalization of military competition in outer space (Ancona, 2025). States proclaim the peaceful use of space in the international arena, but at the same time invent technologies that fail to put limits between defensive and offensive strength, and leave the forces uncertain about their strategy, making it more likely to run into a risk of miscalculation.

Contemporary Development of Militarization and Armament in

Today's World

The outer space has now been openly treated as a war-fighting zone in the modern world. This has been institutionalized in the doctrine and organization of the military of various countries. In December of 2019, the U.S established the U.S. Space Force, the sixth stand-alone service of the armed forces. Russia in 2015 reorganized its military space forces to Aerospace Forces, and China established its own Strategic Support Force aimed at integrating space, cyber, and electronic warfare. In 2019, France formed a Space Command, and other countries such as India, Japan, and the United Kingdom have also developed their military space units (Nagashima, 2020).

The spread of anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons is one of the most important modern trends. These non-kinetic systems (paralyzed by electronic warfare, laser, or cyber assault) or kinetic (physically blowing up satellites) are meant to cause the disruption or destruction of satellites. According to O'Meara (2025), ASAT capabilities tend to be seen as legitimate defenses against self-defense, but their building presents serious legal and strategic issues.

All of these ASAT tests give a picture of the increasing normalization of the weaponization of space. The kinetic ASAT test that was conducted in China in 2007 destroyed a Fengyun-1C weather satellite at 863 kilometers in the air, producing over 3,000 pieces of debris that could be tracked and creating the largest debris cloud ever (Weeden, 2010). India launched Mission Shakti in March 2019, when it destroyed a satellite 300 kilometers into the atmosphere (Tellis, 2019). The most recent example is when Russia shot down its Cosmos 1408 satellite in November 2021, producing more than one and a half thousand pieces of orbits that can be tracked, and requiring spacecrafts on the International Space Station to seek shelter, sharply demonstrating the danger

that space weapons have to not only the military equipment but also civilian operations and lives (Rincon & Amos, 2021).

States are getting more advanced with non-kinetic systems in addition to kinetic systems. The Shijian satellites have proven to be able to carry out rendezvous and proximity operations that may be utilised to inspect the satellites or may have hostile intentions. Russia has tested a co-orbital ASAT that has the capability of maneuvering close to target satellites. Directed-energy weapons such as lasers have the ability to disorient or stun satellite sensors permanently without leaving debris. Cyber capabilities and electronic warfare to jam radio signals or crack satellite control organizations bring on additional levels that are not well covered by existing laws and regulations.

The commercial space capability integration into military operations makes the situation even harder. Starshield is the initiative by SpaceX that is specifically designed to offer satellite services to the U.S. national security needs, and Starlink was deployed to assist military communications in war-torn areas. According to Martin (2025), such a dual-use character of modern space technology makes transparency and confidence-building activities more difficult, engaging more mistrust between states and making it more likely to generate a wrong calculation.

Drawbacks and Risks of the Armament of Outer Space

Supplying arms in outer space can cause many severe disadvantages concerning space sustainability and security among the world's nations. The biggest threat is the formation of space debris. Kinetic ASAT tests and possible space conflicts would create thousands of debris fragments that would be in orbit for decades or centuries in the future. Every fragment is a projectile traveling at high velocity that can destroy other satellites, which is likely to cause Kessler Syndrome, whereby the collisions create more debris in a successively increasing reaction.

Unachukwu (2023) points out that the developing countries have disproportional risks of debris since their economic development, disaster management, and telecommunication are primarily dependent on satellite services, for which they have scarce resources to recover damaged systems. Weaponization of space is therefore a menace to breed a tragedy of the commons of having powerful states depleting the space environment by all the users.

Another important weakness is strategic instability. Space assets are closely bound in the nuclear command and control system, early warning networks, and strategic communications. A crisis of attack on these satellites may be construed as readiness to unleash nuclear first attacks, which will lead to disastrous nuclear retaliations. O'Meara (2025) suggests that the absence of clear legal principles according to which the use of force in space can and should be provided makes the issue of escalation considerably more problematic (O'Meara, 2025). Decision-making timelines are also shortened by the pace of the space-based systems, meaning that critical decisions are made with very extreme time limits under incomplete information, which is favorable to making a miscalculation.

A significant disadvantage is associated with legal and governance issues. The Outer Space Treaty was developed prior to contemporary ASAT weapons, cyber warfare, directed-energy weapons, and commercialization in space. Freeland (2023) argues that although the treaty does

provide valuable principles, it does not have proper enforcement mechanisms and has failed to keep pace with technological change. No binding regulations in particular proscribe ASAT weapons, there are no annexed definitions of space weapons, there is no verification regime, and there are no dispute resolution mechanisms (Freeland, 2023). The engagement of states in space is not very accountable when it comes to national interests.

Space militarization also has some serious ethical issues to deal with in regard to worldwide disparity. A few of the space-faring countries have developed technologies and control the international standards. In contrast, developing countries do not take part in the decision-making process, even though they earn a lot of money relying on space services. Unachukwu (2023) emphasizes that the weaponization poses a danger to the value that outer space is the domain of all humanity (Unachukwu, 2023). The effects of space war would be experienced around the world in whichever nation was the first to start the hostilities, even though the developing countries would be the ones bearing a greater burden in the economic growth and capacity to manage a catastrophe.

Conclusion

One of the most urgent topics in the current international security is the armament of outer space. Since the genesis of the Cold War competition, space has been viewed as a primary source of contention between national defense and the incredible power rivalry; recently, space has become so thoroughly integrated with national defense policies and great power politics. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 was a historic milestone, especially on its ban on weapons of mass destruction in space. Nonetheless, the treaty is not exhaustive on the contemporary ways of space weaponization, such as ASAT systems, directed-energy weapons, and cyber attacks, as well as electronic warfare capabilities.

Seemingly modern trends posed grave and increasing threats. The development of ASAT weapons, exemplified by the Chinese, Indian, and Russian tests, has made space a war zone and

has produced lethal debris that poses a threat to all users of space. The development of space capabilities into the military doctrine, as well as the deployment of specific space warfare commands, has given rise to the circumstances in which space conflict is becoming a more realistic possibility.

They have severe and complex demerits. Space garbage poses a risk to the sustainability of operations that are the keystones of the present civilization. The vulnerability of the command-and-control systems causes strategic instability, enhancing the risk of catastrophic escalation. The ambiguity of laws provides a ground on which states seek military superiority without adequate control. International inequality implies that the developing countries will carry the heavier weight of the effects of space conflict.

The presence of the risk of war in space is going to increase without the enhanced international cooperation, modernized legal frameworks dealing with new technologies, effective verification procedures, and the re-emerging pledge of peaceful usage. The global community has a decision between letting space become another field of unbridled military rivalry and collaborating to maintain space as a tranquil and sustainable space. How space will be used in the next few years will define whether it will continue to be the domain of human progress or a cause of devastating warfare. To maintain the outer space as a non-violent space, not only is it necessary to respect the principles established by the Space Agreement 1967, but it is also imperative to expand them by means of substantial communication between all the space-faring and space-dependent countries to cover the realities of the twenty-first-century technology and geopolitics.

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