

**Disarmament and International Security Committee**

**Chair: Rolando Kattan**

**Topic 1: Global Strategies for Nuclear Disarmament**

**Topic 2: Preserving the Peace: Regulating the Militarization  
of Space**



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# Welcome to DISEC!

Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to YMUN Singapore 2024! My name is Rolando Kattan and I will be your Chair for DISEC.

To introduce myself briefly, I am from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and I am a junior in Saybrook College at Yale University studying Political Science and Comparative Literature. I am primarily interested in the postcolonial history of Latin America, especially focusing on the traces of colonialism in the literature of the region. Outside of class, I compete for Yale's collegiate Model UN team, I work as a research assistant in the Yale Center for Effective Democratic Governance, and I am the president of the Yale International Relations Association. In my free time, I enjoy reading anything related to my studies, spending time outdoors with friends, and watching exorbitant amounts of stand-up comedy on Netflix.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) serves as a vital forum within the United Nations, addressing global challenges related to disarmament and international security. DISEC traces its roots to the aftermath of World War II, where the devastating consequences of conflict spurred international efforts to foster peace and prevent the proliferation of weapons. Today, as the international community faces evolving challenges, including nuclear proliferation and the potential militarization of space, DISEC's role in fostering dialogue, cooperation, and the formulation of effective global policies has become increasingly significant. Its deliberations and resolutions impact not only member states but also the broader international community, underscoring the ongoing relevance and importance of DISEC in maintaining global stability and promoting a world free from the threats posed by the unchecked



proliferation of arms. I chose these topics precisely because of the potential scale of discord they could cause; in a world of increasing conflict, the threat of world-ending violence looms larger every day. The goal of this committee—and your task for this conference—is to resolve that threat before it is too late.

I am incredibly excited to meet you all and engage in meaningful, productive debate. My personal goal is that each delegate will come away from this experience more knowledgeable about the topics and better prepared for a future of addressing these challenges in the real world. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [rolando.kattanrubi@yale.edu](mailto:rolando.kattanrubi@yale.edu).

Welcome again to YMUN Singapore, and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Sincerely,

Rolando Kattan

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Chair of DISEC

Director



# Committee History

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) traces its origins back to the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. Initially known as the First Committee, it was one of the six main committees created by the UN General Assembly to address specific global challenges. In the aftermath of World War II, the devastating impact of armed conflict prompted the international community to prioritize disarmament and the maintenance of global security. As the Cold War unfolded, the First Committee evolved into the Disarmament Commission in 1952, reflecting the heightened tensions between major powers and the urgent need for arms control. Over time, it underwent further restructuring and refinement, eventually emerging as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). The change in nomenclature reflected a broadened mandate that encompassed not only disarmament but also a comprehensive approach to international security issues.

Throughout its history, DISEC has played a crucial role in shaping global policies on arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. It has been a forum for member states to engage in substantive discussions, negotiate treaties, and formulate resolutions aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by the proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons. Key milestones include the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968, a landmark agreement that aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and foster peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Today, DISEC remains an essential component of the UN's efforts to address contemporary security threats. It continues to provide a platform for diplomatic dialogue, cooperation, and the development of international norms to mitigate the risks associated with the global arms race. The committee's history reflects the ever-changing nature of international



security concerns and the ongoing commitment of the international community to work collectively towards a world free from the scourge of war and the threat of unrestrained militarization.

## **Committee Structure**

DISEC adheres to a structured format shared by other UN committees. Comprising all 193 member states, each state appoints a delegation, often led by a representative from its mission to the UN. The committee will be led by the dias, although member states will inform the flow of debate. The dias and committee members will work together to guide the committee's proceedings, preside over meetings, and ensure the adherence to established working methods and rules of procedure.

DISEC operates with a predetermined agenda outlining specific topics or issues for discussion during a given session. Additionally, the committee may establish subsidiary bodies or working groups to conduct in-depth examinations of particular subjects, fostering more focused discussions and negotiations. Regular sessions, held during the annual UN General Assembly, involve meetings where member states present their positions, engage in debates, and participate in the negotiation of resolutions.

Resolutions, proposed by member states, serve as formal expressions of the committee's stance on disarmament and international security matters. These resolutions undergo a process of debate, amendment, and eventual adoption by the committee. DISEC ideally seeks consensus on resolutions; however, in cases where agreement cannot be reached, a two-thirds majority vote is employed for adoption. The resolutions and recommendations generated by DISEC are reported to the plenary session of the UN General Assembly for further consideration and endorsement. The committee's structure and processes are carefully designed to facilitate diplomatic dialogue,



negotiation, and decision-making, providing a vital platform for member states to collaborate on addressing global challenges related to disarmament and international security.





# **Topic 1: Global Strategies for Nuclear Disarmament**

## **Introduction**

As this committee convenes to discuss nuclear disarmament, the urgency of addressing this complex and pressing issue is palpable. The specter of nuclear weapons casts a long shadow over global security, with potential consequences that transcend borders and impact the very fabric of international relations. The historical context leading up to this committee session is marked by a series of geopolitical events and advancements in nuclear technology, intensifying the need for robust discussions and cooperative strategies. As we stand on the precipice of uncertainty, it is crucial for delegates to recognize the gravity of the situation and acknowledge the responsibility placed upon them to navigate through the intricate web of challenges posed by nuclear proliferation.

The relevance of the nuclear proliferation debate is underscored by the evolving landscape of international relations, where the emergence of new nuclear-armed states and the potential for non-state actors to acquire such capabilities present unprecedented threats. The delicate balance between national security interests and the imperative to prevent the unbridled spread of nuclear weapons demands the collective wisdom of the global community. As delegates step into the committee room, they bring with them the weight of a world grappling with the implications of recent nuclear tests, the breakdown of disarmament agreements, and rising tensions among nuclear-armed nations. The urgency lies not just in preventing the proliferation of these devastating arms but in crafting a collective vision for a world where the specter of nuclear warfare is replaced by robust international cooperation and diplomatic solutions.



The committee session becomes a crucial arena where delegates must transcend geopolitical differences, engage in earnest dialogue, and collaboratively forge strategies to curb nuclear proliferation. The consequences of inaction are too dire to ignore, underscoring the imperative for diplomats to rise above political divides and work towards a safer, more secure global landscape. The outcome of this session holds the potential to shape the trajectory of international security, making it a pivotal moment for the global community to demonstrate resilience, cooperation, and a shared commitment to a world free from the threat of unchecked nuclear proliferation.

## **History**

Nuclear weapons have long stood as one of the most profound threats to international peace and security. The devastating aftermath of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 prompted immediate global concern, leading to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's adoption of resolution 1 in 1946. This resolution called for the elimination of atomic weapons and laid the foundation for international efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear arms.

However, the post-World War II period witnessed a disconcerting trend in the opposite direction. Between 1945 and 1950, the global count of nuclear weapons surged dramatically from a mere 2 to a staggering 304. This escalation set the stage for an era of intense nuclear arms competition, primarily fueled by the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War. The numbers climbed exponentially, reaching an alarming peak of over 70,000 nuclear weapons in 1987.

Efforts to address this perilous situation gained momentum, and the international nuclear disarmament regime emerged as a critical player in curbing the proliferation of these destructive arsenals. While substantial progress has been made over the years, with the global stockpile



reduced to fewer than 15,000 warheads by 2017, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' 2018 assessment highlighted a concerning trend. The risk of intentional or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons grew globally, underscoring the persistent and evolving threat they pose.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has also voiced deep concern over the escalating danger posed by weapons of mass destruction, with a particular emphasis on nuclear weapons. Presently, nine UN Member States possess nuclear weapons, and several others hold nuclear weapon-sharing capabilities, further complicating the dynamics of global security. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1968 defines a nuclear weapon as an explosive device that releases energy through nuclear fission. Although nearly all UN Member States acknowledge the fundamental importance of nuclear disarmament in achieving international peace and security, nuclear weapon states (NWS) remain reticent to dismantle their stockpiles. This reluctance is rooted in strategic, tactical, and security considerations that impede a swift move towards comprehensive disarmament.

The challenges emanating from this lack of commitment and adherence to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime profoundly hinder the ability of the international community to achieve complete and total disarmament. This critical task has been entrusted to the General Assembly First Committee, mandated with seeking solutions to achieve the comprehensive disarmament of nuclear weapons.

While the First Committee has played a crucial role in making the nuclear nonproliferation regime one of the most developed aspects of international law, the challenges of implementation have been apparent. The committee has faced obstacles, particularly highlighted in recent events such as the challenges encountered in the denuclearization process of the Korean Peninsula. The international community has also grappled with difficulties in limiting the further



development of nuclear weapons and pursuing good-faith measures for total disarmament, primarily due to a lack of consensus on the way forward and the inconsistent application of existing nuclear disarmament frameworks.

The complexities involved in achieving progress in these areas necessitate the development of additional frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. The pursuit of disarmament requires universal participation, with all NWS contributing actively and transparently to the process. The international community must confront the existing challenges, overcome political and strategic differences, and foster a cooperative environment that prioritizes global security over narrow national interests.

The history of nuclear proliferation underscores the imperative for international cooperation in addressing one of the gravest threats to humanity. The journey from the devastating bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the contemporary challenges of nuclear disarmament reflects the intricate dance between geopolitical interests, technological advancements, and the collective will of the international community to safeguard global peace. As delegates convene to deliberate on this critical issue, the urgency is not only to comprehend the historical trajectory but to forge a path forward that ensures a world free from the looming shadow of nuclear catastrophe. The responsibility lies with the global community to rise above political differences, transcend national interests, and forge a future where the specter of nuclear weapons is a relic of the past.

## **Current Situation**

### **Nuclear Weapon Theory**



Before diving into some more recent case studies, it is important to understand the context and background behind the use of nuclear weapons. Scholars such as Thomas Schelling, Glen Snyder, Robert Jervis, and Kenneth Waltz extensively explored the political implications of nuclear weapons during the latter part of the 20th century. To enhance your preparation for this debate, I recommend reviewing the abstracts of their numerous papers. A thorough grasp of nuclear theory is crucial for developing a nuanced stance on NPT reform. What follows is a brief and broad rundown of the guiding principle behind nuclear proliferation—deterrence theory.

### **Deterrence Theory**

In nuclear theory, deterrence theory states that nations with nuclear weapons will not be subject to attack, especially nuclear attack, because the prospect of a retaliatory nuclear strike is too terrible to contemplate. This is often the chief reason countries use to justify the possession of nuclear weapons. Under such guise, deterrence theory advertises nuclear weapons as promoters of peace, making direct confrontation unthinkable for hostile nations due to the threat of nuclear annihilation. Deterrence theory relies on the threat of massive and even planetary destruction that nuclear weapons can achieve. This concept, in nuclear theory, is often referred to as “mutually assured destruction.” The use of nuclear weapons can leave a radioactive legacy that will last for generations. It is unlikely that only one bomb would be used in the event of a nuclear confrontation, which escalates the threat even further. Much of deterrence theory traces its origins back to Alfred Nobel who, amidst his invention of dynamite, proclaimed that his invention would “usher a new era of peace for Europe” when both rivals knew they would be faced with complete annihilation in the event of their confrontation. Deterrence theory thus



advocates for the expansion of nuclear programs for they not only avoid a nuclear war but all sorts of wars. Lastly, it must be said that the strongest piece of evidence that deterrence theory has is that a nuclear war has indeed not broken out.

Critics argue that the real world is too complex for deterrence theory to work. According to Wareham, “deterrence may work when everything goes according to plan, there are no surprises, each side in a stand-off knows exactly what the other is thinking, and leaders act rationally and in the best interests of their people. This is not the real world but a fantasy world. In the real world there is confusion (especially in a crisis), mistakes and errors of judgment are made, and there is ignorance of what the other side is thinking<sup>1</sup>.” Additionally, there several instances where deterrence theory has failed to prevent armed conflict between nuclear powers such as when China entered the Korean War, against nuclear-armed US forces, in 1950 as well as Egypt and Syria attacking nuclear-armed Israeli forces in the occupied Sinai and Golan Heights in 1973.

### **Rational Deterrence Theory**

Deterrence theory can be conceptualized by employing rational choice and game-theoretic models of decision-making, as seen in game theory. Rational deterrence theory encompasses several key principles such as rationality, unitary actor assumption, dyads, strategic interactions and cost-benefit calculations.

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<sup>1</sup> Nuclear Deterrence Theory – Threat to Inflict Terror, [classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/FlinLawJl/2013/9.pdf](http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/FlinLawJl/2013/9.pdf). Accessed 24 Jan. 2024.



Deterrence theorists consistently assert that the success of deterrence hinges on the credibility of a defending state's threat to an attacking state. A threat is considered credible if the defending state possesses both the military capabilities to inflict significant costs in a conflict and the conviction to employ its military forces. The four key factors under rational deterrence theory include the military balance, signaling and bargaining power, reputations for resolve, and the interests at stake.

Thomas Schelling, an American economist with a background in game theory, revolutionized the study of international deterrence. His seminal work (1966) challenges the traditional definition of military strategy as solely the science of victory, asserting that it is equally, if not more, the art of coercion, intimidation, and deterrence. Schelling contends that the ability to harm another state serves as a motivating factor for states to influence behavior. Successful deterrence, according to Schelling, involves using the power to inflict harm as bargaining leverage, particularly when kept in reserve. In summary, the foundation of deterrence theory lies in the strategic use of the capacity to harm, which is most effective when held as a potential threat<sup>2</sup>.

## **Recent Nuclear Developments**

Many thought that nuclear weapons were a relic of the Cold War. Arguably, they helped keep the Cold War cold and have prevented direct confrontation between nuclear powers. Today, nine countries possess nuclear weapons (China, North Korea, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States). The international landscape has witnessed notable

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<sup>2</sup> Schelling, T. C. (1966), "2", *The Diplomacy of Violence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1–34



shifts in recent years, marked by the emergence of new actors seeking to acquire or express interest in nuclear weapons. Notably, Iran has taken significant strides to increase their nuclear capabilities.

### **Iran's Nuclear Ambitions**

In May 2018, following President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal (also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)), Iran demonstrated restraint in escalating its nuclear ambitions in the two years that followed. This, in part, due to Trump's willingness to impose extensive economic and financial sanctions. Trump initially decided to withdraw from the agreement because he claimed that the agreement had failed to restrict Iran's arsenal and influence in the region<sup>3</sup>. According to the U.S. State Department, "On July 14, 2015, the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), the European Union (EU), and Iran reached a JCPOA to ensure that Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful". Proponents of the deal have claimed that the treaty's main aim was to prevent conflict between Iran and other hostile regional neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. Despite several condemnations, the US and its European allies have failed to hold Iran accountable for its breaches of such agreement. President Joe Biden claims that the US would return to the agreement with its previous conditions so long as Iran complies with the established terms. Ever since, Iran has enriched its nuclear arsenal to nearly weapon-grade levels, alarming the international community.

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<sup>3</sup> "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?" Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, [www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal](http://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal). Accessed 23 Jan. 2024.





Starting from November 2020, Iran has made significant strides towards achieving a nuclear weapons capability, taking advantage of the Biden administration's easing of sanctions as part of its efforts to revive the JCPOA. Tehran has elevated uranium enrichment levels to 20 percent, subsequently to an unprecedented 60 percent, and has experimented with reaching nearly 90 percent (considered weapons-grade). Additionally, the Islamic Republic has produced uranium metal, a substance utilized in nuclear weapon cores, reactivated its underground Fordow enrichment facility, and put into operation over 6,500 fast-generation centrifuges<sup>4</sup>.

According to numerous experts, had all parties honored their commitments, the agreement likely could have effectively achieved its objective for more than a decade. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) includes time-limited restrictions on Iran's nuclear program. For instance, centrifuge restrictions were set to be lifted ten years after January 2016, and limits on Iran's possession of low-enriched uranium would expire after fifteen years. Critics of the deal raised concerns about these "sunset provisions," arguing that they would merely postpone Iran's nuclear capabilities while providing sanctions relief for supporting regional terrorism.

Signatories of the JCPOA have faced challenges in revitalizing the mostly inactive agreement. Talks to reengage the United States and Iran in the deal commenced in April 2021, but the negotiations have been sporadic. Various factors, including the election of conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi as president in Iran, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict, have complicated the process due to Iran's involvement in both of these conflicts.

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<sup>4</sup> Ackerman, Daniel. "10 Things to Know about Iran's Nuclear Program." FDD, 14 Nov. 2023,



## **Non-State Actors**

Nuclear security experts consider that non-state actors could get access to nuclear weapons either by gaining access to existing state-operated nuclear actors or by manufacturing their own weapons of mass destruction by acquiring high levels of uranium or plutonium. Even though both of these scenarios are improbable, especially the latter one, there are growing concerns and increasing probabilities as we enter a world with multiple nuclear players.

Pakistani Leaders have given access to their Interservices Intelligence, which maintains intimate relations with several Jihadist groups and the Taliban. It is also reported that several of Pakistan's nuclear scientists have had links to Osama bin Laden or have simply been lost track of by Western nations. In recent years, however, the most imminent threat of nuclear proliferation to non-state actors has been that of Al-Qaeda.

## **Al-Qaeda Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons**

In 1998, Osama bin Laden declared that acquiring weapons of mass destruction was his Islamic duty. In the late 1993, Al-Qaeda was discovered attempting to procure uranium in Sudan with the intention of using it in a makeshift nuclear device. This marks the initial indication of Osama bin Laden's intentions to obtain nuclear material for an improvised nuclear weapon.

The information about this endeavor is provided by Fadl, who defected from al-Qaeda in 1996 and became an informant for the FBI and CIA. During court testimony, Fadl alleges that the



former Sudanese President Saleh Mobruk actively assisted al-Qaeda in obtaining South African-origin uranium. Fadl adds that he later learned that the acquired uranium, purchased for \$1.5 million and tested in Cyprus, was confirmed to be authentic<sup>5</sup>.

Though Al-Qaeda's efforts to detonate weapons of mass destruction have failed, Bin Laden states in an interview with Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir, "I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as a deterrent." This end has been left to lower rank members of the terrorist organization. Even though this end has not materialized, it does not mean it is not an ongoing, imminent threat to international security.

## **The Non-Proliferation Treaty and Its Critics**

Lastly, we will be covering the most significant milestones made by the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the criticism it has received.

### **Non-Proliferation Treaty**

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), established in 1968, aimed to curb the spread of nuclear technology by fostering cooperation among major nuclear and non-nuclear powers.

Despite not completely preventing nuclear proliferation, the NPT gained significance during the Cold War, setting a precedent for international collaboration to impede the spread of nuclear

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<sup>5</sup> Mowatt-Larsen, Rolf. "Al Qaeda's Pursuit of Weapons of Mass Destruction." Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy, 25 Jan. 2010,



weapons. Following the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the U.S. and the Soviet Union pursued comprehensive arms control agreements, culminating in the Outer Space Treaty and discussions on a non-proliferation treaty. By the early 1960s, nuclear technology had become more accessible, prompting concerns about potential widespread proliferation. The NPT addressed these fears by prohibiting nuclear weapons transfer, requiring non-nuclear states to refrain from acquiring such weapons, and establishing safeguards under the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Despite its importance, the NPT faced challenges during development. Initial proposals for a nuclear technology distribution ban in 1961 took several years to materialize into formal negotiations. Delicate negotiations centered on balancing interests between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and concerns about nuclear NATO plans complicated discussions. The treaty's success hinged on the willingness of non-nuclear nations to forgo developing nuclear weapons. After two years of negotiations, concessions from nuclear powers persuaded many non-nuclear states to sign the treaty, which included provisions against nuclear weapons transfer and acquisition, submission to IAEA safeguards, and cooperation on peaceful nuclear technology. However, notable non-signatories included France, China, and several states close to nuclear capability, like Argentina, Brazil, India, Israel, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa. While the NPT is lauded for its role in mitigating nuclear proliferation, its effectiveness is challenged by the absence of key signatories and subsequent nuclear developments in some non-signatory states<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, [history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/npt](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/npt). Accessed 23 Jan. 2024.



## **Criticism and the Path Forward...**

Many have called the NPT a conspiracy to keep the nuclear weaponry in the hands of a few states. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, stated that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". The main critic is that nuclear states fail to uphold this principle in good faith when planning their national policies regarding the use and expansion of nuclear weapons. As a result, The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination. Among the countries voting for the treaty's adoption were South Africa and Kazakhstan, both of which formerly possessed nuclear weapons and gave them up voluntarily.

## **Bloc Positions**

1. Proponents of Strict Disarmament Timelines:
  - a. Supported by Germany, Japan.
  - b. Advocates for a rapid and strictly defined timeline for nuclear disarmament.
  - c. Emphasizes the urgency of eliminating nuclear weapons to prevent catastrophic consequences.
  - d. Believes in the importance of holding nuclear-armed states accountable for timely and complete disarmament.
2. Supporters of Gradual Disarmament with Verification:



- a. Supported by Canada, Australia.
  - b. Argues for a more gradual approach to disarmament, taking into account security concerns and verification processes.
  - c. Highlights the need for comprehensive monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with disarmament agreements.
  - d. Emphasizes the importance of building trust among nations through verifiable steps.
3. Nuclear Deterrence Advocates:
- a. Supported by the United States, United Kingdom.
  - b. Supports the concept of nuclear deterrence as a crucial element for maintaining global stability.
  - c. Argues that nuclear weapons act as a deterrent against potential aggression and ensure national security.
  - d. Believes that a complete elimination of nuclear weapons may compromise a nation's defense posture.
4. Sanctions and Diplomacy Supporters:
- a. Supported by France, Germany.
  - b. Favors the use of economic sanctions and diplomatic measures to discourage nuclear weapons development.
  - c. Stresses the importance of diplomatic negotiations and international cooperation in resolving proliferation concerns.
  - d. Advocates for targeted sanctions against non-compliant states to enforce disarmament efforts.



5. Nuclear-Free Zone Advocates:
  - a. Supported by Brazil, South Africa.
  - b. Calls for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in specific regions as a step towards global disarmament.
  - c. Believes that creating zones free of nuclear weapons contributes to regional stability and peace.
  - d. Emphasizes the role of regional agreements in fostering a nuclear-free environment.
  
6. Non-State Actor Concerns Bloc:
  - a. Supported by Japan, India.
  - b. Raises concerns about the potential involvement of non-state actors in acquiring or using nuclear weapons.
  - c. Advocates for strengthened measures to prevent non-state actors' access to nuclear materials.
  - d. Emphasizes the need for international cooperation to address the non-proliferation challenges posed by non-state entities.

## Questions to Consider

1. How can countries balance the urgency of nuclear disarmament with the need for a cautious and verifiable approach, considering the diverse perspectives within the committee?
2. What measures can be implemented to enhance transparency and cooperation among nuclear-armed states, particularly in the context of gradual disarmament with verification?



3. In what ways can the committee address the concerns of nuclear deterrence advocates while ensuring the overall goal of global stability and disarmament?
4. How can diplomatic solutions and strategic arms reduction treaties be strengthened to effectively address the challenges posed by non-compliance and potential security risks in the disarmament process?
5. What role can economic sanctions play in discouraging nuclear weapons development, and how can the committee ensure their targeted and effective implementation?
6. How might the establishment of nuclear-free zones contribute to regional stability, and what challenges may arise in the negotiation and implementation of such zones?
7. Considering the potential involvement of non-state actors in nuclear proliferation, what cooperative measures can be taken to prevent their access to nuclear materials and reduce the threat they pose to global security?

## Important Resources for Research

1. <https://natolibguides.info/armscontrol/websites>
2. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/npt>
3. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/overview-of-the-nuclear-disarmament-resource-collection/>
4. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/disarmament>
5. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/07/14/a-stark-nuclear-warning/>
6. <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/>
7. <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/non-proliferation/appendices/nuclear-proliferation-case-studies.aspx>





# **Topic 2: Preserving the Peace: Regulating the Militarization of Space**

## **Introduction**

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and evolving geopolitical dynamics, the question of preserving global peace has extended beyond terrestrial borders into the vast expanse of space. The topic of "Preserving the Peace: Regulating the Militarization of Space" holds a pivotal place in international discourse as nations grapple with the implications of deploying military capabilities beyond Earth's atmosphere. The once uncharted territory of space has become a frontier for strategic competition, raising profound questions about the responsible use of this cosmic domain.

The militarization of space encompasses the deployment of military assets, such as satellites and weapon systems, in orbit or on celestial bodies. As space becomes integral to communication, surveillance, and navigation, the dual-use nature of satellite technology has blurred the lines between civilian and military applications. The escalating interest in space-based assets for national security purposes has sparked concerns about the potential weaponization of this celestial arena, threatening the delicate equilibrium that governs international relations.

Against this backdrop, regulating the militarization of space has become paramount. The international community faces the challenge of establishing norms, frameworks, and treaties that ensure the responsible use of space while preventing the weaponization of Earth's orbit. As nations pursue advancements in space capabilities, the need for transparency, cooperation, and adherence to international agreements becomes increasingly urgent. This topic invites a critical



examination of the evolving role of space in the global security landscape and underscores the necessity of diplomatic initiatives to preserve peace in the cosmic realm. Delegates must confront the complex intersection of technological innovation, national security imperatives, and the shared responsibility to safeguard the peace and stability of our planet from the potential ramifications of an armed conflict extending beyond its bounds.

Around three paragraphs introducing the topic. Set the stage for delegates from *immediately* before whatever brought about the committee session and include the relevance of the topic and urgency of coming to a solution. You will get into the details later in this topic guide. (~300 words)

## **History**

To say that the space exploration of the mid-20th century carried out by the US and Soviet Union primary aim was military is an overstatement, however, both world powers saw this race as an opportunity to showcase their missile and ballistic capabilities. Ever since, the space has served as fertile ground for military spacecrafts and communication satellites. In the 21st century, we are faced with a complex paradigm towards space and its military potential.

The arms race in space is not new. At the dawn of the Cold War, the US enjoyed a comfortable military advantage over the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union sought to offset that advantage by all means possible. Intercontinental missiles provided an avenue for the Soviet Union to gain a military edge over the US. Thus, in 1957, President Eisenhower presented a proposal of accompanying the scientific space endeavours with an arms control agreement. The idea was for international inspectors to establish whether all the objects sent to space would serve exclusively



peaceful ends and scientific purposes. The concept aimed at having global inspectors determine if all items launched into space were intended solely for peaceful and scientific uses.

The Soviet Union rejected Eisenhower's proposal. At the time, the Soviet Union gained the temporary upper hand in space affairs, being the first country to put a satellite into orbit and successfully test an intercontinental missile. So, they presented a counterproposal to President's Eisenhower's proposal, where they would agree to his treaty if the US gave up its military bases around the world. The proximity of these bases to Soviet territory allowed the US to pose a nuclear threat to the Soviet Union without the need of an intercontinental missile. The Soviet Union would thus agree to the US' proposal if the US would forfeit its military bases around the world. With the United States unwilling to do so, the deal fell stagnant on both ends and never went through. The US, proceed to catch up with space technology throughout the 1950s.

At last, in 1967, the United Nations adopted the Outer Space Treaty in 1967 after various UN resolutions. This treaty prohibited the placement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in space, as well as military tests and installations on celestial bodies. However, it did not address several other military activities in space, such as the detonation of weapons of mass destruction, the passage of missiles through space (whether conventional or weapons of mass destruction), and the deployment of conventional weapons in space. The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty limited land-launched missile defense systems to one location on each side, prohibiting space-based systems. In 1979, talks on anti-satellite weapons failed, and both nations were already in the process of testing such systems.



In 1980, President Ronald Reagan started his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) aimed to boost the US's standing in the space arms race but for many reasons failed. For starters, the public interest and urgency to gain military advantage over space had significantly diminished in the US. The Soviet Union had proposed a ban on the militarization of space, and nuclear tensions were easing. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the recommendations on space missiles were taken with less urgency by the international community.

In 2001, President George W. Bush unilaterally terminated the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) Treaty, reigniting discussions about an arms buildup in space. The U.S. contends that its now scaled-down missile defense program targets rogue states like North Korea or Iran. However, Russia and China view it as a strategy to undermine their nuclear second-strike capabilities. Notably, in 2007, China and the U.S. demonstrated satellite destruction capabilities by shooting down their own satellites from the ground or sea. This showcased the potential for any state with rocket launch capabilities to possess satellite destruction capabilities. The termination of the ABM Treaty by the U.S. in 2001 has raised concerns about the militarization of space, with geopolitical interpretations varying on the intentions behind missile defense programs<sup>7</sup>.

## **Current Situation**

The termination of the Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) Treaty marked the first time the US had withdrawn from a major international arms treaty. This also marked the creation of the Missile Defense Agency, a branch of the U.S. Department of Defense tasked with creating a thorough defense system against ballistic missiles. Its inception can be traced back to the Strategic

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<sup>7</sup> "Brief Historical Outline of Space Arms Control: War and Peace." Brief Historical Outline of Space Arms Control | War and Peace, warpp.info/en/m7/articles/m7-13. Accessed 23 Jan. 2024.



Defense Initiative (SDI), initiated by Ronald Reagan in 1983. George Bush, at the time, justified such action under the premise that the US necessitated a defense mechanism against rogue states that had now acquired nuclear capabilities, such as North Korea and Iran. This was also meant to stop the blackmail from such countries.

### **Critics of the termination of the ABM**

Former Secretary of Defense, William Perry, articulated much of the fears of the international community and the American population:

“Our chief peril is that the poised nuclear doom, much of it hidden beneath the seas and in remote badlands, is too far out of the global public consciousness. Passivity shows broadly. Perhaps this is a matter of defeatism and its cohort, distraction. Perhaps for some it is largely a most primal human fear of facing the “unthinkable.” For others, it might be a welcoming of the illusion that there is or might be an acceptable missile defense against a nuclear attack. And for many it would seem to be the keeping of faith that nuclear deterrence will hold indefinitely—that leaders will always have accurate enough instantaneous knowledge, know the true context of events, and enjoy the good luck to avoid the most tragic of military miscalculations.<sup>8</sup>”

Much of the fear boiled down to a destabilization of the nuclear order. By acquiring defense technologies, world powers would no longer be deterred to initiate a nuclear attack. The concept of mutually assured destruction would cease to be a concern for nuclear states.

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<sup>8</sup> Brown, Jerry. “A Stark Nuclear Warning: Jerry Brown.” *The New York Review of Books*, 27 Mar. 2022, [www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/07/14/a-stark-nuclear-warning/](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/07/14/a-stark-nuclear-warning/).



## **Russian Response**

Following the withdrawal, the newly elected Russian President, Vladimir Putin, took action by ordering an enhancement of Russia's nuclear capabilities to offset U.S. advancements. Putin, however, emphasized that there was no immediate threat resulting from the U.S. withdrawal. Subsequently, on May 24, 2002, Russia and the United States signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty in Moscow. This agreement called for reductions in deployed strategic nuclear warheads but did not specify cuts to total stockpiled warheads, lacking any enforcement mechanism.

In a move mirroring the U.S. withdrawal, on June 13, 2002, the U.S. officially exited the ABM Treaty, prompting Russia to announce its discontinuation of the START II treaty the following day, despite it not being in force. In 2017 interviews with Oliver Stone, President Putin disclosed that both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush had, without evidence, attempted to persuade Russia of an emerging nuclear threat from Iran to justify the U.S. withdrawal.

Fast forward to March 1, 2018, Putin, in an address to the Federal Assembly, unveiled the development of advanced "super weapons" in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. An anonymous U.S. official dismissed Putin's claims as exaggerated. Putin, attributing the decision to increase Russia's nuclear capabilities to counterbalance the U.S., expressed this move as a response to the U.S. triggering the withdrawal.



By 2021, Putin continued to cite the U.S. withdrawal as one of his grievances against the West, claiming efforts to partner with the West were unaccepted, characterizing it as one of America's significant post-Cold War transgressions<sup>9</sup>.

### **China's Response and Demonstrations in 2007**

In January 2007, China triggered international concern by deliberately destroying one of its satellites, generating hazardous space debris and raising fears of an emerging space arms race. Despite China's subsequent declaration of a halt to similar tests a month later, the incident showcased the nation's advancing space capabilities and its ability to defend against satellite surveillance during wartime. The delayed official response fueled uncertainty, prompting inquiries into the motives behind China's actions and casting doubt on the authenticity of its proclaimed "soft rise" policy.

The ASAT test highlighted the broader discussions surrounding anti-satellite weapons, emphasizing their potential to disrupt a nation's intelligence collection and military operations. China's 2007 ASAT test, following multiple failed attempts, prompted suspicions about the government's intentions. Speculations suggested potential miscommunication between China's civilian government and military leadership, given the unexpected success of the test. CFR Fellows proposed multifaceted motivations, including military concerns over a prospective U.S.

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<sup>9</sup> Schwirtz, Michael, et al. "Putin's War: The inside Story of a Catastrophe." The New York Times, The New York Times, 17 Dec. 2022, [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/16/world/europe/russia-putin-war-failures-ukraine.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/16/world/europe/russia-putin-war-failures-ukraine.html).



space-based missile defense system neutralizing China's nuclear arsenal, leading to a call for a ban on space weapons. This incident underscored China's growing military prowess, particularly its ability to target satellites critical to U.S. intelligence and precision weaponry, raising concerns about potential disruptions to essential daily functions dependent on global positioning satellites (GPS). Furthermore, China's diplomatic efforts, aligned with Moscow, seek a treaty to ban the deployment of weapons in space, reflecting unease with U.S. dominance and aiming to restrict American activities in space. China's decade-long investment in its space program, featuring diverse satellite types, launching vehicles, and lunar exploration plans, further highlights its commitment to modernizing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and expanding its influence in space exploration<sup>10</sup>.

### **US 2008 “Operation Burn Frost”**

Operation Burnt Frost, conducted in 2008, aimed to intercept and destroy the non-functioning U.S. National Reconnaissance Office satellite, USA-193. The Missile Defense Agency characterized it as a mission to prevent the uncontrolled re-entry of a 5,000-pound satellite carrying over 1,000 pounds of hazardous hydrazine propellant, thus safeguarding human life. Launched from the USS Lake Erie on February 21, 2008, the mission, utilized a heavily modified Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) to shoot down the satellite. The SM-3 successfully intercepted its target within minutes of launch, accomplishing its mission. Although effective, the operation faced scrutiny, particularly from China and Russia. The operation faced significant controversy and raised alarms in the international community.

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<sup>10</sup> “China’s Anti-Satellite Test.” Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, [www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-anti-satellite-test](http://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-anti-satellite-test). Accessed 23 Jan. 2024.





## **Kamala Harris Self-imposed Ban on Direct-ascent Anti-satellite Missile Tests**

Vice President Kamala Harris announced that the United States will impose a self-imposed ban on direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile tests that generate orbital debris. Harris, who chairs the National Space Council, emphasized the dangers of such tests, pointing to Russia's 2021 and China's 2007 tests as serious threats to space security and sustainability. The U.S. decision aims to set an international example for responsible space behavior and encourage other nations to follow suit. Harris highlighted the risks these missile tests pose to space activities, urging for a shared understanding of safe and responsible space conduct.

Harris's announcement received mixed reactions, with experts praising it as a step toward ensuring space safety and sustainability. They emphasized the importance of establishing international norms for responsible behavior in space. Critics, particularly Republicans, viewed the decision as unilateral, voluntary, and unnecessary. Rep. Doug Lamborn expressed concerns that the U.S. commitment not to conduct ASAT tests could give China and Russia an advantage in space, creating a false equivalence. Despite criticisms, proponents argue that the U.S. ban sets a specific commitment example and aims to lead by encouraging other nations to join in promoting responsible space conduct.

## **Space and Cybersecurity**

The convergence of space and cyberspace poses unprecedented challenges to national security, as both domains become increasingly interdependent. The intricate connection between outer space



and the internet, with space assets relying on internet-based networks and vice versa, demands a comprehensive approach to cybersecurity. Current space and cybersecurity policies are ill-prepared for this intersection, heightening national security risks. To address these challenges, coordinated efforts involving government, industry, and international collaboration are imperative. The militarization of space, driven by geopolitical competition, introduces new dimensions to cybersecurity concerns. Space activities, crucial for global services like the Global Positioning System (GPS), are vulnerable to cyber threats that may escalate due to heightened militarization. Current international laws and diplomatic efforts have not effectively addressed space cybersecurity, necessitating a focused approach.

### **Path Forward**

At the forefront of addressing the intricate challenges posed by the convergence of space and cyberspace are space agencies, poised to assume a pivotal role in crafting cybersecurity recommendations tailored to the evolving landscape of space activities. This undertaking demands not only domestic collaboration but a concerted effort to engage with the burgeoning private sector, where the commercial space industry is rapidly expanding. Legislative initiatives must be strategically formulated to go beyond mere endorsement, actively reinforcing and amplifying the cybersecurity endeavors led by the industry. This legislative support is particularly crucial as the commercial space sector undergoes unprecedented growth, presenting both opportunities and vulnerabilities that necessitate robust protective measures.



On the international stage, the imperative is collaboration among nations to collectively navigate the complexities of space cybersecurity. Multilateral frameworks, such as NATO, provide fertile ground for fostering cooperative endeavors in this domain. Moreover, countries should actively seek out bilateral forums dedicated to in-depth discussions on the nuanced intricacies of space cybersecurity. This comprehensive approach, intertwining national efforts with global cooperation, reflects an acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of the challenges at hand. It transcends the confines of conventional cybersecurity discourse and underscores the urgency for a sophisticated and adaptive framework capable of safeguarding the intertwined realms of outer space and cyberspace in the face of escalating security risks.

### **What can the International Community Do?**

The prevailing concern among the majority of United Nations member states centers on the potential arms race stemming from the weaponization of outer space. Advocates for a multilateral treaty, the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), receive resounding support annually in the UN General Assembly, with the exception of the United States and Israel, which consistently abstain. The PAROS resolution urges states, especially those with space capabilities, to refrain from actions conflicting with its objectives and actively contribute to its goals, seeking to enhance the legal framework governing outer space and prevent the deployment of space weapons and related technologies.

Simultaneously, the General Assembly endorses a transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) resolution proposed by Russia and China. While TCBMs are recognized as



positive steps toward fostering trust and cooperation, they are acknowledged as not replacing a legally-binding PAROS treaty. Seen as an initial step, TCBMs are part of a gradual approach to prevent the weaponization of outer space. Initiating a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in 2010, the General Assembly explores TCBMs to enhance space security, signaling ongoing international efforts to address the complexities of preventing outer space weaponization amidst advancements in science and technology<sup>11</sup>.

## Bloc Positions

### 1. United States and Allies Bloc:

Position: Emphasizes the right to defend national interests in space.

#### i. Key Points:

1. Supports the development of missile defense systems for protection against potential threats.
2. Advocates for the responsible use of space for both civilian and military purposes.
3. May express concerns about potential adversaries' actions in space, justifying the need for defensive capabilities.
4. Likely to highlight the importance of protecting space assets critical for national security.

### 2. Russia and China Partnership:

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<sup>11</sup> Outer Space - Reaching Critical Will, [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Resources/Factsheets/outerspace.pdf](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Resources/Factsheets/outerspace.pdf). Accessed 24 Jan. 2024.



Position: Stresses the need for an international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

ii. Key Points:

1. Advocates for a legally binding agreement to prevent the weaponization of space.
2. Highlights the risks associated with the militarization of space and the potential for an arms race.
3. Supports transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as initial steps towards preventing outer space weaponization.
4. Likely to express concerns about the actions of the United States and its allies in space.

3. Non-Aligned Bloc:

Position: Promotes a balanced approach considering the interests of all nations.

iii. Key Points:

1. Emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in space exploration and utilization.
2. Calls for the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race without aligning strictly with any major bloc.
3. May support measures that ensure the responsible behavior of all nations in space activities.
4. Likely to seek diplomatic solutions and negotiations to address concerns related to the militarization of space.



#### 4. European Union (EU) Bloc:

Position: Focuses on multilateralism, diplomacy, and international agreements.

##### iv. Key Points:

1. Supports efforts for a comprehensive and legally binding international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.
2. Advocates for increased transparency and cooperation in space activities.
3. Emphasizes the role of international organizations, such as the United Nations, in addressing the challenges of space militarization.
4. Likely to express concerns about the potential impact of space militarization on global stability.

## Questions to Consider

1. How can the international community assess the potential impact of space militarization on global security and stability?
2. What regulatory frameworks can be proposed to effectively govern the militarization of space and ensure responsible conduct by nations?
3. How can verifiable mechanisms be established to ensure compliance with any international agreements or treaties aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space?
4. How should the international community address the dual-use nature of space technologies, particularly satellite capabilities with both civilian and military applications?



5. What confidence-building measures (CBMs) can be implemented to foster trust among nations and mitigate concerns related to space militarization?
6. In what ways can the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) treaty be strengthened, and how can nations be encouraged to join and comply with it?
7. How can space and cybersecurity policies be integrated to address the growing challenges at the intersection of outer space and cyberspace?
8. What diplomatic initiatives can be proposed to encourage dialogue and cooperation among nations with different perspectives on the militarization of space?

## **Important Resources for Research**

1. <https://www.cfr.org/report/cybersecurity-and-new-era-space-activities>
2. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-anti-satellite-test>
3. <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5448-outer-space>
4. <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Resources/Factsheets/outerspace.pdf>
5. <https://spacenews.com/u-s-declares-ban-on-anti-satellite-missile-tests-calls-for-other-nations-to-join/>
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