



**HANDBOOK FOR DELEGATES OF THE  
SECURITY COUNCIL  
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## Technology and International Security: Outer Space Regulation

Throughout history the delimitation of boundaries has been one of the main obstacles preventing peaceful coexistence of humankind and the societies they have created. With time the regularization process has become more and more refined, and the boundaries themselves more precisely defined. These developments are due chiefly to the creation of internationally recognized territorial borders defined by maps, checkpoints, nautical miles and corresponding air space; the construction of international guidelines for acceptable behavior and, the establishment of international institutions that are able to monitor, regulate and construct new guidelines when needed. As humankind expands its knowledge its area of influence also expands, causing the need for creation of new man-made boundaries. Current ways of dealing with outer space very much follow this model; as outer space becomes more accessible the need arises for man-made boundaries that can guarantee peaceful coexistence.

The need for international regulations regarding areas of space and its celestial bodies above the Earth's lower atmosphere was first considered in 1957, shortly after the launching of the first artificial satellite. In 1959 the United Nations General Assembly established a permanent committee denominated Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS), integrated by twenty-four members -now sixty-five members- with the purpose of providing a functional platform for international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of outer space. The UNCOPUOS includes two subcommittees, one in charge of scientific and technical issues -Scientific and Technical Subcommittee-, and the other dealing with legal aspects of other space investigation and utilization, the Legal Subcommittee. In 1967 the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, went into effect, providing a basic frame work for

international space law. Some of the most important norms put forth in this treaty were: that the only permissible exploration and use of outer space were those with beneficial outcomes for all countries; that outer space was to be accessible to all States; that States would not place nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on celestial bodies; that astronauts were to be considered envoys of humankind; that States were to be responsible and liable for all national activities carried out by the government or by non-governmental organizations; that States would avoid harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies; and that the moon and other celestial bodies were to be used only for peaceful purposes. As of January 2006, ninety-eight States have ratified and twenty-seven States have signed this treaty. Since then, other international treaties have been created through this Committee. However, the principal concern has not been the risk suffered in terms of international security, but rather the scientific and technical aspects implied in the exploitation of outer space.

Apart from the ONCOPUS, other treaties have been created between specific states that limit indirectly the abuses on security implied in the utilization of outer space. Among these the most notable were the series of Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, known as SALT I (1972) and SALT II, signed in 1979 but never ratified. These treaties placed restrictions on the development and utilization of certain kinds of armaments, and were used as outer space regulators during their duration. Another notable set of treaties are the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, known as START I (1991) and START II (1993). As with the SALT treaties, the START treaties imply regulation of uses of outer space regarding the nature of the weapons being limited. Both of these sets of treaties are and were bilateral, established only between the United States of America and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Another way in which the use of outer space has been controlled is through the creation of national acts that apply only to those under the jurisdiction of a particular state. An example of this is the United States National Aeronautics and Space Act enacted in 1958. These nationally oriented regulations deal with questions such as liability and the granting of permits for utilization or investigation of the outer space and its celestial bodies. Never do they refer directly to the issue of global security.

In spite of the constant amendments applied to the current tools that dictate appropriate space conduct, there remain areas in which norms and rules need to be established or clarified. Regulations determining each State's claim and control over outer space, its celestial bodies and possible resources should be discussed. Whether the space laws that were created primarily for regulating government ventures should also be applied to increasing commercial ventures should be reviewed. Most important, considering the function on the Security Council, is the notable lack of an overall applicable framework regulating the military use of outer space and its celestial bodies.

### **Previous Efforts and Resolutions**

- Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
- Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies
- Strategic Arms Limitations Talk and Treaty I
- Strategic Arms Limitations Talk and Treaty II

- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II

### **Questions a good resolution should answer**

- Even if outer space is regarded as a peaceful environment to be respected by all States, what should be done if a State violates this principle?
- Should weapons not be allowed to maneuver in outer space but permitted to move inside the Earth's atmosphere, or vice-versa?
- What are accessible and feasible ways in which the Security Council may act upon countries that do not place weapons in outer space, but utilize the region as a pathway for weapons? Does this interfere with States' Rights?
- Considering that only two countries have acknowledged the importance of security regulations in outer space, and that some action has been taken by the General Assembly, how can other countries be persuaded by the Security Council?

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