MUNIAL'26

# DISEC

## Study Guide

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## Letter from the Secretary-General

Dear Attendees,

It is an honor to welcome you all to the 7th annual session of İzmir Atatürk Lisesi Model United Nations Conference. I am Duru Kılıç, your Secretary-General. If you are reading this letter, you probably already know why you should be here, but let us remind you once more.

MUNIAL is a legacy preserved by generations, now bestowed upon us by our upperclassmen. Being entrusted with this conference was not an easy feat; so you can be sure that we are no amateurs when it comes to MUN, and that it isn't a coincidence you are attending the best. Our esteemed Director-General, Can Karadağ, and I have sacrificed months, if not years, working for our titles. But it wasn't just for MUNIAL; it was for the journey where we grew, improved, and found the best versions of ourselves. Now we stand proud, confident that this year will be no short of what our upperclassmen showed us, if not better.

MUN isn't just an academic achievement, though. This is a free space where you can improve your people skills, make new connections, have fun, and enhance your cultural knowledge. For me, this journey was one where I found family, and now I am honored to be the one creating the opportunity for others to do the same.

Sincerely,

Duru Kılıç

## 1. Introduction to the Committee

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was created in 1945 by the General Assembly when the United Nations was initially chartered. The committee was created to discuss topics related to promoting international peace. To this end, the committee should focus on issues such as the disarmament of regional threats to international security and on promoting cooperation to strengthen stability in volatile conflicts. Anything outside its mandate requires coercive action. Issues that require coercive action, such as military involvement or the creation of new international legislation, are typically passed up to the Security Council. Over time, DISEC's mandate has changed very little because it tends to set long-term goals that are often recycled from committee session to committee session. For example, they have never been able to create legally binding resolutions.

There are no restrictions on DISEC membership, and all 193 United Nations member states are entitled to participate in the committee. The rules of procedure for DISEC include a three-stage structure followed during sessions: general debate, thematic discussions, and action on draft resolutions. As a part of the General Assembly, they must also have verbatim reporting. Verbatim reporting is an official, word-for-word record of a committee session, which is translated into the six languages of the United Nations. DISEC has played a pivotal role in discussions on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which has helped shape international norms against nuclear weapons proliferation. DISEC has also helped key disarmament treaties enter into force, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Additionally, DISEC has been rather fundamental in raising global awareness about the dangers of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the genuine importance of disarmament.

DISEC is one of the main committees of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which serves as a deliberative body for member states to discuss and negotiate disarmament and international security issues. Although it lacks legislative power, it has a profound impact on resolutions and recommendations that shape global norms and policies. In the past, DISEC has collaborated with many entities, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), regional organizations such as the African Union and the OSCE, and various civil society groups, to promote disarmament. These partnerships are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of disarmament initiatives and addressing global security challenges.

Since its establishment in 1945, DISEC has been committed to disarmament through transnational cooperation, resulting in significant achievements in international security. In 2006, DISEC summits led to the adoption of multiple resolutions aimed at limiting nuclear weapons activity, prompting many states to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT bans all signatories from producing nuclear explosions and uses technology to monitor the status of states' nuclear progress, working to increase transparency and build trust between international governments. DISEC's primary goal is to ensure global security and peace.

In their arguments, delegates should emphasize this goal while prioritizing equal representation for all committee members.

## 2. Introduction to the Agenda Item: Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

Outer space is currently "militarized" (used for military support like GPS, spying, and comms) but not fully "weaponized" (permanent deployment of weapons in orbit). PAROS is the UN agenda item dedicated to ensuring it stays that way.

The core tension in this committee is between states that want a legally binding treaty banning space weapons immediately (mostly Russia, China, and developing nations) and states that want voluntary "norms of behavior" first because they believe a ban is currently impossible to verify (mostly USA, UK, and NATO allies).

### ❖ Key Terms and Definitions

- Weaponization vs. Militarization:
  - *Militarization:* Using space for military support (using a satellite to guide a missile on Earth). This is currently legal and common.
  - *Weaponization:* Placing weapons *in* space or creating weapons specifically to attack space objects.

- ASAT (Anti-Satellite Weapon): A weapon designed to destroy or incapacitate a satellite.
  - *Direct-Ascent:* A missile launched from Earth to hit a satellite.
  - *Co-orbital:* A "killer satellite" that parks next to a target and attacks it.

- Dual-Use Technology: Technology that has both civilian and military applications.
  - Example: A robotic arm on a satellite designed to repair other satellites could also be used to rip a solar panel off an enemy satellite. This makes banning "weapons" very difficult to define.

- Kessler Syndrome: A theoretical scenario where the density of objects in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is high enough that collisions between objects cause a cascade, each collision generating debris that increases the likelihood of further collisions, eventually rendering space unusable.

## 3. Outer Space and Space Security

Space security is no longer seen merely as “the absence of war.” It is divided into four distinct dimensions:

### a. Environmental Security (Sustainability)

This refers to protecting the orbital environment. The main threats are Orbital Debris and the Kessler Syndrome.

- Habitability: The risk that the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) will become so cluttered with debris that it is no longer habitable for functional satellites.
- Mitigation and Remediation: Mitigation (preventing new debris) is politically straightforward; remediation (removing existing debris) is legally complex, as a state cannot touch another state's “space object” without permission under Article VIII of the Outer Space Treaty.

### b. Strategic/Military Security

This involves protecting space assets against both kinetic and non-kinetic threats.

- Anti-Space Capabilities: Tools designed to deceive, disrupt, jam, degrade, or destroy space systems.
- First Strike Instability: Because satellites are “easy targets” (they follow predictable orbits and are difficult to protect), aggressors have a significant incentive to launch the first strike in a conflict to “blind” the enemy.

### c. Economic and Social Security

This dimension views space as a Global Public Good.

- Dependency Ratios: Highly developed countries are more “space-dependent.” This creates an asymmetric vulnerability where countries less oriented toward space could suffer disproportionate economic damage if superpowers attack their space infrastructure.

## 4. Arms Race in Outer Space

### a. Modern Context (2025–2026)

In early 2026, the global security architecture is under unprecedented pressure. The end of the term of the New START Treaty (February 5, 2026), signed between the US and Russia, removed the last official security measures related to nuclear weapons, directly affecting space security.

- Multipolarity: The “Space Race” is no longer a two-sided monopoly. China, India, and the EU are now major players, each developing “counter-space” technologies.
- “Golden Dome” Initiative: New for 2025-26, this initiative envisions the US and its allies accelerating the development of “boost-phase” interceptor weapons that destroy missiles shortly after launch, using space-based or space-based sensors. Rivals see this as a threat to their nuclear deterrence.
- Commercial Integration: Companies like SpaceX are now “dual-use” entities. Mega constellations are used for military communications, making civilian infrastructure a legitimate target under some military doctrines.

### b. Taxonomy of Space Weaponization

An arms race in space does not just involve "lasers and missiles." It is categorized by three types of technology:

#### *i. Earth-to-Space (Kinetic ASATs)*

- Direct-Ascent Missiles: Ground-launched missiles that physically smash into satellites.
- The Debris Problem: These tests are highly controversial because they create thousands of fragments that orbit at $28,000$ km/h, posing a threat to other space objects (Kessler Syndrome).

#### *ii. Space-to-Space (Co-Orbital Weapons)*

- Dual-Use Satellites: "Inspector" satellites designed for repair or refueling that can be repurposed to "grapple" or collide with enemy assets.
- Directed Energy Weapons (DEW): On-orbit lasers or high-powered microwaves used to "dazzle" (blind) spy sensors or fry electronics without physical contact.

*iii. Space-to-Earth (Orbital Strike)*

- Hypersonic Fractional Orbital Bombardment (FOBS): Weapons that enter orbit briefly before re-entering at hypersonic speeds to strike Earth targets, bypassing traditional missile defenses.

## 5. Militarisation of Space

The militarisation of space involved the placement and development of weaponry and military technology in outer space. The early space exploration in the mid-20th century had, in part, a military motivation, as the United States and the Soviet Union used it to demonstrate ballistic-missile technology and other technologies with potential military applications. Outer space has since been used as an operating environment for military spacecraft, such as imaging and communications satellites, and some ballistic missiles pass through it during their flight. As of 2018, known deployments of weapons stationed in space include only the Almaz space-station armament and pistols such as the TP-82 Cosmonaut survival pistol (for post-landing, pre-recovery use).

### a. The Cold War

During the Cold War, the world's two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, allocated a large share of their GDP to developing military technologies. The drive to place objects in orbit stimulated space research and started the Space Race. In 1957, the USSR launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1.

By the end of the 1960s, both countries regularly deployed satellites. Reconnaissance satellites were used by militaries to take accurate pictures of their rivals' military installations. As time passed, the resolution and accuracy of orbital reconnaissance alarmed both sides of the Iron Curtain. Both the United States and the Soviet Union began to develop anti-satellite weapons to blind or destroy each other's satellites. Directed-energy weapons, kamikaze-style satellites, and orbital nuclear explosives were researched with varying levels of success. Spy satellites were, and continue to be, used to monitor the dismantling of military assets by arms control treaties signed between the two superpowers. Using spy satellites in this manner is often referred to in treaties as "national technical means of verification".

The superpowers developed ballistic missiles to enable them to use nuclear weaponry across great distances. As rocket science advanced, missile range increased, and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) were developed, capable of striking

virtually any target on Earth in minutes rather than hours or days. To cover large distances, ballistic missiles are usually launched into sub-orbital spaceflight.

As soon as intercontinental missiles were developed, military planners began programmes and strategies to counter their effectiveness.

*i. United States*

Early American efforts included the Nike-Zeus Program, Project Defender, the Sentinel Program, and the Safeguard Program. The late 1950s Nike-Zeus programme involved firing Nike nuclear missiles against oncoming ICBMs, thus exploding nuclear warheads over the North Pole. This idea was soon scrapped,d and work began on Project Defender in 1958. Project Defender attempted to destroy Soviet ICBMs at launch with satellite weapon systems, which orbited over Russia. This programme proved infeasible with the technology available at the time. Work then began on the Sentinel Program, which used anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs) to intercept incoming ICBMs.

In the late 1950s, the United States Air Force considered detonating an atomic bomb on the Moon to display U.S. superiority to the Soviet Union and the rest of the world (Project A119). In 1959, a feasibility study of a possible military base on the Moon (Project Horizon) was conducted. In 1958, a plan for a 21-airman underground Air Force base on the Moon by 1968 was developed (Lunex Project).

The Safeguard Program was deployed in the mid-1970s and was based on the Sentinel Program. Since the ABM treaty only allowed for the construction of a single ABM facility to protect either the nation's capital city or an ICBM field, the Stanley R. Mickelsen Safeguard Complex was constructed near Nekoma, North Dakota, to protect the Grand Forks ICBM facility. Although it operated as an ABM facility for less than a year, the Perimeter Acquisition Radar (PAR), one of Safeguard's components, was still operational as of 2005. One major problem with the Safeguard Program, and past ABM systems, was that the interceptor missiles, though state-of-the-art, required nuclear warheads to destroy incoming ICBMs. Future ABMs will likely be more accurate and use hit-to-kill or conventional warheads to knock down incoming warheads. The technology underlying such systems was shaky at best, and deployment was constrained by the 1972 ABM Treaty.

In 1983, American President Ronald Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a space-based system to protect the United States from attack by strategic nuclear missiles. The plan was ridiculed by some as unrealistic

and expensive, and Dr. Carol Rosin nicknamed the policy "Star Wars", after the popular science-fiction movie franchise. Astronomer Carl Sagan noted that, to defeat SDI, the Soviet Union needed only to build more missiles, thereby overwhelming the defense through sheer numbers. Proponents of SDI said the technology strategy would hasten the Soviet Union's downfall. According to this doctrine, Communist leaders were forced to either shift large portions of their GDP to counter SDI or else watch as their expensive nuclear stockpiles were rendered obsolete.

United States Space Command (USSPACECOM), a unified command of the United States military, was created in 1985 to help institutionalize the use of outer space by the United States Armed Forces. The Commander in Chief of U.S. Space Command (CINCUSSPACECOM), with headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, was also the Commander in Chief of the bi-national U.S.-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (CINCNORAD), and for the majority of time during USSPACECOM's existence, also the Commander of the U.S. Air Force major command Air Force Space Command. Military space operations coordinated by USSPACECOM proved highly valuable to the U.S.-led coalition during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The U.S. military has relied on communications, intelligence, navigation, missile-warning, and weather satellite systems in conflict zones since the early 1990s, including the Balkans, Southwest Asia, and Afghanistan. Space systems are considered indispensable providers of tactical information to U.S. war-fighters.

As part of the ongoing initiative to transform the U.S. military, on 26 June 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced that U.S. Space Command would merge with USSTRATCOM. The UCP directed that Unified Combatant Commands be capped at ten. With the formation of the new United States Northern Command, one would have to be deactivated to maintain that level of command. Thus, the USSPACECOM merger into USSTRATCOM.

On December 10, 2019, the United States Space Force was formed as the world's only independent space force, with 8600 military personnel and 77 spacecraft.

### *ii. Operation Hardtrack 1*

Operation Hardtack I was a series of nuclear tests carried out by the United States Government in 1958. A major facet of these tests was three high-altitude nuclear tests: YUCCA, ORANGE, and TEAK. YUCCA was

detonated on April 28 at an altitude of 86,000 feet and had a comparatively small yield of 1.7 kilotons. YUCCA is notable as the first nuclear test carried out via balloon. Following tests, ORANGE and TEAK were conducted on July 31 and August 11 at altitudes of 252,000 feet and 141,000 feet, respectively. The bombs were delivered via rocket, and their yields were in the megaton range.

### *iii. Starfish Prime*

Starfish Prime was a nuclear test carried out in 1962 over Johnston Atoll by the United States as part of Operation Fishbowl. The 1.4 megaton bomb was detonated at an altitude of 400 km (250 miles), in the ionosphere, and was the highest altitude nuclear test ever demonstrated. The test is notable for its Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) effect, which was felt as far as 1400 km (800 miles) away in Hawaii.

### *iv. USSR/Russia*

The Soviet Union was also researching innovative ways to achieve space superiority. Two of their most notable efforts were the R-36ORB Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS) and Polyus orbital weapons system.

The R-36ORB was a Soviet ICBM in the 1960s that, once launched, would enter low Earth orbit and then de-orbit for an attack. This system would approach North America over the South Pole, thereby striking targets from the opposite direction from that to which NORAD's early warning systems are oriented. The missile was phased out in January 1983 in compliance with the SALT II treaty.

On May 15, 1987, an Energia rocket flew for the first time. The payload was a prototype orbital weapons platform, Polyus (also known as Polus, Skif-DM, or 17F19DM), the final version of which, according to some reports, could be armed with nuclear space mines and a defensive cannon. The Polyus weapons platform was designed to defend itself against anti-satellite weapons with a recoilless cannon. It was also equipped with a sensor-blinding laser to confuse approaching weapons and could launch test targets and validate the fire control system. The attempt to place the satellite into orbit failed.

The Russian Space Forces were the first independent space force, formed in 1992, independent from 1992 to 1997 and 2001 to 2011, and are now part of the Russian Aerospace Forces.

*v. Soviet High-altitude Nuclear Tests*

The Soviet Union conducted its own high-altitude tests to study and develop High-Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse (HEMP) weapons. The most notable of these is the 1962 Nuclear Test 184, in which a nuclear bomb was detonated at an altitude of 290 km. The ensuing HEMP damaged a 1,000 km-long line in Kazakhstan, which was designed to withstand such damage. The electrical damage is comparable to the strongest naturally occurring geomagnetic disturbances recorded.

**b. Post-Cold War**

As the Cold War ended with the implosion of the Soviet Union, the space race between the two superpowers ended. The United States of America was left as the world's sole superpower, with a large concentration of global wealth and technological advancement. Despite the United States' new status in the world, the monopoly on space militarisation is by no means certain. Countries such as China, Japan, and India have launched their own space programmes, while the European Union is working collectively to develop satellite systems to rival those of the United States.

The USSR Space Forces were established as the Ministry of Defense Space Units in 1982. In 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated. The Russian Armed Forces were established on 7 May 1992, enabling the creation of Russian Space Forces later that year on 10 August. In July 1997, the Space Force was dissolved as a separate service arm and incorporated into the Strategic Rocket Forces, along with the Space Missile Defense Forces, which had previously been part of the Troops of Air Defense. The Russian Space Forces were officially reborn on June 1, 2001, as an independent section of the Russian military.

Post-Cold War space militarisation appears to centre on three types of applications. (The word "appears" is used because much of this subject matter is inconclusively verifiable, due to the high level of secrecy that exists among the great powers with regard to the details of space sensing systems.) The first application is the continuing development of "spy" or reconnaissance satellites, which began in the Cold War era, but has progressed significantly since that time. Spy satellites perform a variety of missions, including high-resolution imagery (IMINT) and communications interception (SIGINT). These tasks are performed regularly both during peacetime and wartime operations. The nuclear states also use satellites to provide early warning of missile launches, locate nuclear detonations, and detect preparations for otherwise clandestine or surprise nuclear tests (at least those tests or preparations carried out above-ground); this was the case when, in 1998, India and Pakistan both conducted a series of nuclear tests; in addition, a nuclear-detection satellite of the Vela type was also

reported to have detected a nuclear detonation in the Indian Ocean in 1978 that was believed to be a South African nuclear test in what was famously called the Vela incident. Early-warning satellites can also be used to detect tactical missile launches; this capability was used during Desert Storm, when America was able to provide in advance warning to Israel of Iraqi SS-1 SCUD missile launches.

*i. Global Positioning System (GPS)*

The second application of space militarisation currently in use is the GPS (Global Positioning System). This satellite navigation system is used to determine a user's precise location and to provide a highly accurate time reference almost anywhere on Earth or in Earth orbit. It uses an intermediate circular orbit (ICO) satellite constellation of at least 24 satellites. The GPS system was designed and is controlled by the United States Department of Defense and is available to anyone, free of charge. The cost of maintaining the system is approximately US$400 million per year, including the replacement of ageing satellites. The first of 24 satellites that form the current GPS constellation (Block II) was placed into orbit on February 14, 1989. The 52nd GPS satellite, launched on November 6, 2004, aboard a Delta II rocket, was the first to be launched since the beginning in 1978. The primary military purposes are to enable improved command and control of forces through enhanced location awareness, to facilitate accurate targeting of smart bombs, cruise missiles, or other munitions, and to spoof or jam location data to civilian navigation receivers during wartime. The satellites also carry nuclear detonation detectors, which form a major portion of the United States Nuclear Detonation Detection System. European concern about the level of control over the GPS network and commercial issues has resulted in the planned Galileo positioning system. Russia already operates an independent system called GLONASS (global navigation system), which uses 24 satellites deployed in 3 orbital planes, compared with the 4 used by GPS. The Chinese "Beidou" system provides China with a similar regional (not global) navigation capability.

*ii. Military Communication Systems*

The emerging military doctrine of network-centric warfare demonstrates the third current application of the militarisation of space. Network-centric warfare relies heavily on high-speed communications, allowing all soldiers and branches of the military to view the battlefield in real time. Real-time technology improves the situational awareness of all military assets and commanders in a given theatre. For example, a soldier in the battle zone can access satellite imagery of enemy positions two blocks away and, if necessary, the coordinates of a bomber or weapon platform hovering overhead. At the same time, the

commander, hundreds of miles away, watches the events unfold on a screen. This high-speed communication is facilitated by a separate internet created by the military for the military. Communication satellites hold this system together by creating an informational grid over the given theatre of operations. The Department of Defense is working to establish a Global Information Grid to connect all military units and branches into a computerized system to share information and improve operational efficiency.

### *iii. Military Spaceplanes*

It was revealed that Soviet officials were concerned that the US Space Shuttle program had such military objectives, such as to make a sudden dive into the atmosphere to drop bombs on Moscow. Although it is a popular myth that these concerns were part of the motivation behind pursuing their own Buran programme, the actual study concerning the potential for US Space Shuttles to launch nuclear munitions into Soviet territory was released after the Buran program had already been approved.

The NASA uncrewed spaceplane project X-37 was transferred to the US Department of Defense in 2004. It is unclear what its military mission is, though speculation ranges from testing experimental reconnaissance and spy sensors to assessing its radiation tolerance and other orbital hazards. The Pentagon has denied claims that the X-37 has been, or will be, used in the development or testing of space-based weapons. The USAF has confirmed that Hall thruster electric propulsion tests have been carried out on the X-37 using Aerojet Rocketdyne's AEHF satellites' Hall thrusters. These thrusters are 4.5-kilowatt units that use electricity and xenon to produce thrust by ionizing and accelerating xenon gas particles. The X-37 is akin to a space version of an Unmanned aerial vehicle.

## 6. Legal and Institutional Framework

### a. The Legal Framework: The Five UN Treaties

The legal foundation of space security rests on five core treaties, often referred to as the "corpus juris spatialis."

- The Outer Space Treaty (1967): The "Constitution of Space." It establishes space as the "province of all mankind" and forbids the placement of WMDs in orbit.
- The Rescue Agreement (1968): Mandates the safe return of astronauts and space objects to their launching state.
- The Liability Convention (1972): Establishes that a "Launching State" is absolutely liable for damage caused by its space object on Earth and liable for "fault" if damage occurs in space.
- The Registration Convention (1975): Requires states to maintain a registry of launched objects and provide the UN with details on their orbit and function.
- The Moon Agreement (1979): Declares the Moon's resources the "Common Heritage of Mankind." (Note: Most major space powers have not ratified this, making it a "weak law.")

### b. The Institutional Framework: Who Governs What?

Space governance is divided between two primary hubs: Vienna (Peaceful Use) and Geneva (Security/War Prevention).

#### *i. The Vienna Hub: UNCOPUOS*

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is the largest committee in the UN.

- Focus: Scientific cooperation, debris mitigation, and "Space Sustainability."
- Current Milestone (2026): The 63rd Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) is scheduled for February 2026. It focuses on the "Long-term Sustainability (LTS) Guidelines" voluntary rules to prevent space from becoming a junkyard.

*ii. The Geneva Hub: The Conference on Disarmament (CD)*

The Conference on Disarmament is where PAROS is actually debated as a security issue.

- The 2026 Session: Opened on January 20, 2026, under Mongolia's Presidency. It is the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.
- The Deadlock: The CD operates by consensus, meaning that a single country (such as the US or Russia) can veto any new treaty. This has prevented the formal adoption of a "Space Treaty" for over 30 years.

*iii. The "Two-Track" OEWG (2025–2028)*

Because the CD is deadlocked, the UN General Assembly created a new Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on PAROS. As of January 2026, the OEWG is using a "Two-Track" structure:

- Track 1: Examining Legally Binding Obligations (Treaties).
- Track 2: Examining Voluntary Norms/Responsible Behaviors (Rules of the Road).
- Upcoming: The third substantive session of this group is set for July 2026 in Geneva.

**c. Emerging "Soft Law" and Norms**

Since new treaties are hard to pass, the world is moving toward "Soft Law" non-binding agreements that set expectations for behavior.

- The Artemis Accords (2020–Present): A US-led international agreement on lunar exploration. It introduces "Safety Zones" around moon bases. Critics (Russia/China) argue this is a "veiled attempt at colonization."
- ASAT Test Moratorium: A growing movement (started in 2022) where nations voluntarily pledge not to conduct "destructive direct-ascent ASAT tests" to prevent debris.
- Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs): These are the "Institutional Lubricants." They include sharing launch data and notifying others before a satellite performs a maneuver near another satellite.

## 7. Past UN Actions and Resolutions

### a. The Foundational "Classic" Resolutions

These resolutions are passed almost every year and serve as the basis for the PAROS agenda.

- A/RES/36/97 (1981): The first resolution specifically targeting Anti-Satellite (ASAT) systems. It was the moment the UN officially recognized that the arms race was moving from Earth to orbit.
- A/RES/68/50 (2013): A landmark resolution that endorsed the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs). It is the "Bible" of the Western Bloc, emphasizing voluntary data sharing to prevent war.
- A/RES/69/32 (2014): "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space." Introduced by Russia and China, this resolution urges states not to be the first to deploy a weapon in orbit. It remains a massive point of contention; the US and EU usually vote Against or Abstain because they believe "No First Placement" is unverifiable.

### b. The Current "Dual-Track" Resolutions (2024–2026)

As of January 2026, the UN is following two distinct paths to solve the space crisis.

*–Track A: The Legalist Path (Russia/China-led)*

- A/RES/79/34 (2024/25): "Further Practical Measures for PAROS."
  - The Action: This resolution established a new Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the period 2025–2028.
  - The Goal: To negotiate a "legally binding instrument" (a treaty) to ban space weapons.

*–Track B: The Normative Path (USA/UK/EU-led)*

- A/RES/78/20 (2023/24): "Reducing Space Threats through Norms of Responsible Behavior."
  - The Action: It focuses on "behaviors" (actions) rather than "objects" (weapons).

- The Goal: To agree that certain actions—like flying a satellite too close to another or creating debris—are "irresponsible" and should be banned by social norm before a law is written.

- A/RES/77/41 (2022/23): "Destructive Direct-Ascent ASAT Testing."
  - The Action: Calls for a moratorium (a freeze) on blowing up satellites with missiles.
  - 2026 Context: Over 40 countries have now pledged to follow this, making it a "de facto" international norm.

**c. The 2024 Security Council Veto (The "Space Nuke" Crisis)**

In April 2024, a major event occurred that still defines the debate in 2026:

➔ The US and Japan proposed a Security Council Resolution to reaffirm the ban on nuclear weapons in space (Article IV of the OST).

➔ Russia vetoed it.

➔ Result: This led to a "veto initiative" meeting in the General Assembly, where many countries accused Russia of wanting to deploy nuclear anti-satellite weapons. Russia argued the resolution was "narrow" and should have banned all weapons, not just nukes.

## 8. Involved Parties (Countries)

**a. The Western Bloc: United States & Allies (UK, Japan, South Korea)**

- Core Philosophy: "Norms of Responsible Behavior."
- Key Stance: They believe a legally binding treaty (like the PPWT) is impossible to verify and would only limit their own technological advantages while rivals cheat.
- 2026 Action: The US Space Force has transitioned to a "Full-Spectrum Warfighting" doctrine. Under the "Golden Dome" initiative, they are developing space-based interceptors to destroy missiles in their "boost phase."
- The "Red Line": They will likely vote against any resolution that calls for an immediate, non-verifiable ban on all space hardware, but will support bans on kinetic ASAT tests (which create debris)

**b. The Russian Federation**

- Core Philosophy: "Legalism and Strategic Parity."
- Key Stance: Russia is the primary author of the "No First Placement" (NFP) initiative. They argue that the US is using "norms" as a smokescreen to militarize space.
- 2026 Action: Following the expiration of New START in February 2026, Russia has signaled it may no longer adhere to previous voluntary restraints. They frequently note that Western "commercial" satellites (such as Starlink) are becoming legitimate military targets.
- The "Red Line": Russia insists on a legally binding treaty (PPWT) and views any Western "voluntary" measures as insufficient.

**c. The People's Republic of China**

- Core Philosophy: "Shared Future for Mankind" (rhetorically) and "Strategic Dominance" (practically).
- Key Stance: China co-sponsors the PPWT with Russia. They position themselves as the champion of the "Global South" against Western "space hegemony."
- 2026 Action: China is aggressively expanding its "dual-use" capabilities, including satellites that can "clean debris" and, in theory, grapple or disable enemy satellites.
- The "Red Line": China will oppose any measure that limits its ability to defend its space-based economic interests (Silk Road in Space) or its right to develop defensive technologies.

**d. The European Union (The "Third Way" Bridge)**

- Core Philosophy: "Strategic Autonomy and Sustainability."
- Key Stance: The EU often acts as a mediator. They support the US call for norms but are more open to the eventual development of legal frameworks.
- 2026 Action: In Q2 2026, the EU will formally launch the "European Space Shield," an action plan to protect European satellites from jamming, spoofing, and physical threats.

- The "Red Line": The EU is obsessed with Space Debris. They will likely support any clause that protects the "long-term sustainability" (LTS) of the orbital environment.

**e. India (The "Swing State")**

- Core Philosophy: "Strategic Autonomy."
- Key Stance: India is a major space power that historically supported PAROS but has recently shifted toward a more active defense posture (after its 2019 ASAT test).
- 2026 Action: India is currently conducting high-level "Strategic Dialogues" with France and the EU to build a "Security and Defense Partnership" in space.
- The "Red Line": India will not support any treaty that locks in the current advantages of the US/Russia/China "Big Three" while preventing India from catching up.

**f. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) & Global South**

- Core Philosophy: "Space as the Common Heritage of Mankind."
- Key Stance: Led by nations such as Indonesia, Egypt, and Brazil, they fear that an arms race will destroy the satellites they rely on for development (agriculture, weather, telemedicine).
- 2026 Action: They are acting as "honest brokers," pushing for Capacity Building, demanding that space powers share technology and data with developing nations in exchange for the NAM's support on security resolutions.
- The "Red Line": They vehemently oppose the "Sovereignization" or "Safety Zones" in space (like the Artemis Accords), which they see as a form of "neo-colonialism."

## 9. Questions to Ponder

1. Where should the international community draw the line between the militarization and weaponization of outer space, especially given the prevalence of dual-use technologies?

2. How does the growing threat of orbital debris and the risk of the Kessler Syndrome challenge traditional understandings of security, and should environmental sustainability be treated as a core disarmament issue within DISEC?

3. Does the vulnerability of satellites and the concept of "first-strike instability" make conflict in outer space more likely, and how can states reduce incentives to target space assets first during crises?

4. In a multipolar space environment involving the United States, China, Russia, the EU, and emerging space powers, is an arms race in outer space inevitable, or can cooperative frameworks still succeed?

5. Are existing legal instruments, particularly the Outer Space Treaty and related UN treaties, sufficient to address modern counter-space capabilities such as ASAT weapons, or do they require fundamental reform?

6. Given the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, should the international community prioritize legally binding treaties or focus on voluntary norms, confidence-building measures, and "rules of the road" as an interim solution?

7. How can the interests and vulnerabilities of developing countries and the Global South be adequately protected in debates dominated by technologically advanced space-faring states?