General Assembly 4th Committee

Chair Report

"Ensuring International Cooperation in Strategic and Military Operations in Space"

Chair: Sofia Li
Deputy Chair: Zita Justus

Personal Statements

Head Chair – Sofia Li

Dear Delegates,

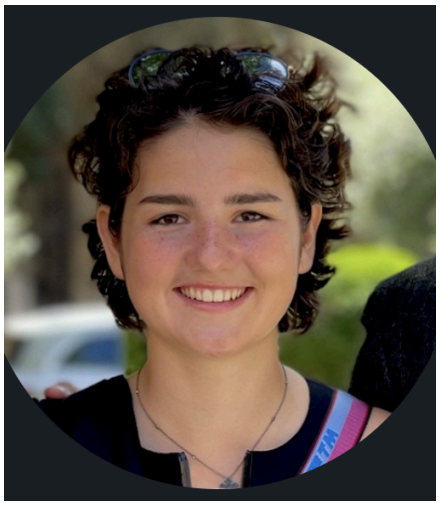
My name is Sofia Li and I will be your head chair for GA4 in MUNISS 2024. I am going to be chairing alongside my fellow deputy chair Zita Justus.
I'm currently in the 10th grade at Frankfurt International School. So far I've been to five conferences, and this is my second as a student officer. It's my first time at MUNISS, but I'm sure it'll be a great experience!

As a committee, we will be discussing the issues of "Ensuring International Cooperation in Strategic and Military Operations in Space", "Establishing Guidelines for the Operation of Military Bases Abroad", and "Promoting Sustainable Economic Recovery and Social Reintegration for Former Child Soldiers in the DRC".
And so, as delegates in GA4 (also called the 'Special Political and Decolonization Committee'), we will be tackling these problems with an aim to find solutions to the generational and historically derived impacts of colonialism around the world.

While these can be challenging topics, I am sure that all delegates will be able to produce versatile and impactful clauses in order to combat the aforementioned issues. If you have any questions about the topics, this research report, or even any general questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at xi_li@fis.edu.

See you all soon! Looking forward to meeting each and every one of you :)

Deputy Chair – Zita Justus



Dear Delegates,

My name is Zita Justus, I'm 17 years old, and I'm currently in 11th grade at the International School of Hamburg. I have participated twice at the THIMUN conferences. In 2023 I was in the SDC 2 committee, representing the Syrian Arab Republic, and in 2024 I was in the HRC 2 committee representing Belarus. This will be my first time at MUNISS conference, but i'm excited to meet new people, and i'm sure it will be a amazing experience.

MUNISS is a student-run, small-scale Model UN (MUN) conference that provides a forum for global problem debate and diplomatic exercises. Participants (delegates) work together to solve challenges in the real world while representing various nations. MUNISS seeks to improve communication, negotiating, and critical thinking abilities.

GA4, also known as the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, is a non-advanced committee in Model United Nations (MUN).

Participating in the GA4 committee can be an excellent first experience for delegates in Model United Nations (MUN). It is imperative that delegates learn everything there is to know about the issues at hand and the position of the nation that they are representing. Become familiar with the procedures and take an active part in committee deliberations by negotiating and giving well-prepared statements. Forging alliances and engaging with other delegates, networking and diplomatic abilities are crucial. In addition, concentrate on drafting resolutions that address the agenda issues and collaborating effectively. Accept the learning process, improve your public speaking abilities, and obtain understanding of the complexities of global diplomacy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the research report, or in fact any topic in general. you can reach me at zjustus@ishamburg.org.

I'm excited to meet each and every one of you. See you soon.

Introduction

The emergence of space as a critical domain has its roots in the Cold War, where the Soviet Union and the United States ignited a frenzied competition for dominance over territories in space. In fact, it is said that the launch of Sputnik 1 on October 4th, 1957 was the catalyst for the outset of space becoming a contested domain.

From 1957 to 1990, also known as the ‘first space age’, both the Soviet Union and the United States made groundbreakingly rapid technological advances in human spaceflight, rockets and satellites. They quickly established themselves as the dominant powers in space - becoming responsible for over 93 percent of all satellite launches during this time period (Harrison et al. 1). After 1991 was when the ongoing ‘second space age’ began. During this period of time, the number of nations with space capabilities grossly increased, and is still increasing. With that, there have been many drastic changes, including: changes in the commercial uses of space, the role of private space companies that are involved, the geopolitical environment on Earth, and the military balance of power (Harrison et al. 3).

In recent years, the number of nations with space capabilities has grown, and the reliance on space assets for communication, navigation, and surveillance has increased significantly. This has led to a growing recognition of the need for international cooperation in space to prevent conflicts, manage risks, and promote the sustainable use of outer space ("Challenges and Opportunities").

International cooperation in space can take many forms: this includes information sharing, activity coordination, and the development of shared norms and rules. In the United Nations, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, formed in 1957, serves as a forum for international cooperation and the development of international space law (Ben-Itzhak). Other international organizations, such as the European Space Agency and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, also play a vital role in promoting cooperation and coordination in space activities (Ben-Itzhak).

However, despite all of the above, ensuring international cooperation in strategic and military operations in space will always remain a complex challenge due to the inherent strategic and military implications of space activities. It is undeniable that many nations will be reluctant to share sensitive information pertaining to their activities in space, or even coordinate with other nations, due to concerns about national security and strategic advantages. To top that all off, different national interests, different levels of technological capabilities, and different interpretations of international law all make developing norms and rules for responsible behavior a very arduous task (Ben-Itzhak).

Regardless, there are still many benefits of international cooperation in space exploration: from increased political sustainability to workforce stability, cooperation will bring forth significant benefits to all that participate (Broniatowski et al.).

As delegates in GA4, you are all tasked with engaging in debates, negotiations, and collaborative problem-solving to develop resolutions on this issue.

Thus to navigate the different complexities of this topic, all delegates should really seek to consider: the current state of international cooperation and affairs, the challenges and barriers to cooperation, and the best practices and lessons learned from successful solutions.

Glossary

Space militarization: The usage of space for military purposes - in particular, the establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications in outer space ("Space Militarization").

Space weapons: These consist of armed systems like weaponized satellites and orbital gliders for space-to-space or space-to-Earth attacks, and Earth-to-space missiles targeting satellites. Despite their military applications as of late, land-launched weapons aimed at Earth targets and passive military satellites are not considered to be space weapons (“Space weapons”).

Orbital debris: Space or orbital debris, also known as ‘space junk’, consists of various man-made objects in space that no longer serve any useful purpose. Such objects include defunct satellites, spent rocket parts, fragments from collisions or explosions, or any other signs of human activity in space. Space debris poses a significant risk to operational spacecraft during their flights - including the International Space Station - due to the potential for collisions (O’Callaghan).

Defense pact: An agreement posed between countries that calls for military assistance in the case of an attack (Johnson et al.)

Arms control: Agreed limitations between countries on the development, manufacturing, accumulation, spread, and utilization of military forces, small arms, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction. Such agreements aim to promote peace and stability by reducing the risks associated with the proliferation and use of arms (“Arms control”).

Heavenly bodies: A natural celestial object, visible in the sky, such as a star, planet, natural satellite, asteroid, comet, the Moon or the Sun. Objects flying or moving in the atmosphere are not usually considered as heavenly bodies.

Issue Explanation

Growing rivalry and the necessity for increased collaboration describe the current state of international cooperation in military and strategic activities in space. A number of nations, such as China and Russia, are creating and deploying counter space technologies with the intention of thwarting or weakening US space-based capabilities (“'We Have Not Passed the Point of No Return', Disarmament Committee Told, Weighing Chance Outer Space Could Become Next Battlefield | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”). This makes it extremely difficult for the United States and its partners to continue its space-based activities and sustain national security.

The absence of comprehensive agreements or treaties that address the escalating risks and difficulties is one of the main issues impeding international cooperation in space. Broader multilateral agreements are required to set standards and regulations for space operations, even while the US has been establishing bilateral agreements, like the Artemis Accords, with governments who are interested in taking part in its space projects (“Critical issues.”). For example, the very contentious topic of resource extraction from heavenly bodies necessitates international coordination and collaboration.

Another problem is the need for improved communication and information sharing among countries involved in space operations. The United States is working to remove barriers to sharing information with allies and streamline its ability to communicate across the U.S. government (“'We Have Not Passed the Point of No Return', Disarmament Committee Told, Weighing Chance Outer Space Could Become Next Battlefield | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”). Strengthening these communication channels and promoting transparency can enhance cooperation and coordination in strategic and military operations in space.

Unresolved international collaboration in space-related military and strategic activities may give rise to new problems for the global community. It may cause tensions and instability to rise as the space weapons race intensifies. Threats to international security might arise from this as space wars have the potential to destroy satellites and interfere with vital functions like navigation and communication. Furthermore, there might be a substantial influence on social and economic stability from the financial losses resulting from the disruption of satellite services and the blending of military and civilian space boundaries. In order to guarantee the safe and peaceful use of space for the benefit of all countries, it is imperative that these concerns be addressed through increased international collaboration.

Key Countries Involved

- **United States:** As a global leader in space exploration and technology, the United States has the world's largest budget spending on space programs, of around $62 billion USD in 2022 (“Global governmental”). This country has a robust space program, which includes the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the recently established U.S. Space Force. Their space capabilities include satellite communication, navigation, Earth observation, and national security missions. In response to growing threats to national security from adversaries like Russia and China, the U.S. has established the Space Force and re-installed the Space Command. These institutions are responsible for organizing personnel, conducting operations, and maintaining counter-space capabilities (Wehtje).
- **Russia:** With a long history in space exploration, Russia operates the Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities. The country maintains the world's second-largest satellite constellation and is a key partner in the International Space Station (ISS). Russia also has significant military space capabilities, which includes reconnaissance and communications satellites (Wehtje). In 2022, the nation spent $3.42 billion USD on space programs - surprisingly the fifth highest in the world, contrary to its historical dominance (“Global governmental”).
- **China:** As a rapidly emerging space power, China has made significant strides in both civilian and military space activities. The China National Space Administration (CNSA) oversees the country's space program, which includes human spaceflight, lunar exploration, and satellite technology. China also operates its own global navigation satellite system, BeiDou (Wehtje). In 2022, the nation spent $11.94 billion USD on space programs; the 2nd highest in the world at the time (“Global governmental”).
- **Other European Countries:** The member states of the European Space Agency, through collaboration, have established themselves a very strong presence in space exploration and technology worldwide. Collectively, the 22 member states of the ESA spent around $13 billion on space activities (“Global governmental”). The aforementioned 22 member states are:
    - **Austria**
    - **Belgium**
    - **Czech Republic**
    - **Denmark**
    - **Estonia**
    - **Finland**
    - **France**
    - **Germany**
    - **Greece**
    - **Hungary**
    - **Ireland**
    - **Italy**
    - **Luxembourg**
    - **The Netherlands**

- **Norway**
- **Poland**
- **Portugal**
- **Romania**
- **Spain**
- **Sweden**
- **Switzerland**
- **The United Kingdom**

History of the Topic

As different nations pursue their own objectives and technological breakthroughs in space, the issue of guaranteeing international collaboration in strategic and military actions in space has changed throughout time. This is a synopsis of the subject's past:

Early Space Exploration: The United States and the Soviet Union were the main forces in space exploration in the middle of the 20th century. The development of rockets and satellites for military use resulted from the space race between these two nations (“A Brief History of Space Exploration.”)

Cold War Era: Space became a disputed arena for military might and geopolitical benefit during this time. The rush to create cutting-edge space technology began when the US and the USSR saw space as a possible theater of conflict (“'We Have Not Passed the Point of No Return', Disarmament Committee Told, Weighing Chance Outer Space Could Become Next Battlefield | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”)

Outer Space Arms Race: The development of outer space weaponry and the quest for space supremacy gave rise to worries of an arms race in space. Tensions and the prospect of war increased as certain nations, particularly the United States, were charged with utilizing space for military objectives (“'We Have Not Passed the Point of No Return', Disarmament Committee Told, Weighing Chance Outer Space Could Become Next Battlefield | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”)

Congestion and Competition: There is a growing amount of competition, disputed areas, and congestion in the strategic space environment. The exponential rise in satellite orbital numbers has sparked worries about possible accidents and interference with satellite services, which might result in financial losses (“'We Have Not Passed the Point of No Return', Disarmament Committee Told, Weighing Chance Outer Space Could Become Next Battlefield | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”)

International collaboration: Initiatives to foster international collaboration in space have been undertaken. Because it was designed, built, and is operated by various countries, the International Space Station (ISS) is a symbol of collaboration. Nonetheless, obstacles still need to be overcome to guarantee efficient collaboration in military and strategic space activities (“A Brief History of Space Exploration.”)

Has the Issue Increased or Decreased?

Over time, there has been an increase and a decrease in the issue of guaranteeing international collaboration in military and strategic space activities. There have been major attempts to encourage collaboration and peaceful usage of space, even if there are still worries about an arms race and the militarization of space.

Any Previous Attempts

Initiatives of the UN:

International collaboration in space operations has been aggressively promoted by the United Nations. The primary UN committee addressing space-related matters was founded in 1959 and is known as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).
The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 is one of the international treaties and accords that COPUOS has helped negotiate and ratify. This pact lays forth guidelines for the peaceful use of space and forbids the stationing of nuclear weapons there.
Additionally, resolutions advocating for the prevention of an arms race in space and the advancement of international collaboration in space operations have been enacted by the UN General Assembly.

International Accords and Treaties:

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty forbids the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in space and was ratified by more than 100 countries, including significant space-faring nations. Its goals are to secure the peaceful use of space.
The Moon Agreement (1979) is a convention that lays forth guidelines for using and exploiting the Moon and other celestial bodies. It places a strong emphasis on the necessity of international collaboration as well as humanity's shared history (“Reflections on Post-Cold War Issues for International Space Cooperation.”)
Space Station International (ISS): The European Space Agency (ESA), Japan, Canada, Russia, and the United States are among the nations that collaborate on the International Space Station (ISS). It provides a forum for global collaboration in space exploration and research (“Reflections on Post-Cold War Issues for International Space Cooperation.”)

Actors individually as well as groups:

European Space Agency (ESA): Promoting global collaboration in space operations has been a top priority for ESA. It has agreements with other nations and organizations for space exploration and research, and it has worked with NASA on a number of missions, including the International Space Station (“Space and National Security: International Cooperation, Competition, and Commerce.”).
The IAF, or International Astronautical Federation: The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is a global institution that fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing between space agencies, business, and academia. It plans gatherings and seminars to encourage communication and cooperation in space-related endeavors (“Reflections on Post-Cold War Issues for International Space Cooperation.”)
NGOs, or non-governmental organizations: Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs), like the International Institute of Space Law and the Secure World Foundation, advocate for the peaceful use of space and aim to advance international collaboration in space operations.

Media Contribution

Support of Cooperation:

It is acknowledged that collaborating in space with partners and allies improves deterrence and increases the range of possible military and diplomatic reactions to crises (“DOD Prioritizing Cooperation With Allies in Space > U.S.”)

In an effort to return humans to the moon, the United governments has been reaching bilateral agreements with governments that wish to take part in the Artemis program. This implies that international collaboration in space exploration and usage is supported and of interest (“Space and National Security: International Cooperation, Competition, and Commerce.”)

Concerns regarding Competitors:

The search results demonstrate how China and other international rivals have quickly advanced their capacities to challenge America's dependence on space-based services. This suggests that there is rising apprehension over the possible risks that other nations may pose in space (“DOD Prioritizing Cooperation With Allies in Space > U.S.”)

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