



**Background
Guide**



**UNOOSA:
MILITARIZATION OF
SPACE WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIS ON ASATS**

2023

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Letter from the Executive Board

2. Introduction to the Agenda

3. Concept of Militarization of Space

a. Why Militarisation and Weaponization of Space?

b. Weaponization of space v/s militarization of space

(Along with links for further research)

4. Implications of Space Weaponization

(Along with links for further research)

5. ASAT WEAPONS: A real threat to the future of Space

6. Global Frameworks to Prevent Space Weaponization

7. Way Forward

1. LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings!!

We take pleasure in welcoming all of you to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs being simulated at the **ORPHEUS MUN 2023**. This letter from the Executive Board will help you get a clear direction about the committee, the agenda that is supposed to be discussed and the method of researching that has to be followed. It is, however, important that you read the entire background guide very carefully and after reading it, focus on the topics that have been suggested for research and the links to the articles that have been attached herewith.

The way of approaching things and concepts in this background guide will be slightly different and it is preferred that you respect the way that has been suggested and then research in the manner so told in order to gain the maximum knowledge and also to get a clear direction of how United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs at the ORPHEUS MUN will function this year.

By reading these articles/news reports/documents attached with the research links you will be able to gain around 80% of the knowledge about the committee and the agenda and the only thing you would be required to do after reading the matter provided in this background guide is to work on the remaining 20% matter for your research from as many sources as you can find on the internet.

Here are certain Rules for Researching that you must follow:

Rule Number 1:

Read from as many sources as possible so as to get a wider angle of researching over things. Read a topic from at least 2-3 articles or sources and then prepare points on the same and not speeches.

Rule Number 2:

Read from more and more authentic documents of sources for getting genuine perspective about things. For example: Since this committee is the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, sources like the official website of the United Nations and that of its agencies, or articles published on the official sources like new agencies including Reuters and the like shall be preferred over sources like Wikipedia and Quora. However, these sources like Wikipedia can be used to read about things but cannot be relied upon as definitive proof or source for your research. Expand the horizons of your research by reading from at least 2-3 sources about a particular topic and then make notes.

Kindly feel free to write to me or contact me for queries or clarifications, if any at the contact details provided below.

Best of luck and happy researching!

Warm Regards,

- **Mr. Lakhan Saddi** (Chairperson, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs)
(Email: saddilakhan.ls@gmail.com)
- **Mr. Danny Alex** (Vice Chairperson, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs)

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA:

Militarization of Space with Special Emphasis on ASATs

Space militarization refers to the use of infrastructure and technology for military purposes. These can include gathering intelligence, navigation, communication, and weapon deployment. This results from the competition between nations to

gain an edge in space. Many countries have begun seeking to deploy assets in space, such as satellites.

Space militarization has led to some concern about the possibility of a space arms race. Additionally, there are growing concerns about the destruction of satellite systems, both civilian and military. This leads to an important topic of discussion: anti-satellite missiles (ASATs). ASATs can disrupt or destroy satellites in orbit. These weapons can be launched from Earth or an outer space vehicle. ASAT can include lasers, missiles, and electronic warfare systems. The development of ASATs can potentially threaten civilian life.

There have been efforts to create rules and regulations for the militarization of space. An important example is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. This treaty prohibits placing nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction in outer space. However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been limited, and the militarization of space remains a prominent issue.

To Read more about it, refer to the following links:

1. “The Militarization of Space and its Transformation into a Warfighting Domain”

https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/nagashima_02.html

2. “Outer Space - UNODA”

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/topics/outerspace/>

3. “Anti-satellite weapons: History, types and purpose”

<https://www.space.com/anti-satellite-weapons-asats>

3. **Concept of Militarization of Space**

The concept for space weaponization came up in the early 1980s through the “Strategic Defence Initiative” (SDI) also known as the “Star Wars” programme of the United States. The idea was to put a large number of satellites into orbit that would detect the launch of enemy missiles and then shoot them down. This space-based anti-missile defence was conceived not as a substitute for ground-based defence but as part of the concept of multi-layered defence which also included sea-based interceptors that are carried onboard ships and the ground-based Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD), the system designed for the engagement of the short and medium

a. Why Militarisation and Weaponization of Space?

The militarisation and weaponization of space are fundamentally at odds with constructive commercial and scientific projects. The war in space would destroy the intrinsic trust and cooperation necessary to maintain the systems deployed in space for peaceful purposes. Despite these facts, the development projects for militarisation and weaponization of outer space have been on the increase with the aim of one country achieving military dominance over the other in outer space.

The desire to establish military supremacy in outer space emerges out of two basic apprehensions; firstly, lack of faith in the present missile defence system to stall an incoming ICBM armed with a nuclear warhead and, secondly, to preserve own satellites in space against other Anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. Besides these two

reasons, the deployment of weapons in space would also give supremacy to a country in the conduct of war over the land, sea and air.

b. Weaponization of space v/s militarization of space

The weaponization of space is different from the militarization of space. Militarization of space includes the usage of space-based assets for command, control, communication, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities.

Militarization of space assists armies on the conventional battlefield whereas via weaponization of space, outer space itself becomes the battlefield. Space emerges as the ‘fourth frontier of war’.

To Read About It Refer To The Following Links:

1. “Weaponization and Militarisation of Space”,

<https://indianarmy.nic.in/WriteReadData/Documents/Weaponisation.pdf>

2. “The Militarisation of Outer Space”

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/130808/ISN_Special_Issues_Aug.2008.pdf

3. UNGA – PR - GA/DIS/3698

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/gadis3698.doc.htm>

4. Implications of Space Weaponization

The use of weapons in outer space that would disrupt, damage, destroy or disable civilian or dual-use (i.e., carrying out both military and civilian

functions) space objects could entail a range of humanitarian consequences.

The consequences of weapons testing and aggression in space could span generations, and current technological advances only increase the urgency for policymakers to pursue a limitations treaty.

To Read more about it, refer to the following links:

1. “What Are the Consequences of Militarizing Outer Space?”

<https://globalsecurityreview.com/consequences-militarization-space/#:~:text=The%20militarization%20of%20space%20would,community%20risks%20facing%20extreme%20consequences.>

2. “Militarization, weaponization, and the prevention of an arms race”

<https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5448-outer-space>

5. ASAT weapons: A real threat to the future of Space

Difficult to define, ASATs occupy a grey zone in international arms control. On one level, they are exactly what the term suggests: weapons designed to destroy or limit satellites for military purposes, such as undermining the command-and-control centres of an adversary’s military. ASATs can function in several ways.

Despite their deterrent functions, ASATs are more likely to provoke or exacerbate conflicts than dampen them, especially given the risk they pose to early warning satellites. These satellites are a crucial element of US ballistic missile defence, capable of detecting missiles immediately after launch and tracking their paths.

To Read more about it, refer to the following links:

1. ASAT Weapons

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/asat-weapons/>

2. Anti-Satellite Weapons

<https://hir.harvard.edu/anti-satellite-weapons-and-the-emerging-space-arms-race/>

3. ASAT test raises space risks

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-05/news/indian-asat-test-raises-space-risks>

6. Global Frameworks to Prevent Space Weaponization

- Outer Space Treaty - It was conceptualized by the United Nations in 1967. It emphasizes that the use of outer space should be peaceful and beneficial to all mankind. It claims that one nation cannot claim national sovereignty in outer space.
- Prevention of an outer space arms race-It stresses the use of space for peaceful purposes. Further, it calls for the importance of avoiding an arms race.
- Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) in Outer Space Activities
- United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS)

7. Way Forward

- The necessity of a strong legal framework: existing space laws should be revisited to develop a new legal framework to address concerns about the weaponization of outer space.
- Space situational awareness: In order to increase situational awareness of space objects already in space, states should submit valid information to international institutions. This data can be further reorganized and provided as open-source information to all.
- Technology transfer– legitimate access for all states to outer space and provision of training and access to technology without discrimination should be promoted.
- Transparency-Transparency and confidence-building measures can help maintain space security by complementing a negotiated international legal instrument on outer space arms control.

To Read more about it, refer to the following links:

1. Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

<https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/prevention-of-an-arms-race-in-outer-space-a-guide-to-the-discussions-in-the-cd-en-451.pdf>

8. Miscellaneous links to study:

- <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/anti-satellite-weapons/>
- <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-12/news/un-first-committee-calls-asat-test-ban>
<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-12/news/un-first-committee-calls-asat-test-ban>
- <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/8756904>

