

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Disarmament and International Security

QUESTION: The Question of the Demilitarization of Space

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Introduction and Background

Since the birth of humanity, people have looked to the stars and yearned to learn more. As technology evolves, nations are able to explore and send people into outer space. Thus, the famous “Space Race” was born in the 1960s all across the globe and opened up all new possibilities of space travel and scientific discoveries. But that also piqued the interest of nations who had the means to use space weaponry, mainly the United States of America and the Soviet Union. For the sake of the world, many governments agreed to maintain a demilitarized outer space in 1967. Today, though, sovereign nations are reconsidering their allegiance to the Outer Space Treaty.

Why Would Nations Like to Maintain a Demilitarized Space?

Maintaining a demilitarized outer space essentially means that space would remain unclaimed. This includes the moon, as well as any current or future celestial bodies. A demilitarized outer space would also ensure that any nation would be able to explore beyond our planet, without the threat of another country or “declared space.” A demilitarized space could also help ensure a

peace of mind to citizens of smaller or threatened nations, knowing that there would not be weapons of mass destruction above them. Space junk would also remain minimal with a demilitarized outer space.

Why Would Nations Like to Militarize Outer Space?

Many nations today believe that the future of war may take place above us, instead of on our own lands or seas. Space warfare may be the next step in wars, and countries want to start preparing. This warfare could include wars only taking place in our atmosphere, or weapons from space attacking the ground. Putting weapons into outer space could also show the dominance of one nation and scare off other countries. This could potentially lead to another Cold War type situation. As “Star Wars” as this all may sound, it is a possible outcome to unfold in the future.

Past Efforts to Solve This Problem

The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, also known as the Outer Space Treaty, was entered into force by the General Assembly of the United Nations in October of 1967. The treaty provided framework for the laws that dealt with outer space. These laws basically stated that the exploration of space will benefit all nations and is free to be explored by all. A major

aspect of this treaty was the banning of nuclear weaponry or any other mass destruction weapons in outer space. More principles of the treaty can be found on the official United Nations website.

In 2000, the United Nations passed the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space resolution to reaffirm the actions done by the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan proposed the idea for the Strategic Defense Initiative, which was famously nicknamed the “Star Wars” program. With Cold War tensions rising, this idea was meant to be a way to prevent nuclear attacks and respond to them. Reagan wanted to send nuclear weapons into space in order to enhance the power of the United States. If this would have been passed, then this would have opened the door to militarizing space.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions varies widely between sovereign nations. Ability to send weaponry into space is very limited to countries only with the means to do so.

A solution could be revisiting past United Nations resolutions and modernizing them accordingly to the decision of the committee. This could apply to decisions of maintaining a demilitarized space, or concluding that space should be militarized.

Another could be to send weapons into outer space to protect your nation from others who have done the same. Smaller countries could align with larger ones who have sent weapons into the atmosphere.

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