



Committee: Disarmament and international security

Question of: The question of the Arms Race in Space

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Introduction:

The question of an arms race in outer space has long been on the agenda of bilateral US-Soviet and multilateral fora concerned with arms limitation and disarmament, and it was, in actual fact, from those discussions that the idea of the prevention of an arms race in outer space came to the fore.

Further reinforcement to the proposal was provided by the technological, military, and political developments of the late 1950s and early 1960s which included, among others, the evolution of nuclear weapons technology, weapon delivery systems such as endo-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric launchers, and a political and military relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union which contributed to R&D on Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons

Part of the CD's (conference on disarmament) discussion is, of course, devoted to key terms such as peaceful purposes of space activities and peaceful uses of outer space, but consideration is in fact limited to an analysis of their relationship and not the military use of space.

While most delegations appear to believe that an agreement on measures aimed at confidence-building between States is feasible, the conclusion of a weapon-specific treaty, let alone a comprehensive the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) treaty, may well prove to be a difficult task if there is no consensus on the interpretation of key terms on the basic uses of outer space.

The Issue:

Since the issue of arms race in space was taken into consideration, there has been many attempts to get to an agreement, but this, as usual, has not been carried out. As a result, many states argue that existing treaties are insufficient for safeguarding outer space.

(PAROS) resolution

In 1981, debate over the weaponization of outer space led the CD to begin talks regarding the potential for a PAROS treaty. The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) is a UN resolution that reaffirms the fundamental principles of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and advocates for a ban on the weaponization of space.

The PAROS resolution acknowledges the limitations of existing laws related to outer space and recognizes that the Outer Space Treaty. The resolution advocates for further measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The CD (conference on disarmament) established a hoc committee on PAROS in 1985. However, Western opposition, particularly from the United States, avoided treaty negotiations and the committee was dissolved in 1994.

The committee has yet to meet again despite an annual, near unanimous vote by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the CD approving the PAROS resolution. The United States is the only country that voted against the resolution, with Israel abstaining. The United States argues that PAROS is unnecessary because there are no weapons—and thus no arms race—in outer space at this time.

State parties

Despite the deteriorating security situation, there are some signs of progress in the field of disarmament, such as the intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States to hold summit talks, a senior United Nations official said.

As for the reported commitment by the DPRK to denuclearization following the recent talks held in China, this also includes the successful reduction of strategic nuclear forces by Russia and the US to the levels required by their New START

Treaty. Looking to build on this momentum, the Commission has also included prevention of an arms race in outer space in its agenda for this session.

Key Events

Event/Date	Explanation
1959	In 1959, the UN General Assembly established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).
1967	The Outer Space Treaty agreement was adopted.
1979	Creation of the Conference on disarmament (CD)
1985	The CD established an added hoc committee to identify and examine issues relevant to PAROS such as the legal protection of satellites, nuclear power systems in space, and various confidence-building measures. The United States opposed.
1990	The United States stated that it “has not identified any practical outer space arms control measures that can be dealt within a multilateral environment.” With its large missile defense program and technical advantages in potential space weaponry, the United States has consistently refused to negotiate PAROS in the CD.
2nd December 2011	The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) is a UN resolution that reaffirms the fundamental principles of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and advocates for a ban on the weaponization of space. The PAROS resolution acknowledges the limitations of existing laws related to outer space and recognizes that the Outer Space Treaty. The resolution advocates for further measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.
2018	Session of the UN Disarmament Commission, held in New York.



Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

During the 1960s and 1970s a number of agreements were adopted to prevent the weaponization of outer space. Although these treaties ban the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space, they do not prevent states from placing other types of weapons in space. As a result, many states argue that existing treaties are insufficient for safeguarding outer space as “the common heritage of mankind.” In order to address this, the final document of the UN General Assembly’s Special Session on Disarmament mandated that negotiations should take place in what is now the Conference on Disarmament (CD), “in order to prevent an arms race in outer space” that are “held in accordance with the spirit of the [Outer Space Treaty].”

In 1985 the CD established an ad hoc committee to identify and examine issues relevant to PAROS such as the legal protection of satellites, nuclear power systems in space, and various confidence-building measures. The United States resolutely opposed giving the committee a negotiating mandate, preferring bilateral talks with the Soviet Union. The committee convened each year through 1994. No further committee meeting occurred due to objections made by the United States. In 1990 the United States stated that it “has not identified any practical outer space arms control measures that can be dealt within a multilateral environment.” With its large missile defense program and technical advantages in potential space weaponry, the United States has consistently refused to negotiate PAROS in the CD.

Under the draft treaty submitted to the CD by Russia in 2008, State Parties would commit to refrain from placing objects carrying any type of weapon into orbit, installing weapons on celestial bodies, and threatening to use force against objects in outer space. State Parties would also agree to practice agreed confidence-building measures.

A PAROS treaty would complement and reaffirm the importance of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which aims to preserve space for peaceful uses by prohibiting the use of space weapons, the development of space-weapon technology, and technology related to “missile defense.” The treaty would prevent any nation from gaining a military advantage in outer space

Since 2005, the UNGA has adopted further measures to ensure the prevention an arms race in outer space, approving an annual resolution on “Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.” China and Russia have produced several working papers on PAROS, which offer suggestions for different confidence building measures together with suggested verification measures. Some of these suggestions include: exchanges of information, demonstrations, notifications, consultations, and thematic workshops.

In 2008, China and Russia submitted a draft treaty to the CD entitled “Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects” (PPWT). The PPWT reiterates the importance of a weapon-free outer space, defines relevant terms such as “weapons in outer space,” and proposes the creation of an additional protocol to establish “measures of verification of compliance with the Treaty.

Last attempt to solve this issue was on 2017 June 16, when the EU Member States issued a statement to the Conference on Disarmament Working Group on the “Way Ahead” that proposed a multilateral non-legally binding instrument on Space Security.

Possible Solutions

There are some possible solution for the topic debated. Despite the deteriorating security situation, there are some signs of progress in the field of disarmament.

- Disputes should be arised between State Parties, they will first attempt to settle through negotiation and cooperation. If this fails, the situation may be referred to the executive organization of the PAROS treaty.
- Recommends that one specific collateral measure for disarmament on which the CD body should be able to make a contribution is the goal of preserving outer space as a realm free of conflict, noting that several recent trends are impacting the security and sustainability of outer space activities.
- Request the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of korea to continue its work in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.
- Calls upon a completely transparency of the activities carried out in the outer space.



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