

MUN

GA1 BACKGROUND GUIDE

AUSMUN 2021



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH WELCOME LETTER



Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2021. As an organization led by the students of AUS, AUSMUN has had the privilege of hosting some of the biggest and most diverse MUN conferences in this region. Our 2020 conference saw over 1000 delegate registrations from more than 45 national and international institutions!

Adapting to a New Normal, Promoting Resilience: given the turbulent year of 2020, there was no other theme which could have fit our present conditions better. A small outbreak in Wuhan exactly a year back has now trickled down into a global catastrophe which has two million dead, leaving a trail of broken lives in its wake. Looking at the severely distorted life that has become our 'new normal', some may question whether it could all have been avoided. Whether we could have been better prepared. And the broader goal of our conference is to do exactly that: teach the upcoming generation to question current policies in the hopes of preventing another similar global catastrophe.

This background guide has been formulated by your chairs along with the research team to provide you with a concise overview of the topics chosen.

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH WELCOME LETTER

The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous actions that have been taken, which can be used by delegates as a stepping stone to come up with their own solutions to the issues. At the end of each topic, delegates will find sections of questions and suggestions that aim to guide the process of research.

Delegates are greatly encouraged to expand beyond the guide and research about their country and topics in order to construct well founded arguments during debate. The delegate handbook contains a number of tips on how to research and addresses a vast array of common concerns. Finally, let me use this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all those who have helped create the document you are reading right now: Your wonderful moderators, the AUSMUN Research Team, and not to mention the AUSMUN Media team who have done an incredible job in designing and formatting the Background Guides.

I wish you the very best in preparing for the conference. If you have any queries at all, or need any specific help in researching for your topics, do not hesitate to contact research@ausmun.com

Sincerely,
Julia Jose
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2021

MODERATORS



Nariman Elewa

Hind Al Halyan

Aisha Almaazmi

Sakina Juzar

WELCOME DELEGATES!

We are in unprecedented times, and AUSMUN is something that brings us a sense of normalcy.

Dear delegates,

Welcome to AUSMUN 2021!

It is our honour to welcome you to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (GA-1). This committee, also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), is the primary panel for the consideration of matters of global security within the United Nations. Formed in 1945, it also serves in an advisory capacity to the UN Security Council. GA-1 is also able to make recommendations for resolutions on matters of peace and security as well as budgets and their use.

The 193 member states meet every year in October to discuss matters of importance that generally fall into 2 categories. Firstly, matters pertaining to weapons, such as nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and other conventional weapons. And secondly, matters that fall under disarmament such as regional disarmament and security, disarmament machinery, space militarization, and other disarmament measures.

This background guide serves as the first step of your research before the conference. We are looking forward to meeting all of you in February. If you have any questions or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us at GA1.AUSMUN2021@gmail.com. Please, also send your position papers to this email.

WARMEST REGARDS,
AUTHORS OF THE BACKGROUND GUIDE
NARIMAN, HIND, HUZAIFA

Summary and History of issue

This topic brings forth the discussion on the treaties and policies related to nuclear weapons and how significant is the issue of stockpiling and testing of such weapons. A nuclear weapon is an explosive device that uses the energy released by the splitting of atoms to cause a powerful blast. The vehicle that is able to deliver a nuclear attack is also referred to as a nuclear weapon such as an aircraft or mobile ground launch vehicles. The explosive device becomes deadlier by the use of an Intercontinental-ballistic missile (ICBM), which is a rocket capable of carrying a warhead at least 5,500km with the longest ranging ICBM reaching 16,000km, capable of delivering the warhead almost anywhere in the world (Cheng & Mosher, 2020).

Apart from direct destruction to life and property, the radioactive fallout from testing and use of these weapons harms life and Earth's climate. Therefore, testing and stockpiling these weapons are a threat to virtually every country in the world. As a country develops this weapon, it conducts tests and later accumulates large quantities as the production continues, this is known as stockpiling. The possession of nuclear weapons, testing, and stockpiling has worried the international community and thus certain treaties have been enacted.

The following timeline highlights the major events regarding the issue.

Timeline

Year	Event
1945	First nuclear test by the USA on 16th July Nuclear bombs dropped on Japan
1949	First nuclear test by the USSR
1952	First nuclear test by the UK
1959	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to encourage nuclear power research and its safe use
1960	France tests first atomic bomb
1961	USA and USSR developed ICBMs and Nuclear submarines USSR test Tsar Bomba- most powerful nuclear test conducted so far
1964	China tests its first nuclear bomb
1968	Via the UN, the US and USSR propose the NPT- the treaty on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons
1969	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean Latin American which is South American and countries until and including Mexico to become first populated region free of Nuclear Weapons
1972	US and USSR agree to limit the production of Nuclear weapons
1996	CTBT-Comprehensive Test ban treaty introduced
1998	India and Pakistan conduct series of nuclear tests
2006	NK after withdrawing from NPT conducts its first nuclear test
2017	9 countries with 16,000 nuclear bombs TPNW- Treaty on prohibition of nuclear weapons voted by 122 countries

(Pfeiffer, 2020)

Discourse on the issue

There are multiple treaties that prohibit the testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) focuses on the disarmament of existing warheads and forbids the manufacture of more nuclear weapons. There are approximately 13,000 nuclear warheads stockpiled between several countries as of early 2020, with Russia in the lead with 4,000 warheads,

followed by the US which possesses 3,800 warheads. India and Pakistan, both being non-signatories of the NPT, have almost 300 combined (FAS, 2020). France and the United Kingdom have made efforts to reduce their stockpile, now standing at some 200 warheads (The French, 2008). China is the only nuclear-weapon state that seems to be increasing its stockpile, standing at 260 warheads as of 2015 (Kile & Kristensen, 2017). The global stockpile poses a threat to global security due to the threats of misuse or accidental detonation. There is also the threat of intentional detonation, which may provoke a global nuclear war.

Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has been signed by 182 countries, forbids the testing of nuclear weapons. The last confirmed report of a weapons test was in 2017 when North Korea announced that it had successfully detonated a nuclear device underground (BBC, 2017). The testing of nuclear weapons has a long term effect on the environment and global security. The National Resources Defense Council estimates that the yield of atmospheric tests alone equals 428 Megatons, which is equivalent to over 29,000 Hiroshima-size bombs. The environmental effects are dependent upon the site of detonation, the type of weapon and its size. With the detonation of a nuclear warhead, radionuclides (atoms that emit radiation as they undergo radioactive decay) are dispersed into the atmosphere and the earth. As these are tested at designated sites, the threat to humans is usually due to the radiation (Report, n.d.). Nuclear testing is also detrimental to global peace and security as it may incite other nuclear states to step up their nuclear programs, further breaking treaties and increasing the threat to peace.

Past Actions by UN, International Organizations (IO) and NGOs

The United Nations has attempted to resolve the issue of stockpiling and testing of nuclear weapons. In 1968, a “Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty” (NPT) was signed, and so far it is the international security agreement that is most widely used (NTI, n.d.). This treaty forbids non-nuclear-weapon states from producing nuclear weapons. However, five countries were exempt from the NPT in exchange for the

five nuclear-weapon-states to fully and completely disarm- these countries are France, the Russian Federation, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States (NTI, n.d.). India, Israel, and Pakistan still possess nuclear weapons, and never joined the NPT (NTI, n.d.). In 1995, the UN held a conference to review the NPT, where state parties agreed to extend the treaty, as well as include a “Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty” (CTBT) which prohibits the production of material that is fissile and for “progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally.” It also included the Middle East resolution, which called for all Middle East states to adhere to the NPT, and for actions to be taken in order to achieve a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (Resolution, 1995).

On July 7, 2017, the UN held a conference where they adopted the “Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Treaty” (United Nations, n.d.). Although none of the states that possessed nuclear weapons signed this treaty, it’s passage is a step in the right direction. Non-Governmental Organizations also had an active role. Amnesty International has released statements opposing the stockpiling and testing of nuclear weapons and has been monitoring the implementation of the treaty (Amnesty, n.d.), while the Red Cross and the Human Rights Watch have also been advocating for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and raising awareness on the humanitarian consequences of them (Red Cross, n.d.).

Questions and suggestions for further research

- How to determine that treaty guidelines on the banning of testing are being followed?
- What can be done about the effects of past nuclear tests?
- Is there a way to involve all countries in the treaties?
- How can we move forward with the efforts to decrease global nuclear weapon stockpiles?
- Roles of NGOs.
- The Iranian nuclear deal and its effects.
- The role of China, Russia, Pakistan and India in the stockpiling efforts.
- The potential responses to nuclear tests and threats.
- The economic effect of stockpiling efforts.

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Summary and History of issue

In this digital era, most countries are almost completely reliant on connectivity and digital data transmission for its operations. Similarly, several military operations and defense systems are monitored by satellites. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities as well as precision-guided munitions are dependent on the digital assets in space. Satellites and other space assets play a critical role in defence capabilities and monitoring war zones, thus it is crucial to protect these assets from foreign attacks. These assets are placed in the orbit of Earth, and those that are for surveillance and communications are specially placed in the geosynchronous orbit. Geosynchronous orbit is a high Earth orbit, 35,786km above the equator, and certain satellites are placed here to be able to match the Earth's rotation speed and better serve their purpose (Marino, 2020).

Russia and China are developing anti-satellite weapons and this challenges the safety of satellites that play a significant role in the defense system of a country, alarming the United States of America in particular due to its rivalry with the two aforementioned states. Governments of Britain, Japan and Australia have voiced their concerns over China shooting down an aging satellite in low Earth orbit using a medium-range ballistic missile (Kestenbaum, 2007). This demonstration was alarming as it showed the high precision of a missile in space and what it is capable of. Due to the ambiguity in the technology of its rivals, the US, Russia and China are developing themselves to fight off foreign aggression in space and are thus shifting towards a space arms race which could involve arming the space assets.

The following timeline explains how the Idea of space warfare dates back to the beginning of space age.

Timeline

Year	Event
1958	Launch of explorer 1 by the US American and Soviet engineers worked on weapons that could defeat satellites
1959	US-first anti-satellite test Launch a missile from a bomber aircraft onto a defunct satellite
2002	US Space command de-established
2006	President Bush authorized a new national space policy, superseding the National Space Policy of September 14, 1996
2007	China anti-satellite test, shoots down its aging satellite Other nations started developing and launching ASAT (anti-satellite) weapons
2008	Allar Commission delivered to the congress- mentioned the need for undersecretary of Defense for Space and to have someone responsible for training of space experts
2015	The Chinese and Russians develop a space service Chinese created the PLA Strategic Support Force
2019	Trump administration proposed the idea of Space Force as separate service under the department of Air Force 20th December- US Space force founded

(Marino, 2020)

Discourse on the issue

After the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, the space race, and underlying arms race, became of vital importance due to its implications on global security. The cooperation of various United Nations committees and its member states has produced resolutions and treaties on the issue, the most notable of which is the Outer Space Treaty. Among other things, the treaty prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in outer space but lists no prohibitions on other space weaponry.

The main obstacle to establishing a comprehensive treaty on space

militarisation and weaponization specifically is the difficulty in defining a space weapon. A space weapon can be considered to be any object that is able to inflict damage on celestial bodies, satellites, or missiles traveling through space. As of yet, there are no weapons currently in space that fit these parameters (UNOOSA, 2019).

The United States has been a staunch opposer of treaties on space militarisation and warfare and the proposed Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) citing the fact that without a clear definition of a space weapon, no treaty can be proposed and ratified. The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have been actively involved in the space race discussion. Both countries have put forth several working drafts of PAROS to advance the debate. In 2008, China and Russia submitted a draft treaty entitled Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) which reinforces the idea of keeping outer space weapons-free (FAS, 2008). The US opposed this treaty due to the conference over its sovereignty and security, despite that the treaty reiterated a state's right of self-defense.

Past Actions by UN, International Organizations (IO) and NGOs

The United Nations has attempted to resolve the issue of militarization of outer space and the possibility of a space arms race. In 1959, the United Nations' General Assembly initiated the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), where they studied the legal problems linked with the exploration of celestial bodies, and encouraged research on the matter (Proposed Prevention, 2020). Almost a decade later, in 1967, the United Nations General Assembly signed an Outer Space Treaty which detailed the terms for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space which includes the moon and other celestial bodies (Treaty, n.d.). The treaty mentions that outer space is free to be explored by any state and that it is not subject to occupation or claim of sovereignty (Treaty, n.d.). It also mentions that "states shall not place nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on celestial bodies or station them in outer space in any other manner" (Treaty, n.d.);

however, the treaty did not signify that any and all weapons have to be absent from space, which in turn leaves a gap for non-nuclear weapons to orbit. Furthermore, the United Nations passed resolution 66/27 in 2011 on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) which reconfirmed the fundamental principles stated in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and also advocated for the ban of weaponization in space (Proposed Prevention, 2020). The United States was the only country that voted against the resolution. Non-Governmental Organizations have not commented on this issue yet.

Questions and suggestions for further research

- What constitutes a space weapon?
- Should all countries be free to launch satellites for surveillance and military purposes without strict regulation?
- Is there a possibility that the US will sign the treaties it has previously opposed if its rivals successfully develop anti-satellite weapons before the US?
- How are other countries affected by the possibility of a space arms race between the US, China and Russia?
- Role of NGOs.
- Countries that have a space program and can possibly militarize their space assets.
- Effect on existing cooperation and ties between countries if space warfare takes place.
- Space debris, its effects and how space militarization could affect the general public.

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