Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL)

Topic A: The Aftermath of the Islamic State

Topic B: Space Politics and the Colonization of Space

Committee Overview

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee is the fourth of six committees of the United Nations General Assembly and is in charge of dealing with decolonization, Palestinian refugees, human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, outer space, public information, atomic radiation, and University for Peace. The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. In the past several years at JHUMUNC, this committee has discussed issues including the South China Sea, Election Monitoring, refugees and settlements in Palestine, and small arms control.

The topics that the committee shall discuss are two of the most pressing issues facing the world today. The Islamic State is the modern day manifestation of structural instability that has plagued the Middle East for nearly a decade. Creating a plan of action to deal with its eventual collapse is necessary at this stage in order to prevent the same instability from plaguing the region even further. A comprehensive plan might also go a long way towards stabilizing global markets and stemming the tide of terrorism. The other topic set for discussion is the political framework of space. Despite the continuing and deepening interest in space, the legal provisions in that arena remain inadequate. The development of legislation and a regime to regulate future activities in this sphere is vital to prevent future conflict and exploitation that might erupt.

Introduction

One of the topics that will be heavily discussed in SPECPOL is the Islamic State. The Islamic State (IS), also known as ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), ISIL (the Islamic State in the Levantine), or Daesh, formed in June 2014 when the group formally declared the establishment of a “caliphate,” a state governed in accordance to Islamic law (Sharia) by God’s deputy on Earth (caliph). IS has demanded that all Muslims across the world swear allegiance to its leader Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al-Badri al-Samarrai and move to territory under its control. Currently, this territory includes much of the Tigris-Euphrates river basin, with Western Syria and Eastern Iraq being largely under IS control. IS has also told other jihadists groups to accept its supreme authority and many offshoot groups of al-Qaeda already have. In attempting to restore God’s rule on Earth and to defend the Muslim community, IS is destroying all

obstacles in its path. Its largest obstacle is a US-led coalition that vows to destroy them, and IS uses their confrontations as fuel to garner more support for their cause, viewing it as an apocalyptic showdown between Muslims and enemies.\(^3\)

Recently, the Islamic State has been gaining a lot of worldwide attention because of the brutal tactics it carries out to achieve its goals. Beheadings, crucifixions, and mass shootings are commonly used to induce fear in its enemies. These acts are justified by their extreme interpretation of Sunni Islam, in which the rest of the world is made up of non-believers who seek to destroy Islam. Interestingly, their attacks are aimed towards Muslims and non-Muslims alike, justifying atrocities against any person not in support of the Islamic State. The massacres have gone too far, with Muslims and even al Qaeda leaders denouncing the militant group.\(^4\)

With rampant instability and fear in the Middle East, state-building is becoming a more and more important matter in creating peace and sustainability in the region. One might argue that the Islamic State is in fact a state attempting to rebuild the Middle East; however, IS is not the “state” that the Middle East needs as it is fueled by the terror of its people, rather than the unity and governance of a true national state. That is why the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon, has deemed this irrational group the “Un-Islamic Non-State”, citing how they “ruthlessly hijack religion to control territory and vital economic resources.”\(^5\)

**Why State Building in the Middle East Matters**

In order to mitigate the violence occurring to innocent civilians in the Middle East, state-building is necessary. So what exactly is state-building? In the past few decades, state-building has become an integral part of peacebuilding by the international community and it consists of three dimensions: the security dimension (which is often deemed the most important), the political dimension, and the economic dimension.\(^6\) The reason why the security dimension is the most important is because in conflict or post-conflict societies, a safe environment must be created in order to make wider political and economic developments possible.\(^7\) In a report released by the UN in 2010, there are three main approaches to state-building. The first, good governance, talks about successful ways that governments can create public institutions that protect people’s rights. The second, new public management, focuses on market-like reforms within the public sector to provide the government with necessary power to implement a development plan on the economy while also using competitive market-based techniques to enhance public sector production. The third, decentralization, disperses power to lower levels of government, where all classes, even the poor, can exercise influence and a variety of actors can participate in the provision of services. These state building

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\(^4\) Ibid.


\(^7\) Ibid.
methods have been used in Africa, Latin America, and Palestine. Furthermore, a distinction must be drawn between mere reconstruction and state-building. While reconstruction of the physical scars of war and terrorism is certainly important, it does not solve the underlying root cause which damages the stability of the Middle East. Instead, state-building is critical because, according to former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, it is the act of building political infrastructure that unites competing forces and ensures order. In this case, the opposing sides of the Islamic State and other Muslims must be united under a stronger state government; this divide is exacerbated by the religious differences between the Sunni and Shiite Muslims (specific religious differences will be discussed in the Contemporary Conditions section below). Middle Eastern stability is important for countless reasons. From earliest history, the Middle East, or the region known as Palestine, has been the global center for trade, science, and religion of ancient civilizations. Recently, the area has become a hotbed of the oil trade. A majority of the world’s supply of oil is drilled and exported from the Middle East, and continued instability in the area could spell disaster for oil prices and culminate in a global economic roller coaster.

Major Issues that the Committee Must Address

There are multiple issues that must be addressed by this committee that deal with the Islamic State and its aftermath. Even though SPECPOL is not responsible for defeating the Islamic State, much can be done to help the communities affected by it. To start off, something has to be done to help with Iraqi and Syrian refugees. IS has forced a lot of innocent civilians that do not support them away from their homes and to neighboring countries. In Syria alone, there are more than 4.7 million refugees hiding in neighboring countries, with a majority in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Additionally, according to Mercy Corps, an NGO, more than 13.5 million people are still in need of assistance inside of Syria. Even though this humanitarian crisis largely stems from the Syrian Civil War, the Islamic State actually plays a major role in the internal power struggles of the country. Meanwhile, on the Iraq side of things, the UNHCR has reported that over 1.9 million Iraqi people have been displaced from their homes in 2014, and that number has surely risen in the past few years. To counter this problem, this committee must address not only ways to aid the refugees through

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emergency support and camps, but to also find ways that they can be safely reintegrated into their countries in the aftermath of the Islamic State.

Besides the humanitarian issues that need to be accounted for by the committee, there are multiple political issues that need to be resolved as well. Since SPECPOL is not responsible for shutting down and ending the violence caused by the Islamic State, most of its duties are associated with what to do after the Islamic State’s possible collapse. There is so much international effort going towards fighting ISIL, and it seems like they are eventually doomed to fail; it is time to start thinking of solutions to maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East region, as well as building or rebuilding states and governments that are capable of sustainable growth and development for the future.

Questions the Committee Must Address

1. What must be done to prevent another jihadist militant group or “irrational” group from rising to power in the Middle East?

In order to determine how to stop the formation of these terrorist groups, one must understand the individuals who join these groups by analyzing the psychology of terrorism. Most people are frustrated with their social and economic conditions and join to make a difference in society. With that being said, economic development and aid may certainly go a long way in re-instilling stability in the region. However, economic development definitely comes with more economic inequality as shown in the histories of many developed countries. Is there a right balance of aid that can be offered to this region that fosters growth and stability in the Middle East? Or is it more beneficial to allow for the independent rise of the states of the Middle East, since global intervention has historically been associated with sparking terrorism and might even defeat the entire purpose of the committee by subtly re-entrenching colonialist ideologies in an attempt to help them? Moreover, a completely different issue also contributes to the formation of terrorist groups: religious extremism. Is there anything that can be done to unite different religious groups without erasing their cultures? As long as religious divides continue to exist in the Middle East, especially between the Sunnis and Shiites, the potential for more violence remains prominent. Some people argue that ISIL may actually be bringing some Sunnis and Shiites together, since many everyday people in the Middle East are tired of discord and dislike how either side is justifying violence against each other. This shift is definitely a good sign for the future and education aimed at younger generations may bring more peaceful interfaith relationships between religious groups.

How can SPECPOL help bridge the gap between religious groups in the Middle East? In fact, Sunnis and Shiites lived in harmony with each other for a millennium


before the rise of the technological age. Surprisingly, with the coming of modern communications and transportation, the drawing of national boundaries, and the establishment of major cities, the two groups were suddenly thrown at each other and memories of past unsettled differences were exposed and exploited.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, this empirical situation begs the question of whether aiding the development of the Middle East will actually exacerbate the religious divide between Sunnis, Shiites, and other religious groups. As one can see, the religious, social, and economic solutions towards reaching a peaceful future are all interconnected. The job of the committee is to find a peaceful equilibrium state that satisfies all aspects of a stable and sustainable future which decreases the chances of future radical group formations.

2. Why are states and governments failing in the Middle East and what type of state structure would best fit Iraq, Syria, and other Middle Eastern countries?\textsuperscript{19}

The SPECPOL committee must decide what method of state-building is best during times of severe conflict and crisis and needs to consider how the international community can aid states of the Middle East without violating their sovereignties. Unfortunately, state building has historically not met the high expectations of many people and often leads to violence. Thus, this committee must be very careful in constructing the right approach to state building. Countless problems plague the success of state-building in Palestine and must be addressed by the committee. These issues include, but are not limited to, a weak economic base, a lack of internal political settlement, weak linkages between ruling authorities and society at large, weakened social cohesion, gender inequality, weak civil society, and the perceived militarization of authority across the Middle East.\textsuperscript{19}

**Historical Background**

**Creation of the Modern State System in the Middle East (Post WWI)**

Although the Islamic State did not truly rise to power until 2014, its roots reach as far back as the end of World War I. Prior to World War I, the area that we know as the Middle East today was controlled by the Ottoman Empire. In World War I, the Ottoman Empire joined sides with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and they ultimately lost to the Allies, consisting of British and French forces. The partitioning of the Ottoman Empire actually happened early in the course of World War I, notably by the Sykes-Picot Agreement.\textsuperscript{20} The lines were drawn by Mark Sykes of the British government and Francois Georges-Picot of the French Government.\textsuperscript{21} Both were aristocrats seasoned in colonial administration, and believed that the Middle East would be better off under European control. Through this mutual understanding, France would take the northern half of the Ottoman Empire, which includes modern day Syria, parts of Turkey and Lebanon, while the British would take the southern half, including Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine.\textsuperscript{22}

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\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
The biggest issue with this agreement was that it was secret and made without the Arab people knowing. It negated a promise that Britain made to the Arabs at the start of the war, that the fall of the Ottoman Empire would bring them independence. Furthermore, the agreement intended to divide the region based on tribal, ethnic, and religious differences.

Under the League of Nations mandate, Lebanon was envisioned to be a haven for Christians; Palestine was to be a sizable Jewish community; Syria would hold the largest sectarian demographic of Sunni Muslims, while the Shiites would be left in the Bekaa Valley. However, this ideal setup never came to be; since the borders were practically drawn with a ruler in straight lines, the newly created borders did not correspond to the actual sectarian, tribal, or ethnic distinctions on the ground. At first, religious differences were buried, first under the Arab’s struggle to eject the European powers, and later by Arab nationalism.

Despite this temporary coexistence of the different religious groups, the damage had already been done. A legacy of resentment towards colonial rule and a distrust of Western motives was born in the Middle East. Not to mention, the state structure was poised for explosion; changing demographics and the identity struggle between nationalism and secularism was brewing a wave that could engulf the entire region in chaos.

Post-World War II Independence in the Levant and Mesopotamia

Following World War II, the British and the French left many parts of the Middle East, and numerous states declared their independence. Lebanon was the first to declare its independence on November 22, 1943. Syria, Jordan, and Iraq soon followed in 1944, 1946, and 1947 respectively; Israel was last in 1948. Even though independence was a great start to a new life for many states in the Middle East, upheaval and instability followed. The struggle between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine led the newly formed United Nations’ plan to partition Palestine in 1947. The idea was to create a separate state for Jews and Arabs, but while the Jews accepted the UN proposal, it was rejected by the Arabs. After Israel’s declaration of independence, the Arab-Israeli War immediately followed and led to over half a million Jews fleeing Arab lands and being absorbed into Israel. Note that during this time, the Arab League consisted of Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan (modern day Jordan), Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. The departure of the European powers, the establishment of Israel, and the increasing importance of oil culminated in the creation of the modern Middle East.

The Middle East During the Cold War

The Middle East was not devoid of foreign presence for long; in the 1950s, the US had become the ultimate guarantor for stability in the region. US presence was just part of its foreign policy initiative to protect democracy in foreign countries. Seeing that the US had control over the Middle East after World War II, the Soviet Union gradually gained more interest in the region, seeing the anti-Western states as a stepping stone for spreading its communist and revolutionary ideology. Furthermore, the

23 Ibid.


Soviets also wanted to achieve strategic parity with the United States by expanding its naval and military reach to the Middle East, securing strategic positions with geographical strength. Meanwhile, the US wanted to deny the Soviets access to the region and also wanted to limit the Soviet and communist sphere of influence. Their defensive agenda was also complemented by its guardianship and alliance with Israel, attempts to broker Arab-Israeli peace, as well as preserve US access to oil. Although the communist ideology of the Soviets never fully penetrated the Middle East, the Soviets significantly helped in its anti-Western movement by providing firearms and aid in exchange for influence, and enticed many Arabs towards the Soviets. The Soviets had made themselves indispensable in fueling the war-making desires of Arabs in the Arab-Israeli conflict. With the US caught up in dominating the region, regional conflicts were exacerbated and anti-Western regimes rose to power, specifically in Egypt, Iraq, and Libya. Seeing this opportunity, the Soviets allied with Arab socialist rulers, such as Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The US was left with close alliances with Iran and Saudi Arabia. With these two sides determined, the power struggle between Iraq and the West came into full effect.

Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Wars

Saddam Hussein was the president of Iraq for 24 years and led quite an infamous dictatorship. Hussein’s rise to power began in 1968 when he participated in a bloodless, but successful Ba’athist coup that resulted in Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr becoming Iraq’s president while Saddam was appointed to be his deputy. The Ba’ath party is the Arab Socialist political party that had control in Iraq, Syria and other regions in the Middle East. During al-Bakr’s presidency, Hussein became a very influential politician, and he modernized many public sectors of Iraq, including infrastructure and health care, in levels unparalleled to other Arab countries in the region. He also nationalized the oil industry, just before the energy crisis in 1973. However, he also developed Iraq’s first chemical weapons program and used torture, rape, and assassination to achieve its goals. In 1979, when al-Bakr attempted to unite Syria and Iraq, Hussein forced al-Bakr to resign and took his place as president. As soon as he took office, Hussein immediately arrested 68 of his enemies in the political sphere and had many sentenced severe punishments and executed for treason.

Since a lot of Hussein’s power led in his influence with the minority Sunni population in Iraq, he decided to take action after a revolution led to Shiite power in Iran. That same year (1979), Saddam ordered Iraqi troops to invade oil-rich Khuzestan in Iran. The conflict soon blossomed to become an all-out war called the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted eight years, ending in 1988. Much of the world, at this point in history, stood behind Hassan since they were afraid of the radical Islamic philosophy that fueled the Iranians. The war was costly and inconclusive, ending in a ceasefire agreement; although, Iraq declared victory. Ironically, border disputes that supposedly sparked the conflict were ignored, and the borders remained the same after the war.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the Iraqi economy was devastated and it sought a means to revitalize its infrastructure. With

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28 Ibid.
this in mind, Saddam ordered the invasion of its wealthy neighbor, Kuwait, in 1990. A UN Security Council resolution was promptly passed, which imposed economic sanctions on Iraq if they did not leave Kuwait and end its weapons program. The resolution was ignored, which led to a UN coalition force, led by the United States, to confront the Iraqi forces. This conflict became known as the Persian Gulf War. In just six weeks, Iraq was driven out of Kuwait and a ceasefire agreement was drawn up. Economic sanctions on Iraq imposed by the UN council remained in place. Still, in a similar fashion to the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam claimed victory. The resulting economic hardships continued to plague Iraq and fracture its already divided population. Various Shiite and Kurdish revolutions occurred, but they were all crushed by Saddam’s military forces. Iraq remained under heavy scrutiny by the international community and its continuance of its weapons program and violations of UN no-fly zones led to intermittent missile strikes until 2001. Saddam’s fall began in 2003 when the Bush administration of the US suspected that the Iraqi government had a relationship with the terrorist group al-Qaeda. Not to mention, their weapons program had not stopped. Another US-led coalition invaded in 2003 and defeated the Iraqi military and government. Saddam briefly escaped, but was captured at the end of 2003. After being tried by his government, Saddam was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging in 2006.

The Arab Springs and the Syrian Civil War

The Arab Springs was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and rebellions that spread rampantly across the Middle East starting in 2011. The core of the movement was fueled by anger and resentment towards dictatorships, especially brutality and corruption within the government. Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Springs protests, where a man committed suicide by self-immolation since he was outraged by injustices suffered at the hands of the local police. The president of Tunisia was forced to flee the country after armed forces refused to crack down on protests that arose. This event inspired the main outbreak of protests in Egypt, which led to the resignation of President Mubarak. Soon after protests in other countries such as Libya and Yemen followed in resignations by their presidents. For the purposes of our topic, we will analyze Syria during the Arab Spring protests more closely. Major protests began in small towns in March of 2011 and gradually spread to urban areas. The regime’s brutality provoked an armed response from the military, but many defectors of the military eventually formed the Free Syrian Army. By the end of 2011, Syria slid into an intractable civil war; the Shiite religious minority supported the President, while the Sunni majority supported the rebels. Russia supports the regime, while Saudi Arabia supported the rebels. Till this day, neither side has been able to break the deadlock and fighting has continued and more than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives to chemical weapons, bombings, gunfire, massacres, etc. The rise of the Islamic State even adds a third dimension of the civil war as it capitalizes on the chaos and tries to take control of the region as well. The US and Russia are leading peace efforts by the United Nations, since they have deemed that a political solution is the only one plausible for one of

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.

the deadliest conflicts of the decade. Even though the Arab Spring had much more far-reaching implications in Syria, its legacy in the Middle East remains, protesters smashed the myth of political passivity by the Arab community and asserted that governments must listen to its people.  


The Rise of the Islamic State and the War against It

The Islamic State can trace its roots all the way back to 2004, when a Jordanian by the name of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden and formed al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). After Zarqawi’s death in 2006, AQI created an umbrella organization called the Islamic State. At first, it was crushed by many US attacks on Iraq. However, after Baghdadi, a former US detainee, took control in 2010, IS capabilities became restored and attacks began happening frequently in 2013. It also joined the rebels in the fight against the president in the Syrian civil war. Soon after, Baghdadi merged his forces in Syria and Iraq to form ISIL, which is the Islamic State that we know today. In 2014, ISIL began taking control of territories in Syria and Iraq while massacring adversaries. It renamed itself the Islamic State after declaring itself a caliphate in the summer of the same year. Since then, IS has been terrorizing the world with deadly attacks, most notably in Paris (November 2015) when 129 people were killed.  


Despite numerous tragedies, many people believe that IS is losing the war since so many countries in the international community have vowed to end its existence. There are multiple reasons why they are losing the war. First, IS finances have been heavily strained. Since the group’s revenue comes solely from taxes and oil, recent air bombings targeting their oil infrastructure, banks and warehouses filled with cash have severely depleted their money supply. Second, IS territory has been slowly decreasing. IS has lost 40 percent of its territory in the last year as well as 3 million people living under its rule. Third, IS recruitment numbers from foreign countries have decreased significantly. Recent developments of victories against IS have led to a 50 percent cut in their foreign recruitment rates since their peak in 2014. Lastly, the US has taken many steps to combatting IS propaganda by infiltrating and hacking terrorist social media accounts. Despite these small successes here and there, there is still much left to be desired in order to defeat the Islamic State once and for all. Terrorist attacks are becoming more rampant, and it may be a sign of desperation from the terrorist organization, but nonetheless, more attacks bring more deaths. Progress is definitely being made by the international community, but the war still continues.  


Contemporary Conditions

The Actors on the Ground

A. The Islamic State

As of 2015, the Islamic State has somewhere in the range of 20,000 to 32,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria and almost 10,000 have already been killed. With these big
losses, IS has turned to conscription, or drafting, to enlarge its forces. This means that approximately 70 percent of the fighters are fighting out of fear and coercion rather than actual passion and belief. Almost a quarter of the groups are not Iraqi or Syrian. IS fighters have access to a variety of small arms and heavy weapons, including machine gun trucks, anti-aircraft missiles, rocket launchers, surface to air missiles, tanks, armored vehicles, and explosives. It earns several million dollars a week from the oil industry to fund its regime.\footnote{What Is 'Islamic State'?" BBC News. December 2, 2015. Accessed October 02, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144.}

B. The Assad Regime

Bashar al-Assad is the president of Syria and his regime consists of forces that are Alawite, which is a branch of Shia Islam (Shiites). He relies on a small core of trusted military units, which limits his ability to control all of Syria. This means that rebel groups and IS can easily control some regions of Syria. The regime has employed artillery, air power, bulldozers, massacres, and ballistic missiles to force insurgents from their homes. These methods caused the US to sever relations with Syria in 2012. Russia has recently been decreasing its military intervention in the region, causing Assad’s regime to lose momentum in the fight against rebels.\footnote{Holliday, Joseph. "The Assad Regime: From Counterinsurgency To Civil War." Institute for the Study of War. Accessed October 03, 2016. http://www.understandingwar.org/report/assad-regime.}

C. Iraq

Iraq is fending off fighters of the Islamic State in its country with the help of the United States. The US has been constantly sending troops to help in the fight; currently, the number of troops in Iraq round out to almost 5,000. Iraq is currently trying to retake Mosul, which is currently controlled by the Islamic State. The current counter-offensive against ISIL manifested by Iraq consists of 30,000 Iraqi soldiers. However, many reports claim that Iraqi troops are not ready for combat. Iraqi military’s poor track record has prompted Iranian-backed militias to join the fight with Iraq.\footnote{Broder, Jonathan. "A Bloody Disaster: The Iraqi Army's Fight Against ISIS." Newsweek. 2016. Accessed October 03, 2016. http://www.newsweek.com/iraqi-army-fight-against-isis-312105.}

D. The United States

As stated above, the United States is constantly deploying troops in Iraq to aid in the fight against the Islamic State. It, along with many other countries, has formed a coalition that vowed to defeat IS. Iraq and the US are not technically allies, but since they are sovereign partners and share strategic concerns over “energy” or oil. IS constantly carries out terrorist attacks in Iraq, especially in Baghdad, resulting in many civilian casualties. The United States is also heavily involved in Syria, and it helps train Syrian rebels and provides them with cash, intelligence and non-lethal aid. The reason why US supports the rebels is because it believes that the Assad regime is violent and inhumane.\footnote{“What Is 'Islamic State'?" BBC News. December 2, 2015. Accessed October 02, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144.}

E. Rebel Groups

The rebel groups being referred to in this topic are Syrian rebels of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) that are fighting for the Sunni majority in Syria against the Shiite minority led by the President. There is not one unified group, but there are as many as a thousand
armed opposition groups amounting to almost 100,000 fighters. The FSA is the largest, while the next largest is the Islamic Front. All of the rebel groups have the common goal of toppling the Assad regime. The FSA is the only group with US-backing and are trained to fight not just the Assad regime, but the IS fighters as well.\(^{39}\)

F. Russia

Russia has an alliance with Syria and Iran, so it has constantly been sending troops and aid in order to help the Syrian Assad Regime fight the rebels as well as fight the Islamic State. However, Russia has recently been decreasing air support, but ground troops’ numbers are unwavering and continue to march Syria’s main roads.

G. The Kurds

Kurdish fighters are said to be an essential player in the fight against ISIS. The Kurds are an indigenous ethnic group inhabiting regions located in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Armenia. They have successfully resisted advances by the Islamic State and are also fighting for autonomy in Turkey. The Kurds are essential to the fight against ISIS because they inhabit the northern border of Islamic State territory in Northern Syria, and they have consistently pushed of IS with US-backed air support.\(^{40}\)

Economic Interests

There is only one clear economic interest that all major players are trying to control in the Middle East, and that interest is oil. There are vast reserves of oil in the Middle Eastern region and with dwindling supplies in other areas of the world, countries are all trying to take advantage of the chaotic circumstances in the Middle East in the hopes of being able to obtain a strategic advantage of accessing the oil industry.\(^{41}\)

Political Rhetoric

Political rhetoric in regards to the Middle East is heavily biased by Western media. IS and dictatorships in the area are all portrayed as evil and terrifying groups; while oppositions to these groups are always shown as needing of US or western support. Western countries definitely skew media portrayals to justify foreign intervention in these regions, when, in reality, foreign countries may just be instigating more terrorism out of anti-western imperialist thought or creating a new Cold War.\(^{42}\)

Religion

The main religious divide in the Middle East is the differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. The Sunnis believe that Abu Bakr, the prophet’s adviser, should become the first successor, or caliph, to lead the Muslim state. Meanwhile, the Shiites favored Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law to be the caliph. In short, one of the reasons the religious differences stem is from deciding who should rule the state after Muhammad’s death in 632 AD. Sunnis wanted his companion or advisor, while Shiites wanted his descendants to lead.\(^{43}\)


\(^{42}\) Ibid.

Past UN and International Action

The Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

In September 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama announced the formation of a global coalition in order to “degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.” The Coalition is currently comprised of 67 member states, with the majority concentrated in Europe and the Americas. These partner states have pledged their support in accordance with available resources; some focus primarily on defeating the ISIL militarily while other states are better equipped to provide humanitarian aid to those directly affected by terror attacks. The Coalition has established an agenda of five broad goals, including “stabilizing liberated areas, countering [ISIL] propaganda, impeding the flow of foreign fighters, tackling [ISIL’s] financing and funding,” and taking direct military action against ISIL.

The goal of stabilizing liberated areas has been accomplished primarily through the establishment of the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS), which is intended to assist the Iraqi government in responding to the needs of residents of liberated ISIL territories. One critical success has been Tikrit in Salah ad Din, which has witnessed the return of roughly 90 percent of its residents since liberation. FFIS has been utilized there to provide residents with electricity, clean water, and access to economic opportunities. Undoubtedly, FFIS will serve as a much-needed resource in the coming years as territories liberated from ISIL control begin the process of economic re-growth and development. According to most recent updates, the FFIS budget currently stands at over $200 million. Current priorities include rebuilding infrastructure with the end goal of job creation.

Security is another key component in accomplishing the stabilization of formerly controlled territories. Italy has taken the lead in overseeing these efforts, deploying over 150 Italian police officers to establish an Iraqi police security force capable of protecting and sustaining safety in the region. Roughly 4,000 police officers have been deployed since the start of the training program, which is expected to double its output in 2017.

The second goal of the coalition is to counter and debunk ISIL propaganda; this particular aim, according to the Coalition’s website, is “critically important to the success of the Global Coalition’s efforts.” Leading the effort to expose the extreme inaccuracy of ISIL propaganda is the Counter-Messaging Working Group, an organization co-led by the United States (US), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United Kingdom (UK). This group is supported in its efforts by the Coalition Communications Cell, which operates out of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Sawab Center, and experts at the US State Department. The Sawab Center is “a UAE-based joint operations center for online engagement” which aims to counter

45 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
the furor and attraction of extremism with positive dialogue surrounding moderation and acceptance. Furthermore, the group frequently highlights the illegitimacy of ISIL and its military failures in order to reduce its standing in the eyes of potential recruits.49

Since its formation, the Sawab Center has been particularly successful in striking back against the preeminence that ISIL often enjoys on social media. A recent Rand study showed that, on average, there are roughly six people that oppose ISIL for every one person that supports the group. The average number of people who follow pro-ISIL accounts has dropped dramatically since 2014, from 1,500 to 300. Nonetheless, countering propaganda continues to be a key goal of the Coalition, especially given the skill with which ISIL fighters use the Internet and social media to recruit foreigners.50

Indeed, recruitment of foreign fighters is a major concern for the Coalition; this has prompted member states to establish the Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, which works towards the accomplishment of nine major goals. These goals attack each segment of the recruitment process, from identifying potential foreign terrorist fighters, crippling the process itself, and ensuring a legal pathway for arresting prosecuting foreign terrorist fighters who join ISIL. Efforts have also been made to secure the Turkish border, thereby facilitating the arrest of foreign terrorist fighters who are crossing over into Syria to fight for ISIL.51

The most critical success for the Coalition has come in the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which has encouraged 40 states to improve existing or pass new legislation on the subject of identification, arrest, and prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters. INTERPOL now receives intelligence related to foreign terrorist fighters from 58 states and the United Nations. Roughly 30 countries recently started programs aimed at countering homegrown extremism. Turkey, in particular, has achieved success in countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, deporting more than 3,500 suspected fighters and denying entry to 2,200 more.52

Since its formation, the Coalition has also sought to damage the financing and funding capabilities of ISIL; in particular, it has sought to destroy ISIL’s oil supply, a primary source of wealth for the terrorist group. Through Security Council resolutions, efforts have been made to identify key ISIL officials and impede their ability to conduct economic business on the world stage. Passage of new Security Council resolutions and coordination among member states has enabled the Coalition to illegalize the trafficking of “antiquities and cultural objects from Syria and Iraq.” Furthermore, the Coalition has sought to close smuggling routes and more effectively monitor border crossings in order to prevent

contraband coming into or out of ISIL territory. The Coalition has also sought to impede ISIL’s oil production capabilities by bombing oil fields, sources of transportation, and key infrastructure. These actions make it increasingly difficult for ISIL to earn revenue from oil.\textsuperscript{53}

One final strategy of the Global Coalition against ISIL is direct military action. This has primarily taken the form of airstrikes, coordinate ground operations, and counter-terror missions carried out by Syrian forces. The success rate has been fairly high; ISIL has now been pushed out of 40 percent of populated Iraqi territory and 10 percent of populated Syrian territory it previously controlled. At the crux of these operations is a desire to impede ISIL’s ability to take and control territory, generate revenue, build and sustain infrastructure, and increase its number of fighters. The Coalition recognizes the importance of local partners in achieving these goals; with that in mind, 18 countries have sent thousands of personnel to support and supply Iraqi forces with equipment necessary for the destruction of ISIL. Coalition partners have trained over 17,000 members of the Iraqi Security Force.\textsuperscript{54}

As of July 2016, the Global Coalition has launched more than 11,500 airstrikes from Turkish bases; these strikes have hit over 1,000 targets in northern parts of Syria. Nearly 4,000 Iraqi policemen have been trained in counter-terrorism strategies against ISIL; numbers are increasing by the month. Perhaps the true measure of the Coalition’s success in taking military action comes in an examination of the number of ISIL fighters. Since December 2014, the number of ISIL fighters has decreased from 33,000 to between 18,000 and 22,200. According to estimates, desertions are increasing as available pay for fighters significantly decreases, a consequence of resource destruction, particularly that of oil fields.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{Local Coalitions}

In December 2015, the Saudi Arabian government announced the formation of the Islamic Military Alliance, a coalition of some 34 majority-Muslim nations whose goal is to coordinate efforts to destroy ISIL. Many Muslim nations faced (and, in some cases, still face) criticism from international observers for not carrying out sufficient efforts to counter ISIL; the formation of the coalition was seen by many as a response to such criticism. Few details were given about the alliance when it was first formed, and the absence of both Iraq and Syria has caused considerable uproar in the international community. Human rights groups have expressed concern that the Saudi Arabian government has too broad a definition of terrorism; in other words, they fear that the Saudi government could label peaceful activists as terrorists and justify a military campaign against them through their alliance.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{UN Attempts to Discuss the Issue}

The destruction of ISIL has been at the forefront of the UN agenda since 2014, though it should be noted that the threat of


terrorism has weighed heavily on member states since at least two decades prior. In 2014, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2170, urging member states to participate in efforts to destroy ISIL, particularly in the area of impeding the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Member states have been encouraged to arrest and prosecute fighters leaving home to join ISIL, stop the flow of revenue to terrorist groups, and establish programs to prevent domestic extremism and radicalization. In Resolution 2178, the Security Council adopted a slightly firmer tone, deciding that states are under obligation to prevent the flow of terrorist fighters from home countries to the Middle East. This resolution also established a framework for placement of suspected terrorists on no-fly lists. In recognition of the disparity of resources available to member states, the resolution specified that the Counter-Terrorism Committee should identify inabilities of member states to carry out the terms of the resolutions and provide accordingly.57

Perhaps the most significant recent development occurred in 2015, during when the Security Council passed a resolution to include ISIL, for the first time, within its framework for international sanctions. This particular action was aimed at reducing ISIL’s abilities to finance its operations, the primary source of which is oil. The resolution also included a provision for “enhanced vigilance” in member states to prevent persons associated with ISIL and other terrorist organizations from engaging in illicit trade or otherwise benefitting from a transfer of goods. Once more, the guiding principle behind this action was that the best way to defeat ISIL is by taking away its financial resources, thus rendering it incapable of carrying out operations (or at the very least, carrying out operations at full strength). In the words of Je-Yoon Shin, President of the Financial Action Task Force, “money is [the Islamic State’s] biggest vulnerability.”58

In summary, United Nations attempts to address the issue of ISIL have focused primarily on impeding the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to ISIL, ensuring that those fighters are arrested and prosecuted, building up member-state capacities to address homegrown extremism and radicalization, and preventing ISIL from financing its operations by targeting its primary source of revenue, that is, oil, and impeding its ability to carry out economic business.

Questions a Resolution Should Answer

1. What role should the United Nations play in determining whom has autonomy over territory previously controlled by ISIL?

One of the consequences of ISIL’s spread has been an increase in nationalist aspirations by minority groups in Iraq. In the aftermath of ISIL, groups such as the Kurds in northern Iraq will undoubtedly intensify the fierce struggle for statehood. The stability of the region will depend on how peaceably these battles can be settled. In order for such peace to be established, a swift decision regarding the autonomy of various regions is necessary. It is up to you to decide what kind of role the United Nations should play in deciding how


58 Ibid.
territory should be divided and what kinds of recommendations they should make.

2. **How should the United Nations address humanitarian needs in regions previously controlled by ISIL without establishing dependency?** In other words, should there be a timeline for how long nations in the region will receive assistance before they are required to be self-sufficient?

The Global Coalition, through the FFIS, already supports the capacities of liberated territories to regain stabilization, peacefulness, and security. However, their efforts centered primarily around meeting immediate needs rather than promoting long-term sustainable growth. The United Nations could play a significant role in promoting the long-term stability of territories previously controlled by ISIL, and there is certainly precedent for countries receiving this type of external assistance. However, there is a danger associated with foreign aid—it can weaken the capacity of a country to attain self-sufficiency. Resolutions should address how the United Nations can go about preventing that kind of dependency from developing without neglecting sustainable growth.

3. **Should the United Nations urge European states to accept more refugees than they currently do?**

A particularly sobering consequence of ISIL’s growth is the refugee crisis, which is the displacement of millions of men, women, and children, most of whom are Syrian. Currently, the countries surrounding Syria, in particular Turkey, are taking in the most refugees. Germany tops the list in Europe with the most asylum requests by far.\(^{59}\) In recent months, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has faced increasing criticism for her refugee policy, which many Germans consider too generous. Nevertheless, no European state is shouldering as heavy a burden as those that many Middle Eastern states have taken on. Whether or not European states should take in more refugees is a key question in determining the relative peacefulness and stability of the Middle Eastern region for decades to come. Successful resolutions will respond to the question and justify their answer.

4. **What should the response of the United Nations be towards the Islamic Military Alliance?**

Some criticize the Alliance, founded in an effort to coordinate the destruction of ISIL among Muslim nations, as an attempt by Saudi Arabia to shield illegal activities against those whom they define as “terrorists” at home. In the aftermath of ISIL, what role does the Islamic Military Alliance have to play in maintaining the stability of the Middle East? Could its continued presence set up a standoff between the Alliance and NATO, thereby threatening the fragile balance of power between East and West?

5. **Should the Global Coalition be disbanded once the defeat of ISIL is completed, or does it have some secondary value?**

The Global Coalition essentially functions as a more specialized version of NATO; given the specificity of its goals, it is difficult to see its value once ISIL is defeated. However, it may have a role to play in maintaining the stability of liberated areas, particularly in regards to security. Successful resolutions will address whether or not the balance of power should be shifted from Western nations such as the United States and United Kingdom to Middle Eastern states such as Iraq and Syria.

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\(^{59}\) Martinez, Michael. “Syrian refugees: which countries welcome them, which ones don’t.” CNN. CNN, 10 September 2015. Web. 10 October 2016.
Bloc Positions
*The United State and Western Developed Nations*

Western Developed Nations, particularly the United States-led coalition, have been leading actors in the fight against IS for a variety of reasons. In particular for the US, resources going towards attacks could then be used to pursue other interests domestically and internationally. One particular interest that many countries have in removing IS is their stake in the oil industry, which could then be changed.  

The United States also has a history of opposing non-democratic regimes in areas of interest, like the Assad Regime, and therefore will want to finish its fight with IS to focus on establishing a western-friendly regime in its place. Other western bloc countries have their own agendas regarding IS. France, for instance, is a member of the US-led coalition but has become more vehement in its policies against IS after the Paris attacks in November 2015. There are some exceptions to countries in the western bloc wanting to stay uninvolved, like Canada for example who pulled support, despite still opposing IS; however, there are also many countries that generally hold non-interventionism as a policy, as in the case of Germany, that have begun lending aid to fight what has been dubbed terrorism. As a whole, the western bloc developed nations continue to battle IS in order to set up more favorable regimes and opportunities in an area of particular interest.

**Russia**

Like much of the world, Russia has also taken a stance against IS. However, Russian leaders view western bloc intervention very critically, believing the western nations, particularly the United States, create the problems in the first place and then fix them through military and policy intervention, only to end up creating another, larger problem. Because of this, Russian policy has been to focus on aiding its allies in Iran and the Assad Regime by providing troops and supplies towards their causes, instead of direct intervention on behalf of the Russian state. Because IS puts Russia's political and military interests in the Middle East and Central Asia at risk, Russian policy will likely continue to aid its allies in order to protect its own interests and security.

**China**

After decades of non-interventionist policy, China took a clear stance against IS when jihadist forces entered into the area of Central Asia that borders China. China felt compelled to enter the fight against IS because IS forces began threatening China's growing economic interests in the Middle East. In its actions against IS, China has sent troops in to aid Russia and the Assad

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61 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
Regime. While Chinese policy in the future will most likely reflect the nation's habits of non-interventionism, China will also act to protect its interests and choose to ally with those of similar ideologies. By supporting Russia and the Assad Regime, China will have a claim staked in the area on a side that would be willing to make an alliance, thus furthering Chinese interest in the area.

Iraq

The Iraqi state has been vastly affected by IS presence. While some Iraqi leaders have been accused of aiding IS, the official position is to eradicate IS presence from the state. Iraq is working closely with the United States to achieve this goal, negotiating agreements that involve US training and equipment for the Iraqi military. Iraq has also negotiated agreements with other countries, including Iran, in order to remove IS from the country. Iraq’s main goal in regards to IS is to eradicate its presence and to regain control of what it has conquered within Iraq's borders, so policy will continue to reflect that, making other alliances and agreements as leaders see fit in order to further its goals.

Iran

Iranian policy towards IS has been entirely based on the goal of beating IS, going as far as making concessions to rivals in order to achieve worldwide cooperation. As Iran opposes much of the world in its view on Syria and generally opposes United States' action in the Middle East, country leaders have had to ignore much of what occurs in the fight against IS to properly fight the common enemy. Iran's alliance with Russia and the Assad Regime will continue to drive its policy, however, despite any concessions made for the common enemy. An ideal defeat of IS for Iran would be one that leaves the Assad Regime in power in Syria, as this will allow Iranian interest and power to continue to flourish.

The Gulf States

Most of the Gulf States are aligned with the western world in politics and practice, and many of them have joined the US-led coalition against IS, though most joined in propaganda more than action. It would be in the best interest of all Gulf Arab States to have IS no longer in existence and a Syria not ruled by the Assad Regime. The United Arab Emirates has been particularly outspoken against the presence of any Islamist radical group in the region; however, other countries, like Qatar, have been busier denying any support given to IS on their end. Despite most nations in the gulf supporting the western bloc agenda of eradicating IS, few will give much more beyond vocal support, as most Gulf States view the containment of IS as a more pressing issue and are worried that distributed support to fight IS will leave their homelands unprotected from a more immediate threat. Because of this, comprehensive support in a war against IS is unlikely to come from the Gulf States if it means taking military power from home territory.

Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Arabian position on IS is similar to the rest of the world: that IS should no longer exist. This has caused

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69 Marcus, "Islamic State: Where key countries stand."

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Thompson, "War on ISIS: Why Arab states aren't doing more."
Saudi Arabian leaders to cooperate with all those in line to bring down IS, including regional rival Iran. Saudi Arabia has already passed legislation that allows the United States to use a Saudi Arabian base to train select rebel forces from Syria. Aside from having to compete for its stake in the oil industry, most of Saudi Arabian fear stems from the idea that IS will inspire jihadists in Saudi Arabia to attempt to overthrow the monarchy. In order to protect its economy and its political structure, Saudi Arabian policy will likely reflect that which will bring IS down from being a threat the fastest.

The Assad Regime
The IS is housed largely in Syria, so the Assad Regime is first and foremost interested in removing IS presence in Syria. IS presence threatens the Assad Regime and takes manpower away from the Regime's ability to fight the other rebels in Syria, which is in the midst of a civil war. While the Assad Regime supports international efforts at "combating terrorism," it has found difficulty in getting the Western Bloc to cooperate, as many of the western developed nations are opposed to the Assad Regime maintaining power, and IS poses a threat to this power. Because of this, it is likely that the Assad Regime will continue to work with its allies, Russia and Iran, to stay in power while simultaneously bringing down IS.

Other Rebel Groups
Other rebel groups in the area, particularly the FSA, are more concerned with toppling the Assad Regime than fighting IS, as the Syrian Civil War is of more importance for them. The United States also favors this more moderate group of rebels over the Assad Regime and has offered them assistance in their fight. Due to the fact that the rebels would like to continue to receive support from the US, the rebels have also taken up in the fight against IS, which the US has a vested interest in toppling as well. Actions taken by the rebels will continue to be aimed more at ridding Syria of the Assad Regime, but will also battle IS to keep US favor.

Conclusion
The Islamic State rose from the fractured remnants of an antiquated political regime imposed on the Middle East by foreign powers: a process that began following the First World War. That process saw the implementation of national boundaries around groups of individuals that shared no national identity. These lines drawn in the sand were created by politicians who possessed little knowledge of the facts on the ground. These included varying religious ideologies, political customs, legal traditions, regional economic viabilities, and tribal or cultural identities and allegiances. Beginning with the emerging independence movements following the Second World War, these artificial boundaries became increasingly challenged, especially regarding Israel, and a series of authoritarian rulers came to power in efforts to secure power for themselves. To do this, they maintained the boundaries imposed by the foreign politicians, but a series of disputes and wars between them would wreak havoc on their ability to maintain their political positions, and many would eventually fall.

73 Marcus, "Islamic State: Where key countries stand."
74 Ibid.

In the vacuums that resulted, opportunities emerged for other groups to seek power and, following the Iraqi War in 2003 and the Syrian Civil War in 2011, the Islamic State rose in prominence in northern Iraq and northern Syria. The group became internationally recognized for the swiftness through which it began to conquer territory and the ferocity with which it treated opponents and those that did not follow its interpretation of Sharia Law. Though delayed and often times at odds with each other, various international coalitions have intervened against the Islamic State. The motivations of these actors are incredibly complex and, more often than not, contradict each other. For these reasons, it is more important than ever to establish what type of regime should be put in place in the event of the Islamic State’s defeat. A solid plan of action would do a great deal to promote stability in the region and could eliminate apprehensions of international actors regarding their interests in the region. While surely a difficult task, it is crucial to take into account the perspectives of all forces involved so that if peace does arrive, the resulting policy would not alienate those who might renew conflict.
**Topic B: Space Politics and the Colonization of Space**

**Introduction**

*Introduction to the Topic and the Committee*

This committee will consider a wide range of political topics within the sphere of space and attempt to usher in a new era of regulations and guidelines for cooperation that will make the final frontier more cooperative and safer for all parties involved. These topics include the use of satellites, commercial enterprises, military capabilities, resource extraction, science and discovery, and even colonization. It is a comprehensive topic, but one of growing importance as humanity continues to improve upon technology on a global scale and as resources on Earth are forecasted to grow increasingly scarce. The committee should thus keep in mind that, while it could seek to solve these problems on an individual, case by case basis, substantial and beneficial change on a system wide level requires a unified and comprehensive plan. In other words, methods to provide legislation that encompass all political aspects and that address overarching problems instead of individual ones may be the best course of action. Members of the committee must consider their overall goals before diving into the convoluted and internationally competitive realm of politics in space.

*Why Space Politics Matter*

In short, the future of the human race is dependent on the future of space. Not only do a growing number of technologies in the daily lives of individuals rely on space, but a large host of advanced technological systems necessary to the entire international order do as well. Space can be a tool for discovery and societal gain. In a capitalist world, it can be a tool for advanced commercial interests. It can also be a tool for global politics, especially in regards to military use. Even more important, however, is that space is essential for human survival. It contains a variety of resources that will be vital to the continued growth of humanity, and as physical space on Earth becomes more and more crowded, it provides a remedy by providing other potentially viable locations for habitation and resource extraction. Space technology has progressed rapidly and, as noted by Charles Rhyne, the former President of the World Peace Through Law Center, “This technological revolution must be accompanied by a comprehensive examination of the rule of law to govern man and countries in their exploration of the heavenly bodies and their use of space”.76

If space is thus so important, the politics around it are as well. Space has the potential to be a theater of either cooperation or competition, and politics play a critical role in laying the framework and foundation of a cooperative system in which all of humanity can benefit. This committee’s role must address the political climate around topics in space and lay the groundwork for greater cooperation. Political scientist Jerome Morenoff points out that although man is confronted with a frontier beyond our atmosphere that transcends national boundaries, “space exists, essentially, as a lawless domain lacking both guidelines and historically proven patterns of procedure”.77 These guidelines must be provided in such a way that promotes peaceful cooperation and equity of opportunity.

Over 6,000 satellites have been launched into space since Sputnik, the first man-made satellite placed into orbit in 1957. Currently, an estimated 350,000 remain in

77 Ibid, 1.
orbit with at least 1,000 of them being operational. Satellites are responsible for a number of functions, from T.V. signals, GPS, cell phones, missile systems, and tools for scientific discovery. There are also hundreds of commercial enterprises in space from broadcasting companies to data tracking industries and space tourism, not to mention several governments with satellite launching capability. As these numbers rise, and the frontier of space becomes more contested, disputes amongst nations will become more common. Comprehensive legislation to regulate interactions and claims in space will only grow in importance as human forays into space become more and more frequent.

In regards to the military and space, it is important to understand the correlation of nuclear weapons and the development of space. Without this explanation, discussions of non-proliferation treaties and their importance to future agreements might not be properly understood. Ballistic missiles and ICBMs (inter-continental ballistic missiles), as well as a vast majority of the technologies devised to stop them, involve at some phase of operation the use of space. They are space weapons to a large degree. Consequently, regulations regarding the militarization of space might go a long way towards curbing the potential for nuclear conflicts on earth.

**Major Issues the Committee Must Address**

There are many issues that this committee must explore and attempt to solve, ranging from broad to specific. First, the committee must address more abstract issues including the exact definition of outer space. It must also take into account how to decide issues of sovereignty in a realm far beyond international borders. How is space to be divided between earthly nations? How do corporations fit into the puzzle? Do they get taxed for any of their profits and are they subject to ethical and safety guidelines? Who oversees this? It is easy to see how these more ambiguous questions lead to more practical ones, but they all have a crucial role to play in the committee.

It might be easiest to break these issues down into several distinct issues that will all, in some way or another, affect each other. They are the more abstract issues, military issues, commercial issues, and environmental issues. They certainly are not mutually exclusive. Overall, these questions must be guided by the desire to make space a more cooperative theater in which respected, established laws guide the way for all future endeavors.

**Historical Background**

*The Origins of the Space Age*

Although the human eye has always been fixated on the heavens, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that these fixations transcended dreams and visions to become a tangible reality. German and Russian scientists were the first to seriously venture into research and development for rocket technology, with the Germans claiming a distinct advantage during the Second World War. In October of 1942, the Germans introduced the V-2 rocket to the ongoing global conflict. This rocket had the capability to journey up to sixty miles into the earth’s atmosphere. Following the German defeat in 1945, many of the

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country’s top scientists were acquisitioned by the United States government and, to an extent, the Soviet government as well. This new U.S.-Soviet division would define much of the age of spatial exploration, in particular its beginning phases unimaginatively referred to as the space race.\(^80\)

The Soviets had begun a rocket research program in the 1920s and by the end of the Second World War, its focus had shifted towards using rocket and missile technology against the United States.\(^81\) By 1954, the Soviets had developed their first intercontinental ballistic missiles and the Soviet Space Program was reorganized under the moniker of “The Ministry of General Machine Building.”\(^82\) By 1957, the Soviets had successfully tested these missiles and in doing so had set the stage for the soon to follow satellite launch of Sputnik I.\(^83\) Sputnik was the first man-made satellite sent into space, occurring on October 4, 1957. A little under four years later, on April 12, 1961, the Soviets followed up on this success by sending the first human into orbit, Yuri Gagarin.\(^85\) This prompted the then President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, to proclaim just a short 17 months later that “We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade . . .” as the realm of space must be left open not for war, but peace and scientific inquiry. The only way to ensure this, the president pointed out, was if the United States won the race to space.\(^86\) Thus, in the initial push towards the heaven, the impetus was competition and not cooperation.

The United States had not been idle up until the 1960s, but rather had been focusing on its own space program. By the end of World War II, the country found itself in the unprecedented position of defending western democracy from the alleged communist threat posed by the Soviets. It needed a more robust rocketry program to keep pace and ensure that its own security interests were served. Throughout this period for both the Americans and Soviets, it must be noted, the primary interest in space lay in its ability to serve as a mechanism to carry out military operations, especially those involving nuclear weapons. The United States had actually introduced, in 1946, the Baruch Plan to the United Nations.\(^87\) This called for all nations to agree to become non-nuclear and to submit their facilities to international inspection. The Soviets rejected the proposal, fearing an anticipated lack of American cooperation and the projected weakening of Soviet power that it would cause.\(^88\) Following this failed agreement, the United States began to expand its rocketry program.

It was not until 1950 that reports within the United States government began to come to term with the importance of space, especially regarding reconnaissance. In 1955, the U.S. National Security Council submitted a classified report detailing a need for a “civilian” satellite program that could also double to serve military and intelligence

\(^{81}\) Ibid, 76.
\(^{82}\) Ibid.
\(^{83}\) Ibid, 79.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{85}\) “A Brief History of Space Exploration”, *Aerospace*.
\(^{88}\) Ibid..
interests. President Dwight Eisenhower subsequently asserted that the United States would launch a satellite into orbit at some point of the 1957-1958 geophysical year. In 1957, however, the United States had begun to see the Soviet lead in establishing a substantial ICBM arsenal and wrote to the United Nations that space should be governed by an international arms control regime and that no military systems should ever venture into space. Rather, space should simply be the domain of peaceful scientific inquiry and discovery. Unsurprisingly, the Soviets rejected the idea as it would serve particularly disadvantageous to them.

Soviet policy at the time maintained an internationally cooperative stance as a front for its true internal aspirations of using space to strengthen its competitive advantages in the global sphere. For example, in 1955, the Soviet Union announced a plan to ban nuclear testing, but it was superficial in content and lacked substance to be truly effective. In what can be considered as far from a shocking response as possible, the United States rejected the plan. The failure to elect Adlai Stevenson to the presidency in 1956, who proposed a similar ban, ended for the moment serious considerations to remove space from military equations. Early attempts at using cooperation to limit the usage of space for military purposes, for the time being, had proven ineffective.

The Space Race Intensifies

On October 4th, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the world’s first artificial satellite, Sputnik I. The satellite was about 22.8 inches in diameter, weighed only 183.9 pounds, and took about 98 minutes to orbit the Earth on its elliptical path. The launch of Sputnik I unsurprisingly marked the launch of the space age as the United States saw tangible proof that it had fallen behind the Soviets. The launch shattered the American perception of their own technological superiority and, as subsequent polls and data revealed, left many European populations believing that the Soviets, and not the Americans, were more technologically advanced. To combat the sudden Soviet advantage, the United States once again proposed a plan through the United Nations to help slow down the pace of the space race, this time arguing that all artificial satellites should undergo international pre-launch inspections to ensure peaceful intentions. Predictably, this measure was likewise rejected by the Soviet Union.

On November 3, Sputnik II was launched. It could carry a heavier payload and also inhabited a living dog named Laika. Just a few months later, the United States launched its first satellite into space, Explorer I, and began to conduct its own scientific tests above the atmosphere. This was on January 31, 1958, and on October 1 of that same year, the Eisenhower administration passed a piece of legislation known as the National Aeronautics and Space Act, which gave rise to the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA).

NASA was designed to essentially provide the institutional infrastructure

95 Ibid, 92.
96 “Sputnik and The Dawn of the Space Age”.
97 Ibid.
needed to compete on a sustainable scale with the Soviet Union. Its stated goals were to provide research into the problems of flight within and outside the Earth’s atmosphere. At formation, the agency had 8,000 employees, a budget of only $100 million, and access to only three laboratories. All of those numbers would grow incredibly over time. Despite the creation of NASA, the next great achievement in spaceflight again was accomplished by the Soviets. On April 12, 1961, the Soviet Union launched the first human being into space. Yuri Gagarin claimed the honor, and during his flight he orbited the Earth once and reached a height of 203 miles. In the span of about two hours, he had returned safely to Earth.

NASA’s response to this was Project Mercury. The project’s goal was to launch an American safely into orbit and retrieve the individual safely, as the Soviets had done. On May 5, 1961, Alan B. Shepard Jr. became the first American to fly into space when he completed a 15 minute suborbital mission. John Glen Jr. was the first U.S. astronaut to orbit the Earth, and he completed this task on February 20, 1962. In all, Project Mercury launched six manned flights, which at the time of its conclusion was the same number as the Soviets. The Soviet Union did, however, spend more time in space during its six flights.

The next major endeavor into space for the United States was Project Gemini. Spacecraft built for Gemini could fit two astronauts, and the project resulted in ten flights. These flights provided NASA scientists with more data on weightlessness, perfected reentry and splashdown procedures, and demonstrated rendezvous and docking in space. Its highlight occurred during Gemini 4, on June 3, 1965, when Edward H. White, Jr., became the first U.S. astronaut to conduct a spacewalk. This accomplishment, as well as all others in the 1960’s was done to the background of President John F. Kennedy’s infamous speech in May of 1961 that declared the United States should commit itself towards sending a man to the moon before the end of the decade.

Following the Gemini Project, and in the spirit of accomplishing the objective outlined by President Kennedy, the United States launched the Apollo Program in 1961. The program was created with the end goal of landing American astronauts on the moon. It lasted eleven years until 1972 and consisted of 17 missions. The program began with inauspicious circumstances, as a cabin fire killed the entire crew of Apollo 1 in 1967. However, Apollo 7, which was launched in October of 1968, showcased a newer and safer command module. The next flight, Apollo 8, was the first to orbit the Moon in December of 1968. Finally, in July of 1969, Apollo 11 flew to the Moon and mankind stepped on its surface for the first time. Two astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, were the first humans to step foot on the moon. They returned with soil samples, took photographs, and placed the American flag on the celestial body’s surface. It marked a turning point in the space race, as the United States finally had a distinct lead over the Soviet Union. Six Apollo missions and 12 astronauts, would land on the moon before the program came to a close. The Soviets, despite several attempts during this period, did not reach the

100 “Launching NASA”, A Brief History of NASA.
101 Ibid.
102 John F. Kennedy, “Rice Stadium Speech”.
103 “Launching NASA”, A Brief History of NASA.
moon and instead focused on orbital missions of Earth.

The Reintroduction of Cooperative Measures

Following the American lunar missions, and the inability of the Soviets to follow up with their own, led to a de-escalation of the space race christened in 1975 with the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP). This project successfully tested joint rendezvous and docking procedures for spacecraft from the United States and the Soviet Union. The two craft were launched separately from their respective countries and the Apollo and Soyuz crews met in space and conducted various experiments for two days beginning on July 17, 1975.\(^{104}\) It was a highly publicized event and symbolized what was proclaimed to be an era of greater cooperation in space.\(^{105}\) This mission signified that the space race was over and paved the way for future cooperation in space. To complete the mission, the astronauts had trained together, learned each other’s languages, and even toured opposing facilities.\(^{106}\)

Following a brief hiatus from space missions, the invention of the space shuttle reenergized and catalyzed the space program. The space shuttle came into service in 1981 and the Shuttle's first mission, STS-1, took off on April 12. It demonstrated that it could take off vertically and glide to an unpowered airplane-like landing.\(^{107}\) This allowed for the same shuttle to be used multiple times, carry larger payloads and dock easier in space. Although tragedy struck in 1986, and the American Shuttle Challenger exploded during takeoff, the program resumed in 1988 and subsequently flew 87 successful missions. Another shuttle, the Columbia, exploded during reentry in 2003. Despite these incidents, the space shuttle has remained the primary vehicle through which human flight in space has taken place over the last several decades.

A major contribution of the space shuttle was its ability to make the use of permanent space stations possible. Recognizing the need to study behavioral and physiological effects of humans as a result of prolonged stays in space, in order to potentially send humans to the moon or Mars in efforts of colonization, the American government began in 1973 a series of projects to establish permanent stations in space. These were coined Skylab. Skylab was the first and only all-American Space Station to orbit the Earth. The astronauts who worked there performed experiments across many fields, including Earth observation, solar astronomy, stellar astronomy, space physics, geophysics, micro-gravity biomedical and biological studies and micro-gravity technology research.\(^{108}\) The Soviets were actually the first to place a station into orbit as a part of their Salyut Space Station Program, which began in 1971. The most prominent space station by far is the International Space Station (ISS). Construction began in 1998 and it has been occupied since 2000. The International Space Station was taken into space piece-by-piece and built in orbit. It consists of modules and nodes that contain living quarters and laboratories as well as

\(^{104}\) Ibid.


\(^{107}\) “Launching NASA”, *A Brief History of NASA.*

exterior trusses that provide structural support, and solar panels that provide power. The station was built by five different agencies representing fifteen countries, with NASA, Russia’s State Corporation for Space Activities (Roscosmos), the European Space Agency, the Canadian Space Agency and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency leading the way. It cost $100 billion dollars to construct and operate.¹⁰⁹

Regulating Space

Throughout this period several treaties and agreements entered into force that would come to help govern and manage the politics of the emerging sphere of space usage and exploration. As early as 1963, the United States and the Soviet Union had signed a resolution in the United Nations to ban a variety of activities that might lead to potential conflict. This resolution paved the way for more civilian involvement in space, more satellite use, and future treaties.¹¹⁰ This treaty was the Partial Test Ban Treaty, or PTBT, and it requires nations to prohibit, prevent, and abstain from conducting nuclear weapons tests and any other nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, in outer space, underwater, or in any other environment in such a way that explosions would cause radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the nation that conducted the explosion. It also requires states to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in, the carrying out of any nuclear explosion anywhere which would take place in any of the aforementioned environments.¹¹¹ This treaty not only marked a new era of potential cooperation in space, but its limitation of nuclear detonations outside of the atmosphere was a major step in demilitarizing space.

The Outer Space Treaty was the next landmark agreement in the emerging political realm of space. Signed in 1967, it banned the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, prohibits military activities on celestial bodies, and detailed legally binding rules governing the peaceful exploration and use of space.¹¹² Additionally, the treaty proclaimed that space is no single country’s domain and that all countries have a right to explore it. It acknowledged that space should be accessible for scientific exploration by all able countries and that space and celestial bodies are exempt from claims of national ownership. Countries should not contaminate space or celestial bodies and are liable for damages their space objects may cause.¹¹³ This treaty provided the foundation for most subsequent international law on the topic.

The next consequential moment of space politics manifested itself amidst the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (or SALTs I & II). These talks, the first of which commenced in 1969 and finished in 1972 and the second of which lasted from 1972 to 1979, resulted in a number of crucial pieces of legislation such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and led to future

¹¹³ Ibid.
treaties such as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, or STARTS. The ABM Treaty, signed in 1972, permitted both the United States and the Soviet Union to maintain two anti-ballistic missile launch facilities. Anti-ballistic missiles were devices that could be deployed to shoot down incoming ICBMs, or inter-continental ballistic missiles. It also prohibited ABM deployment in space, and SALT I as a whole prohibited interference with other nations’ satellites in general.\(^\text{114}\) Essentially, state satellites were out of bounds for attack within any potential future conflicts.

While SALT II was not as successful as SALT I in terms of enacting substantive policies, it provided the framework for the START’s. START I, which came into effect in 1994, was another nuclear non-proliferation and reduction treaty that further limited the possibility for space to play a military role in future conflicts.\(^\text{115}\) Another START, sometimes referred to as START IV, which was negotiated in 2010, further reduced the potential of nuclear militarization in space and did permit an increase in allowing satellite monitoring of various sites within other countries.\(^\text{116}\) Through these series of treaties dating all the way back to the 1960s, the demilitarization of space was made possible. It is important to note, however, that chiefly nuclear weaponry has been prohibited in space while other forms of military action seem to have been left outside of discussions on the topic.

The final historical content relevant to the military aspect of the development of space as a realm of politics is the United States’ Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI, or Star Wars as it was popularly referred to, was a strategic defense mechanism designed to shoot down incoming missiles and projectiles, especially those of a nuclear nature, as they would approach the United States. A key portion of this plan involved using orbital stations in space to shoot down missiles before they entered the atmosphere. The weapons required for the system included space and ground based nuclear x-ray lasers, subatomic particle beams, and computer-guided projectiles fired by electromagnetic rail guns. These were all under the central control of a supercomputer system. However, the program was too costly and would have violated the ABM treaty. As a result, it never came to fruition.\(^\text{117}\) The program did, conversely, ignite public and government speculation about the realm of space as a sphere in which advanced military technologies could play a part. The opening up of space and subjugation of it to the political realm was closely aligned to the nuclear arms race between the United States and Soviet Union. The political roots and legislation that formed thus were concerned chiefly with how to prevent militarization of space, but military activity was not the only usage for the area beyond the atmosphere.

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Satellites began being used in the 1960s for communication purposes. The first of these satellites launched into space was Telstar 1, designed by American, French, and British broadcasting companies. It was the world’s first active communication satellite and enabled TV programs to be broadcast across the Atlantic. It was also the first to send television signals, telephone calls, and fax images through space.\(^{118}\)

There are multiple kinds of civilian satellites that have gone on to be developed.

Satellites are usually categorized by their orbit, and their orbit usually dictates their function. Some have low Earth orbits and tend to be military reconnaissance satellites. They orbit the Earth about once every ninety minutes. Other satellites have sun-synchronous orbits that are designed so that the satellite’s orientation is fixed relative to the sun throughout the year. These tend to be meteorological satellites for weather prediction. There are also satellites with geosynchronous orbits that are placed into orbit so that their period of rotation exactly matches the Earth’s rotation and so that it takes 24 hours to make one rotation. They are usually fixed on a certain latitude, and like geostationary satellites, can be used for communication purposes. Geostationary satellites are typically used for communication purposes such as television and phone usage. They are similar to geosynchronous satellites except they are strictly located on the equatorial plane.\(^{119}\)

Meanwhile, in addition to the previous four types of satellites, there are also satellites with medium earth orbits like those used for GPs and navigation.\(^{120}\)

Space has also emerged as an area in which private corporations are interested in finding additional ways to make a profit outside of the traditional types of satellites. Private enterprise entered the realm of space in several forms. Usage of satellites was the first and remains the most prominent form of commercial activity in space. However, there have been emerging discussions of plans for resource extraction and space. The first incident of space tourism came in 2001, when American businessman Dennis Tito was flown to the International Space Station via a Russian Soyuz rocket. The trip only cost him $20 million.\(^{121}\) Since then, many others have also taken the costly trip. Resource extraction has not had the same historical success as tourism, but discussions have been underway for many years to establish timelines and plans to see it through.

**Contemporary Conditions**

Although humanity has made massive strides in terms of technology and has increased interest in the growing usefulness of resources in space, attempts to further venture into and settle space has been hindered by the lack of a clearly defined legal mechanisms for establishing property rights there within both the United States and international law.\(^{122}\) While there is a slight historical precedent for retaining


ownership of materials acquired in space (the samples brought back from the moon are an example), ownership of actual celestial bodies remains ambiguous and problematic. Without an established avenue through which celestial property can be bought, owned, and sold, it is difficult for both corporations and countries to legitimize developing and extracting resources from bodies in space.

Current law regarding property in space remains ambiguous. While the Outer Space Treaty does prohibit nations from proclaiming sovereign ownership over sovereign bodies, it does not prohibit private appropriation. This is further complicated by the fact that for many businesses in nations across the globe, private activity requires explicit state approval. There are currently five important international treaties dictating activities in space according to the U.N. Office for Outer Space Affairs, but not all countries have ratified and are bound by them. The five treaties are the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, the Registration Convention, and the Moon Agreement. They deal with issues such as arms control, freedom of exploration, liability for damages, safety of astronauts, non-appropriation of space by any one country, the prevention of harmful interference with space activities, as well as the environment, the notification and registration of space activities, scientific investigation and the exploitation of natural resources in outer space, and also the settlement of disputes.

There are currently about 1,419 satellites in orbit around the Earth. The United States has 576 of them, 286 of which are commercial, 146 of which are military, 132 of which serve other government functions, and 12 of which are civil. Russia has 140 satellites, China has 181, and 522 are split between all other countries. There are 780 satellites in low earth orbit, 96 in mid earth orbit, 506 in some form of geosynchronous orbit, and 37 in sun synchronous orbit. There are more countries that have satellites in space than have the capability to launch satellites because countries can pay others to launch theirs. About 58 countries and 20 organizations have some type of payload in space, but only ten countries are capable of launching their own satellites. These countries are Russia, the U.S., France, Japan, China, the U.K., India, Israel, Iran, and North Korea. Several other countries like Brazil, Australia, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, and Romania have plans to launch their own satellites in the future.

Regarding national budgets and expenditures in space, the United States spends the most. Its 2013 budget of over $39 billion dwarfed the runner-up, China, which spends just over $6 billion a year. Russia is third with 5.2 billion, followed by Japan, France, Germany, Italy, India, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In terms of its overall budget spent on space, Russia spends the most at .25 percent, followed by the United

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124 Ibid, 60.
states at .23 percent, and followed in order by France, Japan, China, India, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Israel to round out the top ten.133 The Russian budget in particular grew by 144 percent from 2008 to 2013 in an effort to expand and modernize existing infrastructure by 2020.134 It does have plans to work with the United States, however, as the two countries have agreed on plans to build a new space station following the decommission of the International Space Station in 2024.135

Past UN and International Action

The Outer Space Treaty

In 1966, the United Nations Passed the Outer Space Treaty, or the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.136 It is one of the founding documents of international space law and has provided many subsequently important principles to the exploration of space. The treaty sought to prevent new means of colonial competition in space and prevent the damage that self-centered exploitation might cause.137 The treaty was the culmination of talks centered on the United States and the Soviet Union and their desire to limit the ability for nuclear weapons and bases in space. Early in 1966, both countries submitted draft resolutions to the U.N. and, after working out differences, agreed on the Treaty.138

The Treaty asserts that the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all mankind. Outer space shall be free for exploration and use by all states and is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means. It maintains 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 and that the moon and other celestial bodies shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.139 Astronauts shall be regarded as the envoys of mankind and treated accordingly. States shall be responsible for national space activities, whether carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities, and shall be liable for damage caused by their space objects.140 They must also avoid harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies.141

In order to verify compliance, the treaty also maintains that they will inform the U.N., the public, and the scientific community of the “nature, conduct, locations, and results of activities covered in this Treaty” and proclaims that “all stations, installations, equipment, and space vehicles on the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be open to representatives of other States

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133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 "Which countries spend the most on space exploration?", https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/which-countries-spend-the-most-on-space-exploration/, Accessed October 12, 2016.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
Parties on a reciprocal basis.” Interestingly enough, nowhere in the treaty is outer space defined. This has caused debate in the decades since and solutions to the question have thus far proven elusive.

**Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (The Moon Treaty)**

The Moon Treaty was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and fully ratified in 1984, allowing it to enter into effect that same year. The agreement elaborates on many of the principles articulated by the Outer Space Treaty, namely that the Moon and other Celestial bodies be used solely for peaceful purposes, that environmental integrity be maintained, and that the United Nations be informed of the location and purpose of any station established on those bodies. The treaty further asserts that “the Moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind and that an international regime should be established to govern the exploitation of such resources when such exploitation is about to become feasible”.

This treaty, however, has not technically been ratified by any state that engages in self-launched space ventures, making its effects minimal. The nature of the international regime that it calls for is also ambiguous and leaves much room for future discussion.

**Questions a Resolution Should Answer**

Space is a realm in which a myriad of possibilities exists. It has military, resource, tourism, technological, settlement, and environmental potential that is still only just being realized. One of the key factors holding back progress is the lack of an international legal regime to regulate and facilitate future growth in the sector. While the Outer Space Treaty set a precedent that international legislation could be meaningful and successful, it leaves many questions unanswered and provides little in the way of establishing any type of regulatory mechanism. This is the task that lies in front of any potential resolution: how to successfully create and implement that framework. To do so, there are several questions that must be addressed.

1. **What is outer space?**

   There is no clear internationally recognized definition, and this must be solved before any appropriate policies be considered. There is no solid line where the atmosphere ends and space begins. This ambiguity can potentially create debate on what constitutes a space activity and what does not. It must also address whether celestial bodies are a part of space or are their own, separate entities. Celestial bodies differ greatly as well, from comets to other planets. Any type or resolution must contain clear definitions of the spatial boundaries and areas in question.

2. **Should ownership exist in space and, if so, what form would it take?**

   Would ownership of goods and territories in space be governed by national

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governments, various commercial actors, a global, multinational organization, or would it be open to the general public? If any of these groups are the answer, how would fairness and equality of access to space be determined? Not all countries, corporations, and certainly people have space reaching capabilities, so the rights of all groups with rights and opportunities in space must be considered. If not, the realm of space will mirror the history of Earth, where colonialism, imperialism, and exploitation ruled.

3. Should the military be allowed in space?

Military activity has long been a focus of regulations in space, but the existing frameworks can be described as tenuous as best. Many are good in principle, but lack meaningful enforcement measures. There is not much in terms of mechanisms designed to actually stop the militarization of space outside of mutual assurances which can always be broken. A more substantial means of enforcement must be considered if militarization in space is to be avoided in spite of whatever future political developments on Earth arise. Some type of regulatory body must be created, even if that body might infringe on the sovereignty of states involved.

4. Who would regulate commercial interests in space?

If national ownership is limited in space, who will oversee commercial interests beyond the atmosphere? Once again, a multinational organization might be the answer, but how would it appear and function? Some type of policy or organization must regulate business in space to prevent exploitation of its environment and of workers who inhabit it. Unregulated activity in space could also harm activity on Earth. If space truly is the domain and heritage of all mankind, commerce there must benefit all mankind.

5. What would serve to arbitrate disputes in space?

Like many other questions, this one will require some type of group devoid of national or corporate biases. Some type of court must be established, and it must have the power to enforce its decisions. If it does not, its existence will be of marginal importance. It must also prevent disputes in space from spilling down and becoming disputes on Earth.

6. How should the environment be treated?

Pollution and other factors that might degrade conditions in space have the potential to negatively impact the earth. Groups acting in space must be mindful that most of their activities may occur within the Earth’s gravitational well. Activities on some celestial bodies like asteroids, even more seriously, could alter the trajectories and orbits of those bodies. This could very well put objects on a collision course with Earth.

**Bloc Positions**

*The United States*

The United States has played a leading role regarding space activity since efforts began and it continues to have a strong presence in the arena. Despite the money spent by the United States on its space programs, its advantage is decreasing. Today, only 25 percent of the world’s launch capabilities are owned by the United States as compared to 15 years ago, when 75 percent was.¹⁴⁵ Perhaps the reason for this is the increased focus by the United States government to focus on private enterprise in space and on private contracts for traditional

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government roles in space activity. In 2010, President Barack Obama announced the private sector would take over the function of bringing astronauts to space and in 2011, the American space shuttle fleet was retired.\textsuperscript{146} In fact, the Americans have relied many times on purchasing rides into space aboard Russian spacecraft.

While the United States remains committed to the ideal of cooperation of space, there is no denying its weakened position in regards to the area and its continued assertion that in spite of this, it can do what it wants. In 2015, President Obama signed the US Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act.\textsuperscript{147} This asserts that American citizens can go into space and make use of asteroids with the promise that they shall be “entitled to any asteroid resource or space resource obtained, including to possess, own, transport, use, and sell the asteroid resource or space resource obtained”.\textsuperscript{148} While the policy specifically goes out of its way to acknowledge that it is not claiming sovereignty over materials in space, and would thus technically be in line with the Outer Space Treaty, many observers have protested that the United States cannot give away to companies what it itself does not own.

American insecurity in space can be noted from its treatment of the Chinese Space Program. When China became only the third country to launch astronauts into space in 2003, the US repeatedly rebuffed their attempts to join the International Space Station Program despite calls from most other developed nations to allow for it. Many in the US feared another space race.\textsuperscript{149} American attitudes towards space can thus be marked by three defining traits: a decreasing level of capability in space, an increasingly assertive and unilateral approach, and a fear of others joining the race.

\textbf{The Russian Federation}

Russia is increasing its efforts to return to its Soviet Era level of prominence in space. Its main priorities at the moment are its commitments to the ISS and using its space presence to project its level of power. In terms of its views on a potential political environment in space, the country maintains publicly that cooperation is the chief goal. It would certainly be averse to any countries, particularly the United States, going around the existing legislation concerning space. Much of its fears are currently held at bay by the reliance of the United States on it for several of its capabilities.\textsuperscript{150} It would certainly work hard to remain as one of the most indispensable nations in space, and would only amend its international legal commitments if the changes benefitted Russia by continuing its advantageous positions.

\textbf{The People’s Republic of China}

China’s goals in space include expanding its human spaceflight capabilities and to catch up technologically with other developed nations. It would applaud a policy that leveled the current playing field but still


\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{149} Leroy Chiao, “The Politics of Space Exploration”.

provided opportunities for it to separate itself from the pack later on. China’s military space program is highly secretive, but has conducted anti-satellite tests as recently as 2006. This speaks volumes about its presumptions on the importance of the military’s role in space expansion. The country has, as well, developed jamming satellites and anti-satellite missiles. Like the United States, China has begun to see the advantages of handing aspects of the space industry over to the private sector.\footnote{“China’s Aggressive Space Program is Forced to go it Alone”, \url{http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/19464/china-s-aggressive-space-program-is-forced-to-go-it-alone}, Accessed October 10, 2016.}

**Other Spacefaring Nations**

Most nations with space capabilities recognize their deficiencies in comparison to countries like the United States and Russia. They advocate for cooperation in space as well as preventing unilateral action from the more advanced countries. Many are themselves developing space capabilities on their own, but would approve of international cooperation on efforts to improve space activity. Japan, for example, is attempting to create more networks of radar and optical telescopes that track space debris.\footnote{“Space Programs”, \url{http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/series/8/space-programs}, Accessed October 10, 2016.} Iran has plans to launch three satellites, Argentina is planning on launching satellites of its own as well, and India recently launched 20 satellites in one mission.\footnote{Ibid.} The European Space Agency (ESA) has plans to land a probe on Mars in late 2016.\footnote{Ibid.} All of these countries, and many more with space capabilities, are slowly making their own way in the exploration of space. International cooperation, at least in civilian ventures, would greatly expedite these processes. They would be greatly in favor of measures that promote cooperation and opportunity for all space capable nations in an egalitarian manner.

**Underdeveloped Nations**

A number of developing nations are attempting to build their own space programs, but they and other countries who are not making any efforts are far behind countries with already established space enterprises of their own. Many countries such as Nigeria, Turkey, and Algeria have sent experts abroad to the US to learn what they can of satellites and other space technologies.\footnote{Jennifer Chu, “Satellites in the Developing World”, \url{http://news.mit.edu/2011/developing-satellites-0804}, Accessed October 10, 2016.} As many as 70 countries have space programs, though only a dozen have launch capability.\footnote{“How can poor countries afford space programmes”, \url{http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/11/economist-explains-0}, Accessed October 10, 2016.} Developing nations will have two main goals in the coming discussions about a political regime for space. The first is that existing space technologies will be used for their benefit. An example of this was the use of global satellites to assess damage in Haiti following its catastrophic earthquake.\footnote{Jennifer Chu, “Satellites in the Developing World”.} Continuing this is a goal, as is making sure that equal opportunities to reap the benefits of space will exist in the future. They may be unable to participate now, but these countries have hopes of one day attaining space capabilities. They want to be treated as equals when that day comes.
Conclusion

The exploration into space only began in the past century, but it has quickly erupted into one of the biggest issues of our present and our future. Activities in space were born from competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. To this day, the U.S. and Russia remain the major players in the region. Tensions and animosities continue to exist between them, and this could very well spill into space. Although the Outer Space Treaty set a framework for law in space, it does not do nearly enough to prevent conflict and to create an environment where enforcement is taken seriously. Other nations and corporations are showing increased interest in space, and more competition could be on the way. With an uptick in space activity likely, there must be a guiding policy document that will help successfully navigate the politics of the emerging arena.

The realm of space is one of enormous consequence and uncertainty. As humanity expands, it will look upwards beyond the atmosphere. In order for a fair and ordered system to exist, and for equal and peaceful opportunities to be present, there must be a legal framework to maintain those values. It is the duty of this committee to provide such a framework. Chaos in space cannot be allowed, as the Earth and its society are vulnerable to activities that may occur there. Disputes in space could become disputes on earth unless a system of politics is put in place. While so far space has not become a danger to humanity on earth, it one day could be, and a mechanism must be in place to prevent that.