



SPECPOL STUDY GUIDE

Agenda Item 1

**Questioning the future of recent advancements made
in space travel and colonization in relation to
the Space 2030 Agenda**

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THE SPECIAL POLITICAL and DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE STUDY GUIDE

Topic: Questioning the future of recent advancements made in space travel and colonization in relation to the Space 2030 Agenda

Committee: SPECPOL

Name: Emre Oktav

Position: Committee Director

A. Introduction to the Chair

Greetings,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 5th edition of the Haydarpaşa Model

United Nations Conference and to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. I am Emre Oktav, a senior student in the 2nd year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) at İstek Acıbadem Anatolian High School. I will be serving as one of the chairs in SPECPOL during the conference.

I have spent as a part of the Model United Nations community in Turkey and abroad. MUN has always been an integral part of my life, and no other event has come even close to giving me such a fun and productive time. During all these years and enjoyable moments, I have learned one important fact, that we can unite and there is no hardships or problems that cannot be overcome when we unite. MUN has been a lesson which gave me hope to pursue my unfaltering goal for global change in a fair and green future, and I sincerely hope that I can provide an experience which can light a spark of hope for the future in you.

In this committee, we will be focusing on solving important political disputes and plan for the future of geopolitics. It is a challenging task, because even if an obvious solution exists it is never easy to unite nations with conflicting interests to agree on a common solution. Negotiation is a hard skill to master and a bitter pill for some to swallow.

I wish you all a productive and interesting discussion.

Sincerely,

Emre Oktav

B. Introduction to the Committee

SPECPOL was established as the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in 1945. Similar to the other General Assembly committees, it is located in New York. It considers a broad range of issues including decolonization-related agenda items, effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, reviewing the question of peacekeeping operations and special political missions around the globe, the refugee aid and relief missions for Palestinian refugees, Israeli activities and the rights of Palestinians on the West Bank and, most importantly for this conference, international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space (The United Nations). The major issues it covers are decolonization and political disputes within the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the subsidiary committee under SPECPOL that covers the peaceful uses of outer space is Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) which is serviced by the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). The mandate of COPUOS is to strengthen the international legal regime governing outer space, resulting in improved conditions for expanding international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and supporting efforts at the national, regional and global levels, including those of entities of the United Nations system and international space-related entities, to maximize the benefits of the use of space science and technology and their applications (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs). COPUOS is the most extensive UN organs that specializes on the uses of outer space and also considers space law. Delegates are advised to check the missions and powers of both committees as they can be useful not only for research but also while finding UN organs that can provide solutions to problems regarding outer space in their resolutions.

Its powers and mandate are similar to the other General Assembly committees of the UN in the fact that its resolutions are advisory and comprise of recommendations. However, note that SPECPOL can try to establish legal precedent via rulings on the behalf of UNOOSA, which lays the groundwork of international space law. It can enact this as a ruling as UNOOSA is an UN body that is regulated by the General Assembly. It can also act as a platform to promote the signing of a new treaty on the regulation of space. The regulatory powers that SPECPOL has over political questions are also greater than the other GA committees as regulating UN political initiatives are one of the legally binding purposes of SPECPOL.

However, SPECPOL can still not legally bind other member states to do an act or violate the sovereignty of member states in its resolutions. More importantly, please also remember that the UN cannot directly intervene in the affairs of private businesses or try to bind them directly to the UN. It is also not within its powers to mention one of them in a resolution directly or take actions against those. It can only try to persuade states to regulate private businesses or enact new rulings or laws on the matter of private sector activity in space. This will be an important thing to keep in mind as the private sector is taking a very major role in space travel and colonization without little oversight as no laws specifically regulating properties or ventures located outside Earth exists.

C. Introduction to the Topic

Firstly, we must be aware of what is the Space 2030 Agenda. It is a resolution exploring the potential ways in which resources and human activities in space can be utilized in order to reach to the target goals set in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It underlines the fact that space-related technology is playing a key role in development and that there is a need to work collectively in order to deliver the full potential of space for sustainable development (UNOOSA, 2018).

Meanwhile, the most recent developments in space to consider is the following. During the Trump Administration, the United States has laid important groundwork on a project to land a man on the Moon with the Artemis Program, established the first independent Space Force and eventually develop capabilities to land humans on Mars by cooperating with other states and the private sector. The Biden Administration has expressed approval for these programmes, and issued a new space policy framework which included pledges to fund satellites which can investigate climate change from the orbit. Meanwhile, China has completed the first soft landing on the far side of the Moon in 2019 and returned a sample to Earth in 2020 completing its first lunar program successfully and launched the Tianhe core module of the all-Chinese built Tiangong Space Station. In 2021, it became the third state to make a soft landing and deposit a rover to Mars. China is now actively planning and preparing a manned mission to Mars alongside the American government and various private companies. As China considers the exploitation of the Earth-Moon space and landing humans to Mars a priority, it is expected that they will be focusing their efforts on that direction. The China Daily, The Communist Party's official newspaper, has expressed these as a long term goal and to make China 'recognized' as a great power.

Currently, the 'space race' is no longer waged between two countries over singular goals. There are multiple space races. One is to be the first to return men to the Moon and being the first to establish the first human outpost in the Moon, waged largely between China and USA and private entities. There is also a Race to Mars between America and China and a 'billionaire' space race between Elon Musk, Jeff

Bezos and Richard Branson, the founders of the largest aerospace and space tourism companies, to be the first to reach to Mars.

Moreover, all of those parties mentioned above has expressed targets aiming to colonize celestial bodies. The goal of this committee would be to ensure that these groups do not start to divide space into zones of influence and exploit space resources solely for their own benefit without assisting to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, solving the ambiguities of the Outer Space Treaty and reinvigorating or replacing the Moon Treaty with more efficient solutions solving the regulatory problems of private space companies would also be a major goal for the delegates, as an unregulated space industry would cause a failure in the Space 2030 Agenda as it called for an equitable distribution of resources collected from space in order to reach to the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, in order to prevent future political conflict on the matters of political allegiance, political rights and any requests for independence delegates should be aware of setting decisive precedent on what should be the political situation of any permanent human settlement.

D. History of the Topic

Naturally, the history of political and economic activity do not extend far into modern history. The immediate predecessors of space law are the international laws that recognize states' sovereignty over the airspace directly above their territory. However, space law as we know it did not start to develop until the late 1950's when Cold War powers took an interest in weapons tests conducted in space within the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In this treaty, testing nuclear weapons and ICBM's in outer space was banned as a measure amongst others to relieve public anxiety over increasingly destructive nuclear tests in all of the parties to the Cold War. However, note that China, North Korea, France and Saudi Arabia are not parties to this treaty. Meanwhile, the space race between the USA and the Soviet Union began after the launching of the world's first satellite, Sputnik, to space although this situation did not had a direct effect on international space law immediately. Rather, the subsequent arms race on developing weapons operable in outer space for strategic purposes had the effect of spurring the enactment of the Outer Space Treaty (OST). It prohibited nuclear weapons in space, limited all nations to use celestial bodies in space only for peaceful purposes and prohibits states to claim sovereignty in outer space. It is signed by all major spacefaring nations, but it is largely silent on new commercial issues such as asteroid mining or space tourism and has no clauses on whether any human settlement on outer space has political rights or a right to self determination. It also does not prohibit the establishment of space army forces or use of conventional weapons in space.

The Outer Space Treaty makes states responsible for the activities of NGO's (including companies) and obliges NGO's to receive authorization and constant surveillance by states for their activities in space.

Between 1967 and 1979, four other treaties were signed, mostly complementary treaties reinforcing the existing clauses of Outer Space Treaty. The Rescue Agreement obligates states to provide assistance to rescue the personnel of a spacecraft which has landed on their territory due to an accident or emergency or simple mistake, supporting the OST's clause that designates astronauts as envoys of mankind. The Liability Convention obligates states to take full responsibility for any object launched to space from their territory and make them legally liable. Finally, the Registration Convention obligates the states to provide details to the United Nations on the orbits of the objects that was launched to their space from their territory.

The last treaty, but the one with the smallest amount of signatories (11), is the Moon Treaty. It is not ratified by any state that engages in human spaceflight using only their own capabilities. It is called the Moon Treaty but its clauses also concern outer space and generally reviews the clauses of the OST. The Moon Treaty bans all military activity in space, provides laws to establish an international structure to govern resource exploitation of natural resources on the Moon, bans altering the environmental balance of celestial bodies and obligates states to share lunar resources equitable amongst other clauses that I will write in detail later. However, it still leaves several of the major problems mentioned before unanswered and as it has extremely few signatories it is nearly irrelevant in international law. There is also precedent on denouncing the Treaty as a way to 'constrain free enterprise' set by the United States. In the executive order of Donald Trump, it is directly stated that '...the United States does not view it as a global commons. Accordingly, it shall be the policy of the United States to encourage international support for the public and private recovery and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law.' and that the Secretary of the State should object to all attempts to treat the Moon Treaty as reflecting or expressing international law (Donald J. Trump, 2020).

Meanwhile, during the stagnation process of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's, the United States gradually shifted its attention away from NASA as its main rival was no longer investing in space. Both powers had experienced a considerably long period of stagnation in space affairs until the 2010's, as one no longer had the motivation to take on ambitious space projects and the other had a limited budget. The United States' situation went as bad as having to rely completely on Russian Soyuz craft to supply its astronauts in the ISS at some points due to political neglection. In the meantime, China has rapidly expanded its spacefaring capabilities, taking advantage of the other powers' stagnation. In 2003, China became the third country to send men to outer space using independent capabilities and sent its first native navigational satellite to space. Following these, China became the fifth nation to orbit the moon successfully in 2007 and carried a space walk in 2008.

At the last years of the Obama Administration, China became the third country to perform a 'soft landing' on the Moon and land a rover using independent capabilities. However, the USA was not able

to accomplish significant steps on revitalizing NASA during the Obama Administration. In the meantime, companies such as SpaceX and Virgin Galactic came to public attention for the first time.

E. General Overview

First, I would like to remind all delegates that the Space 2030 Agenda is a resolution exploring the potential ways in which resources and human activities in space can be utilized in order to reach to the target goals set in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and therefore delegates are **strongly recommended** to produce solutions which tackle the regulatory and political problems mentioned as well as those which would help humanity to complete the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Next, the recent developments in space travel and colonization can be divided into a few important factors. The first, and possibly the most important, is the decentralization of space activity. Space is no longer the sole domain of state actors only. Several private companies in the US have made big leaps in their flight capabilities in recent years. The company SpaceX has successfully provided NASA with equipment to transport astronauts to the ISS and its SpaceX Dragon 2 is the only reusable crewed and cargo spacecraft in the world (China claims to have successfully tested one, yet many details remain classified by the Chinese government and unlike Dragon its payload and purpose is unknown). They have been also preparing designs for a permanent settlement on the Moon and been providing space tourism services. The same company is also speedily developing its Starship in order to launch a mission to Mars themselves. The company Blue Origin, founded by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, is in close competition with SpaceX over reaching to Mars and other American companies are starting to follow their lead. Meanwhile, the British Virgin Galactic has no such ambitions and focuses solely on developing commercial spacecraft and providing flights to space tourists. Currently, only SpaceX, Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic are the private companies to conduct missions to space successfully.

Secondly, tighter great power competition means that state actors themselves are more eager to compete with each other in space technology and assert their dominance in other planetary bodies in order to exploit them for getting an edge over their rivals. Interplanetary activities and a strong presence in space has always been one of the requirements for being a superpower in the minds of Chinese policymakers who have been rushing to gain major achievements in space. Meanwhile the West, which has been lagging behind in space technology, has risen to the challenge China presents with the Artemis Accords and the EU is continuing to conduct research on space technology. Emerging powers such as India and Israel are joining the race, and Japan is quietly developing its capabilities.

Thirdly, new technologies mean that all actors, states or NGO's, now can conduct profitable activities beyond simply landing on planetary bodies or launching probes. New technologies mean that activities

such as lunar and asteroid mining and colonization is no longer a pipe dream in the realm of science fiction. These activities are also strategic, as they would allow the exploitation of rare metals on space and allow the population sustainment challenges of Earth to diminish as populations could potentially be sent to other interplanetary colonies to relieve the burden of sustaining the huge population of Earth.

However, all of these brings big questions to ask. Firstly, how can we regulate and tax the activities of corporations operating in space. Will space become an unregulated tax haven, particularly as companies relocate their ‘headquarters’ to extraterrestrial settlements? In addition, which nation should be held responsible for businesses whose operations are completely located in space, particularly as the UN cannot directly govern business activity? Also, another question is making certain that all stakeholders of the society can reap the benefits of commercial activities in space equitably. There is also an environmental aspect as there is likely going to be a need to preserve some aspects of the natural environment of other planetary bodies in order to conduct research on the nature of those planets, something which human settlements will immediately damage. Moreover, there is going to be a need to establish human safety and health standards for any commercial operations in space as those can be highly risky as it is with commercial aviation. Special health considerations will also be needed for these operations as the human biology may not be perfectly adaptable to other planetary bodies or to space, causing decompression sickness, barotrauma, immunodeficiencies, loss of bone and muscle, loss of eyesight, orthostatic intolerance, sleep disturbances, and radiation injuries (solar radiation exposure) as well as mental health problems as astronauts usually spend a lot of time alone or in small groups.

Finally, if we are talking about what could happen in the very long term, there is also hard political questions to consider. Probably the most important, ensuring that human rights are respected in other planetary settlements which can be hard to enforce as they will be very far away from Terran authorities. Moreover, we cannot know if states will consider extraterrestrial settlements solely as a way to deplete the resources of other planets or as places to forcibly resettle their excessively large populations. There is also the questions over the political status of the settlements themselves, to which nation they should owe allegiance to, what should be their political status as defined in the international law and lastly what should be done if those settlements demand political representation or even independence citing the right to self determination of populations.

F. Key Terms

ICBM: An acronym standing for Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, which is any ballistic missile with a minimum range of 5000 kilometers. They can be loaded with explosive, chemical or biological warheads, but usually designed to carry one or more nuclear warheads.

Soft landing: It is the landing of spacecraft without resulting in significant damage to the landing vehicle or its payload, as opposed to a hard landing.

CNSA: Chinese National Space Administration. The main government agency of China which is responsible for civilian space operations and their regulation.

Earth-Moon Space: The political-economic denomination used to indicate the area of space located between the Earth's atmosphere-outer space border and (including) the Moon.

G. Bloc Positions

The United States

There may be few doubts on whether or not the USA has won the space race, but it can certainly be discussed whether NASA is currently on par with CNSA on actual launch capabilities as the latter is able to conduct very hard landings on the Moon as demonstrated by landing on the dark side of it. However, the US still has a giant industrial and technological base which can overtake Chinese capabilities in a short period of time if used properly, and a burgeoning private space industry. Overall, it can be said that the US has three policy goals overall, with delegates having more freedom in other issues such as enforcing human rights in space.

1-Ensuring the freedoms of economic and entrepreneurial activities in space and the ability of the private sector to exploit the economic options that can benefit the market under limited regulations for safety, health and fair competition. Even though the US is against the Moon Treaty, it can consider its options if economic freedoms are guaranteed for private companies.

2-Ensuring that any outcome benefits the United States on gaining an edge over its superpower competitors in space program development, and if that is not possible mitigate the advantages that the emerging powers can gain.

3-Trying to maintain the legal basis of keeping the military United States Space Force intact, and deflect attempts to make such forces illegal. In addition, it should try to prevent hostile nations from acquiring rival military-space capabilities for its own homeland security interests.

Even though it is not a core interest, the US should also have an interest in being sure that any human settlement outside Earth is governed by democratic principles as it would be beneficial for any such settlement to take sides with the West.

Its National Space Policy also advocates expanding U.S. leadership in space, allowing unfettered access to space, encouraging private sector growth, expanding international cooperation, and establishing a human presence on the Moon with an eventual human mission to Mars (The United States Government, 2020).

People's Republic of China

As said before, exploiting the Earth-Moon space and being the first to send a manned mission to Mars are policy goals that the Chinese government currently sees as imperative steps to make China a ‘great power’. Any Chinese delegate should be aware of their country’s aspiration to be a great power and act according to it.

They should advocate for measures which would allow Chinese state-linked enterprises to exploit the Earth-Moon space and especially focus on the Chinese exclusion from NASA which is regarded as a humiliation and an important block on developing technological capabilities faster within the Chinese government. Meanwhile, a Chinese delegate should also be aware of their country’s aspirations to counterbalance the presence of the United States Space Force, develop its own cutting edge missile systems and other military technologies regarding space and the government’s aim to transform China from a manufacturing economy to an economy in which high technology industries such as the aerospace industry has a dominating role in the Chinese economy.

The delegation would also strongly desire to increase regulation of private aerospace companies, especially giving the recent crackdown in the designated ‘technology monopolies’ by the Chinese government, which extended into several other industries such as the gaming industry as well. Meanwhile, it would try to avoid the question of enforcing human rights in outer space as this would also encourage the debating of China’s own crackdown on minorities as well, a highly uncomfortable topic for any Chinese diplomat.

The Chinese delegation should not be afraid to use their country’s strong economic influence and its major role as the world’s biggest provider of foreign direct investment to achieve their aims or conducting the so-called ‘Wolf Warrior’ diplomacy.

Russia

Once the other space superpower as the Soviet Union, Russia lost many of its space project development capacities, resources and brainpower after the dissolution of the USSR. Although it is not the dominant power that it was and no longer develops significant ambitious projects on its own, the ISS still has a reliance on Russian space equipment and Soyuz rockets for the transportation of cargo. It also maintains one of the largest and extensive Deep Space Networks that facilitates the observation of space from land and communications to space. Currently, Russia mostly develops missions in cooperation with the CNSA and Roscosmos currently has no plans to launch a new manned space mission. Its recent focus has been mostly developing more sophisticated space weaponry and ICBM's with the Russian Armed Forces and the Russian Aerospace Forces.

Russia still maintains a strong aerospace industry and has strong communication capabilities, and a privileged position in the ISS. Therefore, keeping the current economic and geopolitical situation of Russia, the priority of a Russian delegate would be to preserve their old power in the space technology scene. Russia is also expected to be in favor of stricter private aerospace industry regulations as it has attempted to nationalize the whole breadth of the industry in the Putin era reorganization of the space sector although this has not prevented massive losses in Roscosmos, which recorded a loss of 1 billion rubles in 2020.

The European Union

Most European Union member states have their own space programs and pursue their own space policies, especially true for France, although they coordinate their operations through the European Space Agency. It commonly cooperates with NASA in conducting space missions and is developing important missions on its own, including manned missions to the Moon and Mars and a permanent European Space Station. In addition to pursuing strategic autonomy and independent capabilities, assisting the development of aerospace companies are also a priority for the European Union and many European countries.

The United Kingdom itself remains a member of the ESA despite Brexit but it has very few spacefaring capabilities on its own, and is considered a relatively minor actor on space affairs. It had never had a manned mission on its history and kept itself limited to launching satellites. Overall, it heavily relies on the ESA and its main interest is to develop spaceports and the private aerospace industry (Virgin Galactic's operator Virgin Group is a British company despite Virgin Galactic being based in the United States).

India

Indian Space Research Organization, formed in 1969, superseded the erstwhile INCOSPAR. Vikram Sarabhai, having identified the role and importance of space technology in a Nation's development,

provided ISRO the necessary direction to function as an agent of development. ISRO then embarked on its mission to provide the Nation space based services and to develop the technologies to achieve the same independently. Future readiness is the key to maintaining an edge in technology and ISRO endeavors to optimize and enhance its technologies as the needs and ambitions of the country evolve. Thus, ISRO is moving forward with the development of heavy lift launchers, human spaceflight projects, reusable launch vehicles, semi-cryogenic engines, single and two stage to orbit (SSTO and TSTO) vehicles, development and use of composite materials for space applications.

The current Indian government's economic policies are generally protectionist against foreign competition, though the government strongly supports its own domestic private industries and encourages them to partner with foreign companies within the project Make in India. India also sees settlements in space as a way to ease the burden of having a huge increasing population as well. Militarily, India should also be highly concerned about militarization of space as its military rivals China and Pakistan are racing with India to gain a strategic advantage, with China particularly making great leaps recently.

Indonesia

Indonesia is a newly emerging power in the space races. The National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN) has been developing its own launch capabilities and has launched Indonesian made satellites to space. Another of its main concerns was to build spaceports and try to attract private aerospace companies to Indonesia. It currently lobbies to attract SpaceX's launches to the nation to receive a new source of income and create new jobs, so making itself more attractive to private aerospace companies should be a priority for Indonesia.

LAPAN was integrated into The National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), a cabinet level governmental agency. Although most welcome the unification of the numerous Indonesian space research agencies under one organization, others have accused the government of using BRIN as a political tool and of creating conflicts of interest within the formerly independent research agencies.

Japan

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) was born through the merger of three institutions, namely the Institute of Space and Astronautical Science (ISAS), the National Aerospace Laboratory of Japan (NAL) and the National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA). It was designated as a core performance agency to support the Japanese government's overall aerospace development and utilization. JAXA, therefore, can conduct integrated operations from basic research and development to utilization. In 2013, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of its founding, JAXA created the corporate slogan, "Explore to Realize," which reflects its management philosophy of utilizing space and the sky

to achieve a safe and affluent society. JAXA became a National Research and Development Agency in April 2015, and took a new step forward to achieve optimal R&D achievements for Japan, according to the government's purpose of establishing a national R&D agency. In 2013, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of its founding, JAXA created the corporate slogan, "Explore to Realize," which reflects its management philosophy of utilizing space and the sky to achieve a safe and affluent society.

Currently, Japan is a developed space power which is working towards achieving a high-technology space industry whose quality is unrivaled. It should encourage pro-free market policies, yet existing strong quality measures in the general Japanese economy should be reflected in Japan's regulatory calls.

Israel

The Israel Space Agency, founded following a government decision in 1983, is a national agency operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Agency is responsible for initiating, leading and coordinating all activities of the civilian space program.

The Agency especially supports scientific research and development with real, economic potential such as the development of unique and innovative technologies. In addition, the Agency operates on the premise that all space related activities contribute to the Israeli economy, to the country's international standing and also benefit its citizens in terms of agriculture, communications, monitoring of environmental pollution and research.

The Israel Space Agency's goals are many and diverse. They include expanding cooperation and reciprocal relationships with various countries in the field of space, promoting infrastructure research studies in the academic sector and research institutes, investing in start-ups developing components for the Israeli and international space industry, the development and construction of satellites for civilian purposes and supporting the development of unique and innovative space technologies. The Agency also cultivates a cadre of future scientists, through space education and community projects, who will work in the field of space research in the future. In general, the Agency seeks to increase Israel's relative lead in this field and position the country amongst the leading nations involved in space research and its exploitation.

Israel also is attempting to create its own private aerospace sector to rival foreign businesses and grow its economy and as a result any Israeli delegate should be aware of these efforts to create new businesses in this industry. Israel, alongside the US, is also a major supporter of capitalism in space and desires to exploit the resources of space freely. However, Israel should also be careful that its many enemies like Iran is trying to gain a military foothold in space and should ame efforts preventing these or developing their own capabilities as a matter of national security.

Iran

The Safir launch in 2009 marked the first achievement of Iran's space program, initiated in complete secrecy earlier in the decade by the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics. The goal was to eventually launch heavy telecommunications satellites into 36,000-kilometer geosynchronous earth orbit (GEO). Iran is also noticeable in the fact that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has an aerospace force specifically dedicating itself to building military capabilities in space.

Iran should also note that there has been accusations that the Iranian civil space program has been dual-used, meaning that technologies that are used in building weapons like ICBM's are secretly tested in the civilian program by using these ICBM launcher technologies in sending satellites into Earth's orbit.

United Arab Emirates

The UAE launched the National Space Programme under which the UAE will prepare Emirati cadres specialized in aerospace sciences. Young Emirati cadres will execute the National Space Programme. Launching the National Space Programme is part of the UAE's ambitious space programme of reaching Mars by 2021 and building the first settlement there by 2117.

Similar to Saudi Arabia, the UAE desires to create a 'space city' and diversify its economy by attracting the headquarters of major private aerospace companies and gaining revenues from their operations. Unlike other states like the US, Israel and Indonesia, these projects are mostly aimed to attract the know-how and financial operations of these companies rather than their manufacturing bases.

H. Relevant Treaties

Partial Test Ban Treaty

Signed in 1963, this treaty is not related to human activities in space. However, it is important due to the fact that this treaty has banned the testing of nuclear weapons above ground (including outer space). Notable non-signatories are China, France, North Korea and Saudi Arabia.

The Outer Space Treaty

It is the treaty upon which international space law is based upon and signed by all of the major spacefaring nations of Earth. It entered into force in 1967 and has 89 signatories. In the following lines the important rules set by the treaty will be pointed out with bullet points. All of the bullet points include articles or parts of articles of the Treaty and all academic credit belongs to the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.

1- The exploration and use of outer space shall be carried for the benefit and in the interests of all countries irrespective of their economic and scientific development as the province of all mankind.

2-There shall be free access to all areas of celestial bodies.

3-There shall be freedom of scientific investigation in outer space and all celestial bodies and signatory states shall encourage and facilitate international co-operation in such investigation.

4-Outer space, including all celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, means of use or occupation or any other means.

5-State parties must not place any weapons of mass destruction in the orbit of Earth or place them in any other celestial body or station them in outer space in any other manner.

6-The moon and other celestial bodies can only be used for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military maneuvers on celestial bodies is forbidden.

7- State Parties will regard astronauts as envoys of mankind and offer them all means of assistance in case of an accident, distress or emergency landing on the territory of another state party or the high seas. When astronauts make such a landing, they must be safely and promptly returned to the State of registry of their space vehicle. In carrying on activities in outer space and on celestial bodies, the astronauts of one State Party will provide all possible assistance to the astronauts of other States Parties.

8- States Parties to the Treaty shall bear international responsibility for national activities in outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies or by non-governmental entities and The activities of non-governmental entities in outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall require authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate State Party to the Treaty.

9-Every State Party that launches or procures the launching of an object to space and each State Party from whose territories or facilities an object is launched will be held internationally liable for damage to another State Party.

10- Ownership of objects launched into outer space, including objects landed or constructed on a celestial body, and of their component parts, is not affected by their presence in outer space or on a celestial body or by their return to the Earth. (Important, because loophole to make claims exists via constructing buildings).

11- States Parties to the Treaty shall pursue studies of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, and conduct exploration of them so as to avoid their harmful contamination and also adverse changes in the environment of the earth resulting from the introduction of extraterrestrial matter and, where necessary, will adopt appropriate measures for this purpose.

12-All stations, installations, equipment and space vehicles on the moon and other celestial bodies shall be open to representatives of other States Parties to the Treaty on a basis of reciprocity.

However, as it can be seen, it is very silent on the issue of commercial activities to be conducted in space including asteroid and interplanetary mining as well as space tourism. It also has no provisions regulating commercial operations in space or enforcing health and safety standards, or any such standards on commercial operations. Also, it does not restrict all forms of military activity in outer space or establishment of military space forces and is silent on the political status of any potential human settlement in other celestial bodies.

Rescue Agreement

This treaty coming into force in 1968 is complementary to the Outer Space Treaty and supports its provisions on rescuing astronauts. It contains more detail compared to the Outer Space Treaty's article on the issue as it denominates the parties to be rescued and obligates any state which is returning a space object to be compensated financially for their efforts.

Liability Convention

This treaty that came into force in 1967 is also complementary to the Outer Space Treaty and supports its provisions on the liability of state parties. It states that state parties are responsible for all space objects launched from their territory regardless of the entity that launches the object. It also states that in the case of joint projects between states, all states are equally liable for damage caused by the object and that only states can hold other states liable due to the damages caused by spacefaring objects.

Registration Convention

This treaty came into force in 1976 and obligates the states to provide details to the United Nations on the orbits of the objects that were launched to space from their territory as well as its general functions with the records kept by UNOOSA.

Moon Treaty

The Moon Agreement was considered and elaborated from 1972 to 1979. The Agreement was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 in resolution 34/68. It was not until June 1984, however, that the fifth

country, Austria, ratified the Agreement, allowing it to enter into force in July 1984. The Agreement reaffirms and elaborates on many of the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty as applied to the Moon and other celestial bodies, providing that those bodies should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, that their environments should not be disrupted, that the United Nations should be informed of the location and purpose of any station established on those bodies. In addition, the Agreement provides 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. However, it is only signed by 11 parties (none of them major spacefaring nations) and has very little relevancy at the moment.

I. Possible Solutions

Depending on their opinion, sides may / will be taking different approaches on this issue.

- Revising and revitalizing current treaties
- Creating new treaties tackling original problems
- Efficiency-focused program upgrades
- Encouraging the establishment of new private aerospace companies, via direct tools such as foreign direct investment and subsidies or indirect measures such as more pro-business taxation
- Further demilitarizing space by signing new treaties or by multilateral understanding
- Trying to reach strategic military parity in space with other rival powers
- Establishing regulatory standards for the taxation of operations in space, which can take the form of eliminating anti-competitive behaviour and pro-business taxation for pro-free market states and possibly more progressive policies for social democratic economies
- Establishing international safety and health standards for commercial flights in space, whose strictness may depend according to general national policies on setting such standards (harsher in quality-seeking Japan, lesser in Russia etc.)

J. Guiding Questions

1-To what extent should property rights and ownership be enforced in outer space? What should be the legal basis on owning property in space under space law and should there be any terrestrial body that should not be owned and remain common heritage of mankind?

2-To what extent should be businesses operating inside and having their headquarters and profit centers in space should be regulated and taxed?

3-To which nation the businesses mentioned above should be connected, and on what basis should they be connected?

4-How can we ensure that universal human rights and basic human decency are respected in any extraplanetary human settlement?

5-How can we ensure that any human settlement outside Earth will be governed well under democratic principles

6- What should be the political status and rights of these settlements considering the fact that they are very far away from Earth and potentially would need to be autonomous to a degree simply because they are far from Earth?

7-Can the right to self determination be fully respected in human settlements in outer space in case the populations of such settlements decide to demand more autonomy or independence from Earth?

8-How can we preserve the environment of other planetary bodies if human settlement occurs and what should be the standards for preserving the natural environment of other planetary bodies?

9-How can basic standards for commercial space flight in space be established in a way similar to those regulating commercial air flights?

10-What should be the safety and health standards for commercial spacecraft and space travel?

K. Further Reading

https://www.unoosa.org/res/oosadoc/data/resolutions/2021/general_assembly_76th_session/ares763.html/A_RES_76_3_E.pdf (Resolution on the Space 2030 Agenda)

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-encouraging-international-support-recovery-use-space-resources/>

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SPECPOL STUDY GUIDE

Agenda Item 2
Question of United States Virgin Islands

haydarayagamun

THE SPECIAL POLITICAL and DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE STUDY GUIDE

Topic: Question of United States Virgin Islands

Committee: The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

Name: Ekin Can

Position: Committee Director

A. Introduction to the Chairs

Dear participants,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this year's Haydarpaşa Model United Nations conference. My name is Ekin, and I am a junior student in Kadıköy Anadolu Lisesi. I will serve you as your committee director for the four amazing days of HaydarpaşaMUN and as a first timer of that role, I am as excited as you are for this experience.

I wish all of you to have an eagerness to debate and brilliance for all sorts of ideas. And I wish myself the ability to make this conference an unforgettable one in your MUN journey.

Best regards,

Ekin Can

B. Introduction to the Committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, also known as the United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4), is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. It focuses on issues regarding decolonization, peacekeeping, and special political missions. It considers agenda items allocated by the General Assembly and advises it by drafting resolutions and/or preparing recommendations. Although it was first created solely as a committee for decolonization related issues, as the decolonization process fastened and ultimately led to a decrease in the importance of the issue and the workload of the committee, it got merged with the Special Political Committee (SPC) in 1993. There is no general debate at the beginning of the Committee's work. All items on decolonization are debated jointly. The representatives of subsidiary bodies usually introduce their reports, and the author departments of SG reports can also be invited to do so. These presentations

are sometimes followed by a question-and answer session. Petitioners (civil society representatives and other stakeholders) are allowed to address the Committee on decolonization issues.

C. Introduction to the Topic

The Question of the United States Virgin Islands is about the self-governance status of the islands and the possible and necessary actions which can be taken to ensure that by the United Nations and/or the United States of America, the administering power of the United States Virgin Islands.

The United States Virgin Islands is one of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGT's) according to the United Nations. Under Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, the administering Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories have the obligation to promote to the utmost the well-being of the inhabitants of these Territories, further constructive measures of development and cooperate with the United Nations and other associated international bodies in this endeavor, when and where appropriate.

The United States Virgin Islands has been on the list of NSGT's since the list was first created in 1946. The United Nations is expected to continue to work on the status of the United States Virgin Islands in cooperation with its goal of eradicating colonialism by 2030.

D. History of The Topic

The Virgin Islands is a dependent territory of the United States with a total land area of 133 square miles and a population of 87,146. Throughout most of its history as an American possession the Territory has been the scene of movements for greater self-government. The form which this self-government is to take in the future is not agreed upon by all parties—the Virgin Islands, the United States, and the United Nations all have conflicting ideas concerning the proposed status of the Islands.

The United States' involvement in the Virgin Islands dates back to 1917 when the latter was obtained from Denmark in an attempt to frustrate German efforts to establish a military base in the Caribbean.

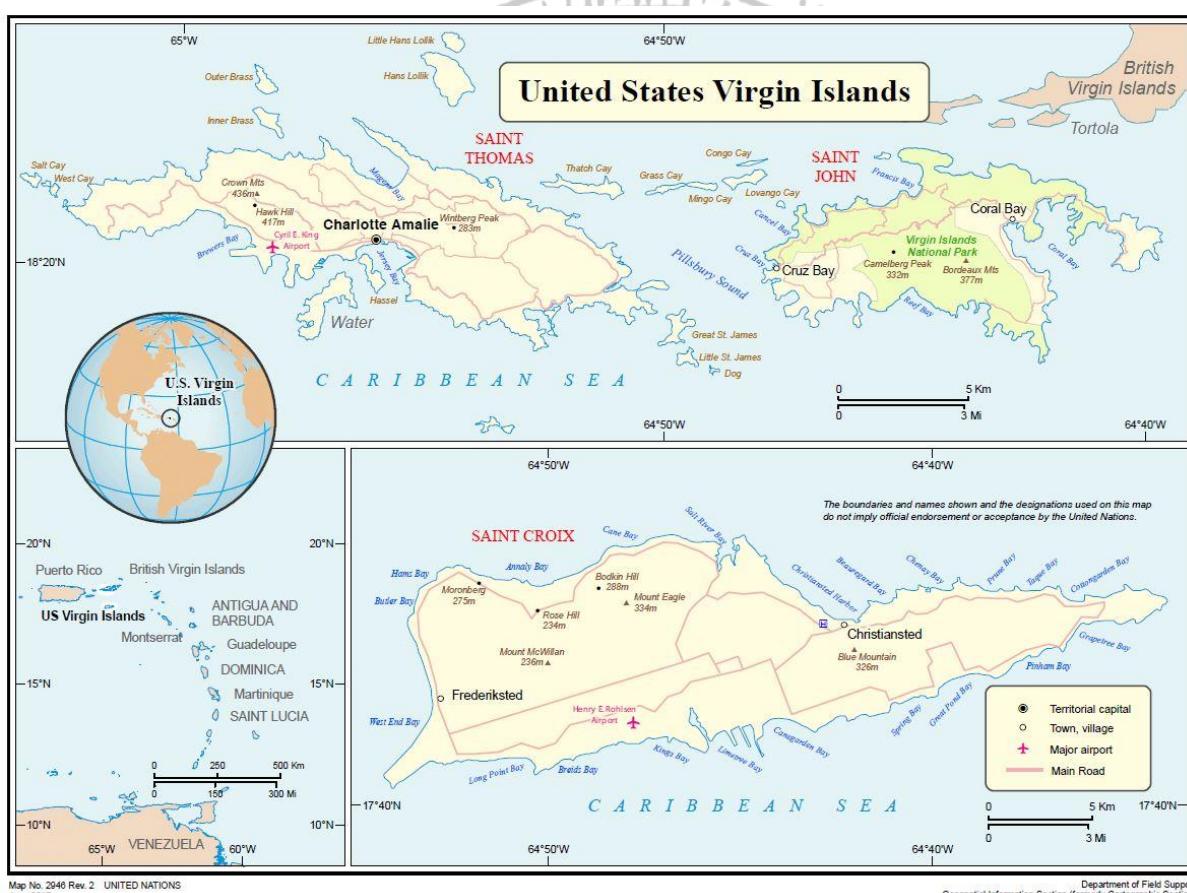
A slow and painful process began for the islanders after the purchase. The Organic Act of 1930, which was by no means a liberal document, reflected a growing trend toward "more representative" government. It also embraced basic civil rights which had not been previously provided for Virgin Islanders. The Revised Organic Act of 1954 defined the Virgin Islands as an unincorporated territory.

This action was consistent with the established patterns of relationship between the United States and its possessions, and it also satisfied congressional opponents of statehood, since this status implied that the Virgin Islands could not be immediately advanced to statehood. The Constitutional Convention of 1964-65 sought to revise the Organic Act of 1954 in order to provide for an elective governor and lieutenant governor, representation in Congress through a resident-commissioner or delegate to the House of Representatives, the right of Virgin Islanders to vote in presidential elections, and the abolition of the veto of local laws by the President of the United States. The Constitutional Convention of 1964-65 provided Virgin Islanders an opportunity to express their feelings concerning the future of the Territory. The Constitutional Convention favored having the Virgin Islands retain its ties with the United States, but with maximal internal self-government.

During the 1967 session of the General Assembly, the United States replied to the accusations of the subcommittee by citing what it considered to be impressive statistics on economic, social, and political development in the Territory. Attention was called to the relatively high annual per capita income of \$2,100, the increase in expenditures for schools and public housing, and the existence of a two-party system in a wholesome political environment. Apparently these arguments “fell on deaf ears,” since the United Nations proceeded to vote strong condemnation of American policies toward the Virgin Islands.

March 31, 1917	The United States took possession of the islands and named it the United States Virgin Islands after the purchase of the territory from Denmark.
March 18, 1931	Paul Martin Pearson, first civilian governor for the Virgin Islands, took the office after his appointment by president Herbert Hoover.
June 22, 1936	The Organic Act of the United States Virgin Islands established a local government, replacing previous temporary provisions.
July 22, 1954	The Revised Organic Act replaced the Act of 1936. Functioning as a constitution, it provided for a unicameral legislature which is elected by the citizens of the islands, a court system and a Bill of Rights.
1964-1965	First Constitutional Convention was held for the islands, Although the convention approved a draft constitution in February 1965, it was not adopted by the United States Congress, only some elements became law.
November 1, 1970	Melvin Herbert Evans has become the first elected governor of the islands.
November 7, 1972	A referendum on the constitution drafted in the second convention which took place between 1971-72 was held. Although the outcome favored the new constitution, it did not come into force due to “low turnout”

1977-78 , 1980, 2009	Third, fourth and fifth constitutional conventions were held but had no notable impact with the drafts being rejected in referendums for the first two, and the convention failing to draft one for the last.
October 11, 1993	A referendum for a possible independence of the islands was held. Voters were offered the options of integration into the United States, remaining a United States territory or independence. Although 82% voted in favor of territorial status, voter turnout was below the 50% threshold and the result was invalidated.
November 3, 2020	Another referendum was held for calling a sixth convention. With the votes in favor of a convention passing all requirements of turnout, the proposal was approved.



A map of the United States Virgin Islands, consisting of three islands called St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. The broad location of the islands on the earth and the Charlotte Amalie, the capital city, is also visible.

E. General Overview

Today, the United States Virgin Islands has a unique level of self-governance with being an unincorporated and organized territory of the United States. All three aspects of a typical democracy

are present; a unicameral legislature consisting of 15 members, a court system, and a governor as the head of the executive branch. However, the islands are using the Organic Act in place of a constitution and failed to draft a new one so far. While that situation ultimately makes them dependent on the United States, the lack of representation in United States politics are far from satisfying those favoring incorporation to the Union.

The Virgin Islands residents are U.S. citizens but the territory has no electoral votes to cast for the president or vice president of the United States. The territory is allowed to participate in the nominating processes, though. Citizens cannot elect voting members of Congress. However, in the U.S. House of Representatives, they are represented by a delegate, who can vote in congressional committees but not in the House itself. Such delegates can speak on the U.S. House floor, introduce bills and offer amendments but cannot vote during business as the Committee as the Whole or on final passage of legislation. The United States Virgin Islands has been allowed to have non-voting representation since 1972.

The United States and The Virgin Islands

Since its purchase, the Virgin Islands' relationship with the United States has been one of ambiguity. It is noted that, although Virgin Islanders had anticipated acceptance as full Americans, Congress chose to apply to the Islands the doctrine of "unincorporated territory". It is also concluded that this doctrine had racial overtones, and tended to be applied primarily to areas in which a significant percentage of the population was of a darker race. A similar conclusion is drawn in a study of the early American policies towards Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, and the Philippines. The purchase agreement gave Congress the authority to determine the civil rights and political status of the Territory. This, in effect, made Congress the Constitution of the Islands. Rights were not regarded as basic, but tended to vary according to the wishes of congress members. Congress exercised the right to give, and it had the right to take away; thus, Virgin Islanders were at the mercy of the Congress.

The United Nations and The Virgin Islands

The United Nations has indicated that it has a vested interest in the ultimate decision of the United States with regard to the status of the Virgin Islands. The United Nations' interest in the Territory is based upon a 1960 resolution which recognized that all peoples have the right to self-determination, and thus are free to determine their political status. The resolution further stated: "Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence." According to the United Nations, the United States has exerted only minimal effort in the promotion of significant constitutional development in the Territory. The United States was advised

to take necessary steps to ensure the rights of Virgin Islanders to express their wishes concerning the future political status of their territory.

Reactions of Virgin Islanders

Congress has been very deliberate in developing a sound and realistic formula for self-government in the Virgin Islands. In spite of consistent pressures by both the United Nations and the Virgin Islanders, Congress has stubbornly resisted efforts to encroach upon "its power" to govern the Territory, Virgin Islanders are permitted to petition Congress for greater self-government, but beyond this, few remedies are available. Very vocal opposition to current policies by Virgin Islanders has been discouraged by those who feel that such action will arouse a "hostile" Congress to move even slower in creating the necessary machinery for self-government. Virgin Islanders are aware of the provision in the 1954 Organic Act—supposedly for the purpose of discouraging communist efforts in the Territory—which could have implications for protesters who insist too loudly on changes in the status of the Islands. The provision reads: *No person who advocates or who aids or belongs to any party, organization, or association which advocates the overthrow by force or violence the government of the Virgin Islands or the United States shall be qualified to hold any office of trust or profit under the government of the Virgin Islands.*

F. Key Terms

Organic Act : is an act of the United States Congress for the U.S. territories. Organic Acts aim to specify a territory and its governance. It acts as a basic constitution.

Non-Self-Governing Territory : Under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, the Non-Self-Governing Territories are defined as "territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government". Currently, there are 17 NSGT's.

Administering Power : The governing state of a non-self-governing territory is called an administering power. According to the United Nations, there are 4 administering powers for 16 of 17 NSGT's, which are The United Kingdom, The United States, France and New Zealand.

Constitutional Convention : a meeting of selected and/or appointed delegates that aims to draft a constitution for a political entity. There have been five constitutional conventions for a constitution for the United States Virgin Islands, with all of them failing in various ways.

F. Bloc Positions

The United States of America

Historically, the government of the United States has been one of the best on complying with the United Nations on the issues of decolonization. Throughout the time, rights of the islanders and level of self-governance granted by the United States have increased in the Virgin Islands. The delegation is expected to continue the complying approach with the United Nations and the government of Virgin Islands while also preserving its own rights and sovereignty on its territory.

G. Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

[United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Question of United States Virgin Islands - A/RES/76/103](#)

[Resolution 66 \(I\) , 1946](#)

[Resolution 1514 \(XV\) , 1960](#)

[Resolution 1541 \(XV\) , 1960](#)

[The Charter of the United Nations](#)

H. Possible Solutions

There have been a number of proposed solutions on the status of the Virgin Islands that have been deemed insufficient. Delegates may work upon some of those to construct a better approach that can fulfill the needs of the islanders and the government of the United States. Although being opposed in The Constitutional Convention of 1964-65, incorporating the Virgin Islands into the United States by methods such as attaching it to Florida as a county or having it annexed to Puerto Rico with the possibility of the latter then becoming a state with the former as a component. Trying to make the Virgin Islands enter the Union as a separate state has been viewed as an idea far from realistic because of its small population and controversial racial composition.

Solutions aiming at an independent Virgin Islands have also been proposed and endorsed by various parties. There were several models including a simple independence of the United States Virgin Islands only, independence for a “greater Virgin Islands” composed of the British and American sectors, and independence with the Virgin Islands becoming a component of a federation of Caribbean territories.

Finally, solutions that preserve the current status of the Virgin Islands while strengthening the rights and political representation of the islanders can also be proposed. The delegates are encouraged to draft resolutions with an approach that favors finding common grounds and satisfies all parties.

I. Further Reading

[Revised Organic Act of 1954](#)

[The United Nations and Decolonization](#)

[What the UN Can Do To Assist Non-Self-Governing Territories?](#)

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