



## United Nations General Assembly (1982)

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### Committee Description.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) was founded in 1945 and is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Comprising all Member States, it facilitates multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Every member state of the United Nations has an equal vote in the General Assembly, which distinguishes this body from every other arm of the United Nations. The General Assembly is presided over by its President or the Secretary-General under certain occasions. Additionally, all resolutions passed by the General Assembly are non-binding; the UNGA may only issue recommendations.

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### State-of-the-World Brief, 1982

The world finds itself in the middle of several major conflicts. In the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq War is tilting in favor of Iran. Powerful outside actors, including the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab League, are mulling overextending support to prop up a struggling Iraq. In the mountains of Central Asia, the Soviet Union finds itself locked in the Soviet-Afghan War after its invasion in late 1979. As casualties mount, the USSR must determine whether to redouble their efforts, or begin the process of pulling out, admitting defeat in the process. Meanwhile, a cross-Atlantic crisis is brewing as the Argentinian junta sets its sights on the British-occupied Falkland Islands.

At the same time, major changes to the world are occurring beyond the scope of specific conflicts. The 20th century has played host to many changes within the international community – keep in mind that the United Nations was chartered in 1945, only 37 years before this simulation is set to begin! During those 37 years, the size, scope, and number of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) has continuously expanded.

*This section of the background guide is designed to orient you to the general state of affairs in the world – what every political mind, no matter the country they represent, is eyeing. Though you likely will not be discussing all these issues as you debate your specific topics of focus, this background will guide the context and nature of your relationships and communications.*

*Additionally, developments on these issues will be occurring as you write your resolutions – you never know when an international crisis may emerge that requires your immediate attention. Consequently, it is critical that you maintain an awareness of what is contained in this section so that you possess the necessary background to react to and interact with the world around you.*

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## Historical Background

### The Cold War

It is difficult to contextualize the state of world affairs in 1982, nor accurately make the decisions of a national Cabinet member at the time, without first understanding the Cold War.

The Cold War refers to a historical era defined by a decades-long rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union – the world’s two preeminent economic and military superpowers at the time – who each sought global dominance. The conflict was rooted in an ideological split between the two states. While the United States sought to protect and expand democracy and capitalism, the Soviet Union subscribed to a communist economic model coupled with centralized, authoritarian leadership. The USSR saw the United States as Western imperialists whose capitalist system was oppressive and fraught with contradictions. Meanwhile, the United States believed the Soviet Union posed an existential and expansionist threat to its liberal system. In the minds of both, the two could not co-exist. The success or empowerment of one was tantamount to the destruction of the other.

The Cold War represents what many international security scholars refer to as a *bipolar* world order. *Bipolarity* is a system of international order in which two competing powers control global economic, military, and political relations, resulting in other states choosing to ally with one of them.<sup>1</sup> As the United States and the Soviet Union made their opposition to each other clear, each sought to expand their sphere of influence to other countries. This divide still structures much of international relations in 1982.

### The Evolution of the International Political Community

The very first Inter-Governmental Organization, or IGO, was the Congress of Vienna from 1814 to 1815 to re-establish the territorial borders of Europe after the defeat of French dictator Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>2</sup> Since then, different governments have been working together in various organizational capacities to form the institutions of the international political community that guide the world in 1982.

The most well-known IGO is the United Nations, and all the smaller bodies and committees contained within its reach. The Charter of the United Nations was first ratified on October 24, 1945, in the wake of a devastating Second World War. Now, in 1982, the international political system the United Nations created has expanded to sprawling heights.

The United Nations contains six primary organs<sup>3</sup>:

1. *The General Assembly*, the UN’s main deliberative body, composed of all its Member States, each with one vote.

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<sup>1</sup> [The politics of bipolarity and IPE in contemporary times](#)

<sup>2</sup> [From the Congress of Vienna to Present-Day International Organizations | United Nations](#)

<sup>3</sup> [UN Structure | United Nations](#).

2. *The Security Council* is directly charged with maintaining international peace and security. It is the only UN organ capable of passing binding resolutions, composed of 15 states, five of whom possess veto power.
3. *The Economic and Social Council* serves as the policy hub for economic and social issues within the UN system.
4. *The Trusteeship Council* provides international supervision for the UN's Trust Territories and primes these Territories for independence.
5. *The International Court of Justice* settles legal disputes between States, give advisory opinions to UN bodies, and serves as the UN's principal judiciary organization.
6. *The Secretariat* carries out the UN's day-to-day administrative work.

Alongside its six organs and six standing committees of the General Assembly, the UN now encompasses fifteen specialized agencies legislating on issues from meteorology to telecommunications. Subsidiary bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization have been created to work along the UN's main committees. Post-colonial countries have contributed to a growth in the UN's membership, making the General Assembly a broad forum for smaller countries to have their voices heard. The United Nations has passed an increasing number of treaties on subjects related to disarmament, human rights, and maritime law. All this growth has increased the scope and influence of the UN's role in the international political community.

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## Major International Touchpoints

### Iran-Iraq War

One of the most prominent turning points in the history of the Middle East took place in 1979 in the form of the Iranian Revolution. During the Iranian Revolution, the Pahlavi dynasty, led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was overthrown. The Shah's government was replaced by the rule of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was previously in exile for 14 years. The Iranian people approved a new constitution, instituting the Islamic Republic of Iran as a theocratic republic.

The Iran-Iraq War, in fact, began as a reaction to the Iranian Revolution. Tensions between the two countries had grown throughout the 1970s as they competed for control of the Shatt al-Arab, the waterway formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the southern end of which forms the border between the two nations.<sup>4</sup> The Iran-Iraq War officially commenced on September 22, 1980, when the Iraqi military launched a two-prong invasion against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The fighting continued, ramping up on both sides. By March of 1981, the Iranian government stated that it would not negotiate with Iraq until its President, Saddam Hussein was overthrown. Meanwhile, the tides of the war began to shift. Iran drove back a large Iraqi offensive on the oil-rich city of Abadan and launched an attack on Iraqi forces in Khuzestan. On January 16, 1982, the Washington Post reported that Iran is now winning the war.

### Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December 24, 1979 – Christmas Eve. The reasons for the invasion are multi-pronged. First, Afghanistan held a location of strategic importance to the Soviet Union. Second, political chaos in Afghanistan created an incentive for the Soviet Union to take control so it could ensure the government was supportive of its goals.

The invasion began with the murder of Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin and the installation of Babrak Karmal as the Soviet's puppet head of government. Soviets sent in ground forces from the north in an attempt to conquer Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet Union faced more resistance than expected in their attempt to take control of Afghanistan. Outside of their strongholds, Soviet troops faced fierce resistance from the local peoples. Resistance fighters, called *mujahidin*, saw the Soviets controlling Afghanistan as a defilement of Islam as well as of their traditional culture. Soviet troops, on the other hand, did not know the territory, constantly faced surprise attacks, and were not welcomed by local populations.

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<sup>4</sup> [Iran-Iraq War](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Soviet Union Invades Afghanistan - HISTORY](#)

The Soviet Union's invasion was opposed by the United States, both publicly and through arms sales to the mujahidin. In the years following the Soviet Union's invasion, Afghanistan quickly became a Cold War battlefield. The United States responded harshly to the invasion, freezing arms talks, cutting wheat sales, and even leading a boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.

### **Other Actors to Keep in Mind**

As you navigate the issues listed above, other national Cabinets also seek to advance their country's agenda and positioning in the world order:

- Cabinet of the United States
  - Led by President Ronald Reagan
- Cabinet of the United Kingdom
  - Led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
- Cabinet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
  - Led by President Leonid Brezhnev
- Cabinet of the Islamic State of Iran
  - Led by Ayatollah Khomeini
- Cabinet of the Republic of Iraq
  - Led by President Saddam Hussein

Additionally, the following intergovernmental organizations and national parliaments will be active in real-time decision-making alongside you:

- United Nations Security Council
- League of Arab States
- British House of Commons

### **Final Takeaways**

- The world is constantly in flux. We are on a tipping point of the Cold War ending or gaining renewed strength.
- Though the United States and the Soviet Union are still considered economic and military superpowers, other countries are looking to assert their agency on an ever-changing global order.

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## Topic A: Ensuring the Peaceful Use of Outer Space

### Executive Summary.

The United Nations responded quickly to the advent of space exploration by forming its own bodies and treaties to govern the uses of outer space. While much of this work has proven to be fruitful, the subject is still plagued by ambiguity and disagreement. The potential for both prosperity and disaster from the use of outer space is evident. It is the job of the United Nations General Assembly this year to resolve the current issues and allow for the continued use of outer space.

### Overview & Background.

Humanity began its exploration of outer space on October 4, 1957, when the USSR launched Sputnik into orbit.<sup>6</sup> It is no accident that this happened as the Cold War was starting to escalate. The Cold War is “cold” because the United States and the Soviet Union have not engaged in direct conflict, but rather clashed through proxies. The realm of outer space has become yet another one of the most symbolically important proxies in this war.<sup>7</sup>

The gap in technological capabilities between the USSR and U.S. grew as the former launched Sputnik II on November 3 of 1957, carrying the first living creature to outer space, a dog named Laika. This was in the face of two failed rocket attempts by the U.S. before they finally succeeded in launching the Explorer satellite on January 31, 1958. The Explorer satellite carried a Geiger counter that, along with future experiments, would prove the existence of the Van Allen radiation belts surrounding the Earth. In October of the same year, the U.S. would consolidate their Space Race efforts into the newly formed National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Yet the Soviets would beat the United States once again to the next milestone, successfully sending cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin into space, completing the first manned mission beyond our planet. Three weeks later, the U.S. sent Alan Shepard into space, though on a suborbital trajectory, as opposed to Gagarin’s mission, which was able to complete one full orbit around the Earth. U.S. President John F. Kennedy would follow this mission up with the declaration that the U.S. would put man on the moon before the close of the decade.

In 1961, the U.S. launched Project Gemini, meant to prepare NASA for its eventual manned missions to the lunar surface. While the Soviets had the first manmade object impact the moon in 1959 with their Luna 2, the U.S. would ultimately claim the title of first man on the moon, with the 1969 Apollo 11 mission. During the 1960s, the U.S. also launched probes to Mercury, Venus, and Mars, focusing more on scientific endeavors while the Soviets focused on landmark milestones to further this new Space Age.

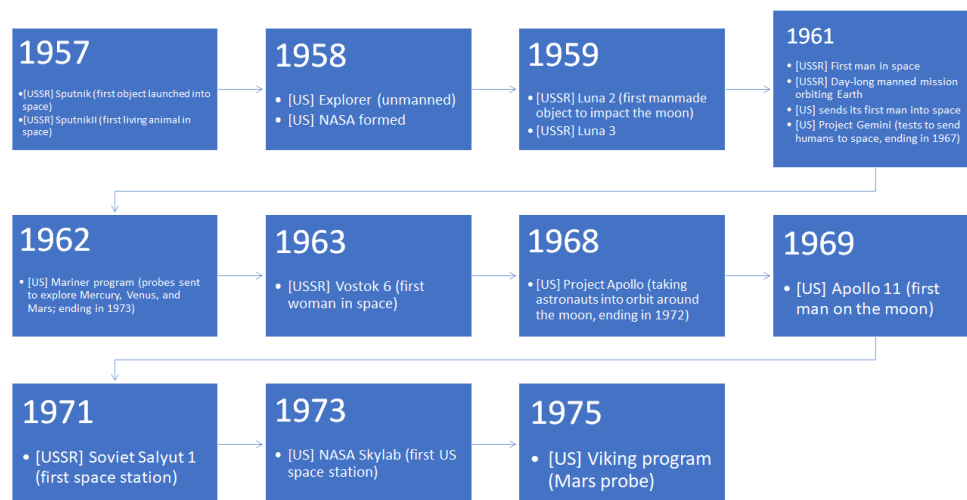
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<sup>6</sup> [\[National Geographic\] The History of Space Exploration](#)

<sup>7</sup> [\[History\] The Space Race](#)

The previous decade saw the advent of space stations in the USSR's Soviet Salyut 1 (1971) and the US's NASA Skylab (1973), marking the next step in space exploration. With Project Apollo coming to an end in 1972, recent space exploration has been focused on low-Earth orbit. A timeline of events can be found in Figure 1.

So why is the exploration of outer space an issue of military supremacy? That has to do with the numerous ways in which outer space can be used for military purposes. Both the U.S. and the USSR have used reconnaissance satellites to take more accurate photos of each other's military installations than were possible before.<sup>8</sup> This first began with the US's CORONA<sup>9</sup> and the USSR's Zenit<sup>10</sup> satellites. The gravity of this new surveillance threat quickly became apparent to both superpowers, and both sides began developing anti-satellite weapons around the same time in the late 1950s to either disable or destroy the opposition's satellites.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) also required an understanding of rocketry and outer space, as these weapons utilize sub-orbital spaceflight.<sup>12</sup> ICBMs specifically pose a large threat to the international community as they are capable of carrying nuclear payloads.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1: Timeline of the Space Race.**<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Erickson, Mark. *Into the Unknown Together. the DOD, NASA, and Early Spaceflight*. Air Univ Press Maxwell Afb AL, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> [Corona: America's First Satellite Program](#)

<sup>10</sup> McDonald, Robert A. *Corona between the Sun and the Earth: The First NRO Reconnaissance Eye in Space*. ASPRS.

<sup>11</sup> [WS-199](#); Peebles, Curtis. *The Corona Project: America's First Spy Satellites*. Naval Institute Press, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> [\[Encyclopedia Astronautica\] R-7](#)

<sup>13</sup> [\[Century of Flight\] History of the Atlas Rocket](#)

<sup>14</sup> [\[NASA\] Skylab](#); [\[NASA\] Viking 1 & 2](#)

## **Past International Action & Precedent.**

The potential threat originating from the use of outer space as a staging ground for weapons and surveillance, among other issues, quickly became apparent to the United Nations after the initial launch of Sputnik in 1957. On December 13, 1958, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) created an ad hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to address such issues. This committee was originally composed of 18 member nations tasked with reporting to the UNGA on the peaceful uses of outer space as it pertained to the United Nations and other international bodies.<sup>15</sup> The following year, the committee would be made a permanent body of the UNGA and have its membership increased from 18 to 24.<sup>16</sup>

Rising tensions quickly became apparent in the years after COPUOS was formed. The international community became increasingly concerned with the potential militarization of outer space, but due to rising tensions between the U.S. and USSR, COPUOS would not be able to meet for a few years until 1962, only after UNGA Resolution 1721 dictated that the committee convene. COPUOS's two subcommittees met at this time to discuss issues scientific, technical, and legal in nature. While the discussions resulted in agreement in terms of scientific and legal issues, the subcommittees were ultimately unable to come to a suitable resolution on its legal questions.<sup>17</sup>

Resolution 1721 also furthered the United Nations' commitment to the peaceful use of outer space by reaffirming the duties of COPUOS. This resolution clarified that the UN Charter and subsequent international law applied to outer space as well as to Earth. COPUOS was then tasked with reporting legal issues arising from space exploration to the UNGA for arbitration.<sup>18</sup>

Resolution 1721 further directed UN member nationals to inform COPUOS of any launches into outer space, so they could be recorded on a public registry kept by the United Nations. COPUOS was also to act as a consortium, keeping in close contact with both governmental and non-governmental organizations relating to the exploration or use of outer space. This resolution also gave COPUOS the authority and responsibility to work with both the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and submit relevant reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UNGA.<sup>19</sup> This made COPUOS the first international body acting in the role of ensuring that the use of outer space by world governments would remain peaceful in nature.<sup>20</sup> To aid COPUOS in their work, the United Nations also established the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which

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<sup>15</sup> [\[UNGA\] RES 1348](#)

<sup>16</sup> [\[UNGA\] RES 1472](#)

<sup>17</sup> [\[American Journal of International Law\] "Outer Space Co-Operation in the United Nations"](#)

<sup>18</sup> [\[UNGA\] RES 1721](#)

<sup>19</sup> [\[Permanent Mission of France\] UNOOSA and COPUOS](#)

<sup>20</sup> [COPUOS History](#)



serves as the secretariat for COPUOS and its subcommittees.<sup>21</sup> UNOOSA is also responsible for any documents relating to COPUOS or its subcommittees.<sup>22</sup>

COPUOS is also responsible for overseeing the five United Nations treaties and agreements passed thus far pertaining to the use of outer space.<sup>23</sup> The first of such agreements was the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, or Outer Space Treaty, passed on January 21, 1967, which forms the basis of international space law. This treaty was originally prompted by the advent of ICBMs.<sup>24</sup> Among the Outer Space Treaty's provisions were the prohibition of nuclear weapons in space, the prohibition of military uses of celestial bodies, an affirmation that outer space remain open to the free exploration and use by all nations, and the prohibition of any nation from claiming sovereignty over any celestial bodies or outer space in its entirety. One key distinction is that while the Outer Space Treaty limits the use of outer space to peaceful purposes, it does not in its text prohibit all military activities in space, including the establishment of military forces or weapons platforms in outer space. The treaty does, however, prohibit the establishment of military bases, the testing of weapons, and the use of outer space for military exercises.<sup>25</sup>

The second such agreement was the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, or the Rescue Agreement, passed on December 19, 1967, through UNGA Resolution 2345. This agreement elaborates on Article V of the Outer Space Treaty in the rescue and safe return of astronauts from space.<sup>26</sup> It has, however, been criticized for being vague on multiple fronts, including defining who and what are entitled to rescue and the burden of cost for rescue efforts.<sup>27</sup>

The third agreement governed by COPUOS is the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, or the Space Liability Convention. Similar to the Rescue Agreement, the Space Liability Convention expands upon the Outer Space Treaty, specifically its provisions on liability. The Convention states that member nations ultimately bear responsibility for any spacecraft launched from within their territories.<sup>28</sup> As of today, there has only been one claim made through the Convention.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> [\[UNOOSA\] History](#)

<sup>22</sup> [\[UNOOSA\] Past Sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees](#)

<sup>23</sup> [\[UNOOSA\] Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#)

<sup>24</sup> [\[US DoS\] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies](#)

<sup>25</sup> [\[The Space Review\] Space Force and international space law](#)

<sup>26</sup> [\[UNGA\] RES 2345](#)

<sup>27</sup> [\[American Bar Association\] The Recovery and Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space: A Legal Analysis and Interpretation](#)

<sup>28</sup> [\[UN\] Convention on the international liability for damaged caused by space objects](#)

<sup>29</sup> [\[NNSA\] Operation Morning Light](#)

The Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, also known as the Registration Convention, was signed on November 12, 1974.<sup>30</sup> This convention further expanded on the Outer Space Treaty by requiring UN member nations to provide the United Nations with details on the orbital path of all space objects launched from within their territories, including the launching state, space object designation number, date and location of launch, orbital parameters, and general function of the space object.<sup>31</sup>

The most recent treaty with regards to the use of outer space is the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, also known as the Moon Treaty or Moon Agreement, which was signed on December 18, 1979. This treaty furthers the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty by surrendering the jurisdiction of all celestial bodies to the signatories of the Treaty, thus subjecting them to international law.<sup>32</sup> However, as the treaty has not currently been ratified by any countries engaging in human space exploration, it can be said to hold little legal weight.<sup>33</sup>

### **Possible Solutions.**

Since its inception, the overwhelming majority of resolutions passed by the United Nations have been adopted through consensus or a large majority vote.<sup>34</sup> It is because of this precedent that we should believe that such a solution is also possible with regards to ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space. In fact, this pattern has already been observed as it pertains to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned before, COPUOS has increased its membership since it was established as a permanent body in 1959. Today, it stands at 53 members, almost three times its original size.<sup>36</sup> This growth demonstrates first, that there is growing interest within the international community in ensuring the peaceful use of outer space, and second, that many UN member nations are eager to participate directly in this endeavor.<sup>37</sup>

At present, there remains much debate over the legal questions pertaining to the peaceful use of outer space. One cause is that the term “peaceful uses of outer space” itself lacks a meaningful definition.<sup>38</sup> One can look to the 1967 prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America as

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<sup>30</sup> [\[UNGA\] RES 3235](#)

<sup>31</sup> [\[UNOOSA\] Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space](#)

<sup>32</sup> [\[UNTC\] Agreement governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies](#)

<sup>33</sup> [\[Legal Desire\] MOON AGREEMENT, 1979](#)

<sup>34</sup> [United Nations Decision-Making: Confrontation or Consensus?](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Consensus Decisionmaking by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#)

<sup>36</sup> [\[UNOOSA\] https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/members/evolution.html](#)

<sup>37</sup> [The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges](#)

<sup>38</sup> Jasani, Bhupendra. *Peaceful and Non-Peaceful Uses of Space: Problems of Definition for the Prevention of an Arms Race*. Routledge, 2021.

precedent for the term “peaceful” meaning non-military.<sup>39</sup> However, by the time the Outer Space Treaty (OST) was signed, the U.S. and USSR had all but committed to using outer space for military purposes, including surveillance satellites and ICBMs. It is thus important for this body to discuss how the UN might define and/or use this term moving forward.

Furthermore, rather than outlining what constitutes military uses of outer space, another approach would be to define what constitutes the peaceful use of outer space. As stated before, the potential for scientific advancements through the use of outer space are evident. As COPUOS also interfaces with the WMO and the ITU, it may be beneficial to examine those relationships and determine the nature and purported benefits of such interactions.<sup>40</sup>

It may also behoove the UNSC to further elaborate on the delineation between airspace and outer space. While the purview of the United Nations may be shared across both, outer space poses a potential route for confusion and conflict being a new frontier to the human species.<sup>41</sup>

The use of outer space also shares similarities with the use of nuclear technology. So called dual-use technologies are those that can be used for both civilian and military applications.<sup>42</sup> While the potential for scientific advancement using outer space is undeniable, the lines become blurred when such advancements are achieved through means that cannot be neatly defined as either civilian or military in nature. An apt comparison can be made between outer space and the high seas. As such, the Convention on the High Seas may prove to be a useful analogue for discussion regarding the use of outer space.<sup>43</sup> The new Convention of the Law of the Sea currently being worked on may also prove useful in providing an updated framework in discussing the use of a shared region of our natural world.<sup>44</sup>

Lastly, the issue of space debris is currently a burgeoning topic of discussion among scholars. From a results-oriented perspective, it may be useful for the body to also consider the end ramifications of the use of outer space, peaceful or otherwise, and how that might impact the global citizenry.<sup>45</sup>

## **Bloc Positions.**

The current consensus in the international community, as evidenced by the creation of and work since COPUOS, is that outer space ought to be reserved for peaceful use and not military use.<sup>46</sup> However, it is still undeniable that the main players in current space exploration, namely the

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<sup>39</sup> [\[OPANAL\] The prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America](#)

<sup>40</sup> [\[Interdisciplinary Science Reviews\] Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#)

<sup>41</sup> [The Legal Status of Outer Space and Relevant Issues: Delimitation of Outer Space and Definition of Peaceful Use](#)

<sup>42</sup> [\[European Commission\] Exporting dual-use items](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Convention on the High Seas](#)

<sup>44</sup> [The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#)

<sup>45</sup> [\[Space Policy\] On strengthening the role of COPUOS: Maintaining outer space for peaceful uses☆](#)

<sup>46</sup> [The Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: Soviet Views](#)

United States and the Soviet Union, have sought to explore the military uses of outer space from the onset of the Space Age.

The U.S. has explored several military uses of outer space through its programs including the Nike-Zeus Program, Project Defender, the Sentinel Program, and the Safeguard Program.<sup>47</sup> The Soviet Union has also explored similar uses through its Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS)<sup>48</sup> and its Polyus orbital weapons system.<sup>49</sup>

At present, the focus of defining the peaceful use of outer space has been limited practically to that of celestial bodies but excludes outer space as a whole. One need only look to the aforementioned military programs to see that outer space is, indeed, currently being used for military purposes outside of the territory of celestial bodies.<sup>50</sup>

It is impossible to frame the current debate on the use of outer space outside of the context of those on either side of the Iron Curtain. Both sides have begun a slow process of cooperation, evidenced by the 1972 Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP). However, it is clear that the realm of outer space remains an area of interest for both sides agnostic of the apparent cooperation.<sup>51</sup>

### Questions To Consider.

- Should the United Nations continue with its efforts to limit outer space to peaceful uses?
- How do we define the “peaceful use of outer space”?
- What precedents outside the realm of outer space can we look to for comparison?
- Which states bear responsibility for the uses of outer space?
- How much responsibility should states bear for the uses of outer space?
- Are the current treaties and agreements surrounding the use of outer space effective?
- What is the role of sovereign nations in ensuring the peaceful use of outer space?
- What is the role of the international community in ensuring the peaceful use of outer space?

### Further Reading.

- The History of Space Exploration, *National Geographic*  
<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/history-space-exploration>
- The Space Race, *History.com*  
<https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/space-race>

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<sup>47</sup> [NYT] 'STAR WARS' TRACED TO EISENHOWER ERA; [James Madison University] EMP: A Brief Tutorial

<sup>48</sup> [Quest Volume 7, Number 4](#)

<sup>49</sup> "Звездные войны", которых не было

<sup>50</sup> [\[U.S. Naval War College\] Properly Speaking, Only Celestial Bodies Have Been Reserved for Use Exclusively for Peaceful \(Non-Military\) Purposes, but Not Outer Void Space](#)

<sup>51</sup> Samuels, Richard J. *Encyclopedia of United States National Security*. SAGE, 2006.

- COPUOS History, *United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs*  
<https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/history.html>
- Corona: America's First Satellite Program, *Central Intelligence Agency*  
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA499635>
- Outer Space Co-Operation in the United Nations, *American Journal of International Law*  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-journal-of-international-law/article/abs/outer-space-cooperation-in-the-united-nations/7CE7D5C8C8EDBF34E80F1B0637A617E7>

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## **Topic B: Codifying & Protecting the International Rights of the Child**

### **Executive Summary**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1948, defining the basic human rights of all people in all nations. Last year, UNICEF renewed its declaration that children around the world have experienced another year of “silent emergency” in their 1981-82 edition of their “State of the World’s Children” report.

UNICEF reports that 40,000 children die each day on average, 100 million children are affected by hunger, ten million children are experiencing a mental or physical disability, and 200 million 6-11 year olds do not have access to an education. Generally, children are most affected by poverty, hunger, or crime in Africa or South Asia.

Additionally, other organizations have reported on human and children’s rights violations worldwide. In Amnesty International’s annual report on human rights last year, human rights violations were noted in 117 nations. And according to the London-based Anti-Slavery Society, 3.5 million children are forced to engage in child labor or trafficking in Thailand and 500,000 child laborers are reported in Italy.

To protect the international rights of the child is to guarantee human rights to one of the most important segments of modern society. There are countless solutions to improve the rights of children within the context of the General Assembly. Some solutions may include creating mechanisms to enforce the prohibition of child labor; protecting children from racial, gender, religious, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination; providing food, water, and shelter to children internationally; ensuring children are protected during wartime; and improving conditions for children living in poverty.

This topic consists of a breadth of issues that may be addressed within the scope of this committee. This guide serves as an introduction to the issues at-large, but delegates are encouraged to become well-informed on the topic via the “Further Reading” section of this document and through independent investigation and research.

### **Overview & Background**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1948, defining the basic human rights of all people in all nations. A self-described “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”, the UDHR establishes one’s “right to life, liberty, and security of person”<sup>52</sup>, to education, and advocates against slavery, torture, “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”, and numerous other human rights offenses. The UDHR is a milestone and guiding light for the mission of the United Nations, and especially for the United Nations General Assembly, and has been so for the last 34 years since its publication.

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<sup>52</sup> [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations](#)

Just last year, however, UNICEF renewed its declaration that children around the world have experienced another year of “silent emergency” in their 1981-82 edition of *The State of The World’s Children*.<sup>53</sup> In this report, UNICEF enumerates the crisis children face *now*, citing that there are 40,000 children dying each day, 100 million children who are victims of hunger, ten million children experiencing a mental or physical disability, and “200 million 6-11 year olds quietly watching other children go to school”.

Further, infant mortality rates in developing nations are “ten times higher than in the industrialized world,” and a “third of its 6-11 year olds still out of school”; and while the United Nations called upon developed nations to contribute 0.7% of their GNPs as aid in 1965, UNICEF raises that the actual level stands at an average of 0.37%.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund, is an agency governed by the United Nations General Assembly. However, this edition of their annual report, like many previous editions, is a plea for this committee to prioritize the rights of the child. UNICEF’s report itself echoes the public and private sentiments of policymakers as claiming that UNICEF is inviting “the charge of naivety” or unrealistic – clearly demonstrating the fund’s disappointment in the action taken by policymakers around this issue.

In general, the conditions of human rights across the globe are bleak. Amnesty International, an independent organization that “acts on behalf of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, released its annual report for 1981.<sup>54</sup> In this report, Amnesty International chronicles human rights violations in 117 nations, including every permanent member of the UN Security Council and the G7 nations.

The horrors of children’s rights violations extend into the darkest realities of humanity. The London-based Anti-Slavery Society reported that an “estimated 3.5 million children under the age of 14 are reportedly forced to work in Thailand... thousands of children are openly bought and sold on a massive, professionally operated market to supply factories, brothels, and massage parlors in Bangkok.”<sup>55</sup>

While children are most affected poverty, hunger, or crime in Africa or South Asia, with ¾ of infant deaths occurring in these areas<sup>56</sup>, it is in conventionally “developed” nations where complex offenses occur. In Italy, for example, the Anti-Slavery Society reports an “estimated 500,000 children [who] are forced to work, most of them illegally” in Italy — the consequences of this extending to the point where “cheap child labor has seriously accentuated already high adult unemployment.”<sup>55</sup> And in the United States, the debate on a juvenile death penalty was met

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<sup>53</sup> [THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1981-82](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Amnesty International Annual Report 1981](#)

<sup>55</sup> <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/13E3053C0F742188>

<sup>56</sup> [THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1981-82](#)



with commentary from U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist, asking “why should the taxpayers have to bear the cost of confining and treating [a child] for the next 15 to 30 years?”<sup>57</sup>

To make it to adulthood is a privilege that is granted to the survivors of an international human rights crisis that is largely ignored by the world, as children’s rights *are* human rights. The victims of war, poverty, homelessness, hunger, or child labor are those who will grow to become adults one day, traumatized by the horrors of their youth for which they experienced against their will.

Echoing the UDHR, it is important the General Assembly recognizes that “everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of [one’s] personality is possible”, including those of children. It is the duty of this committee to ensure that the adequate processes, procedures, and actions are taken in order to ensure that children around the world can develop into the future of our nations.

### **Past International Action & Precedent.**

Notable actions taken in favor of the rights of the child by the United Nations have come in the form of the drafting and adoption of important international documentation, and through the creation of committees and organizations specializing in managing children’s rights.

In 1946, UNICEF was established by the UN General Assembly to focus on providing support for children around the world. Thirteen years later, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a declaration drafted by the Save the Children Fund in 1923 that was also adopted by the now-defunct League of Nations.<sup>58</sup>

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child can be seen as an extension of the UDHR, focusing on the rights of the child to “means for their development; special help in times of need; priority for relief; economic freedom and protection from exploitation; and an upbringing that instills social consciousness and duty.”

In 1966, the promises defined by the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights” and the “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights” were also agreed upon by UN member states to uphold “equal rights – including education and protection – for all children.”

In 1974, the General Assembly ratified resolution 3318 (XXIX), “The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict”, a document that stands against civilian attacks, the use of chemical weapons, and the persecution and degradation of women and children in wartime.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, this resolution acknowledges the need to provide

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<sup>57</sup><https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/155945E38CDDD2C0>

<sup>58</sup> [History of child rights | UNICEF](#)

<sup>59</sup> [Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 33](#)



“shelter, food, medical aid or other inalienable rights” to women and children during armed conflicts.

Works performed by specialized intergovernmental agencies also include the International Labour Organization’s adoption of Convention 138 in 1973, which “sets 18 as the minimum age for undertaking work that might be hazardous to a person’s health, safety, or morals.”<sup>60</sup>

Additionally, over the course of the last year, UNICEF reported significant works in providing maternal and child health services; developing formal and informal education systems & programs; supplying food, clean water, and sanitation services; and reaching impoverished urban populations in developing nations.<sup>61</sup>

In general, direct action, such as those performed by UNICEF and other independent organizations, has obviously provided the most success in improving the rights and quality of life of children internationally. While other actions, such as adopting documentation or encouraging nations to agree to certain guidelines regarding the rights of children, are much less effective. Within nations that harbor the most children’s rights violations, the resources to allocate to such issues are either unavailable or allocated to other programs. As such, while it is universally agreed that children deserve rights and should be regarded as a global priority, the actions that nations must take to support them largely fall to the wayside. In order for the General Assembly to be effective in improving the quality of life for children around the world, it is imperative to recognize the need for action to be taken.

### **Possible Solutions.**

As with any discussion regarding human rights, there is an endless breadth of subject matter to address the topic of protecting children. Within the context of the General Assembly, solutions to consider in order to create a pathway toward improving the rights of children are included, but not limited to, the following:

- Creating methods of enforcement and encouraging action(s) that support the principles laid out by the UDHR and Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
- Reducing child labor or slavery and creating methods to enforce the prohibition of child labor.
- Protecting children from racial and other forms of prejudice and discrimination.
- Providing food, water, and shelter to children internationally.
- Ensuring children are protected during wartime.
- Improving conditions for children living in poverty and reducing poverty as a whole.
- Enabling children to receive a fulfilling education that allows them to learn and grow.
- Developing frameworks to encourage fair and just legal treatment of children and minors.

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<sup>60</sup> [History of child rights | UNICEF](#)

<sup>61</sup> [UNICEF Annual Report 1982](#)

While this is not an exhaustive list of issues for the General Assembly to address in its discussion, delegates are advised to have an understanding of these topics as they form the backbone of children's rights issues worldwide. Additionally, topics excluded from this list are not to be excluded from consideration by the committee, and nations particularly affected by other issues should feel comfortable expressing their concerns to the General Assembly.

### **Bloc Positions.**

It is a fundamental belief of the General Assembly that children are entitled to the basic rights of all humans and also basic children's rights. Therefore, outward-facing bloc positions are limited. However, there are complexities around this topic that deal with issues of class, race, and ideology in which delegates will certainly express disagreements.

- ***African & South Asian nations*** - As reported by UNICEF, "three-quarters of 1981's infant deaths have occurred" in Africa & South Asia; and more broadly, it is projected that "some countries are actually facing a reversal of development... [where] average incomes in the 1980s are unlikely to increase by more than \$1 or \$2 a year."<sup>62</sup> These nations are easily framed as "victims" of an unfair geopolitical system by outsiders, but can be as easily understood as victims of the neglect of wealthy nations, whose actions rarely reflect the promises that are made. It is possible these nations ought to take matters into their own hands in order to grow, to thrive, and to be heard rather than dismissed by their wealthier counterparts.
- ***Industrialized or "developed" nations*** - While developing nations are frequently accused of human and children's rights violations, it is the contributions of developed nations, such as the permanent members of the Security Council, which can make the largest impact. However, developed nations are also nations most reliant on trade, and therefore, offenses such as child labor and enslavement. The distance between a consumer in an industrialized nation and a supplier exploiting children in a developing nation is so great that dismissive attitudes are likely, if not expected.
- ***"Capitalist" vs "Communist" nations*** - Considering the political landscape, it is expected for capitalist and communist nations to have differing perspectives regarding the strength of enforcement mechanisms and to also engage in divisive discussion despite the generally agreed upon topic. Capitalist nations may encourage further adoption of capitalism by stating that the globalization of capitalism will allow for nations to develop on their own, reducing child poverty and labor at the will of the invisible hand. Communist nations may similarly encourage the adoption of communism by declaring that the inequities children face around the world are due to the neglect of the general rights of the worker and the promotion of capitalism to line the pockets of the wealthy without support for the disenfranchised.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/media/88161/file/SOWC-1981-82.pdf>

### Questions To Consider.

- What human rights violations or children's rights violations occur in your nation that your delegation is willing to acknowledge and resolve? What violations do your delegation perceive as morally justified?
- What support does your nation need in order to improve conditions for children domestically? What support can your nation provide in order to improve conditions for children?
- What methods of enforcement can the General Assembly take in order to incentivize and enforce the rights of the child?
- How does your nation benefit from child labor or child trafficking? What would the economic impact of eliminating child labor mean to your nation?

### Further Reading.

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948)  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/1-declaration-rights-child-1959>
- The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-protection-women-and-children-emergency-and-armed>
- Amnesty International's Annual Report on Human Rights (1981)  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/0001/1981/en/>
- UNICEF's Annual Report (1981)  
<https://www.unicef.org/media/93741/file/UNICEF-annual-report-1982.pdf>
- UNICEF's "The State of the World's Children" (1981)  
<https://www.unicef.org/media/88161/file/SOWC-1981-82.pdf>