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**Topic:** Refining the Outer Space Treaty

"*Exploration is dangerous. Exploration is hazardous. We go into space because whatever humanity brings to the universe, it has to be the best we have to offer*." - Story Musgrave

As of today, in the 21st century, our planet as a whole stand on the brink of an entirely new era in space exploration. As we explore the cosmos and what it has to offer, we must ensure the responsible use of this complex resource. The Outer Space Treaty, established by the UNOOSA in 1967, laid the groundwork for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space between nations. Even so, in this era of change and discovery, it is clear to us in Canada, that the outdated treaty requires updating to address the modern challenges that the exploration of space may present to us. Firstly, I Must state that Canada is undeniably an activist for peaceful and responsible space exploration and has consistently advocated for measures to prevent the militarization of outer space by assisting the UNOOSA. Canada’s unwavering commitment is reflected by its support for UNOOSA’s treaties and agreements, engagement in diplomatic forums, and being a proponent of non-military space activities. Having said that, The Outer Space Treaty, to which Canada is a signatory, serves as a cornerstone in preventing the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space, however as previously stated, it is not perfect. It must be further tailored to the modern threats of space exploration. For that, Canada as a whole, along with myself has numerous suggestions.

For instance, the modern problem of space debris continues to worsen by the day. Since these pieces of debris — of which there are approximately 1 million pieces 1 cm and larger — travel several times faster than a bullet, a collision between the debris or with active satellites could be devastating, destroying entire missions, or creating large new debris fields. Furthermore, as we navigate outer space, finding various celestial bodies containing vast amounts of precious minerals. The Concern behind mining these celestial objects grow larger and larger. Scientists just calculated that one of two metallic asteroids floating in Earth's vicinity may contain precious metals worth about $11.65 trillion. If a nation decides to mine such a celestial body containing valuable minerals, it would be impossible to prevent the formation of an entirely new industry from being established, creating a monopolization of space minerals, which may cause vast devastation. In Addition, dispute management between countries over space resources is growing to be extremely important in preventing international wars across space. For instance, after the U.S.-Soviet Space War during the mid-1950s, preventing possible wars in space was a huge concern demanding new laws to be established. To prevent potential wars like this from ever occurring again, we must address these issues by amending the outer space treaty to manage these disputes.

For all three of these modern problems Canada as a whole, along with myself has found solutions that we suggest the UNOOSA to amend to the outer space treaty. For instance, Canada believes that the Outer Space Treaty must implement stricter guidelines and regulations for satellite design and operation to minimize space debris generation, and I suggest the implementation of active removal mechanisms for debris from orbit to mitigate the risk of collisions. Furthermore, regarding mining celestial bodies, Canada supports the implementation of a licensing framework for mining activities on celestial bodies, and I believe that quotas or restrictions on the quantity and types of minerals that can be extracted from celestial bodies should be set. In addition, regarding dispute management between countries, Canada believes that the Outer Space Treaty must also Strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms to address conflicts arising from space activities, I believe the major disputes that must be addressed are disputes related to mining rights, environmental concerns, or collisions involving space debris. In Conclusion, Story Musgrave’s words echo the human race’s pursuit of exploration, and Canada hopes that the UNOOSA will consider the issues stated and amend their rather outdated treaty to address all the modern challenges of the 21st century.

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