

Committee Name: General Assembly

Topic: The Cold War Space Race: Power, Prestige, and Perception

Conference: Edison INVENT MUN

Chairs / Dais: Samuel Khamimov, Amy Bangaroo

Mandate: This General Assembly committee operates under early principles that would later shape the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). Delegates will examine how the legacy of the Cold War Space Race continues to shape present-day space activity, international cooperation, and global responsibility. The committee emphasizes the peaceful, cooperative, and sustainable use of outer space, while recognizing that early competition created enduring political, environmental, and technological consequences.

Letter from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Cold War Space Race at Edison's INVENT MUN. This committee places you at the center of a global rivalry where every decision you make carries high stakes. Throughout this committee, you will navigate the pressures, fears, and ambitions that defined the Cold War era. Whether you decide to advance scientific progress or reshape global order, your choices will determine the trajectory of this committee. We look forward to seeing your strategy, creativity, and leadership as you navigate this moment in history!

Sincerely,

Amy Bangaroo

This committee examines how competition beyond Earth became one of the most influential arenas of the Cold War. Space exploration was not only a scientific pursuit but a means of projecting power, prestige, and ideological credibility on the global stage. Every launch, satellite, and mission carried political, strategic, and cultural consequences. Delegates will be challenged to navigate rivalry without direct conflict, balancing technological advancement, international stability, and national identity. This committee rewards diplomacy, creativity, and an understanding of how perception and influence can be just as powerful as force. We encourage all delegates to think critically, collaborate thoughtfully, and use both traditional political strategy and broader cultural perspectives to shape meaningful solutions. We look forward to a dynamic and engaging committee.

Sincerely,

Samuel Khamimov

Background

In the aftermath of World War II, the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union rapidly deteriorated as ideological, political, and economic differences resurfaced. The United States promoted democracy and open markets, while the Soviet Union sought to expand its influence by establishing communist-aligned governments across Eastern Europe. This ideological divide gave rise to the Cold War, a period defined by rivalry without direct large-scale conflict.

As tensions spread beyond Europe, Asia became a major area of competition. Some countries, such as China and North Korea, aligned with communist movements supported by the Soviet Union, while others, like Japan and South Korea, opposed Soviet influence. This struggle for political, military, and ideological dominance shaped almost every aspect of international relations.

By the late 1950s, the Cold War rivalry expanded into outer space. Technological advancements became a measure of national strength, ideological superiority, and military capabilities. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 transformed the Cold War, turning space into a new battleground and setting the stage for the Space Race.

One of the most consequential arenas of this rivalry was outer space. In 1957, the Soviet Union's launch of *Sputnik 1* marked the beginning of the Space Race and demonstrated how scientific achievement could rapidly shift global perception. In response, the United States accelerated its own space program, leading to decades of rapid advancement in satellite technology, human spaceflight, and scientific research.

Space exploration soon became a symbol of national capability and legitimacy. Success in space suggested technological superiority, educational strength, and ideological progress, influencing alliances and inspiring populations at home and abroad. For many non-aligned nations, space achievements represented independence, modernity, and global relevance.

The Issue at Hand

The central issue facing this committee is how the legacy of the Cold War Space Race continues to impact modern space activity, particularly through space debris, launch-related environmental effects, and the risks posed to civilian populations and critical infrastructure.

Although space was officially designated for peaceful purposes, advancements in space technology had significant strategic implications. Satellites affected intelligence gathering and communication, launch capabilities reflected missile technology, and space achievements altered diplomatic leverage. Power was demonstrated through innovation and prestige rather than force.

At the same time, space exploration carried important cultural and ideological meaning. Governments used space programs to inspire national pride, shape education, influence media narratives, and promote visions of progress. Cultural identity and national storytelling became tools through which states justified their systems and attracted international support.

Delegates must determine how their nations will pursue space advancement while balancing strategic restraint, international stability, technological ambition, and cultural influence. While also remembering about the environment. The challenge is not waging conflict in space, but managing competition without escalation, recognizing that environmental impact, perception, and long-term sustainability are central to modern space governance.

Past UN actions

- Creation of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) –1958
- Adoption of the five core UN space treaties
- Outer Space Treaty 1967 – the “constitution” of space
- Rescue agreement 1968
- Liability Convention 1972
- Registration Convention 1975
- Moon agreement 1979
- UN GA Resolutions on Peaceful Use of Outer Space (1950s-1980s)
- Early arms control proposals (Late 1950s-1960s)

- International Geophysical Year (1957-1958)

Enduring Issues

- Accumulation of space debris from early and modern launches
- Environmental and safety risks from uncontrolled re-entry
- Lack of binding enforcement mechanisms in space governance
- Balancing prestige, innovation, and responsibility
- Unequal exposure to space-related risks among nations
- Transparency and trust in space activity

Question to consider in committee

- How do delegates navigate political differences while also considering the impact on space travel?
- How can nations balance national security concerns with the need for transparency and cooperation in space?
- What responsibilities should nations take when their space objects create risks, damage, or debris?
- Should environmental and civilian safety concerns outweigh national ambition in space?
- How does the legacy of the Cold War Space Race continue to shape modern space activity?

Glossary

Low Earth Orbit (LEO): Common satellite region close to Earth.

Conjunction: When two objects pass close enough to require avoidance planning.

Deorbiting: Bringing an object down intentionally at the end of the mission.

Graveyard Orbit: An area where old satellites are moved to reduce risk.

Controlled Re-entry: Planned return path so debris falls safely (usually over the ocean).

Uncontrolled Re-entry: Natural fall back to Earth with an uncertain landing path.

Space Traffic Management: Coordinating orbits to prevent collisions.

Debris Mitigation: Preventing creation of new debris (design + rules).

Active Debris Removal (ADR): Technology to remove existing debris.

Mega-Constellations: Large satellite fleets that increase congestion.

Registration: Tracking which country is responsible for an object.

Outer Space Treaty of 1967 – an international treaty binding the parties to use outer space for only peaceful purposes. The US and the USSR sent draft space treaties to the UN in June 1966. The UN General Assembly approved the final document on December 19, 1966, and it became available for signature on January 27, 1967, following months of negotiations in the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space's Legal Subcommittee. The United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and a number of other nations approved the pact, which went into effect on October 10, 1967.

Rescue agreement 1968 – The Rescue Agreement, which was also known as the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, The Return of Astronauts, and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, was signed on April 22nd, 1968, supplementing the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. This Treaty requires all signatory states to give all possible assistance to astronauts in distress, no matter their nationality, and to safely return any astronauts or spacecraft that land outside their home country's territory. This Treaty also requires states to notify the launching authority and the UN of incidents involving space objects and astronauts

Liability Convention 1972 – The Liability Convention makes countries legally responsible for any damage that has been caused by their space objects. This treaty establishes absolute liability for any harm on Earth and fault-based liability for any damage in outer space. States must resolve any claims through diplomatic channels, with a Claims Commission available if negotiations fail

Registration Convention 1975 – The Registration Convention requires every launching state to maintain a national registry of all space objects it sends into Earth orbit or beyond and to report key information about these objects, such as the launch date, location, orbital parameters, and its purpose. The UN will then keep a central register that is accessible to the public to improve transparency and identification of said space objects. The treaty also states procedures for cooperation when a space object cannot be identified and allows international organizations to participate if they accept the treaty's obligations.

Moon agreement 1979 – The Moon Agreement, also known as the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, establishes that the Moon and other celestial bodies may only be used for peaceful purposes and cannot be claimed by any nation. It bans military activities, weapons testing, and hostile acts on the Moon while requiring transparency and international cooperation in all lunar exploration. The treaty also designates the Moon’s natural resources as the “common heritage of mankind” and calls for an international system to govern future resource use.

Delegations

Algeria – Supports UN-led space debris mitigation and re-entry safety standards; prioritizes protecting civilian populations and environmental safety.

Argentina – Supports transparency and debris mitigation measures to protect civilian satellites and ensure long-term orbital stability.

Australia – Strong advocate for space sustainability, emphasizing tracking coordination, debris prevention, and responsible orbital use.

Bangladesh – Focuses on Earth-safety concerns, highlighting risks from uncontrolled re-entry over densely populated regions.

Brazil – Supports sustainable space practices while maintaining flexibility for developing national space capabilities.

Bulgaria – Cooperative and supportive of international data-sharing systems to improve collision avoidance and debris tracking.

Canada – Strong supporter of strict debris mitigation and re-entry safety, viewing space debris as a direct Earth safety and liability issue.

Chile – Supports international coordination to protect scientific, civilian, and commercial satellite infrastructure.

China – Advocates for UN-centered frameworks and collective responsibility in managing space debris and orbital sustainability.

France – Strong proponent of binding international standards, treating space debris as an environmental issue requiring regulation.

Germany – Emphasizes environmental-style governance of outer space and supports comprehensive sustainability norms.

Guyana – Equity-focused, advocating for protections and early-warning access for non-spacefaring states.

Hungary – Neutral and cooperative, favoring low-cost, UN-led debris mitigation and safety solutions.

Indonesia – Focuses on re-entry and debris risks to equatorial regions and supports international coordination for population safety.

Italy – Supports EU-aligned cooperation, shared standards, and multilateral approaches to orbital safety.

Japan – Strong supporter of technological innovation for debris prevention, mitigation, and active debris removal.

Kazakhstan – Strong advocate for debris mitigation and controlled re-entry due to direct exposure to launch and re-entry zones.

Kyrgyzstan – Supports international safety guidelines to reduce risks to civilians in non-spacefaring countries.

Libya – Supports UN-guided sustainability frameworks without imposing high technical or financial burdens.

Mexico – Supports multilateral safety standards and regional coordination to protect populations and satellite services.

Mongolia – Advocates peaceful, safe use of space and supports international cooperation on debris prevention.

Nigeria – Emphasizes capacity-building and equitable access to debris alerts and tracking information.

North Korea – Skeptical of restrictive frameworks, viewing debris regulations as potentially limiting national development.

Paraguay – Focuses on Earth-impact prevention and supports protections for non-spacefaring and vulnerable states.

Poland – Supports EU-aligned sustainability standards and views orbital debris as a shared infrastructure risk.

Romania – Cooperative stance supporting standardized debris prevention and collision-avoidance measures.

Russia – Supports shared responsibility for orbital sustainability while prioritizing national sovereignty in space activities.

South Africa – Emphasizes equity, capacity-building, and shared access to space safety systems.

South Korea – Strongly supports debris mitigation to protect satellite-dependent economic and communication systems.

Spain – Supports transparency, coordination, and international data-sharing for orbital safety.

Tanzania – Prioritizes civilian safety and supports international oversight of debris and re-entry risks.

Trinidad and Tobago – Equity-driven approach, supporting fair access to tracking and safety systems.

Turkmenistan – Neutral but supportive of non-political, safety-focused international cooperation.

United Kingdom – Focuses on coordination, transparency, and commercial accountability in space operations.

United States – Supports debris mitigation and safety standards while maintaining flexibility to encourage innovation.

Uzbekistan – Emphasizes environmental protection and regional safety related to orbital debris and re-entry risks.

Links to research

[Cold War | Dates, Definition, Timeline, Summary, Era, & Facts | Britannica](#)

[The Origins and Evolution of the Cold War: A Historical Overview • PolSci Institute](#)

[Origins of the Cold War | A Visual Guide to the Cold War](#)

[Cold War: Summary, Combatants, Start & End | HISTORY](#)

<https://www.unoosa.org/>

[Rescue Agreement](#)

[Outer Space Treaty | International Law, Space Exploration, Arms Control | Britannica](#)

[Rescue Agreement \(1968\) | 4score.org](#)

[Conv_International_Liab_Damage.PDF](#)

[Conv_Regi_Objects_Launched.PDF](#)

[volume-1363-I-23002-English.pdf](#)

[Agent Skills, Rules, Subagents: Explained!](#)

[Yuri Gagarin, First Human in Space \(1961\)](#)



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