JUNIOR ACADEMY MODEL UN X

UNOOSA

TOPIC GUIDE

Aakrithi Ram
Vedanti Rawal

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– Tenth Annual Conference –

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Greetings Delegates!

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you all to JAMUN X! To introduce myself, my name is Aakrithi Ram (yes, I know it's hard to pronounce) and I'm a freshman here at BCA in the Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology (AAST). I'm so excited to be your co-chair for the UNOOSA committee!

My Model UN journey began only last year when I was at the BCA Flash in 2023. There, I randomly selected 4 courses that sounded interesting and Model UN happened to be one of them. At the event, I found myself enthralled by the how the various aspects of public speaking, research, and the thrill of constructive persuasion and listening came together to form a cohesive solution. When I came to BCA, I joined the Model UN club my first trimester, and from there, I have had the amazing opportunities to travel to places such as Princeton and Yale for conferences and have met amazing students from all over the world, all while immersing myself in the realm of real world debate.

When I'm not at school, studying, or sleeping, I enjoy, playing the piano, working out regularly, swimming competitively for my district high school as well as for a club team, and I love hanging out with my friends and family. I'm also a huge fan of movies (my favorite is Martian...hence why I'm chairing UNOOSA), and I love cooking, eating, and most importantly, sleeping. JAMUN X will be a learning experience for all of us; I encourage all delegates to step outside of their comfort zone, and keep an open mind as we continue to learn and grow. I know some of you may be nervous, but please remember that I was in your shoes just a few short months ago! It is my hope you all approach this conference with the mindset of aiming to learn and grow, rather than seeking an award; after all, the friends you make, the challenges you face, and the knowledge you gain are infinitely more valuable than a piece of paper with your name on it. Whether JAMUN X will be your first conference, or you are a MUN pro, I hope you find your experience at JAMUN X to be a fulfilling one, and I cannot wait to meet you all and welcome you into the BCA comMUNity!

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any and all inquiries, MUN related or otherwise at aakram27@bergen.org.

Regards,
Aakrithi Ram '27
Co-Chair of UNOOSA
aakram27@bergen.org

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Dear delegates,
It is my pleasure and honor to welcome you all to JAMUN X! I'm Vedanti Rawal, a freshman in AAST(Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology) at BCA, and I can't wait to be your co-chair alongside Aakrithi.

Although I began my journey into Model UN last year, I've always been interested in foreign policies and was on the World Cultures Club board throughout middle school. As soon as I saw the sign for Model UN at the introductory picnic, I knew I would join. I love public speaking, and public speakers amaze me. Their awe-inspiring speeches are another reason I wanted to try my hand at MUN. After gaining some experience through the club, I began attending conferences, my most recent being Yale, where I learned more debate techniques and met people from around the globe. I can't wait to dive into a world of debate with you all in UNOOSA!

Outside of MUN, I love gardening, making jewelry, and painting during my weekends. I also compete in taekwondo and play soccer and volleyball for fun. I love traveling, shopping with my family, and reading at the beach. In the last few months, I've developed an interest in space technology and international space laws, hence chairing for UNOOSA. However, high school has created two new favorite hobbies: listening to music and sleeping.

I'm so excited to be your co-chair for UNOOSA, and I believe this opportunity truly allows every single one of you to grow and get closer to your full potential, whether this is your first conference or your tenth. I hope we can all leave this congress feeling accomplished, having tried something new, even if it's as small as making a few new friends and raising your placard as much as possible to develop a newfound interest in UNOOSA and Model UN. There is so much more to Model UN than just the awards, and I look forward to seeing you all collaborate to develop creative solutions to current issues. I hope you are just as excited as I am and that JAMUN X will be a memorable experience for all of you!

Please don't hesitate to email me at vedraw27@bergen.org if you have any questions or concerns regarding UNOOSA and JAMUN!

I'm so excited to meet you all!

Sincerely,
Vedanti Rawal '27
Co-Chair of UNOOSA
vedraw27@bergen.org

INTRODUCTION

TOPIC: Weaponization and Security of Space

In recent years, the field of space exploration has seen a remarkable surge in activity, with a multitude of countries, and more recently, private entities launching ambitious projects. This massive surge has resulted in the establishment of groundbreaking technologies. However, while many celebrate and acknowledge the benefits of new space exploration, there are many drawbacks and concerns presented as well. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has recently seen reason to be concerned with matters regarding equitable access to and responsible use of space technology.

As space and technology move forward through unprecedented movement, so does safety, security, the possibility of outer space. Countries with less resources are forced to ally with the United States or China, contributing to divisions on Earth and in the universe and creating a strong divide.

Introduction (Continued)

Instead of focusing resources and time on furthering research, this divide forces countries to focus on building technology for defending themselves or attacking others.

Furthermore, as the reach of humanity expands beyond the boundaries of our own planet to places like Mars, the sun, and even distant galaxies, the threat of weaponized space technology looms, and the potential consequences of such actions pose a clear threat to international peace. Charged with dealing with these complex issues, delegates must navigate the daunting complexities of diplomacy, balancing national interests with the requirements of global stability, period all of which encourage joint international efforts.

Topic History

The competition between countries for control over the world outside of Earth is a race that began on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union sent Sputnik I, the first spacecraft, into the world that was then, and still is, the unknown: outer space. This sent a shock wave of panic through the United States. Since the Russians had technology to get up to space, this sparked concerns in regards to military technologies following. In 1958, the American government launched Explorer I, a satellite into space, which became the first american craft to leave the atmosphere. The same year, President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized the creation of the group, commonly known as NASA.

Topic History (continued)

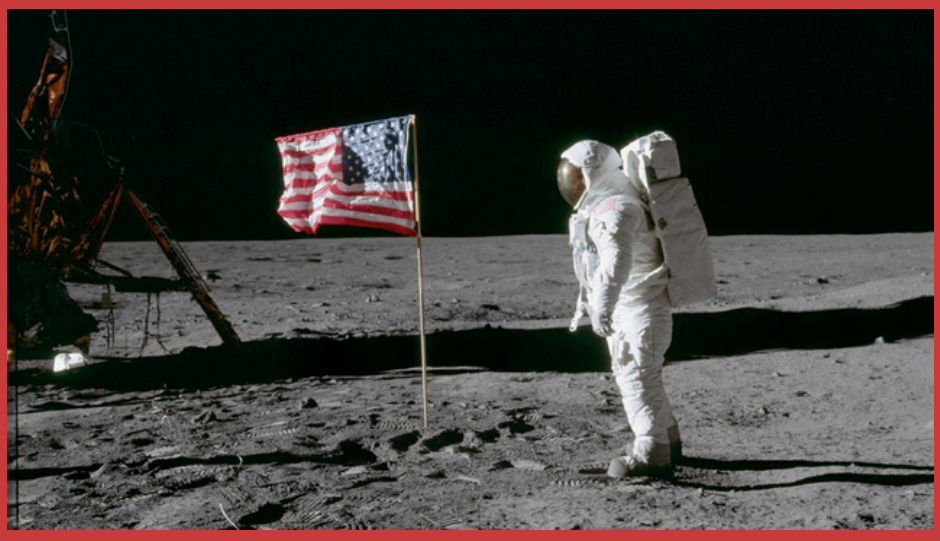
The following year, in 1959, the Soviets pushed themselves into the lead in the Space Race, launching Luna II, the first probe to hit the moon. Two years later, in 1961, Yuri Gagarin, a Russian cosmonaut became the first person to orbit the earth, traveling in Vostok I. These strides taken by the Russian government sent the US government and NASA into a frenzy, as they rushed to match the Russian achievements. Since then, many countries have joined this race to space, as the notion of space exploration became linked with the demonstration of technological and military prowess.This fight for power originated after World War II, which had brought attention to the fact that rocket technology would drive the power of modern warfare.

The United States and the Soviet Union found themselves engulfed in a political, social, and ideological struggle known as the Cold War. This locked various countries in a fight of technological developments, where the USSR and United States were two of the prominent countries in this battle. Throughout the duration of both the Space Race and the Cold War, both the United States and the USSR developed satellites, anti-satellites, directed energy weapons, and orbital nuclear explosives, each trying to outdo the other in attempts to scare the other side into backing down from the cold war. In both countries, various legislation was introduced; In the United States, President Ronald Reagan proposed a system called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), but was known to the public as the 'Star Wars.' However, this plan was deemed ridiculous, as it required massive amounts of money that was not available and technology that didn't exist; the plan was eventually scrapped.

Topic History (continued)

However, the Commercial Space Launch Act, introduced in 1984, granted the U.S. Department of Transportation oversight of commercial spaceflight, allowed for compensation to companies for large third-party damages, and enforced regulations for commercial human spaceflight. This is an example of a very successful piece of legislation that is still the basis of human spaceflight in the United States Today.

When the USSR was dissolved in 1991, the interest in military advancements never ceased. The newly formed Russia joined the United States, India, China, and several other countries as those on the forefront of new space technology. The mad rush to space seemed to decrease, partly due to the fact that the public lost interest, and the toil of funding the programs was starting to have effects on the economy. After this, most space technologies were regulated to satellites, rovers, and space shuttles, which continued into the early 21st century.



Current Situation

Currently, the race for space is still ongoing and continues to be a prominent point of comparison between government organizations. While many argue that exploration should still be at the forefront of the goals of space exploration, development and testing of weapons is also certainly a goal for many countries. This race is driven by the larger, richer, and more powerful countries of the world: Russia (formerly USSR), United States, European Union, China, India, Japan, and South Korea. There are currently over 320 military satellites in the world, and the number is rapidly increasing. However, it is imperative that all countries claim their stake in negotiations and discussions regarding the management, regulation, and development of the militarization of space, as this is an area that all countries will inevitably become active in coming years. Again, for many countries, the level of space exploration they have achieved serves as a measure for dominance.

It is important to note that there is a large difference between weaponization and militarization of space. Militarization refers to the use of space technology by the military. This includes using navigation (using the Global Positioning System), communication, and monitoring. While space has been militarized from its early days, there are many uses of militarization of space that can be peaceful. Weaponization refers to as 'the placement of in orbit of space-based devices that have a destructive capacity'. Weaponization of space has the potential to cause destruction on a massive scale. The new competitiveness of nations paired with the recent strides in space technology have sparked a new interest in space among the general population in nations around the world. Space is once again seen not only as a realm of exploration, but also an area of concern regarding national security.

Current Situation (continued)

This level of concern has not been seen since the Space Race during the Cold War. This shift has brought space weaponry and exploration up the priorities list of nations.

While it is clear that the countries with the most dominance over Space Militarization and Weaponization are developed countries, it is clear that developing countries too have a major hand in this debate as well. Although many developing nations have focused their priorities on the well-being of their own people, as opposed to developing new technologies, soon, they will be on the same parallel as the currently developed nations. If they do not voice their opinions now, by the time they do, the laws and legislation put into place will be unfavorable towards them.

Currently, there are just under ten thousand satellites orbiting the earth, and many more are inactive, broken, and are simply space junk. While there is some legislation regarding outer space, many of these rules are vague and unclear

For example, on December 5, 1979, the Moon Treaty was officially adopted and put into effect, stating that the use of the moon for military purposes of any kind, including military bases, weapon testing, and conduct of military maneuvers is strictly forbidden. However, scientific research is allowed. A similar agreement is in place concerning the planet Mars; it is the property of all nations, and is not subject to national appropriation.

While there is also some governance on what types of crafts can be sent into space, given that technologies are constantly evolving, these laws are often struggling behind, creating a never ending game of catch up. As a result, nations often stretch the laws to maximize their own country's technologies and reap the benefits for themselves. However, given that the threat of space weaponization is relatively new, nations around the world agree that there must be a standard set of laws in place to regulate the use of outer space.

Country Policies

United States: From the beginning of the space race, continuing to the current day, the United States has held a position of dominance over space technology. They claim to be committed to solely using outer space for peaceful purposes, but at the same time also have created programs such as the Space Force under former President Donald Trump. While they strictly don't support weaponization of space, it is clear that they have fully developed technologies that are capable of causing damage. The US has developed counter-space capabilities, including kinetic and non-kinetic weapons like anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles and ground-based jammers. Recent initiatives, such as the Department of Defense's adoption of a new space policy in 2022, signal a growing emphasis on responsible behavior in space.

Russia/China: Russia and China have both communicated concerns in regards to weaponization of space, and how that might cause harm and conflict in terms of orbit. In 2008, both nations introduced the Conference on Disarmament (CD), a draft treaty on the "Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space." Although both entities emphasized the importance of transparency and building confidence between countries, the draft treaty was critiqued for being unspecific and being an attempt at gaining an edge in space weapon development. However, both have openly designed, built, and tested military assets, including anti-satellite weapons. In February, it was believed that Russia was developing nuclear bombs that could destroy satellites in space. This would not only cause the issue of space junk, but would also largely cripple economies around the world, as satellites are an integral part of the human lifestyle.

Country Policies

China has recently doubled the number of satellites they have put into space, the number now around 450. They are currently in the process of testing and developing anti-satellite technology which would have the potential to destroy various space technologies that belong to other countries. However, China believes that transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are vital for creating a secure environment in space, and building treaties and foreign policy between nation-states.

Middle East: In regards to the middle eastern region, due to the history of conflicts and security challenges, they have a general desire for the peaceful use of space and prevention of weaponization. However, given that most countries in the Middle East are still in various phases of development, they remain wary of the global powerhouses around them and strive to maintain vigilance if a threat becomes serious. Some countries, such as Israel and Iran are known to be capable of building, launching, and controlling their own satellites, but other countries in this region, including Saudi Arabia, have shown similar feats. Egypt believes in the importance of preventing an arms race and has said that a legally binding instrument that prohibits the placement of weapons, armed attacks against space assets, and developing, testing, and stockpiling weapons to attack space assets is necessary.

European Union: The European Union alongside its member states regard outer space as global property, and property to be used for the benefit of all. They strongly believe that ensuring space security and preventing a space arms race would be beneficial to all. They acknowledge the need for implementation of international law for space security which would cover militarization of space.

Country Policies

They firmly believe that the most pragmatic and realistic way to strengthen space security and prevent misunderstandings is to agree upon norms and principles of responsible behavior, which will not only increase transparency, but build trust between nations. The Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects are currently two draft treaties. However, the EU does not believe that these are effective enough and strongly encourage building a stronger set of agreements to prevent future misconception and more importantly, an arms race.

Africa/South America: Many African and South American countries have shown promise of prominence in regards to space technology and exploration. During a session of debate on October 19, 2023, Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group declared a need for negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament and proclaimed that treaties and agreements must be made to prevent a space arms race.

They claimed the instrument(s) put into place should allow for peaceful exploration and equal opportunity for all countries. During the same meeting, the delegation of Chile claimed that the body of UNOOSA must consider current and future threats by nation-states to space systems, analyze actions, activities, and omissions that could be considered irresponsible, and therefore make recommendations on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors relating to threats by States to space systems. This would include how they would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments on prevention of an outer space arms race. Several other nations of Africa and South America hold similar views.

Potential Solutions

While the international community struggles to find common ground on exactly what policies should be implemented, it is common thought that clear and relevant legislation is needed to prevent a space arms race. One potential solution is to draft some sort of agreement that would be agreed upon by all council members and would have specifications on how the members would be held accountable and what uses of space technology are deemed acceptable. In addition to this, increasing transparency measures between countries allows for trust to be established and diplomacy between states to be achieved. Part of this transparency would include annual reports mandated to be submitted to the UN or UNOOSA detailing how each country is using its technology and complete transparency on their developments.

Another angle would be to assume that space will inevitably be weaponized and focus on how to control that.

Transparency certainly falls under this category, and focusing efforts on cleanup and protection could be a potentially strong solution.
Finally, global education of the general public based on current space tensions and the promotion of peace throughout space creates an opportunity to utilize space safely. While many schools and education centers spread information about the great aspects of space exploration and all of its accomplishments throughout time, they often lack education about the dangerous aspects of technological advancements. For example, implementing a college-level course may be helpful when aiming to achieve space peace.

Delegates must keep in mind that any solution must be or eventually lead to all nations participating, as it takes just one entity to cause others to militarize space.

Questions to Consider

1. What regulations are necessary to ensure security and accountability of each country while maintaining the privacy of the countries?
2. What role should the UN play to either prevent or use the weaponization of space to benefit humanity and what would these roles entail?
3. How would protective measures against the weaponization of space affect the framework of the current international space laws? (Would any counties be put at a disadvantage?)
4. What effect would the weaponization of space have on conflict escalation between countries and even all of humanity?
5. How will countries put into effect plans for the short-term and the long-term?
6. How will potential treaties/agreements be enforced amongst countries?
7. What measures should be taken by developing nations to ensure they protect themselves while also complying with internation space agreements?
8. How will transparency of arms/weapon development between countries be achieved?
9. How do countries balance national interests and security while also maintaining an international economic focus?
10. What types of actions could be taken against countries who do not abide by international agreements?
11. What are some possibilities of actions that can be taken in regards to space weapons that are currently in space?
12. How will nations take into account the private sectors investing in space technology and what rules should apply to them in terms of developing space technology?

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