

Security Council

Topic 1: Outer Space Laws and Enforcement

In recent decades, the global community has become increasingly aware of the effects and consequences of its own development. Resources of land, water, food, and other natural products are becoming less available with one shining exception: space. Currently, our most underutilized resource is space—it is literally limitless in what it may provide for us, should we appropriately make use of it. It is the task of the Security Council, the most respected body of the United Nations and the only body imbued with the authority to create law, to advance and direct the cultivation of this untapped opportunity.

In 1967, the Outer Space Treaty was enacted after its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly. The treaty remains the framework for all outer space law, though other treaties have since been enacted. The Outer Space Treaty specifies that the exploration and use of space must be in the interests of and benefit for all mankind and that no part of it can be subject to claims of national sovereignty, though items launched into space remain under the dominion of the launching country. In this regard, installations must be open for review, knowledge must be shared, and missions must be registered with the United Nations's governing body.

Recently, nations have increasingly delegated the funding and sponsorship of space programs and missions to private and non-governmental organizations. This development in space policy makes the potential for non-compliance with current governing principles and laws more likely. It falls to the Security Council to preemptively formalize and adapt space law to ensure no such action occurs. Existing space law, while generally applicable to instances of non-compliance, does not contain any specific response protocol with strength or authority. It is the Security Council's purview to create such law.

Space is a resource the global community cannot afford to ignore. It is largely untapped, and is potentially limitless in what it can provide to mankind, even if all it provides is knowledge. It is the Security Council's responsibility to ensure such use occurs within the parameters enacted by the United Nations and that any benefit is shared by all.

Questions:

1. What treaties and provisions are in effect, and which topics and nations do they apply to?
2. Do the current treaties need to be amended or disregarded in favor of more strenuous ones?
3. What actions need to be taken by this council to ensure compliance with existing or newly created laws?
4. What might be appropriate repercussions or consequences of non-compliance?

Resources:

1. <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/>
This is the homepage for the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).
2. <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/OOSA/index.html>
This link off of the UNOOSA site gives background information on the committee.
3. <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/outerspt.html>
This link, also off the UNOOSA site, provides a summary and full text link to the Outer Space Treaty.
4. <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/outerspt.html>
This link is to the main page of UNISPACE III, the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
5. <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/outerspt.html>
This page provides links to the different sections of the Report on International Cooperation in Space Activities for Enhancing Security in the Post-Cold War Era.
6. <http://www.thespacereview.com/article/141/1>
This site offers an article promoting the commercialization of space in order to further space exploration.
7. <http://www.spacelaw.com.au/content/issues.htm>
This webpage discusses space law generally and one man's attempt to buy space real estate on the moon.
8. http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/air_space/4264325.html
This article proposes lunar property rights.

Security Council

Topic 2: Nuclear Disarmament, focusing on Iran

Global concern about the potential for mass casualties and environmental destruction has existed since the introduction of the nuclear warhead in WWII. Visions of the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan have stymied the use of nuclear bombs since, though a number of nations have or are assumed to possess them. Images of the past may not be enough for long, however, as more nations have recently sought nuclear capability and weapons technology. The potential for misuse has the global community wondering if and when destruction will occur on a nuclear scale.

Among the nations seeking nuclear technologies, Iran is the international community's most pressing potential threat. Iran is vehemently opposed to many characteristics of non-Middle Eastern culture and has repeatedly expressed animosity toward the nation of Israel. Israel fears that a nuclear-capable Iran threatens its existence and has pledged military action, if needed, to ensure its security. The United States and France have called for sanctions as preventative measures against further nuclear-enrichment in Iran, while China has promoted diplomatic options. In the interests of continued peace, not only in the region, but also across the globe, the United Nations must negotiate a nuclear program that both respects Iran's sovereign right of development and reduces the threat of nuclear weapons use.

While the international community largely sees Iran's nuclear program as a threat to national and international security, Iran maintains that its activities are peaceful. Only time will tell, as Iran has the sovereign authority to develop any programs it desires, though it may be pressured by the global community to comply with international standards and policy. Iran is not the only country seeking nuclear weapons, and many other nations either desire to develop programs of their own, or to increase programs already in existence, citing personal security as their rationale. It is imperative that the Security Council devise a nuclear policy that respects member nations' rights, while ensuring the security of the larger community. It is the Security Council's responsibility to encourage a global environment in which nuclear weapons are neither viable nor a necessary defensive measure.

Questions:

1. What actions need to be taken by the Security Council specifically relating to Iran and its nuclear program?
2. What actions should be taken in similar situations?
3. Does the Security Council need to amend its responses to nations seeking nuclear weaponry?
4. Are there broader nuclear policies to be enacted and enforced?

Resources:

1. <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html>
This is the United Nations site containing the text of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
2. <http://www.iaea.org/>
This is the homepage for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
3. <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/index.shtml>
This is the IAEA page regarding Iran's nuclear program.
4. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4031603.stm
This source has basic facts on American foreign policy relating to Iran, Iran's nuclear program, the IAEA, and the UN Security Council.
5. <http://www.nti.org/db/disarmament/index.html>
This source provides information on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and movements toward nuclear disarmament.
6. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/02/11/us.iran.nuclear/index.html>
This source is an update of the latest news regarding Iran's nuclear program.
7. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33927&Cr=nuclear&Cr1>
This page contains an article from the UN News Centre on the IAEA's concerns regarding Iran's and other nations' nuclear programs.
8. <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/menukes.cfm>
This source is an overview of nuclear weapons build-up in the Middle East.
9. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iran/index.html>
This source gives complete statistics, history, and news of Iran.
10. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/nuke.htm>
This site offers extensive information about the developments in Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Security Council

Topic 3: International Piracy

This world's seas are an unimaginably valuable resource. Beyond their value as a source of natural resources, they serve the global human community as routes for shipping, transportation and communication. Threats to the seas' viability are highly deserving of attention from the global community. When threats are caused by humans, they must be addressed by United Nations Security Council.

The Convention of the Law of Sea defines piracy as, "any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed on the high seas against another ship or aircraft." It calls on "all states to cooperate to the fullest possible extent" in the suppression of piracy. This definition was contingent on the act taking place outside the jurisdiction of any particular state. The 2008 rise in incidents of piracy along the coast of Somalia woke the global community to the fact that in some instances, global involvement is required not just in international waters, but also in sovereign ones.

Instances of piracy have skyrocketed in recent years. In 2008 alone, Somalia, the nation most victimized by acts of piracy, experienced over 100 separate reported incidents. Piracy in this area of the world threatens several key international trade routes near the Red Sea. As a result, a multinational coalition force was established in August 2008 to secure parts of the region. In October of 2008, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for all naval vessels in or near Somalia to use military force to repel pirate attacks. Despite these actions, piracy remains a prevalent issue. It is to Somalia's credit that it has invited international involvement in the suppression of piracy within its territorial waters. Currently, a number of a nations patrol in the region.

Somalia's acceptance of international aid represents the ideal course of action taken by a nation under attack from piracy. Still, there is no cohesive policy or international program for combating piracy. In some instances, nations or corporate interests have negotiated with attackers; at other times, force has been used as a deterrent. Ransom demands have sometimes been met. Vigilantism has occasionally prevailed. Some nations have allowed international involvement in policing actions in territorial waters; others have not. A formalized plan of action is required if peace and security are to be reestablished. The international community has turned to the Security Council to create such a plan.

Questions:

1. What is the best way to patrol international and national waters with high incidences of piracy?
2. Are there steps to be taken by the international community when dealing with piracy that only occurs in national waters?
3. What actions are to be taken when countries do not allow international assistance?
4. What should be the specific international response and policy in regards to piracy?

Resources:

1. <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm>
This is the homepage for the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.
2. http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm
This page links to the full text of the 1982 Convention Law of the Sea.
3. http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part7.htm
This section of the Treaty on the Law of the Sea discusses piracy on the high seas.
4. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/624/65/PDF/N0962465.pdf?OpenElement>
This is the resolution passed by the Security Council in 2009 regarding Somalia.
5. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rwarchive/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7F93FM?OpenDocument>
This article provides information on the Security Council's actions towards piracy.
6. http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/p/piracy_at_sea/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=Piracy&st=cse
This site gives a detailed background on piracy. It also has many varied articles relating to piracy.
7. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9793.doc.htm>
This article talks about a UN Security Council meeting in which a Somalia representative spoke about the problems facing his nation with regards to piracy.
8. http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/03/pirates_of_somalia.html
This link provides text and photographic information on Somali piracy.
9. <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-04-08-voa67-68785907.html>
This article discusses the weakness of the Law of the Sea when applied to situations such as in the case of Somalia.
10. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33433&Cr=somali&Cr1=>
This article provides information about the state of the UN's aid agencies in Somalia.