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BACKGROUND GUIDE

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE (DISEC)

Addressing the Weaponization of Outer Space and the Threat of Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Weapons

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is our privilege to welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee. The agenda before you, the weaponization of outer space and the threat posed by anti-satellite weapons, sits at the intersection of orbital physics, a fifty-eight-year-old treaty framework that never anticipated these systems, and the strategic calculations of states that have spent decades in disagreement at Geneva. The subject rewards careful, patient research rather than quick conclusions. This guide is intended to orient your research, not to conclude it. It sets out the historical record, the relevant treaty text and its gaps, the technical vocabulary required to discuss the issue with precision, and a detailed examination of one incident that shaped the diplomatic response to this agenda more than any other. Delegates are expected to build on this foundation through their own research into their assigned country's policy and record on this agenda. We expect delegates to arrive with a firm command of their country's actual voting record and stated position on this agenda, and to form blocs on the basis of genuine policy alignment rather than assumed allegiance. We expect debate that treats this as the genuinely unresolved question it is. Delegates are encouraged to reach out to the Executive Board with any questions over the course of their preparation. We look forward to a productive committee.

Sincerely,
The Executive Board of DISEC

DISEC

Introduction to the Committee:

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE:

The Disarmament and International Security Committee, formally the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, addresses questions of disarmament and international security under Article 11 of the UN Charter. Its membership is universal: all 193 member states of the United Nations hold a seat and a vote, which distinguishes it from bodies like the Security Council, where only fifteen states sit and five hold veto power.

This universality shapes what DISEC can and cannot do. Resolutions passed here are recommendatory, not legally binding on member states. A DISEC resolution cannot compel a state to sign a treaty, dismantle a weapons system, or accept inspections. What it can do is register where international opinion actually stands, on the basis of a vote in which every state, regardless of military or economic weight, counts equally. A resolution passed 155 to 9 carries a different kind of authority than a treaty negotiated by five states behind closed doors, even though only the latter is enforceable in the conventional legal sense.

It is worth distinguishing DISEC from two other bodies that will come up repeatedly in this guide. The Conference on Disarmament (CD), based in Geneva, is the primary multilateral forum actually tasked with negotiating binding arms control treaties; it operates by strict consensus among its 65 members, which is precisely why its Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) agenda item has been stalled since the 1980s. The Open-Ended Working Groups discussed later in this guide are yet another mechanism, created directly by General Assembly resolutions (most recently 79/512) to allow broader, more technical discussion outside the CD's consensus deadlock.

DISEC's committee mandate on this agenda, in practice, is to produce a resolution that reflects where the General Assembly's membership is willing to go on ASAT weapons: what norms it is prepared to endorse, what it asks other bodies to pursue, and what it explicitly leaves for the CD or the OEWG to negotiate as binding law. A strong resolution from this committee will not attempt to write a treaty. It will build the political consensus that makes a treaty negotiable elsewhere.

HOW THIS COMMITTEE WORKS:

This section is a reference, not a tutorial; we assume most of you have sat in committee before and are looking for a refresher rather than a first introduction.

Motions. The principal motions you will use are the moderated caucus (a structured speakers' list on a specific sub-topic, with a set speaking time), the unmoderated caucus (unstructured time for informal negotiation, usually to draft working papers or build blocs), and motions to introduce, amend, or vote on draft resolutions. Motions to extend or close debate on a caucus or the agenda as a whole are also standard.

Points. A point of order flags a procedural error by the dais or another delegate. A point of personal privilege addresses your own comfort or ability to participate (inaudibility, room temperature, and so on). A point of parliamentary inquiry asks the dais a question about procedure itself, not about content. A point of information is directed at a speaker after their speech, within any question time the dais has allotted.

Accepted sources. For fact-finding during committee (used to substantiate claims in speeches or points of information), acceptable sources include UN documents and press releases, national government statements, established international news wires (Reuters, AP, AFP), and recognized think tanks and research institutions (Secure World Foundation, IISS, Carnegie Endowment, and similar). Wikipedia, personal blogs, and unattributed social media posts are not acceptable as sources of fact in committee, though they can be useful starting points for your own research outside it.

DISEC-specific notes. Procedural votes require a simple majority and are open (no abstentions recognized on procedural matters). Substantive votes on draft resolutions require a simple majority of those present and voting, and abstentions are permitted. There is no veto in this committee; every delegation's vote carries equal weight, which is the point of the body existing at all.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA:

More than 11,500 active satellites currently orbit the Earth, and the figure has grown sharply in the last five years with the expansion of large commercial constellations. These satellites carry out functions that are easy to take for granted until they stop working: GPS timing signals synchronize financial transactions and power grids, weather satellites feed the forecasting models that warn coastal populations ahead of cyclones, and military reconnaissance and earlywarning satellites sit underneath the nuclear command structures of several states. An antisatellite (ASAT) weapon is, in the simplest terms, any system designed to disable or destroy a satellite in orbit, whether by physical collision, directed energy, jamming, or cyberattack.

At least four states, the United States, Russia, China, and India, have demonstrated the ability to destroy a satellite in orbit using a dedicated weapon. Several others are developing or are suspected of developing similar capability, and non-destructive counterspace tools (jammers, lasers capable of blinding sensors, cyber-intrusion methods) are considerably more widespread than destructive kinetic weapons. There is no treaty in force today that bans ASAT weapons themselves. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the foundational instrument governing this domain, was written to prevent nuclear weapons in orbit; it has almost nothing to say about a conventional interceptor missile fired at a satellite.

This agenda sits at the meeting point of two arguments that rarely resolve into a single answer. The first is a security argument: several states regard ASAT capability as a legitimate deterrent, no different in principle from any other weapons system a state develops to protect its own space assets from an adversary's. The second is a sustainability argument: destroying a satellite in low Earth orbit creates a debris field that does not distinguish between the country that fired the weapon and every other country with a satellite in a nearby orbital shell. A single test can degrade an orbital environment that took six decades to build and that every spacefaring and non-spacefaring state alike now depends on.

DISEC cannot adjudicate which argument is correct. What it can do, and what past resolutions on this agenda have in fact done, is build a norm around the specific behaviors that generate the most damage while leaving the underlying security debate to bodies with the mandate and the membership to negotiate binding restrictions. Your task is to figure out where that norm should sit, and what your delegation's national interest tells you about how far it should go.

KEY TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS:

Kinetic vs. non-kinetic ASAT. A kinetic ASAT weapon destroys its target through physical impact, whether by direct collision (a "kinetic kill vehicle") or by detonating a warhead near enough to shatter the target with shrapnel. Kinetic strikes are the primary source of orbital debris. Non-kinetic ASAT methods, including high-powered lasers that blind or damage a satellite's sensors, radiofrequency jamming of its communications, and cyberattacks on its ground or onboard systems, can disable a satellite without generating physical debris, which makes them both harder to detect and, in some technical assessments, less escalatory.

Direct-ascent vs. co-orbital. A direct-ascent ASAT weapon is launched from the ground, sea, or air directly at a target in orbit, intercepting it on a single ascending trajectory; the missile itself never enters a stable orbit. A co-orbital ASAT weapon is first placed into orbit itself, then maneuvers over time to approach and disable its target. Co-orbital systems are considerably harder to distinguish from legitimate satellite servicing or debris-removal missions, since the underlying maneuver, a slow, controlled approach to another object in orbit, looks identical whether the intent is repair or destruction.

Dual-use ambiguity. This is arguably the central technical obstacle to any verification regime on this agenda. The same interceptor technology used in a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system can often be repurposed to strike a satellite instead of an incoming missile, since both tasks require hitting a fast-moving object outside the atmosphere. Russia's Nudol system, discussed in depth later in this guide, is officially classified as an anti-ballistic missile system. The same is true in reverse for co-orbital technology:

a satellite designed for in-orbit servicing or active debris removal has, by necessity, the same rendezvous and proximity-operation capability that a co-orbital ASAT weapon would require.

Space situational awareness (SSA). This refers to the tracking and cataloguing of objects in orbit, both operational satellites and debris, and the ability to predict collisions between them. SSA capability is unevenly distributed; a small number of states and commercial actors operate the radar and optical tracking networks capable of monitoring most debris down to a few centimeters in size, and states without independent SSA capability depend on data shared by those that do.

Kessler syndrome. Named for the NASA scientist who first modeled it in 1978, this describes a scenario in which the density of objects in a given orbital shell becomes high enough that a single collision triggers a cascade: the debris from that collision strikes other objects, generating more debris, which strikes still more objects, in a self-sustaining chain reaction. Past a certain density threshold, an orbital shell could become effectively unusable for decades or longer. Low Earth orbit (LEO, roughly 160 to 2,000 kilometers altitude) is the region of greatest concern, since it hosts the majority of active satellites, including most communication constellations, and because objects there remain for years to centuries depending on altitude.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The pursuit of ASAT capability is almost as old as the space age itself. The Soviet Union began testing a co-orbital ASAT concept, the Istrebitel Sputnik ("satellite fighter"), in the 1960s. The United States tested its own early ASAT systems through the 1960s and 1970s before conducting a widely cited direct-ascent test in 1985, when an F-15-launched ASM-135 missile destroyed the aging Solwind P78-1 satellite. In 2007, China destroyed one of its own defunct weather satellites, Fengyun-1C, in a direct-ascent test that generated the largest tracked debris field of any single event at the time, more than 3,000 catalogued fragments, and drew sharp condemnation from the United States and others.

The United States followed in 2008 with Operation Burnt Frost, using a modified sea-based missile defense interceptor to destroy a malfunctioning American satellite, USA-193, before it could re-enter the atmosphere with a tank of toxic hydrazine fuel intact; Washington described this as a safety measure rather than a weapons test, a distinction other states did not fully accept. India conducted its first ASAT test in March 2019, Mission Shakti, deliberately striking its target satellite at a lower altitude than earlier tests specifically to shorten the lifespan of the resulting debris, and framed the test publicly as a demonstration of responsible practice rather than an unconstrained one.

Each of these tests followed a similar pattern: a demonstration of capability, an international reaction weighted heavily toward the debris generated rather than the capability itself, and, in most cases, no lasting change to the legal or normative framework governing such tests. The event examined below broke that pattern, at least partially, and is worth understanding in detail

Case Study: The 2021 Russian Nudol Test and Its Diplomatic Aftermath

On 15 November 2021, Russia launched a PL-19 Nudol direct-ascent interceptor from Plesetsk Cosmodrome, striking Cosmos 1408, a defunct Soviet-era signals intelligence satellite that had been in orbit, inactive, since 1982. The intercept occurred at an altitude of roughly 480 kilometers and destroyed the satellite outright.

The immediate physical consequences were severe. The test generated more than 1,500 pieces of debris large enough to be tracked by ground-based radar, and an estimated hundreds of thousands of smaller fragments too small to track individually but still capable of causing damage at orbital velocities of roughly seven to eight kilometers per second. Because Cosmos 1408 broke apart at a comparatively high altitude, the resulting debris spread across an unusually wide range of orbital shells, from around 300 to 1,100 kilometers, placing it on a collision course with numerous other objects, including the International Space Station.

The seven-member ISS crew at the time, four Americans, two Russians, and one German, was ordered into an emergency "safe haven" procedure as the debris cloud's orbit repeatedly intersected the station's own path. Crew members sheltered in their return capsules, the Crew Dragon Endurance and Soyuz MS-19, prepared for the possibility of an emergency evacuation. The station itself has since had to perform multiple debris-avoidance maneuvers because of this single test; one such maneuver, in October 2022, required a docked cargo spacecraft to fire its thrusters for over five minutes to nudge the station clear of a predicted debris fragment. As of the most recent tracking data, the great majority of the debris has since decayed out of orbit, though this process took years rather than months, and a portion remains aloft.

Russia's public defense of the test rested on a specific legal reading: the Outer Space Treaty prohibits placing weapons of mass destruction in orbit and prohibits military activity on celestial bodies, but says nothing explicit about a conventional-warhead interceptor destroying a satellite from the ground. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated the test posed no risk to the ISS or other space activities; Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu confirmed the missile test had destroyed the satellite while separately maintaining it threatened no ongoing operations. The United States response was considerably sharper. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the test's long-lived debris a threat to the security, economic, and scientific interests of all nations for decades to come, and NASA Administrator Bill Nelson noted the irony that Russia had endangered its own cosmonauts along with the American and international crew aboard the station it had helped build.

The test's most significant consequence was not the debris itself but what followed diplomatically. In April 2022, Vice President Kamala Harris announced a unilateral United States pledge not to conduct destructive direct-ascent ASAT tests, and invited other states to join. Canada did so within weeks; by late 2023 the pledge had drawn roughly three dozen adherents, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and Australia, among others.

The United States then carried this initiative into the General Assembly, and on 7 December 2022 DISEC's parent body adopted Resolution 77/41, endorsing a moratorium on destructive directascent ASAT testing by a vote of 155 in favor, 9 against (including Russia and China), and 9 abstentions (including India). It remains, to date, the clearest normative outcome to emerge directly from a single ASAT test, and it is difficult to imagine the resolution being written, let alone passed by that margin, without the Cosmos 1408 incident to draw on.

It is worth noting what the resolution does not do, since delegates frequently overstate its scope in committee. It is non-binding. It addresses only destructive, debris-creating, direct-ascent tests, leaving co-orbital ASAT development, non-destructive counterspace weapons, and the possession or deployment of existing ASAT systems entirely untouched. Several states that voted against it, including Russia, argued explicitly that this made the resolution one-sided: the United States, having already demonstrated ASAT capability through Operation Burnt Frost in 2008, faced no comparable constraint under a moratorium it was proposing after the fact. That argument, whatever one makes of it, is a useful entry point into the stakeholder positions covered later in this guide.

LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK:

The Outer Space Treaty (1967). The foundational instrument of space law, ratified by more than 110 states including all major spacefaring powers, prohibits placing nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit around the Earth (Article IV) and reserves celestial bodies exclusively for peaceful purposes, banning military bases, weapons testing, and maneuvers there. It says nothing about conventional-warhead ASAT weapons launched from Earth against targets in orbit, which is the loophole every ASAT test to date has operated within. Article IX requires states to conduct their space activities with "due regard" to the corresponding interests of other states, a phrase invoked constantly in debates over debrisgenerating tests but never defined with enough precision to be enforceable.

The Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963). Predating the Outer Space Treaty by four years, this agreement banned nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, underwater, and in outer space. It remains relevant chiefly as the reason no state has tested a nuclear ASAT weapon since, though it does nothing to restrict conventional kinetic interceptors.

PAROS at the Conference on Disarmament. The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has been a standing agenda item at the CD since the early 1980s, and has produced essentially no binding outcome in that time. The obstacle is structural: the CD operates by consensus among 65 member states, and the core disagreement, over whether a ground-based ASAT weapon counts as "placing a weapon in space" at all, has never been resolved. Russia and China have consistently argued that a binding treaty is the only adequate response; the United States and its allies have argued that any such treaty is unverifiable without intrusive inspection regimes no major power will accept.

The Russia-China draft PPWT. Russia and China jointly introduced a draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) at the CD in 2008, revising it in 2014. It would ban placing any weapon in orbit and prohibit the threat or use of force against space objects. Critics, principally the United States, note two structural gaps: the draft does not restrict ground-based ASAT systems (the very category responsible for every major ASAT test to date, including Russia's own Nudol tests), and it includes no verification mechanism, which the treaty's own sponsors have acknowledged as a deliberate choice reflecting the difficulty of distinguishing weapons from legitimate satellites by inspection alone.

The Open-Ended Working Groups and Resolution 77/41. The General Assembly, unable to break the CD's deadlock, has increasingly turned to Open-Ended Working Groups (OEWGs) as a parallel track. A 2022-2023 OEWG on Reducing Space Threats, mandated under Resolution 76/231, held four sessions but failed even to agree on a procedural summary of its own work, let alone a substantive outcome; Russia in particular was cited by multiple observers as the primary obstacle.

Resolution 77/41 (December 2022), discussed in the case study above, was a separate and narrower initiative that succeeded where the OEWG did not, precisely because its scope was limited to one specific, recently demonstrated behavior rather than the full weaponization question. In 2024 the General Assembly merged the space-threats OEWG with a parallel Group of Governmental Experts on PAROS into a single new working group under Resolution 79/512, running 2025 through 2028 with two substantive sessions per year. Its early sessions in 2025 and 2026 have continued to split along the same fault line as their predecessors: Russia and China have resisted efforts, led by the United Kingdom, Austria, and the Netherlands among others, to treat interpretation of Article IX's due-regard clause as a legitimate part of the group's work, characterizing it instead as an unauthorized rewriting of existing law.

The cumulative picture is a normative structure built almost entirely out of gaps: a 1967 treaty that never anticipated conventional ASAT weapons, a stalled treaty proposal that does not cover the systems actually in use, and a single narrow, non-binding resolution addressing one behavior among many. Delegates drafting a resolution on this agenda should treat identifying which of these gaps is realistically closable in the current diplomatic environment, rather than which is most serious in the abstract, as the central strategic question.

TECHNICAL AND STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS:

The debris problem is not proportional to the act that causes it. A single ASAT test lasting seconds can generate debris that remains a collision hazard for years or decades, and that debris does not recognize the flag of the satellite it eventually strikes. More than 23,000 tracked objects larger than ten centimeters already occupy Earth orbit, alongside untracked debris numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and each additional destructive test compounds a density problem that, past a certain threshold, becomes self-sustaining under Kessler-syndrome dynamics. This is the argument for treating debris-generating ASAT tests as a distinct category deserving separate, faster-moving restriction, independent of the broader and much slowermoving weaponization debate.

Dependency without attribution. The infrastructure riding on satellites, GPS timing for financial networks, weather forecasting, agricultural monitoring, disaster response coordination, and military command and control, means that a debris-caused satellite failure can have consequences far beyond the two states directly involved in an ASAT incident, and the resulting damage is frequently difficult to attribute to any single actor's original test. This diffusion of consequence is part of why the sustainability argument has gained traction even among states that are otherwise reluctant to constrain their own military space programs.

Deterrence logic. States that have developed or are developing ASAT capability generally frame it in terms familiar from nuclear-era strategic thinking: possessing the ability to threaten an adversary's reconnaissance, communication, or missile-warning satellites is treated as a stabilizing check on that adversary's freedom of action, not an escalatory move in itself. The complication, one that has no clean analogue in nuclear deterrence, is that a kinetic ASAT strike's effects are indiscriminate and effectively permanent at orbital timescales, in a way a demonstrated nuclear capability's mere existence is not.

Why verification keeps failing. Every proposal on the table, from the PPWT to the various OEWG norms, runs into the same wall: dual-use ambiguity makes it extremely difficult to write a verifiable rule. A ground-based interceptor missile can be labeled missile defense; a maneuvering satellite can be labeled a servicing or debris-removal mission. Any treaty attempting to ban ASAT capability outright would need an inspection regime intrusive enough to distinguish intent from capability, and no major spacefaring state has so far accepted that degree of transparency into programs it considers central to its national security.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDER POSITIONS:

United States. Possesses demonstrated ASAT capability (the 1985 ASM-135 test and the 2008 Burnt Frost intercept, though Washington maintains the latter was a safety measure rather than a weapons test) and has, since 2022, positioned itself as the leading advocate of the destructivetesting moratorium, having authored both the unilateral pledge and Resolution 77/41.

Washington's stated preference is for incremental, norms-based progress through the OEWG process rather than a comprehensive binding treaty, which it regards as unverifiable given current technology. It has been consistently skeptical of the PPWT for its exclusion of groundbased systems and absence of verification.

Russia. Operates the Nudol direct-ascent system examined in this guide's case study, and has tested it multiple times, though only once against a live target. Moscow voted against Resolution 77/41 and has argued consistently that a moratorium targeting only destructive direct-ascent testing is asymmetric, since it does not restrict states, chiefly the United States, that have already demonstrated equivalent capability through other means. Russia's preferred instrument remains the binding PPWT it co-sponsors with China, and it has resisted efforts within the newer OEWG on PAROS to treat interpretation of Article IX as within that group's mandate.

China. Conducted the 2007 Fengyun-1C test and has since developed a broader suite of counterspace capabilities, including co-orbital and non-kinetic systems, according to opensource assessments by Western defense analysts. Beijing, like Moscow, co-sponsors the PPWT, voted against Resolution 77/41, and has taken the position within the OEWG process that discussion should focus strictly on legality under existing treaty text rather than broader "responsible behaviour" norms it regards as extralegal.

The United Kingdom, European Union member states, and other early adopters of the moratorium (Canada, Japan, Australia, Germany, and others). These states were the first to follow the American pledge in 2022 and voted uniformly in favor of Resolution 77/41. Several, particularly the United Kingdom, have also taken an active role in pushing the OEWG on PAROS to treat interpretation of Article IX's due-regard obligation as legitimate workinggroup business, over Russian and Chinese objections. Their general posture favors incremental norm-building over a comprehensive treaty, on the reasoning that a narrower, achievable step now is preferable to continued deadlock while waiting for a comprehensive instrument that may never materialize.

India. Conducted Mission Shakti in March 2019, deliberately choosing a lower intercept altitude to shorten the debris field's orbital lifetime, and has publicly framed the test as a demonstration of capability exercised responsibly rather than recklessly. India abstained on Resolution 77/41 rather than voting for or against it, a position consistent with a state that has recently demonstrated the very capability the resolution addresses and is reluctant to accept new constraints while that capability is still relatively new to its own arsenal.

Non-spacefaring and developing states. States without independent launch or satellite capability were nonetheless decisive in Resolution 77/41's wide margin of passage, and several, including a number of Non-Aligned Movement members, have used PAROS and OEWG discussions to press a distinct concern: that debris accumulation threatens their own future access to orbit before they have had the chance to use it, and that Article IX's due-regard obligation exists precisely to protect that interest. Sri Lanka, for instance, has on record proposed a moratorium on the testing and development of space weapons ahead of any binding treaty negotiation, framing the issue explicitly around equitable future access rather than current military balance. This bloc's positions are worth close attention in committee, since its numerical weight in a body where every vote counts equally is considerable, even though its individual members rarely hold ASAT capability themselves.

CURRENT STATUS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

As of mid-2026, the diplomatic picture on this agenda remains largely as the case study above left it, with one structural change. The 2022-2023 OEWG on Reducing Space Threats concluded in September 2023 without a consensus report of any kind, not even a procedural summary of its own proceedings, an outcome most external observers attributed chiefly to Russian objections. In 2024, the General Assembly folded that process together with a parallel Group of Governmental Experts on PAROS into a single new Open-Ended Working Group under Resolution 79/512, chaired by Argentina's Ambassador Carlos Foradori and running through 2028 with two substantive sessions per year.

The new working group's first sessions, held through 2025 and continuing into 2026, have reproduced much of the earlier group's dynamic. Russia and China have resisted treating interpretation of the Outer Space Treaty's Article IX due-regard clause as legitimate workinggroup business, arguing this amounts to an unauthorized revision of existing law; the United Kingdom, Austria, and the Netherlands, among others, have pushed back, arguing that shared interpretation of key terms is a necessary and ordinary part of legal practice, not a rewriting of it. Civil society and NGO access to sessions has also narrowed compared to the earlier OEWG, a point several smaller delegations, including Ireland, South Africa, and Switzerland, have raised as a concern given their own limited capacity to bring independent technical expertise to the table.

The moratorium pledge initiated in 2022 has plateaued at roughly three dozen adherent states, and notably still excludes Russia, China, and India, the three states besides the United States with demonstrated destructive ASAT capability. PAROS itself remains formally stalled at the Conference on Disarmament, unchanged since the 1980s, with the OEWG on PAROS functioning as the only forum where the underlying substantive questions, rather than procedural ones, are actually being discussed. Whether that discussion converges on anything by the time this committee reconvenes for its next session is, at the time of writing, genuinely open.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ADDRESS (QARMA):

1. Should DISEC pursue a further extension or expansion of the 2022 destructive-testing moratorium, and if so, should it attempt to close the gap Russia and other critics have identified, namely that the moratorium does not restrict states that already possess demonstrated ASAT capability through other means?

2. Is a norms-based, incremental approach (in the tradition of the OEWG process) more realistically achievable than pursuing a comprehensive binding treaty at this stage, or does the repeated failure of the OEWG to reach consensus suggest the opposite?

3. How should a resolution treat the distinction between destructive kinetic ASAT tests and the broader category of counterspace capability, including co-orbital, non-kinetic, and dual-use systems, that current instruments leave almost entirely unaddressed?

4. What role, if any, should verification play in a resolution from this committee, given that DISEC itself cannot mandate an inspection regime, and how might a resolution instead task the CD or the OEWG on PAROS with pursuing one?

5. How should the interests of non-spacefaring and developing states, whose future access to orbit is affected by debris regardless of their current capability, be reflected in operative clauses, beyond the general invocation of Article IX's due-regard principle?

6. Should a resolution take a position on the Russia-China PPWT draft, either endorsing it as a starting point, rejecting it on the grounds its critics have raised, or proposing amendments that might make it more broadly acceptable?

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH:

Delegates should ground their speeches and negotiating positions in their country's actual voting record and public statements on this agenda where these exist, particularly on Resolution 77/41 and, if their country has participated, in the sessions of the OEWG on PAROS. Failing to account for how a delegation's own country voted on the one resolution directly on point will read as under-researched regardless of what else is said in committee.

Do not treat the Outer Space Treaty as though it settles this agenda; as this guide has tried to make clear, its silence on conventional ASAT weapons is precisely the problem. Citing Article IV as though it bans ASAT testing outright is factually incorrect and will be treated as such in committee.

Delegates should research their country's stance specifically on the moratorium (whether it has pledged, and if not, what its public statements suggest about why) and on the PPWT (whether it has endorsed, criticized, or stayed silent on the draft, and what that silence itself might indicate). These two positions, more than any general statement about peaceful uses of space, are where bloc alignments should actually be built.

Suggested starting points for further research: the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) documents library, the Secure World Foundation's published reports and its global ASAT test tracker, the Arms Control Association's contemporaneous reporting on Resolution 77/41 and the OEWG sessions, and a country's own Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Defence statements to the First Committee, which are generally published in full and are the single best source for an accurate national position.

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