

Beginner Committee SPECPOL

SJMUNC XXXVIII

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Letters from the Chairs:

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Aarav Jain, I am a junior at St. John's High School, and alongside co-chair Owen Meager, I will be chairing the SPECPOL committee. My interests beyond Model UN range between playing sports (I play tennis and golf for St. John's), painting, and learning about philosophy. I have been doing Model UN for three years now, largely because I personally hope to build skills like collaboration and public speaking. But through my experiences, I've learned that the value of Model UN runs far deeper than the resolutions or learned skills. It's about interacting with informed, interesting people that you never would have met otherwise. Meeting one sincere friend more than justifies four years of Model UN.

In every committee, I notice two types of delegates: those who gain confidence and energy while speaking, and those whose certainty falters when they're called to speak. I would consider myself in the second category, especially when I started. In my first SJMUNC two years ago, I couldn't find the confidence to raise my placard for the first hour or so. And then, after I spoke for the first time, I raised my placard at each opportunity for the duration of the conference. I anticipate there will be a similar mix of personalities in our committee as well. To the people who have the confidence to speak extemporaneously, I admire your ability. And to those who push themselves to do what you find difficult, I admire your courage just as much.

I hope you are given the chance in this committee, not only to build new skills, but to meet people who challenge and inspire you. Feel free to contact me at jaina27@stjohnshigh.org.

Sincerely,

Aarav Jain '27

History of the Problem:

Before tackling the modern variant of space conflict, the most logical point in history to reflect on is the Cold War. As the devastating aftermath of World War II left European nations struggling to recover, two non-European powers were quick to seize positions of global supremacy. These two countries, the USA and USSR, became engaged in a struggle mainly driven by their differences in ideology. The United States and its supporters demonstrated the progressive efficiency of capitalism and democracy while the USSR, built on the foundations of Marxist theory and Vladimir Lenin's vision, sought to progress toward a global, classless system of governance.

Hundreds of conflicts similar to this one have festered throughout human history, and yet none of them ever managed to bleed into the realm of space. What made the Cold War unique? In August 1945, after the European theater of World War II had effectively ceased, two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan which, in time, came to represent far more than their catastrophic number of casualties. The glimpse of nuclear warfare as the pinnacle of human destruction became enough to terrify the entire world. From that moment on, the resolution of any major conflict had to be reached by different means: alternative means that, without triggering the detonation of nuclear weapons, could adequately distinguish one nation as superior to the rest. And while this manifested in myriad ways like espionage, proxy wars, and even contests toward economic success, a far more revolutionary metric of victory emerged—the space race.

The space race officially began in 1957 when Sputnik I was launched by the USSR as the first satellite in human history. And by the time this first domino fell, the ensuing achievements became only inevitable. Just a year later, NASA was officially formed by the US as the space administration in charge of reaching and countering the capabilities of the USSR. Yuri Gagarin

became the first person to travel to space in 1961, symbolizing the early promise of the USSR's space campaign. But in the end, the US tasted the sweetest victory when, in 1969, NASA's Apollo 11 mission successfully landed humans on the moon. Although there were a multitude of other factors that caused the decline and ultimate dissolution of the USSR, losing the space race dealt a severe (and possibly fatal) blow to their morale.

In the midst of all this, diplomatic forces acknowledged the need for legislation and cooperation through such competitive pursuits. The Outer Space Treaty in 1967 was the first step towards a peaceful future in space and was signed by all the major players in ongoing space travel attempts. As part of the treaty's provisions, no nation could lay territorial claims to space, weapons of mass destruction were banned from entering space, and nations were held accountable for any misconduct or damage caused in space. Similar efforts were made in the 1979 Moon Agreement, though many particularly powerful nations neglected to sign it. Still, these historical efforts represent the base of this committee's efforts and should be consulted.

Evidently, space competition between powerful nations is not just a pragmatic method of transportation or exploration into sustaining human life beyond Earth. There seems to be a more childish, innate stubbornness and desire for pure glory that drives these countries into space. If not to learn about the universe or commercialize space travel, but to succeed in the most extreme and daring enterprises. Sure, the landscape of space has changed drastically, with newer, bolder, and bigger opportunities becoming commonplace in the world today. But the same instinctual drive to showcase human brilliance on the world stage will continue to be a factor for as long as the space race continues, regardless of the particular circumstances.

Statement of the Problem:

In an evolving context, the absence of robust, universally agreed-upon regulations leaves outer space vulnerable to exploitation, conflict, and irreparable environmental damage. Questions of territorial claims, the weaponization of space, satellite interference, and the management of space debris highlight the urgent need for a multilateral framework. While treaties like the 1967 Outer Space Treaty laid the groundwork for peaceful use, it is outdated and lacks modern interpretation. As space becomes more frequently accessed, the risk of its militarization grows exponentially. The deployment of satellite defense systems, anti-satellite weapons, and surveillance technologies has already sparked concern among international bodies. Without official, universal legal frameworks and mutual agreements, the vacuum of space law could quickly be filled with conflict and competition, rather than cooperation. There are three major parts of the problem that are especially important to address.:

1. *Legal Ambiguity*: The existing Outer Space Treaty provides a foundational guideline for the regulation of space traffic, yet it lacks enforcement mechanisms and does not fully address modern challenges posed by advanced technologies and private actors. If even a small percentage of the attention given to civil, earthly matters was extended to outer space, a peaceful future may become much more possible. But at the same time, such high regulation may deter the authentically curious nature of space exploration.

Ultimately, the committee must decide to what extent the modern space age will be subject to legal precedent, and to what extent that legal precedent must be redefined.

2. *Privatization of Space Efforts*: Instead of the purely national space efforts of the past, current visionaries are seeking business and monetary gain in the exploration of space,

often through privately funded efforts. Companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin are able to operate under the radar and away from the international spotlight, allowing them to run space operations in an unregulated manner. For example, the current ruling is that a private space entity must follow the regulations established by its country. Unfortunately, national regulations are inconsistent throughout the world, allowing certain private organizations to take advantage of less stringent rules. Additionally, as space efforts become more commercialized, it becomes disadvantageous for a nation to call out its own private company for malpractice if the company is contributing to its economy, reputation, and strategic holdings.

3. *International Competition/Rivalry*: As always, countries are looking to outdo one another on the global stage to improve their geopolitical positioning. Competition is human nature, after all. Successful space exploration is one of the most effective ways to showcase a country's sophistication and given the universal accessibility of technology, the modern space age will only unfold on a larger scale than previous encounters. Developing the means to ensure that each nation stays in its own lane without being deprived of due opportunity is crucial to maintaining world peace. And if even one international conflict over the use of space breaks out, there's no telling what types of weaponry may be unleashed.

SPECPOL must now deal with how to establish verifiable measures of transparency, diffuse weaponization, and promote peaceful scientific collaboration. Delegates will be tasked with navigating the complex issues of sovereignty, sophisticated technology, and legal gray areas to ensure that outer space remains a shared, secure domain for all humankind.

Possible Solutions:

As the conflict escalates, diplomacy becomes the most vital tool for slowing down the militarization of space. Generally speaking, this committee will strive to provide each international power with enough incentive to join international treaties without enabling them to dominate the sector. Furthermore, the presence of independent, private entities will require more than just addressing government-backed space efforts. The main goals of any proposed solution will be to balance the need for peace (both in orbit and on Earth) while preserving the space exploration industry, which may lead to the greatest discoveries in human history. A few areas of focus are:

1. *Unchecked Space Weaponry:*

- a. Problem: Given that the current “constitution” of space usage—the Outer Space Treaty—was developed many decades ago, making it clearly outdated. For instance, while weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) are banned from orbit, the Outer Space Treaty fails to account for modern weapons like satellite jamming technology or anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. Several nations have clearly displayed an ability to launch ASAT weapons, although the extent of their presence remains ominously unknown.
- b. Proposed Solution: If these nations were held to a higher standard of legal accountability, the threat of such weaponry would be more clearly understood and safeguarded against. Updating the PAROS (Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space) initiative to specifically regulate ASATs and newer technology could be

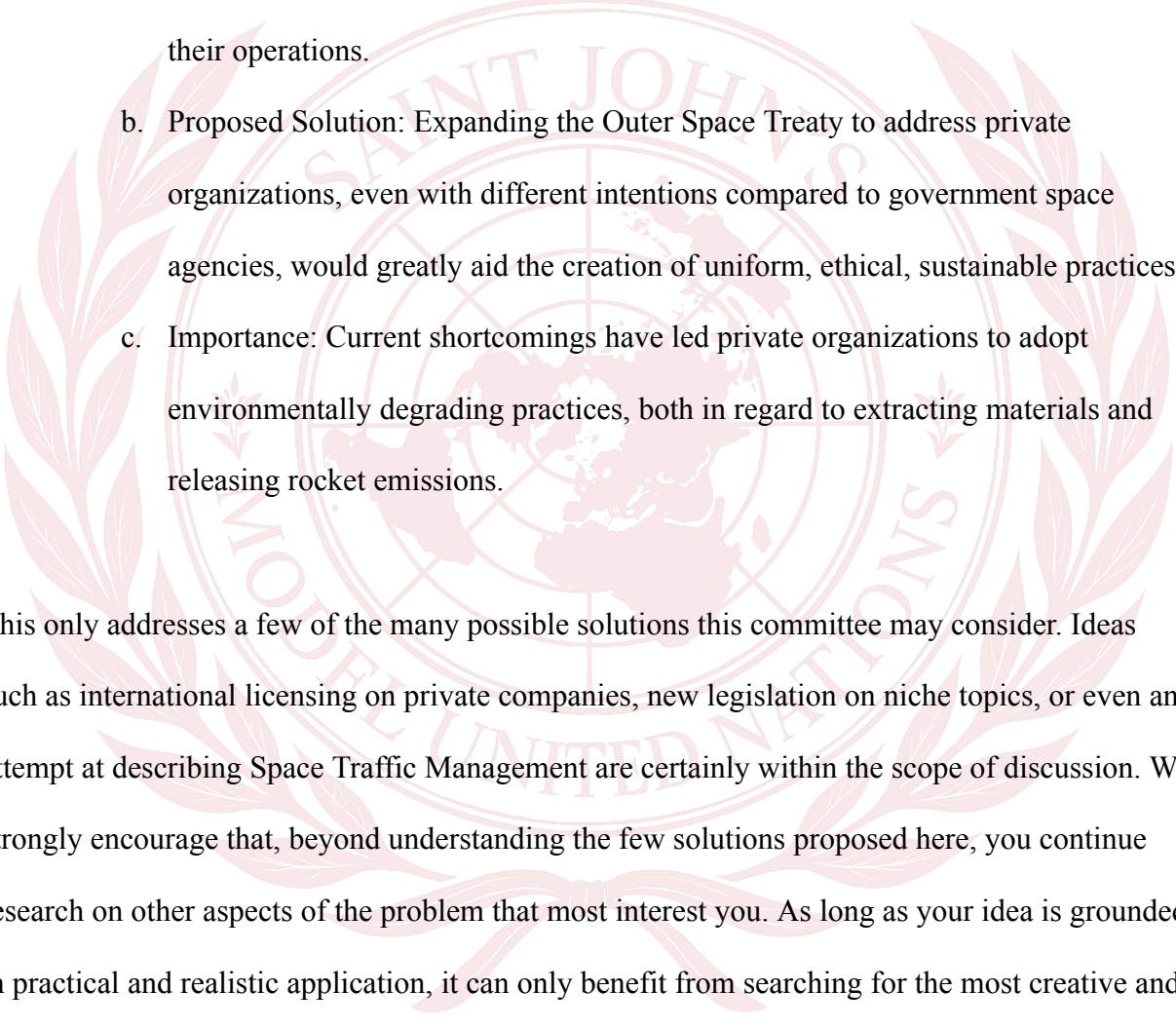
the key to preventing the outbreak of a global conflict. Simply encouraging transparency through inspection could be enough to maintain peace.

- c. Importance: Until such regulations are included, all the benefits and necessities that satellites provide for a nation, such as GPS systems, communication, surveillance, military positioning, etc., could be taken away in seconds.

2. *Space Debris:*

- a. Problem: In 2007, a Chinese ASAT test intentionally destroyed a satellite. In addition to displaying the fear-inducing and destructive capabilities of humanity again, this test had further implications for space. It is estimated that this event sent 2,700 pieces of minuscule debris hurtling across space at speeds about ten times faster than a bullet. Any abandoned satellites and discarded rocket parts contribute to the growing amounts of debris, also referred to as space junk.
- b. Proposed Solution: By introducing severe, binding penalties for expelling space junk, nations will be forced to abandon destructive testing and operate more responsibly. Funding can be directed towards innovative campaigns such as cleaning or tracking pieces of debris.
- c. Importance: If these measures aren't taken, future space-related missions or existing satellites must assume the danger of being eliminated by pieces of junk. Collisions involving pieces of debris naturally create more debris, a problem that could quickly spiral out of control, as theorized by the Kessler syndrome. Not to mention that in a symbolic sense, leaving human junk beyond our planet can only be deemed a form of pollution.

3. *Addressing Private Entities:*

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- a. Problem: The rise of private entities involved in space exploration is a double-edged sword. On one hand, they contribute many resources and services to government space agencies (ex., NASA's collaboration with SpaceX), spread public awareness to space exploration, and improve technological ability overall. However, the problem is that there aren't legal regulations to govern the nature of their operations.
 - b. Proposed Solution: Expanding the Outer Space Treaty to address private organizations, even with different intentions compared to government space agencies, would greatly aid the creation of uniform, ethical, sustainable practices.
 - c. Importance: Current shortcomings have led private organizations to adopt environmentally degrading practices, both in regard to extracting materials and releasing rocket emissions.

This only addresses a few of the many possible solutions this committee may consider. Ideas such as international licensing on private companies, new legislation on niche topics, or even an attempt at describing Space Traffic Management are certainly within the scope of discussion. We strongly encourage that, beyond understanding the few solutions proposed here, you continue research on other aspects of the problem that most interest you. As long as your idea is grounded in practical and realistic application, it can only benefit from searching for the most creative and specific solutions possible.

Bloc Positions:

As nations negotiate the peacekeeping of the modern space age, divisions have emerged and will continue to divide or merge along the edges of regions and ideological blocs. These blocs and their positions reflect differing priorities regarding security, commercial interests, environmental interests, environmental sustainability, and equitable access to space. While generally, Western powers advocate for upheld or updated standing space regulations, along with the regulation of private entities. Other global powers emphasize strategic autonomy, economic development, or equitable access to space resources. Developing nations stress the need for a more inclusive policy; hence, most nations don't have the resources to have space programs. Along with pushing for a space-age colonialism that isn't controlled by select entities that dominate over others. Understanding these diverse perspectives is essential for crafting viable, multilateral solutions that uphold the peaceful use of outer space while balancing the ambitions of different state and non-state entities.

Western Nations:

1. United States of America,

As the leading player in the modern space age, the United States holds the most advanced and well-funded space program globally. U.S. policy is focused on regulating private space firms, updating and upholding space treaties, and promoting commercial innovation through partnerships with companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin. The U.S. supports transparency and responsible use of space but often resists excessive regulation that could hinder private sector growth.

2. France,

While not the dominant space actor, France remains a key contributor to European space policy. It advocates for EU-wide regulations, non-militarization of space, and multilateral cooperation under international frameworks. France supports stricter environmental protections and is active in joint projects through the European Space Agency (ESA).

3. United Kingdom,

The UK has ramped up its independent space initiatives post-Brexit. Its focus includes space tourism (Virgin Galactic), satellite internet (OneWeb), and developing small satellite launch capabilities. The UK supports regulated privatization, safe space traffic management, and increased cooperation through the UN and ESA. It tends to align with the U.S. on balancing innovation with international oversight.

Japan,

Japan is a technologically advanced space power known for its innovation in satellite systems, asteroid missions, and space robotics. It supports non-militarization, international cooperation, and debris mitigation, while partnering with both Western and regional powers. Japan also supports private ventures like Astroscale, emphasizing sustainable space practices.

Strategic Autonomy Nations:

4. Russia,

Russia maintains one of the oldest and most experienced space programs but prioritizes sovereignty over global regulations. Russia has a disinterest in Western-led initiatives and seeks to retain military capabilities in orbit, including anti-satellite (ASAT) systems. Russia is a strong critic of what it sees as U.S.-led dominance in outer space governance.

5. China,

China has rapidly developed into a top-tier space power with state-driven expansion, including lunar bases, Mars missions, and satellite constellations. Through CASIC/CNSA, China is pursuing space exploration with strategic independence, and China resists Western transparency norms. China promotes bilateral agreements and its own space station while investing in the militarization of space infrastructure.

Emerging Space Powers/Neutral Stances:

6. India,

India is a respected space actor through ISRO, known for cost-effective missions and successful lunar/planetary programs. India advocates for equitable access to space, technology sharing, and regulating private-public partnerships. India balances collaboration with global powers while positioning itself as a leader among developing nations.

7. Pakistan,

A regional actor with modest space capabilities. Pakistan is interested in strategic balance with India, access to satellite tech for development and defense, and maintaining regional security in space. It often aligns with China in opposing Western regulatory dominance.

8. Brazil,

Brazil promotes peaceful space cooperation and is vocal about anti-militarization and environmental sustainability. As a founding member of COPUOS, Brazil supports inclusive global governance of space and capacity-building for Latin America.

9. United Arab Emirates,

UAE has emerged as a space player with missions to Mars and active satellite launches. UAE supports international collaboration, commercial space growth, and innovation-led space diplomacy, while positioning itself as a neutral actor that bridges East and West.

Corporations and Private Entities:

10. SpaceX

SpaceX is a dominant private actor advocating for reduced governmental interference, commercial freedom, and sustainable expansive space activity. SpaceX pushes for Mars colonization, mega-constellation deployment (Starlink), and rapid technological advancement.

11. Airbus Defense & Space

A major European aerospace contractor focused on satellite infrastructure, space defense systems, and ESA collaboration. Airbus supports EU-driven regulations, corporate responsibility, and debris management protocols.

12. Virgin Galactic,

Virgin Galactic supports open commercial access, low regulation, and safe innovation. Virgin Galactic advocates for international standards to ensure sustainable and profitable space travel.

13. Casic/Cnsa Partnerships,

As the state-commercial hybrid of China's space strategy, these partnerships blend commercial services with national security interests. They aim to circumvent Western dependence, expand China's Belt and Road Space Initiative, and oppose international regimes that limit state control of space assets.

14. Blue Origin,

Founded by Jeff Bezos in 2000, this private corporation, like the others, seeks to commercialize space travel. Recently, it has grown in ambition, moving beyond suborbital missions to more sophisticated lunar landings. Its presence only heightens the levels of space competition in America, acting as a competitor to SpaceX. Blue Origin will likely oppose any strict regulation in the hopes of continuing to grow under the radar.

15. Roscosmos,

Taking the place of the historic Soviet space program, Roscosmos isn't afraid to leave its own mark on the world. Since being part of many milestones in space on an international level, Roscosmos has shifted its focus unto the Russia-China collaboration. Looking to bolster its own efforts with another major world power, Roscosmos is more likely to act under the sovereignty of Russia than meet demands from the rest of the world, making it a feared entity in space talk.

16. Axiom Space,

Working off contracts from NASA initially, Axiom Space has made considerable progress on constructing space stations. In the past, it expanded the ISS in addition to building the first commercial space station. Another party vying to commercialize space travel, Axiom Space will find its goals quite similar to other private entities and fear the possibility of heavier regulation.

17. Rocket Lab,

Founded in New Zealand, Rocket Lab enters this discussion from a slightly different vantage point. Since New Zealand has no historical ties to the space race, they will tend to advocate for such travel to become more accessible to smaller countries. In terms of innovation, their developments of small satellites as well as unique Electron and Neutron rockets places them into a more visionary category. Generally speaking, they will push for lighter international regulation (at least for smaller nations) but greater traffic control on what travels in and out of orbit.

18. Boeing,

One of the most influential names in the aerospace industry, Boeing's contributions go beyond manufacturing airplanes, as they have been contracting for space missions and military satellites. Boeing would like to advance the USA's leadership of space travel, acting as a defending power of its nation.

19. Planet Labs,

Founded by three former NASA scientists, Planet Labs has invested its space capabilities into an observation of Earth. Recently, it used its satellites to monitor the Russia-Ukraine war through overhead imagery. Clearly interested in civilian well-being, Planet Labs will likely prioritize the agenda centered around scientific progress and international peace.

20. Astroscale,

A private Japanese company, Astroscale is the first private company exclusively working towards debris removal. Evidently, it respects the possibility of space junk causing collateral damage, and is looking to avoid this for the betterment of humanity. If Astroscale has any say, debris removal will become a prerogative of any of its signed solutions.

Western Allies:

21. Italy,

An important member of the ESA (European Space Agency). Around the year 1960, it became the first European nation to independently launch its own satellite, illustrating its

interest in space exploration. Italy will likely use its already strong ties within the EU to build a stronger voice for its goals.

22. Germany,

One of the biggest funders for the ESA (European Space Agency), Germany hopes to establish a framework conducive to peace. In its efforts, it will likely build upon strong relationships with other European nations.

23. Canada,

Canada, on the whole, has been displaying curiosity in the engineering sector over the past few decades. Not only has it given rise to successful astronauts like Chris Hadfield who led the ISS, but its robotic systems are now widely used in all major space agencies. Canada will look to continue spreading their revolutionary technology, while ensuring it doesn't end up in the wrong hands.

24. Luxembourg,

Although a small and easily dismissable nation on the global stage, Luxembourg has demonstrated an unusual interest in space advancement. Seeking to harvest space resources through mining, Luxembourg ratified national laws that granted property rights to space material. Its stance, specifically regarding parts of the Outer Space Treaty, may come to clash.

25. Australia,

Reinforcing its role as a Western stronghold in the Pacific. Through AUKUS and its membership in Five Eyes, it has doubled down on U.S. and U.K. partnerships, even

while keeping major trade links with China. Its future will be defined by how it manages security commitments without jeopardizing economic interests.

26. Norway,

Norway contributes to multiple international space initiatives with special emphasis on Arctic satellite coverage and environmental monitoring. It supports transparency, scientific collaboration, and sustainable space use, and will be a strong advocate against the domination of space that may border on violence.

Rising Powers:

27. South Korea,

Firmly established itself as a modern economic and technological powerhouse, anchored by its alliance with the United States. Known for global giants like Samsung and Hyundai, as well as cultural influence through K-pop and film, the country balances its rapid innovation with security concerns over its northern neighbor. Going forward, Seoul will continue relying on Western partnerships while pushing its own soft power worldwide.

28. North Korea,

Isolation and military strength is the foundation of North Korea's global identity. Its nuclear program has brought both fear and sanctions, forcing reliance on limited allies such as China and Russia. Looking ahead, Pyongyang will continue pursuing survival through deterrence, even as its people face the burden of international isolation.

29. Iran,

Seeking influence in the Middle East by projecting both military and cultural

power. Iran, despite heavy sanctions and clashes with the West, has maintained resilience through energy exports and new alliances with Russia and China. Iran will likely continue shaping regional politics while resisting U.S. influence, all while balancing pressure at home and abroad.

30. Turkey,

Pursuing a balanced act between East and West. As a NATO member with deep ties to Europe, yet also a nation open to cooperation with Russia and the Middle East, it positions itself as a regional broker. In the future, Ankara will look to expand its strategic autonomy while keeping a foot in both camps.

31. South Africa,

Emerging as Africa's gateway to the global stage. As a founding member of BRICS, it champions Global South voices while maintaining ties with Western trade partners. Its challenge will be to lead in regional development while navigating global competition between East and West.

32. Nigeria,

Using its vast population and oil wealth to position itself as Africa's largest economy. Nigeria works with Western institutions, it also embraces Chinese investment to drive infrastructure growth. Going forward, Nigeria will seek to balance foreign partnerships with the need to strengthen domestic stability.

33. Argentina,

leaning into Global South solidarity through its entry into BRICS+. Known for its agricultural exports and cultural influence, it has struggled with cycles of economic

instability and debt. Its future lies in balancing cooperation with China and Brazil while managing sensitive ties to Western lenders.

34. Mexico,

Deeply integrated into North America's economic system. Through NAFTA (now USMCA), it became a major manufacturing hub tied closely to the United States. Moving ahead, Mexico will continue leveraging its geographic position to fuel growth, even while exploring independent policies abroad.

35. Indonesia,

Embracing its role as a non-aligned giant in Southeast Asia. Indonesia, as the world's fourth most populous country, has balanced ties with both Washington and Beijing while leading ASEAN initiatives. In the coming years, Jakarta will likely strengthen its regional leadership without choosing sides in global rivalries.

36. Egypt,

A cornerstone of Middle Eastern politics, balancing U.S. military aid with growing cooperation with Russia and China. Home to the Suez Canal, a vital global trade artery, it wields influence beyond its borders. Looking forward, Cairo will continue playing all sides to secure both stability and relevance.

37. Israel,

Israel has advanced satellite and missile technology, including surveillance and defense applications. It balances cooperation with the U.S. and its own strategic independence, often emphasizing national security and space innovation.

38. Saudi Arabia,

Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in space through its Saudi Space Commission, focusing on diversification beyond oil and partnerships with the U.S. and China. It supports peaceful exploration but prioritizes national prestige and economic development.

39. Singapore,

Singapore is a growing technological hub for small satellite and launch startups. It emphasizes the economic potential of space, advocating light regulation, public-private partnerships, and multilateral cooperation. But if violence is introduced, Singapore will be quick to dismiss the goodness of space exploration.

40. Chile,

Chile is developing Earth observation and astronomy infrastructure, hosting major observatories in the Atacama Desert. It supports scientific collaboration and environmental protection, aligning with sustainable and non-militarized space use.

41. Iran,

Iran maintains an independent space program with both civilian and military components. It promotes technological sovereignty and often resists Western-led regulatory regimes. Iran plans on pursuing success in space as a way to gain national prestige on the global stage.

Questions to Consider:

1. When does the pursuit of scientific discovery come to the detriment of earthly peace?
2. Should private space entities be allowed to continue their mission without the same legal restrictions as governmentally backed space programs?
3. Can space property be claimed like Earth's property? Does all property have a price?

4. Is the commercialization of space a reality or fantasy?
5. What diplomatic measures can be taken to prevent the volatile competition for space glory as seen previously in the Cold War?

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