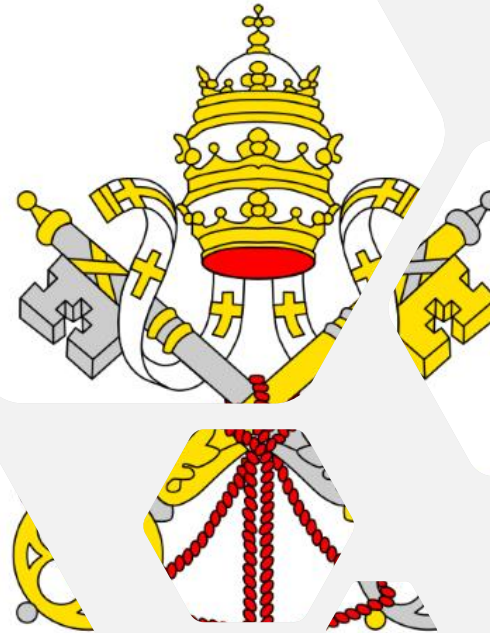


The Holy See at the UN: Disarmament & International Security

Aaron Humphriss

Intern - Holy See (DISEC)

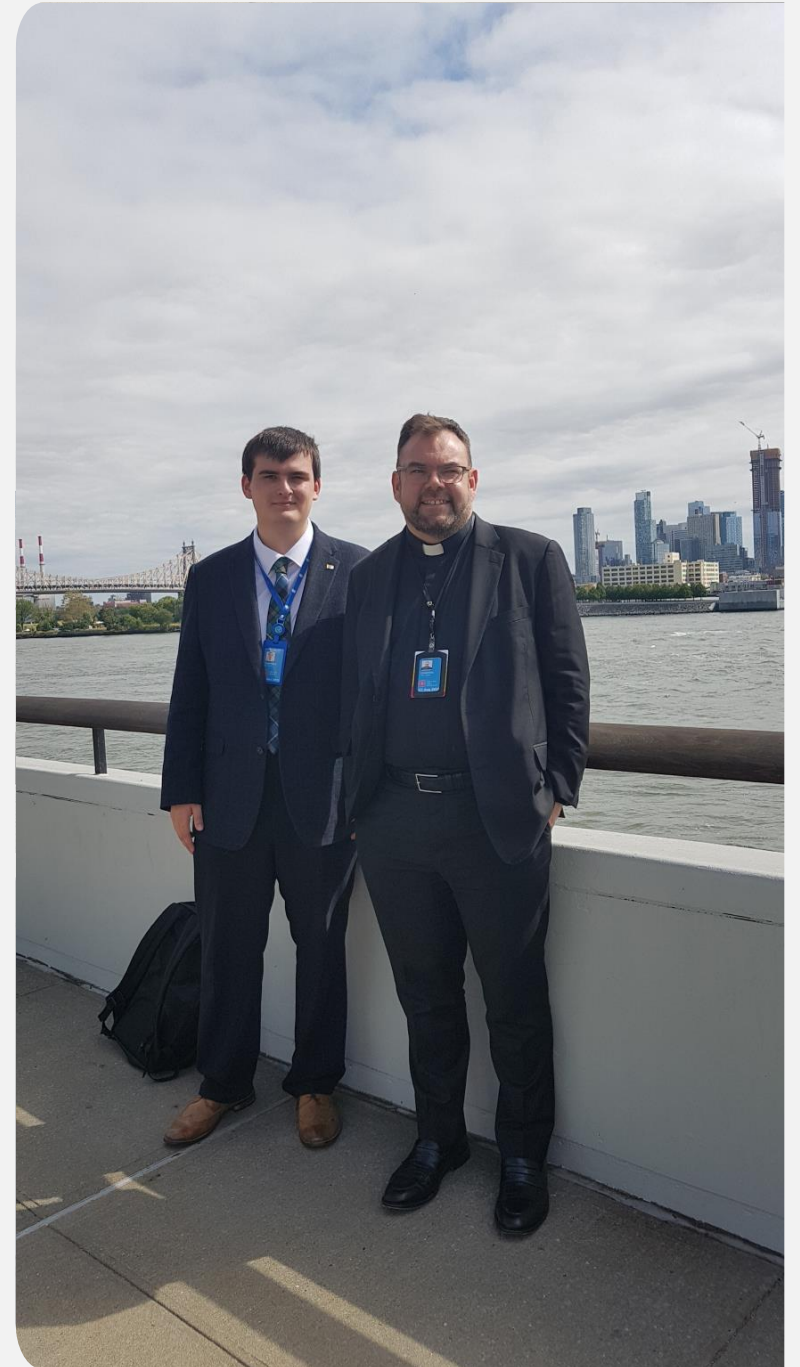
74th Session of the UN General Assembly (2019)



**This is an edited version for uploading to the Pax Christi Website. Some slides and images have been removed for privacy reasons.*

The Holy See Mission at the UN

- The Holy See became a Permanent Observer State of the United Nations on April 6th 1964, nineteen years after its formation.
- At the beginning of the UN, many States couldn't meet the requirements of membership, such as payments, the supply of peacekeepers, or could not gain the approval of the Security Council to join, so they became Observers. Others desired it for neutrality purposes.
- Currently, the only explicit limitations to the role of the Permanent Observer States, compared to Member States, concern the right to vote, the right to submit resolutions without co-sponsoring, and the right to put forward candidates for the various UN and UN-related offices.



The Holy See Mission at the UN

- The primary mission of the UN, that is peace, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, fundamental human rights, the care of the environment and development and respect for international law and treaties — are all at the core of the Social Doctrine of the Church.
- The Holy See seeks to bring a perspective influenced by the light of the Gospel and the Church's 2000 year experience of humanity to the complex realities of international relations and to international debates about the various human, social and ethical problems facing the world.



Key Dates of the Internship

- **1st September** – Arrive in Newark, NJ
- **3rd – 6th September** – Intensive Training
- **18th September** – 74th UNGA begins
- **24th – 30th September** – General Debate
- **3rd October – 8th November** – Coverage of the First Committee (DISEC)
- **12th December** – Deadline for the Draft Final Report of the First Committee
- **20th December** – Final Day
- **23rd December** – Flight Home



A Day in the Life of an Intern

- 8.30 AM – Arrive at Mission
- 9.00 AM – Morning Prayer in the Chapel
- 9.20 AM – Briefing in Meeting Room
- 10.00 AM – 1.00 PM – Morning Meeting at the UN
- 1.15 PM – 2.30 PM – Lunch at the Mission or Side Event
- 3.00 PM – 6.00 PM – Afternoon Meeting at the UN
- **Evenings and Weekends**
 - Report writing
 - Exploring New York
 - Attending receptions and events (such as this one on the right!)



Structure of the United Nations

- The UN is an intergovernmental organisation consisting of 193 Member States and 2 Observers.
 - State of Palestine and the Holy See.
 - Last country to transition was Switzerland in 2002.
 - Holy See decided to remain an Observer State for neutrality purposes.
- Made up of 6 principle organs...

General
Assembly

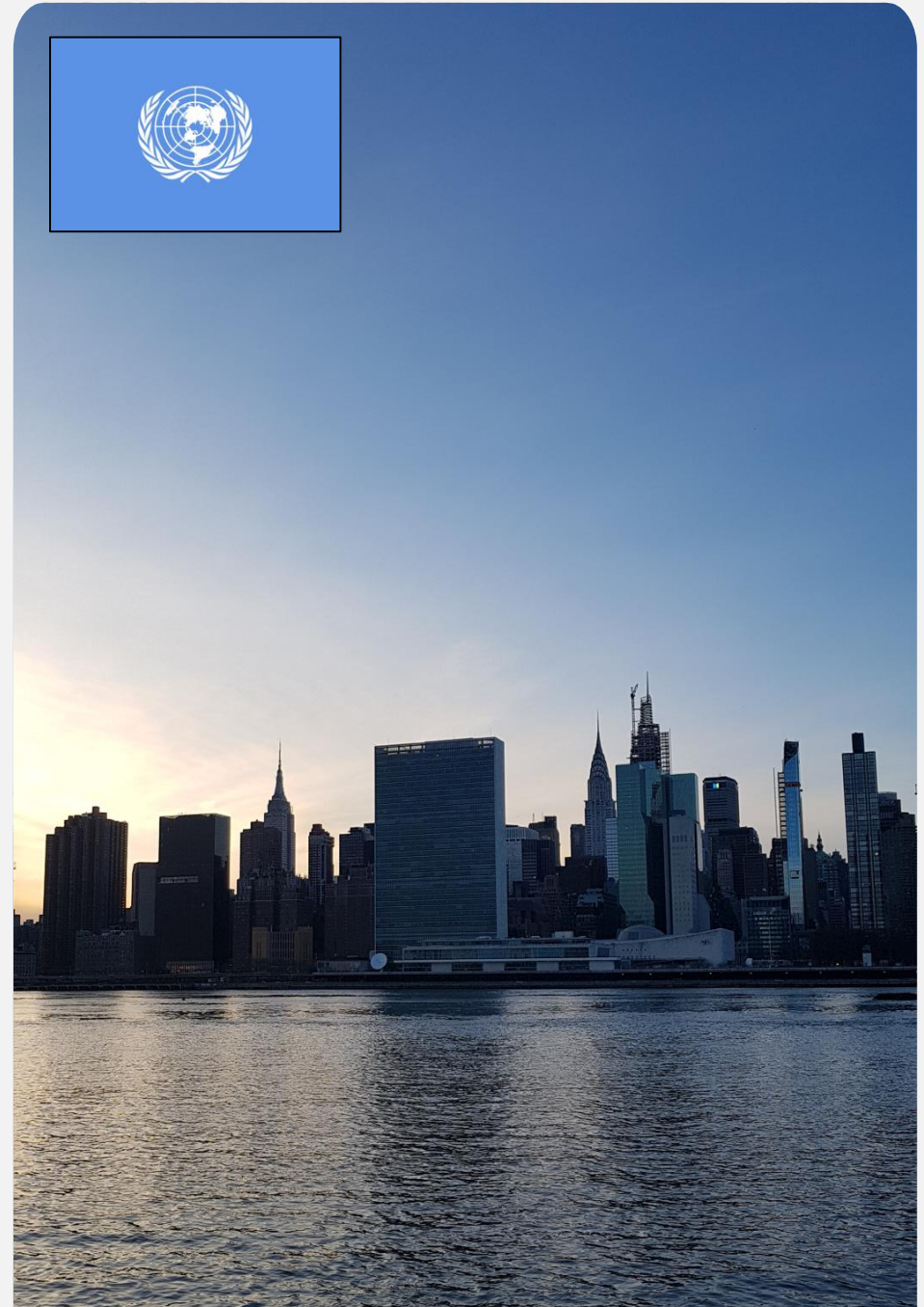
Security
Council

Economic &
Social Council

Trusteeship
Council

Int. Court of
Justice

Secretariat



Security Council (UNSC)

- Membership of the UNSC – “P5” & “E10”
 - 
- The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement.
- In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. All Member States are obliged to follow resolutions of the UNSC.
- As the Holy See is an Observer State of the UN, it is not eligible to become an elected Member of the UNSC.
 - The Holy See observes all meetings and occasionally gives speeches on the topics being discussed when invited by the UNSC to do so.

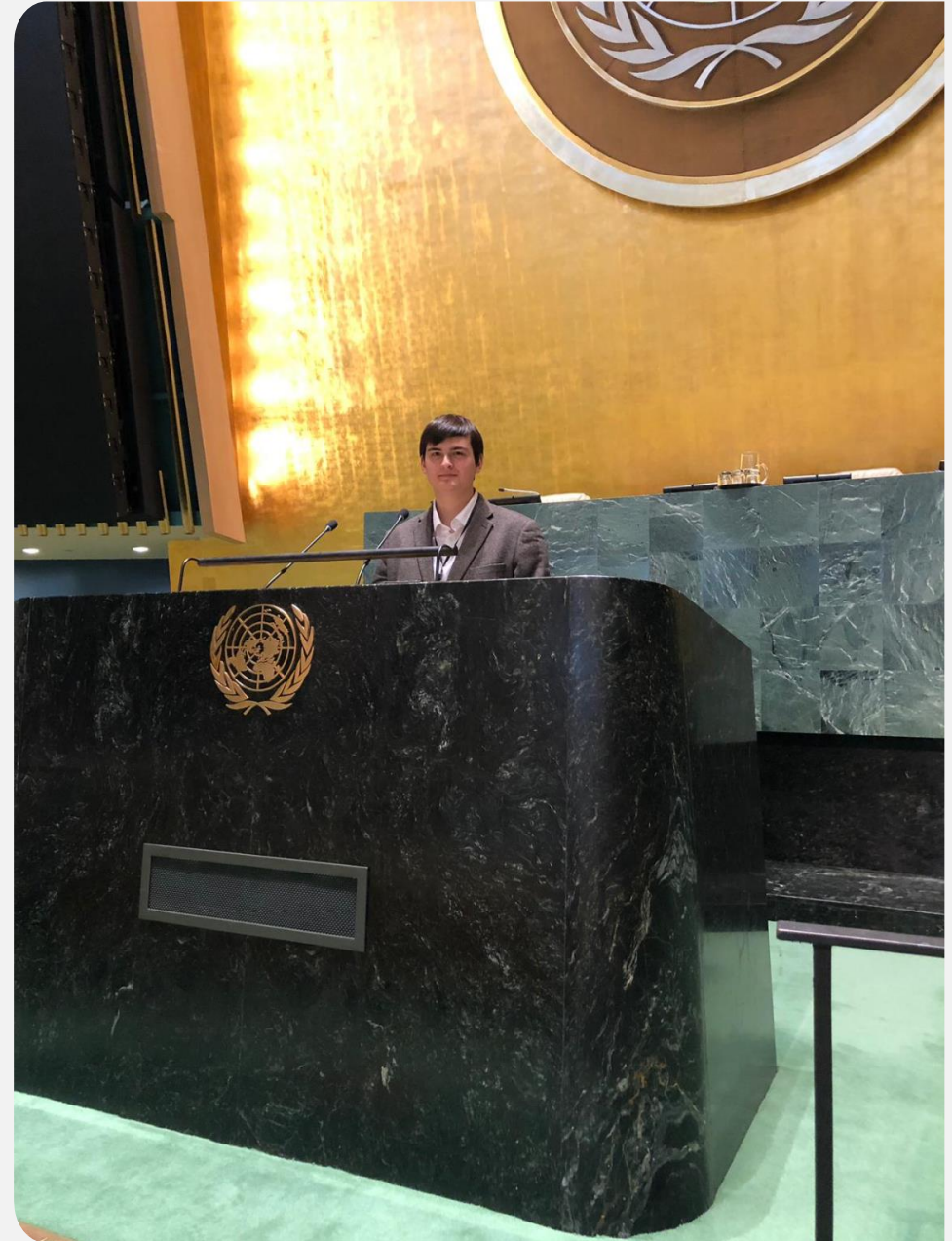




UN Security Council (September 2019)

General Assembly (UNGA)

- Membership of the UNGA - 193 Members.
- UNGA holds its regular session from September to December of each year.
- During the session, the UNGA considers current issues of critical importance to the international community in the form of high-level thematic debates, organized by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with the membership.
- Often described as the “World’s Parliament”.



General Debate of the UNGA

- The General Debate occurs at the start of each session in September. It is an opportunity for world leaders to gather at UN Headquarters, in New York, to discuss global issues.
- World leaders set out their respective national agendas in front of the Assembly during their address. To cover all of these speeches, the interns were assigned shifts to record the important points of each speech. A final report of the key points was then drafted collaboratively and sent to Rome.
- Meetings between world leaders occur on the sidelines, to have face to face discussions about the most pressing issues of the day.
- Cardinal Parolin represented the Pope at the General Debate and was with us for the week. I accompanied him to a number of meetings. After his speech, we took him on a tour of the UN buildings.

**Image removed from this version*





Holy See Delegation (General Debate – Cardinal Parolin Speech)





Holy See Delegation (74th Session of the UN General Assembly)

General Assembly (UNGA)

- After the close of the 'General Debate', the UNGA begins consideration of the substantive items on its agenda.
- These agenda items are allocated among UNGA's six Main Committees
- During my time at the Holy See, I was assigned to the First Committee (DISEC)

Disarmament &
International
Security

Economic &
Financial

Social,
Humanitarian &
Cultural

Special Political
& Decolonisation

Administrative &
Budgetary

Legal



First Committee (DISEC)

- The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.
- It considers all disarmament and international security matters...
 - The general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security.
 - The principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments.
 - The promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.



What happens at DISEC?

The First Committee sessions are structured into three distinctive stages. It was delayed in September 2019 due to a disagreement between the USA and Russia regarding the issuance of diplomatic visas.

1. General Debate (DISEC)

- Members and Observers deliver statements on all matters related to Disarmament and International Security.

2. Thematic Discussions

- Nuclear Weapons
- Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Outer Space
- Conventional Weapons
- Other Disarmament Measures and International Security
- Regional Disarmament and Security
- Disarmament Machinery

3. Action on Draft Resolutions

- Member States pass or reject resolutions submitted to the Committee by other States
- Less contentious resolutions sometimes pass without a vote
- More controversial resolutions are put to a vote
- The UN prefers to pass resolutions and decisions by consensus





First Committee (10th October 2019)

Main Focuses of the Holy See

- Nuclear Weapons
 - The Holy See is a signatory to the following major nuclear treaties: Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, (CTBT), Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).
 - The Holy See, therefore, seeks to use its seat as an Observer State to encourage other countries to eliminate their nuclear weapon stockpiles.
 - The Church recognises the conflict between not just the use but the possession of nuclear weapons with Christian teachings and ethical principles and so the Holy See reminds the international community of the following: the illegitimacy of their use according to international humanitarian law; the current and emerging grave threats by non-state actors; the scandal of extreme poverty while so much is spent on weapons; the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament as a threat to our existence.

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Main Focuses of the Holy See

- General Disarmament
 - The Holy See demonstrates its commitment to general disarmament by being party to treaties such as: the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Mine-Ban Treaty and the Geneva Conventions.
 - In an intervention on General and Complete Disarmament, the Holy See argued for greater international cooperation to eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.
 - They also drew attention to those who, shamefully, “earn a living and accumulate great wealth through trafficking in these instruments of death – whether licit or illicit - thus providing the means for criminals and terrorists to achieve their deadly activities and even for governments who would engage in armed aggression against sovereign states or subvert their internal peace and tranquillity”.
 - Emphasised the need for educational and awareness initiatives to promote a culture of peace and life to overcome the culture of violence.



Future Concerns For Peace

- Breakdown of Nuclear Arms Control Measures
 - Recently there has been a trend towards the abandonment of nuclear controls by the US and Russia – the two biggest nuclear states:
 - **2018** – US abandons the Iran Nuclear Deal
 - **2019** – US withdraws from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)
 - **2020** – US to withdraw from Open Skies Treaty
 - Only arms control agreement still in effect is the New START Treaty (2010), which limits US and Russian strategic nuclear weapons.
 - New START Treaty is set to expire in February and we are yet to see an indication as to whether the USA wishes to extend the treaty for another five years.
 - USA wants China to sign a three-way nuclear arms agreement but China is not willing.
 - 90% world's stockpile belongs to Russia and USA.

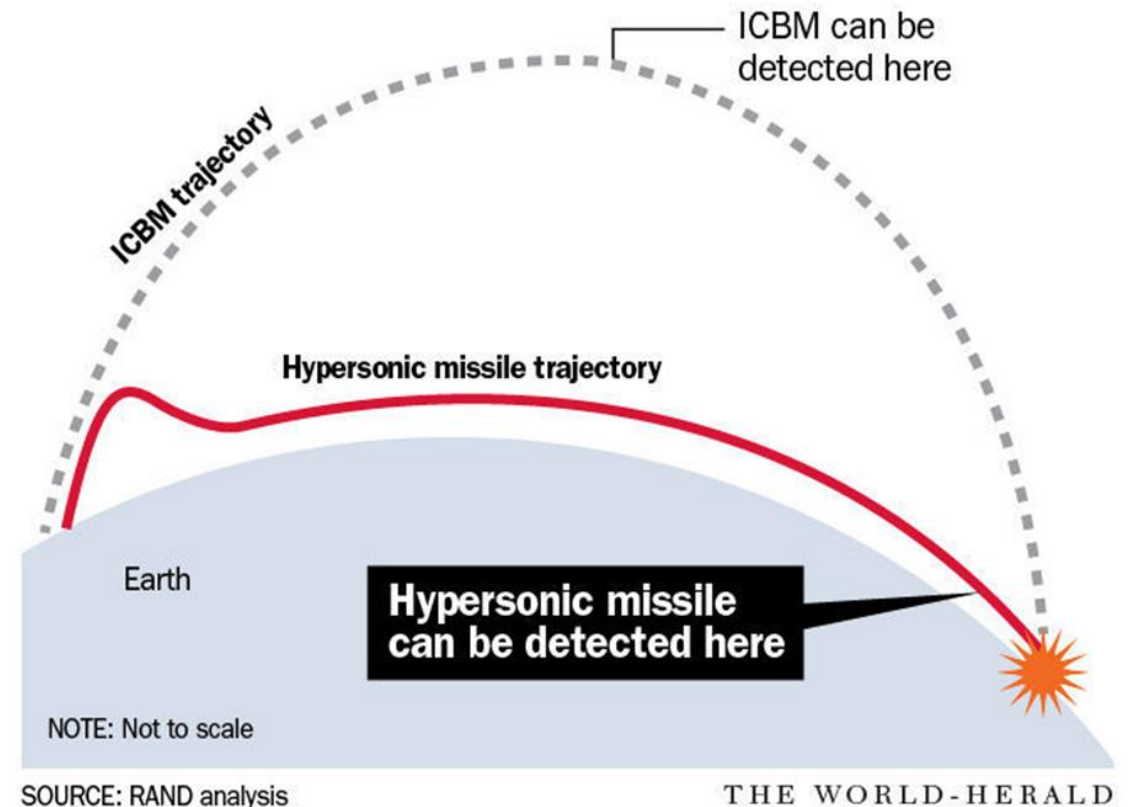


Future Concerns For Peace

- Hypersonic Missile Arms Race
 - Due to the speed and maneuverability of hypersonic missiles, they are much harder to detect and defend against in comparison to existing ICBMs.
 - Since they cannot be detected until the last moment and can change course mid-flight, current defence systems are extremely limited in their ability to neutralise them.
 - This technological leap has led to the USA, Russia and China competing in an arms race to stockpile this type of weaponry.
 - Meeting at the German Embassy discussed this in depth – the deployment of these weapons could result in unintended consequences. Pressurises countries to strike first and fast. There is hope that the cost will be a deterrent to proliferation.

HYPERSONIC MISSILE VS. ICBM DETECTION

Because their flight takes them high above the Earth, the current generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles can be detected by ground-based sensors relatively early in their flight. Hypersonic missiles glide just above the atmosphere at 5 to 20 times the speed of sound and are much harder to detect from the ground because their flight path is hidden by the curvature of the Earth.



Future Concerns For Peace

- Lethal and Autonomous Weapons (LAWS)
 - Select and attack targets without human intervention. Once activated, the weapon system initiates the attack autonomously.
 - The technology is already in use – it is a current threat to peace, not something from the future. However, humans are currently overseeing the “pulling of the trigger”.
 - But this could change in an instant as it not a matter of a lack of technological capability, but rather a legal and moral issue.
 - Most Member States in the First Committee argued that measures should be put in place to prevent the switch over to completely autonomous weapons.

Watch – Autonomous Weapons Video on Reference Sheet



Campaign Robot Arriving at the Committee Room

Future Concerns For Peace

- An Arms Race in Outer Space
 - Many States are anxious to keep space a peaceful zone, particularly due to how important satellites are to military, development and civil sectors.
 - Attacks on satellites already include signal jamming and the use of high-powered lasers to disrupt networks.
 - Anti-satellite missiles, such as the one tested in 2007 by China, are problematic for peace. The destruction of satellites by missiles causes lots of debris that remain in orbit and damaging other satellites (Kessler Syndrome).
 - In 2019, NATO named Outer Space as an “operational domain” and Trump founded the US Space Force. The concern for the future is the potential placement of weapons in space.
 - The Holy See suggested establishing an International Satellite Monitoring Agency to maintain a space free from weapons, ensuring the viability of international agreements. It also stated that this could be strengthened by an agreement to inspect payloads prior to launch to build confidence and ensure their non-weapon character.

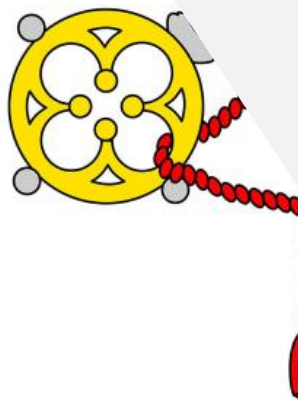
UK Mission & Airbus Defence and Space Event
(30th October)



Watch – Space Arms Race Video on Reference Sheet



DISCUSSION



Thank You

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