



Special Political and Decolonization Committee Study Guide



SPECPOL

**Establishing united guidelines for the
colonization of the Moon**



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BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE:

CHAPTER A: Overview of the topic, including why lunar colonization is relevant and its implications for humanity.

Lunar colonization has long been a subject of fascination, but recent advancements in space technology and the increasing involvement of national space agencies and private companies have made it a tangible reality.

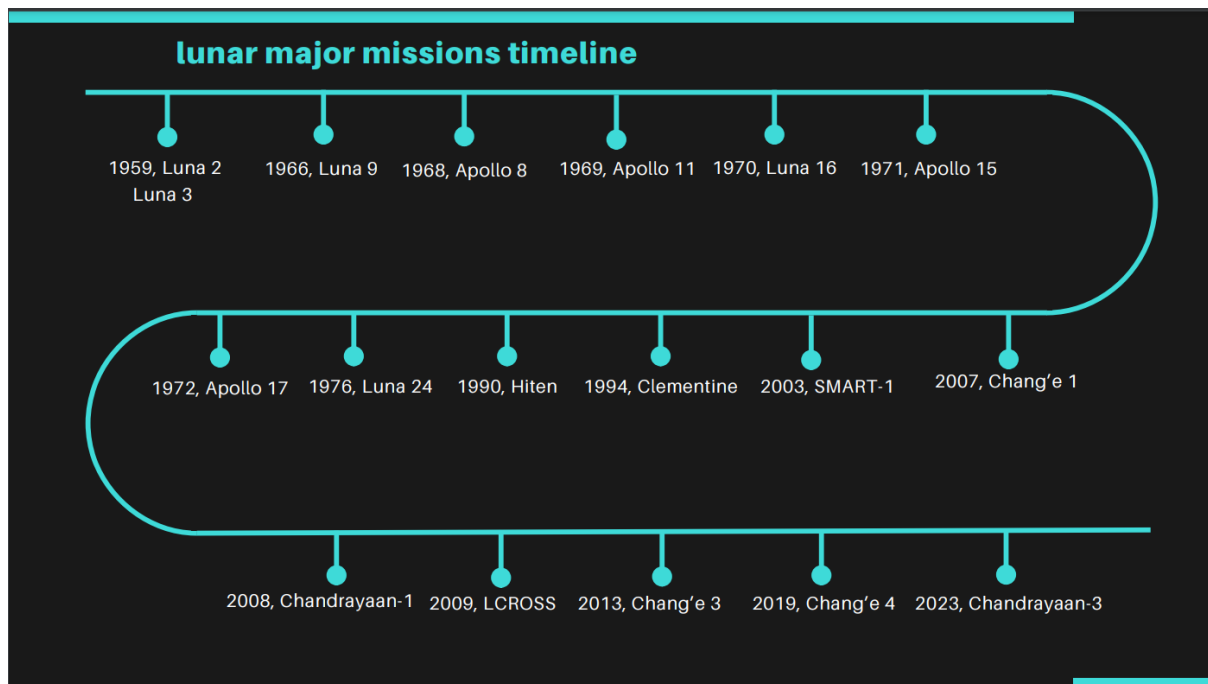
The Moon's proximity to Earth and its untapped resources make it an attractive destination for scientific research, and commercial activities, and a potential stepping stone for deeper space exploration. With several nations and corporations are planning missions to establish a long-term presence on the Moon (such as the USA Artemis program, and China&Russia ILRS operational goal). Therefore, there is an urgent need for a unified set of guidelines to govern these efforts.

The relevance of lunar colonization extends beyond scientific curiosity or national prestige. It presents opportunities for technological innovation, as lunar settlements would require advancements in energy production, life-support systems, and sustainable resource management.

The Moon holds significant economic and strategic value due to its natural resources. The presence of water ice, particularly in the permanently shadowed regions near the lunar poles, is a key driver of interest. Water can be used not only to sustain human life but also as a source of hydrogen and oxygen for fuel production, enabling a sustainable presence in space and facilitating missions to Mars and beyond. Additionally, the Moon contains rare minerals, such as Helium-3, which has been theorized as a potential fuel for future nuclear fusion energy production. However, the extraction and commercialization of these resources raise critical legal and ethical questions. Without a robust international framework, there is a risk of resource monopolization, environmental degradation, and even geopolitical conflicts over lunar territories.

CHAPTER B: History of lunar exploration: Timeline of major lunar missions. (e.g., Apollo Program, Luna Program,).

Lunar exploration began during the Cold War, driven by the Space Race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Soviets led early efforts with Luna 2 (1959), the first human-made object to reach the Moon, and Luna 3, which captured the first images of its far side. In response, the U.S. launched the Apollo Program, aiming to land humans on the Moon. After Apollo 8 successfully orbited the Moon in 1968, Apollo 11 achieved the first human landing in 1969, with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin taking historic steps. However, after Apollo 17 in 1972, lunar exploration declined due to shifting priorities and high costs, though it set the stage for future missions.



Major Lunar Missions Timeline:

In 1959, **Luna 2** became the first human-made object to reach the Moon.

Later that year, **Luna 3** captured the first images of the Moon's far side.

In 1966, **Luna 9** achieved the first successful soft landing, while **Surveyor 1** became the first U.S. spacecraft to land and gather data.



In 1968, **Apollo 8** became the first crewed spacecraft to orbit the Moon and return safely.

In 1969, **Apollo 11** landed the first humans, with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the lunar surface.

In 1970, **Luna 16** completed the first robotic mission to return lunar soil samples.

In 1971, **Apollo 15** introduced the first lunar rover to explore the surface.

In 1972, **Apollo 17** became the last crewed mission to the Moon, marking the end of human lunar exploration for decades.

In 1976, **Luna 24** collected the last Soviet lunar soil samples.

In 1990, **Hiten** became Japan's first lunar probe, marking its entry into Moon exploration.

In 1994, **Clementine** mapped the Moon's surface and found early signs of ice at its poles.

In 2003, **SMART-1** became Europe's first lunar orbiter, studying the Moon's geology.

In 2007, **Chang'e 1** became China's first lunar orbiter, launching the country's ambitious Moon program.

In 2008, **Chandrayaan-1** confirmed the presence of water molecules on the Moon.

In 2009, **LCROSS** provided further evidence of water ice in permanently shadowed craters.

In 2013, **Chang'e 3** successfully landed on the Moon and deployed the Yutu rover.

In 2019, **Chang'e 4** became the first mission to land on the Moon's far side.

In 2023, **Chandrayaan-3** successfully landed near the Moon's south pole, advancing research on lunar water resources.

CHAPTER C: Past attempts at international cooperation in space, and challenges faced in prior space treaties or agreements.

Territorial disputes often have far-reaching social and economic consequences for the affected regions. Prolonged conflicts can lead to population displacement, creating waves of refugees and internally displaced persons who strain the resources of neighboring countries. Economically, these disputes disrupt trade routes, hinder foreign investment, and divert government budgets toward military spending rather than infrastructure or social development. On a social level, communities living near contested borders often face instability, reduced access to basic services, and inter-communal tensions that may escalate into violence. Addressing these impacts requires not only resolving the disputes themselves but also implementing post-conflict recovery programs aimed at rebuilding trust, fostering economic growth, and ensuring the protection of vulnerable populations.

CURRENT SITUATION:

CHAPTER A: International Collaboration.

The **International Space Station (ISS)** serves as one of the most successful examples of global partnership, involving space agencies such as NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan), and CSA (Canada). This model of cooperation that demonstrates how pooling expertise, technology, and funding can lead to groundbreaking achievements that would be difficult for a single nation to accomplish alone, could serve as a foundation for future lunar colonization efforts. However, the ISS also highlights challenges such as political tensions between participating countries, logistical complexities, and disagreements over funding and resource allocation.

The Telecommunication Union is a specialized agency of the United Nations that ensures that nations and private entities do not interfere with each other's communications by coordinating spectrum allocation and satellite positioning. The ITU's framework has historically helped avoid conflicts over orbital resources. Therefore, the ITU could play a central role in facilitating agreements that ensure fair access to lunar resources, prevent conflicts, and promote sustainability.

CHAPTER B: key countries: the interests ambitions and priorities

United States

As the leader of the **Artemis Program (NASA)**, the United States is at the forefront of modern lunar exploration. NASA aims to establish a long-term human presence on the Moon, using it as a stepping stone for future missions to Mars. The U.S. also introduced the **Artemis Accords**, a set of international agreements promoting transparency, peaceful exploration, and resource utilization on the Moon. By partnering with countries that sign these accords, the U.S. seeks to create a legal and cooperative framework for lunar activities. However, its leadership in space also raises geopolitical concerns, as some nations view the Artemis Accords as a means of securing American dominance in space governance.

Russia

Russia has a long history of lunar exploration, dating back to the Soviet **Luna Program**, which achieved significant milestones such as the first spacecraft to impact the Moon and the first soft landing. While Russia was once a dominant space power, its recent lunar efforts have faced setbacks, such as the failure of **Luna 25** in 2023. Nevertheless, Russia remains a key player in global space politics, opposing U.S.-led initiatives like the Artemis Accords and instead favoring multilateral agreements through the **United Nations and BRICS countries**. Russia has also expressed interest in collaborating with China on a **lunar research station**, reflecting shifting alliances in space exploration.

China

China has rapidly expanded its space capabilities, positioning itself as a major force in lunar exploration. Through its **Chang'e Program**, China has achieved major milestones, including the first landing on the Moon's far side (**Chang'e 4**) and successful sample-return missions (**Chang'e 5**). Unlike the U.S., China has not signed the Artemis Accords and instead promotes its own vision for lunar governance. It has proposed an **International Lunar Research Station (ILRS)** in collaboration with Russia, seeking to create an alternative framework for Moon exploration. China's interest in lunar resources, such as water ice, reflects its long-term goal of establishing a sustainable human presence and potentially leading in lunar-based technologies.

European Union (EU)

The European Union, through the **European Space Agency (ESA)**, plays a significant role in lunar exploration. ESA collaborates with NASA on the **Artemis Program**, contributing technology such as the **European Service Module** for the Orion spacecraft. However, the EU also emphasizes peaceful, cooperative exploration and supports broader international frameworks beyond U.S.-led initiatives. Some European nations, such as France and Germany, have signed the Artemis Accords, while others prioritize independent research and diplomatic efforts within the **United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)**. The EU's primary focus is on scientific research, sustainability, and ensuring fair access to lunar resources.

These four key players have differing approaches to lunar governance, influencing global discussions on how to regulate Moon colonization, resource utilization, and international cooperation in space, yet these countries all can have great power regarding such a unique challenge.

CHAPTER C: possible solutions and strategies:

As lunar exploration advances, establishing international guidelines is crucial to prevent conflicts, ensure fair resource distribution, and minimize environmental damage. Without a unified legal framework, nations and private entities risk competing over lunar territory and resources, leading to disputes and monopolization. The following solutions provide structured approaches to managing lunar colonization responsibly.

Global Oversight Body: The Role of a Potential "Lunar Governance Council"

A **Lunar Governance Council (LGC)** could be established under the **United Nations or an independent international coalition** to oversee all lunar activities.

This council would regulate territorial claims, resource extraction, and commercial operations while ensuring compliance with international treaties. It could include representatives from major spacefaring nations, developing countries, and scientific organizations to prevent any single entity from dominating lunar governance. The LGC would also serve as a mediator in disputes, a coordinator for international research efforts, and an enforcer of environmental regulations on the Moon.

International Lunar Resource Sharing Agreement

With lunar resources such as **water ice and helium-3** being critical for future space missions, an International Lunar Resource Sharing Agreement would prevent monopolization and ensure equitable access. This agreement could establish a registry for mining operations, set up a profit-sharing mechanism where companies contribute to a global fund, and create rules for sustainable extraction to avoid over-exploitation. By adopting a model similar to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, this framework would ensure that lunar resources benefit all of humanity, not just a few nations or corporations.

Global Lunar Governance Council

A **Global Lunar Governance Council (GLGC)** could be formed to set binding international laws on Moon exploration and colonization. This body would regulate land claims, mining rights, and private sector involvement while ensuring that space remains demilitarized. The council could also facilitate joint scientific missions, establish international research bases, and coordinate technology-sharing agreements to promote cooperative exploration. By setting clear legal structures, the GLGC would help prevent territorial disputes and ensure long-term sustainability.

Moon Exploration "Environmental Impact" Guidelines

As more missions reach the Moon, **environmental protection** must be prioritized. Unlike Earth, the Moon has no natural recovery processes, meaning any damage could be permanent. A set of environmental guidelines could regulate:

- **Waste disposal** to prevent pollution from abandoned spacecraft and equipment.
- **Mining restrictions** to protect fragile geological sites and historically significant locations.
- **Sustainable construction** methods, such as using 3D-printed lunar regolith instead of transported materials.
- **International cleanup missions** to remove debris from previous lunar expeditions.

Potential Challenges to Implementing Solutions

One of the major challenges in addressing geopolitical disputes or territorial issues lies in balancing national sovereignty with international cooperation. While countries may agree to joint frameworks or peace negotiations, deep-rooted historical tensions, political instability, and differing economic interests often hinder sustainable progress. Furthermore, the lack of enforcement mechanisms within international organizations frequently leaves agreements unenforced. To overcome these obstacles, nations must not only focus on short-term solutions but also invest in long-term trust-building initiatives, such as economic partnerships, cultural exchanges, and multilateral dialogues. Additionally, empowering local communities through education and development programs can help address the root causes of discontent that often escalate into larger geopolitical conflicts.

Conclusion

A structured, cooperative approach is necessary to ensure that lunar colonization remains **peaceful, fair, and sustainable**. By creating governance bodies, resource-sharing agreements, and environmental protection, the international community can prevent conflicts and promote responsible exploration. These solutions aim to establish a legal and ethical foundation for the future of human presence on the Moon.

Questions to consider:

1. How can international organizations mediate disputes while respecting national sovereignty?
2. What role do economic partnerships play in resolving or exacerbating territorial conflicts?
3. How can technological advancements (e.g., satellite imagery) aid in resolving disputes over territory?
4. What lessons can be learned from past territorial conflicts that were successfully resolved?
5. How can nations ensure the inclusion of marginalized communities in conflict resolution processes?
6. What are the potential risks of leaving geopolitical disputes unresolved for prolonged periods?
7. How should countries prioritize domestic stability versus global cooperation when addressing territorial issues?