

### **3. Outer Space Treaty, 1967**

**Prelims level:** International - International Policies & Schemes

**Mains level:** GS-II Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests.

#### **Why in News?**

- China has recently accused U.S. that it was turning the cosmos into a “battlefield”, after Washington announced a new military arm called the Space Force.

#### **What has USA done?**

- Following concerns that China and Russia are challenging its position in space, U.S. President Donald Trump signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act on Friday — which created a new branch of the U.S. military.
- The Space Force will be the sixth formal force of the U.S. military, after the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard.

#### **What is the issue about Militarization of space?**

- The militarization of space involves the placement and development of weaponry and military technology in outer space. The early exploration of space in the mid-20th century had, in part, a military motivation, as the United States and the Soviet Union used it as an opportunity to demonstrate ballistic-missile technology and other technologies having the potential for military application.

#### **So, what are some possible aspects of space use?**

- **A Reconnaissance Satellite:**
  - ✓ It is an intelligence satellite for Earth observation or communications for military or intelligence applications.
- **Global Positioning Systems:**
  - ✓ Space militarisation currently in use is GPS or Global Positioning System. This satellite navigation system is used for determining one's precise location and providing a highly accurate time reference almost anywhere on Earth or in Earth orbit.
- **Military Communication Systems:**
  - ✓ The third current application of militarisation of space can be demonstrated by the emerging military doctrine of network-centric warfare. Network-centric warfare relies heavily on the use of high-speed communications, which allows all soldiers and branches of the military to view the battlefield in real-time.

- **Space weapons are weapons used in Space Warfare.**

- ✓ They include weapons that can attack space systems in orbit (i.e. anti-satellite weapons), attack targets on the earth from space or disable missiles travelling through space.
- ✓ In the course of the militarization of space, such weapons were developed mainly by the contesting superpowers during the Cold War, and some remain Under Development Today.

### **Is there an Agreement to Prohibit the Militarization of Outer Space?**

- **The Outer Space Treaty**, formally the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, is a treaty that forms the basis of international space law.
- The treaty was opened for signature in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union on 27 January 1967, and entered into force on 10 October 1967.
- As of June 2019, 109 countries are parties to the treaty, while another 23 have signed the treaty but have not completed ratification.

### **Key Provisions of this Treaty?**

- ✓ It prohibits the placing of nuclear weapons in space, it limits the use of the Moon and all other celestial bodies to peaceful purposes only, and establishes that space shall be free for exploration and use by all nations, but no nation can claim sovereignty of outer space or any celestial body.
- ✓ The Outer Space Treaty does not ban military activities within space, military space forces, or the weaponization of space, with the exception of the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space.
- ✓ It is mostly a non-armament treaty and offers insufficient and ambiguous regulations to newer space activities such as lunar and asteroid mining.

### **Treaties governing Outer Space:**

- **Outer Space Treaty 1967**
- According to this treaty, outer space shall be used only for peaceful purposes.
- It prohibits countries from placing into orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction.
- It requires that celestial bodies shall be used by all parties exclusively for peaceful purposes and no weapon can be stationed on them.

- However Outer Space Treaty by itself does not prevent arms race in space.
- India is a party to Outer Space Treaty by ratifying the agreement in 1982.

### **Other measures to prevent militarization of Outer Space:**

- **UN Resolution: PAROS to TCBMs: An unfinished task**

#### **PAROS:**

- The Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) is a UN resolution that advocates for a ban on the weaponization of space.
- It was conceived of during the Cold-war era.
- The PAROS resolution acknowledges the limitations of Outer Space Treaty in preventing an arms race in outer space.
- However, US opposition has thwarted treaty negotiations in the UN General Assembly.

#### **TCBMs and PPWT:**

- Since 2005, the UNGA has adopted annual resolutions on “Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.”
- China and Russia in 2008 submitted the following treaties to reiterate the importance of a weapon-free outer space.
  1. Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT)
  2. Treaty on threat or use of force against Outer Space Objects.
- The logjam over PAROS and PPWT treaties has necessitated building of counter-space capability lest it will lead to lopsided balance of power. Thus even India has done the A-SAT test