WCDMUN 2024 Briefing Papers

DITECH

Topic 1: TQO the Use of Depleted Uranium in War Zones

Depleted uranium (DU) is a dense, slightly radioactive metal that is a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process used in nuclear power production and nuclear weapons manufacturing. Due to its high density, depleted uranium has been utilized in various military applications, particularly in the manufacturing of armor-piercing projectiles and armor for military vehicles. Depleted uranium is used in the production of armor-piercing munitions, such as tank shells and anti-tank missiles. The high density of depleted uranium allows these projectiles to penetrate armored vehicles more effectively than conventional materials. Depleted uranium is also used in the construction of armor for military vehicles, providing enhanced protection against incoming projectiles. The use of depleted uranium armor is intended to improve the survivability of tanks and other armored vehicles on the battlefield.

The use of depleted uranium in military applications has raised concerns about its potential health and environmental effects. When depleted uranium munitions impact a target, they can release fine particles of uranium dust. Inhaling or ingesting these particles can pose health risks, as uranium is a heavy metal and a weakly radioactive substance. There have been debates and studies about the potential long-term health effects on both military personnel and civilian populations exposed to depleted uranium. The use of depleted uranium in conflict zones, such as during the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003, has been a source of controversy. This was due to the health and environmental risks associated with depleted uranium use warrant restrictions or bans, while others emphasize its military effectiveness. During the Second Gulf War many soldiers were unwittingly exposed to harmful radiation from wreaks of equipment destroyed by DU rounds after several battles.

Some military forces have established guidelines and regulations regarding the use of depleted uranium to minimize potential risks. These may include measures for handling, disposal, and monitoring of depleted uranium-containing materials. It's important to note that opinions on the use of depleted uranium in war zones vary, and the topic remains a subject of ongoing research and debate among scientists, policymakers, and advocacy groups. International efforts have been made to address the potential health and environmental concerns associated with depleted uranium, and discussions continue within the context of arms control and disarmament efforts.

Topic 2: TQO the Disposal of Space Waste

With the rapid advancement of space exploration, a new challenge has emerged; the disposal of space waste. After years of obsolete technology left orbiting our planet, we now grapple with the intricate task of safeguarding and cleaning up our atmosphere and space as a whole, while also harnessing its boundless potential. This issue encompasses the growing concern of how to manage and eliminate space debris, a subject of paramount importance that requires meticulous attention and innovative solutions.

Space waste is made up of a vast collection of defunct satellites, spent rocket stages, and fragments from previous missions. Over the years, this waste has swelled to an alarming magnitude. It looms as a formidable threat to the sustainability of active satellites and future space missions. Collisions with space debris, even small fragments, not only threaten the vast investments in orbital infrastructure but also generate a cascading effect of debris proliferation. This intricate web of trash in space threatens to engulf the very environment it inhabits, rendering it a perilous obstacle course that could severely hamper human access to outer space.

We are tasked with designing, implementing, and enforcing regulations that govern space activities, these measures should mitigate the pernicious effects of space waste. These organisations and governments must work in tandem with other international partners to promote responsible space usage and manage the escalating debris problem. Developing and enforcing stringent guidelines for satellite end-of-life disposal, launching debris removal missions, and fostering space situational awareness are just a few facets of this multifaceted effort. This responsibility extends beyond national borders, for the consequences of space waste are global. The collaboration between governments, driven by the imperative to protect not only their investments but also the broader cosmic commons, is vital to addressing the pressing issue of space waste.

The advancement of space debris mitigation strategies encompasses concepts such as active debris removal, utilizing robotic spacecraft to capture and deorbit defunct satellites. Moreover, the development of advanced debris tracking and monitoring systems has gained prominence, offering the capability to predict and avoid potential collisions with space debris. Furthermore, the pursuit of sustainable space practices, such as the development of reusable launch systems and modular satellite designs, aims to minimize future contributions to the burgeoning waste crisis.

The disposal of space waste stands as a modern challenge reflecting our expanding reach beyond Earth's boundaries and the responsibilities that come with it. As we take on the role of custodians for our orbital environment, their task is clear, but how will the UN begin to resolve this issue?

Topic 3: TQO the Role of Social Media in Terrorist Recruiting

One of the most pressing challenges confronting governments, intelligence agencies, and tech giants is the role that social media plays in terrorist recruiting. This phenomenon has revolutionized the way extremist ideologies are disseminated and recruits are mobilized.

Social media platforms have provided an unprecedented avenue for the amplification of extremist content. The algorithmic design of these platforms which, driven by engagement metrics, often inadvertently boosts extremist content, effectively increasing its reach and influence. Furthermore, the structure of social media platforms tends to foster echo chambers and filter bubbles, where users are exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs. By immersing individuals in an environment where their views are unchallenged, the process of radicalization can be accelerated and intensified. This allows for continuous exposure to extremist content, resulting in the further hardening of beliefs and the creation of a sense of belonging and identity within extremist circles.

This marks a major shift from the traditional models of recruitment and radicalization, where physical proximity and personal interactions were key elements. Today, terrorists harness the borderless nature of the internet to transcend geographical limitations and target individuals worldwide. The recruitment process, which was once confined to local communities, has been digitized, creating a virtual conveyor belt that transcends borders. Consequently, those susceptible to radicalization are drawn into a virtual web of extremism, which can be as potent and life-altering as any physical indoctrination process. The cloak of anonymity that users gain online, and end-to-end encryption featured on most of these platforms, provides a haven for extremists to communicate and coordinate, rendering it challenging for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to monitor and intercept potential threats.

Counter-terrorism efforts, in the context of social media's role in terrorist recruiting, represent a complex and evolving battleground where governments and tech companies employ a range of strategies to mitigate the spread of extremist content and recruiting drives. These efforts entail the use of policies, algorithms, and human oversight. Tech companies have taken substantial steps to monitor, remove, or restrict the dissemination of extremist content on their platforms, often leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to identify and suspend such accounts. Governments, on the other hand, have sought to establish legal frameworks and cooperate across borders to facilitate information sharing and intelligence gathering. Despite these initiatives, the adaptability of terrorist groups and the sheer volume of online activity have made it a relentless challenge. While these platforms have the potential to foster positive social change and connectivity, they are equally adept at promoting hatred and violence. What will the UN do to prevent the spread of terrorism worldwide?