Mars Treatymaking Workshop
Results and Insights from ISU SSP15

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The Problem
- Tensions
- The Group
- Why Mars?
- Relevant International Law

The Solution
- Getting Familiarized
- Professional Framework

Lessons Learned
- Benefits of Diversity
- Roles Outside Your Comfort Zone
- Key Treatymaking Behaviors and Practices
- The Futures?

Concluding remarks
- Applications
- Conclusions
Tensions

Existing treaties:

Outer space [...] is not subject to national appropriation by

- Claims of sovereignty,
- Means and use of occupation,

or by any other means.

[Outer Space Treaty, 1967]

Interests in Mars:

- Potential resources
- National self-bolstering
- Scientific exploration

Arena for international cooperation?
The Group

French electronics engineering student,
Japanese catalytic combustion student,
Norwegian astrophysics student,
Chinese Aerospace department leader,
Italian Space Agency lawyer,
Australian space law expert,
Chinese Satellite Comm. Co. secretary general,
American NASA systems engineer,
Chinese Great Wall deputy manager,
Korean fighter pilot,
American project manager,
Italian aerospace engineer

COPUOS Chair
COPUOS observers:
Holy See
ESA
Delegates:
Austria,
France,
China,
Republic of Korea,
Russian Federation,
United States of America
Why Mars?

- Evoked our aspirations - Mars as the “promised land”
- Cultural and historical rationales for presence on Mars differ:
  - Nature
    - Conquering the “wilderness” vs Symbiosis
  - Society
    - Expansion vs Inner stability
  - Technology
    - Supporting society or solely for harnessing resources?
  - Space?
- Mars as indicator on humanity’s evolutionary readiness to leave the Tsiolkovskian cradle

[Von Puttkammer, 1987]
The Problem

1967
Outer Space Treaty

Outer Space: **benefit** all mankind

**Free** for exploration

*Not*: National **appropriation** and claim of sovereignty

Use: solely for **peaceful** purposes

Avoid harmful **contamination** of space and bodies

1979
Moon Treaty

Moon and other celestial bodies (incl. Mars)

Exclusive use: **peaceful** purposes

**Environments** should not be disrupted

**UN**: to be informed of use of Mars and location

Moon’s (+++ natural resources: **common heritage** of all mankind
Getting Familiarized
Professional Framework

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-Seventh Session
(Athens, 1-10 July 2025)

MONDAY, 6 JULY 2025

SUMMARY OF SCHEDULED MEETING
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Room 103 - Richard

780th Meeting

United Nations

General Assembly

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-Seventh Session
(Athens, 6 July 2025)
Agenda Item 4
Draft Version of a Mars Treaty

Draft version of a Mars Treaty

I. Revised text of the draft Mars Treaty as submitted by the Russian Federation

Treaty on Principles Governing the Exploration and Use of Mars

The States Parties to this Agreement,
Benefits of Diversity

Valuable insights would not have been shared if everyone had the same background.

When having an engineering background: had to adapt - from numbers and equations to bargaining over words.

Affecting the negotiation: Personality and the stance of the nation they are representing.

Formality of UN COPUOS session was enlightening. Exposed to this, learned the need to speak respectfully and clearly.

Non-space faring states have large influence, will affect the length and complexity of the process - may take decades.
Roles Outside Your Comfort Zone

Insider vs outsider perspective - very apparent that these are not the same when others represent your own agency

Swapping of roles allowed us to express our understanding of other nations’ priorities and values

One’s interests not aligned with the country you are representing - requiring us to shift perspective and not express personal opinions

Selfie: Curiosity/NASA
Key Treatymaking Behaviors and Practices

**Negotiations**
- Unstated agreement: striving to reach agreements that everyone could accept - adhering to idea of an evolved way of leadership
- Consensus-based decision making takes time - but is easier to achieve when all parties are open to listen to each other

**Organisation**
- Pre-committee meetings (allies): of paramount importance
- Small countries as mediators: propose solutions that would not be accepted if coming from an “opposing power”
- Allow strategy building
- Agree on acceptable ideas from opposition (bargaining cards)

**Behind closed doors**
- Confidence and trust-building: Sharing of information and possibly incriminating ideas
- Potential to influence negotiations: through informal social interactions

Lessons Learned
The Futures?

Moon Treaty:

Easy to draw a parallel to Mars - the Moon Treaty had no significant impact.

Concern from less influential states about attempts on allowing appropriation.

Atmosphere of competition?

Change in terminology:

From “man” to “humankind”, “colonisation” to “continued presence”.

Different roles in COPUOS:

Member states may have opinions differing from mother agencies.
Applications

- Practice negotiations in an international forum
- Helpful for any who wants to engage in international activities
- Organiser must know the setting to be taught
- Workshop format suitable outside ISU
Conclusions

Greater understanding of importance of the inspiration provided by humanity’s entry into space and the potential exploration of Mars by humankind.

Workshop provided solid introduction
Extremely realistic
Advance lectures and distribution of material crucial to its success
High impact even though relatively short time spent

Space:
develop mutual understanding and strengthen friendly relations

Process:
Lengthy, complicated and frustrating

Things to Consider:
Political will for a Mars Treaty?
Aligning this treaty with others? Revision of old concepts?
Mars landing before treaty (as with Moon landing and unsuccessful Moon Treaty?)
Better: principle declaration by UN GA than a full treaty?