

Article IV contains the only provision of the Outer Space Treaty addressed specifically to military activities and reads as follows:

States Parties to the Treaty undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner.

The moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the Treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration of the moon and other celestial bodies shall also not be prohibited.

The first paragraph of this article codifies the policy set forth in a bilateral pledge by the United States and the Soviet Union, later unanimously adopted as a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁸ Within its admitted limits it contributed affirmatively to the stabilization of international relations through the imposition of some restraints on the military use of the space environment.¹⁹ It also expands the prohibition against nuclear tests in outer space contained in the Partial Test Ban Treaty, to encompass any other kind of weapons of mass destruction.

The second paragraph of Article IV is one of the most controversial provisions of the Treaty and has often been cited in support of the claim that the Treaty forbids only those military activities that are enumerated in the above-mentioned article.²⁰ An argument has been advanced that Article IV, in conjunction with other provisions of the Treaty, imposes "complete demilitarization of outer space".²¹ However, the negotiating history of the Treaty, its text and the practice of states would not seem to support this view.

To verify compliance with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty, Article XII provides for inspection "on the basis of reciprocity" of all stations,