

"The term 'environmental modification techniques' refers to any technique for changing-through the deliberate manipulation of natural processes - the dynamics, composition or structure of the Earth, including its biota, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, or of outer space".

The addition of "space" was to make the area of prohibition as extensive as possible. As the prohibited techniques remain largely theoretical, and never seemed usable in or from space, the prohibition at present is also theoretical. The Moon Treaty largely repeats in Article III, the bans on military facilities and manoeuvres on celestial bodies contained in Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty. Both stress that the moon is to be used only for peaceful purposes, but the "Moon Treaty" gives it extra prominence, and stresses that its surface cannot be used to direct any hostile act out into space.

16. 1975 Convention of Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space requires, in Article IV, that the Secretary-General of the United Nations be provided with information concerning space launches, including the general function of the space object. It is not thought that to date any State has registered a space launch for military purposes, despite the fact that it is believed that well over half of all space launches are primarily for military purposes.

17. There are two other agreements worth noting:

(a) Rescue of Astronauts (which came into force in 1968), providing for assistance to astronauts in the event of accident, distress or emergency landing; their return and that of objects launched into space. About 100 States are parties to this treaty, including the United States and the USSR.

(b) Damage caused by Space Objects (which came into force in 1972) providing for rules and procedures on liability for damage caused by space objects. About 55 States are parties, including the United States and the USSR.