

This Treaty as explained by the government in June, both in the House of Commons and before the Standing Committee on External Affairs, is intended to ensure that outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies will be explored and used only for peaceful purposes and that there can be no national appropriation of such bodies. Of particular significance in this respect are those provisions of the Treaty which state that parties to it 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 establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies are also forbidden by the Treaty. These terms incorporate the main ideas expressed in the 1963 United Nations Declaration on Legal Principles Governing Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space. In this respect the Treaty represents a very significant step forward in the achievement of multilateral arms control arrangements.

The Treaty emphasizes freedom of scientific investigation on celestial bodies and in outer space. It also stresses co-operation among states both in avoiding the contamination of outer space and in the dissemination of information on conditions which might cause harm to the health or affect the safety of astronauts. In order further to promote such international co-operation states party to the Treaty are to consider, on the basis of equality, requests from other parties to build tracking facilities on their territory for observing the flight of space objects which the requesting nation has launched. The Treaty stipulates that if the request is considered favourably, all the necessary terms and conditions are to be arranged by negotiations. Should these terms and conditions prove unacceptable to the host nation, however, there is no obligation to grant the facilities requested.