

DISEC

ACADEMIC GUIDE: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE



MUNUR XVII
UNIVERSIDAD DEL ROSARIO

What is MUNUR XVII?



The Model United Nations at the Universidad del Rosario (MUNUR) is the first of its kind at the university level in Colombia. It is a space led and organized entirely by students and for students, designed to foster public speaking, critical thinking, and the development of solutions to the challenges of the international system. MUNUR invites its participants to explore the world, understand the issues of the present, learn from the lessons of the past, and imagine the responses that the future will demand.

Founded as an initiative by students at the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, MUNUR has, over the course of seventeen editions, established a tradition of academic excellence, leadership, and commitment. More than just a model, it is a community where people from different parts of the country and the world come together to strengthen friendships, promote diversity, celebrate inclusion, and demonstrate that respectful dialogue remains the most powerful tool for transforming realities.

For this seventeenth edition, we have decided to look toward the future without losing sight of what has defined us since our inception. Under the theme “Beyond Legacy, Towards Impact,” we seek to go beyond the legacy we’ve built over the years to make a real impact on every delegate, every committee, and every debate. We want this experience to not only develop better speakers and negotiators, but also leaders of integrity who are aware of their ability to transform their surroundings and contribute to a more just, cooperative, and sustainable world.

For this reason, MUNUR XVII offers a wide variety of committees designed to cater to different interests and levels of experience, with innovative activities that will challenge delegates to step outside their comfort zones, put their creativity, negotiation skills, and academic excellence to the test, and discover the true extent of their potential.

This document contains the necessary information for delegates interested in participating in this committee. It should be emphasized that the academic guidelines are merely a suggested research path developed by the Steering Committees. However, it is the responsibility of each participant to prepare thoroughly for the days of debate. We also remind you that all rules of procedure are set forth in this edition’s Handbook, which we recommend all participants read carefully.

At MUNUR XVII, we don’t just debate ideas: we develop leaders, inspire change, and demonstrate that our true legacy is the impact we have on others.

CONTENTS

WELCOME LETTERS	4
Welcome letter from the Secretary General	4
Welcome letter from the Sub-secretary General	6
Welcome letter from the General Director	8
Welcome letter from the General sub-director	10
Welcome letter from the Undersecretary Generals of United Nations	12
Welcome letter from the Honorable Dais	16
ABSTRACT	19
ABOUT THE COMMITTEE	20
Introduction to the committee	21
Committee History	22
Committee Competence	23
ABOUT THE TOPIC	25
Introduction to the topic	26
Historical context	28
Current context	31
CASE OF STUDY A	36
Current situation	37
Relevant actors	39
Importance of the topic	39
CASE OF STUDY B	40
Current situation	41
Relevant actors	43
Importance of the topic	44
QARMAS	45
GLOSSARY	46
RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY	48
REFERENCES	49

WELCOME LETTER

Secretary General
Juan David Rincon





Hello, everyone!

My name is Juan David Rincón Vásquez, and in this edition of MUNUR, I have the privilege of serving as Secretary-General.

Whenever I came to this section of the guide, I used to skip it or simply not give it much thought; but today I see firsthand the work, effort, and dedication that come with having the honor of writing these lines. That's why, if you're reading this, I'm immensely grateful to you for recognizing the value behind every word.

If I had to describe my journey at MUNUR from day one in a single word, it would be: challenge. For many people, the word "challenge" may be synonymous with something negative; however, I am convinced that human beings only hone their skills and character when they face situations for which they may not feel fully prepared or that force them to step outside their comfort zone. In the four years I've been participating in this model, I can say that the moments when I've learned and grown the most always coincide with the same dates: late October and early November.

If this is your first time participating in the event, get ready for a truly life-changing experience. But best of all, you won't be alone throughout the process. At MUNUR and the Universidad del Rosario, we're known for doing everything with excellence but, above all, with deep human warmth. Rest assured that you'll see this reflected in every aspect of the model: from the team that will guide you through the registration process, to the tables and support centers that will be there for you at all times, to a Board of Directors fully dedicated to serving every delegate.

Take advantage of this opportunity to grow, debate, put your skills to the test, and, above all, build experiences and friendships that will stay with you for a lifetime.

A warm welcome to everyone at MUNUR XVII!

Juan David Rincón Vasquez

Secretary General of MUNUR XVII

WELCOME LETTER

Sub-secretary General
Andres Acosta





Dear delegates, sponsors, observers, and staff welcome to this new and extraordinary academic and personal experience. Participating in a Model United Nations conference means much more than simply representing a country or debating international issues. It means committing to the values of dialogue, cooperation, and the tireless pursuit of solutions to the challenges facing our global community.

Throughout each session, you will discover that a delegate's true greatness lies not only in delivering good speeches, but in the ability to listen, understand different perspectives, and build consensus.

As an International Relations student and a member of the MUNUR XVII organizing team, I have had the privilege of witnessing the profound impact these experiences have on those who participate in them. Model United Nations programs shape leaders of integrity, inspire vocations, and forge friendships that transcend borders. Through them, we learn that authentic leadership is exercised with humility, responsibility, and a commitment to service.

May this program be the beginning of new dreams and the setting in which you discover the full extent of your own potential. The future of international cooperation needs committed, creative, and courageous leaders, and I am convinced that each of you has the ability to contribute to building that future, and that this seventeenth edition will help you challenge yourselves.

I wish you every success and hope that this experience will remain in your memory as a lasting source of inspiration and growth.

Andrés Acosta

Sub-secretary General of MUNUR XVII

WELCOME LETTER

General Director
Santiago Sepulveda Perez





Dear delegates:

It is a true honor to welcome you to MUNUR XVII. As General Director, I am proud to welcome you to a new edition of this simulation, a forum that, over the course of seventeen editions, has brought together students committed to dialogue, critical thinking, and developing solutions to the challenges facing our world.

Each of you has decided to take on the challenge of representing a country, defending a position, and participating in debates that will require preparation, discipline, negotiation skills, and, above all, a willingness to listen. That decision demonstrates your interest in going beyond the classroom and becoming citizens with a global perspective and a genuine commitment to your community.

MUNUR is much more than a simulation of the United Nations. It is a setting where leadership, advocacy, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills are strengthened, but also where friendships are formed, unforgettable memories are created, and participants discover the enormous impact that a conversation can have when guided by respect and cooperation.

I invite you to take advantage of every committee, every speech, every caucus, and every informal conversation as an opportunity to learn and grow. Don't be afraid to defend your ideas, question your own perspectives, and build consensus. It is precisely these moments that make a Model United Nations a transformative experience.

I want to thank you for placing your trust in MUNUR XVII and for being part of this edition. Behind this Model United Nations stands a team that has worked diligently for months to offer you an academic and personal experience of the highest quality, and we hope that each of you will find here a space where you can challenge yourselves, learn, and enjoy yourselves.

Welcome to this new edition. I am confident that, with your commitment, enthusiasm, and talent, we will make MUNUR XVII a memorable experience.

I wish you every success and look forward to seeing you make your mark on this edition.

Sincerely,

Santiago Sepúlveda Pérez

General Director, MUNUR XVII

WELCOME LETTER

General sub-director
Carolina Echeverri Echeverria





Dear delegates:

I extend my warmest welcome to you all at MUNUR XVII. As General Sub-director, it is a privilege to greet you and to see how this model, now in its seventeenth edition, continues to be a breeding ground for critical thinkers, empathetic leaders, and young people committed to the future of our society.

Taking on the role of a nation's spokesperson and defending its interests requires courage, preparation, and discipline, but above all, a tremendous willingness to listen and build consensus. That determination that brings you here today is what makes a Model United Nations a truly transformative experience.

Beyond diplomatic rigor and committee debates, MUNUR is a setting for personal growth where networks are forged, friendships are formed, and lasting memories are created. I encourage you to make the most of every caucus, every statement, and every exchange to challenge yourselves, question perspectives, and learn from your peers.

Behind MUNUR XVII is an extraordinary team that has taken care of every detail to ensure you have an unforgettable academic and personal experience. Make the most of every space we have prepared for you.

I wish you the greatest success during this event. May your ideas and voices leave an indelible mark on this edition.

With appreciation and admiration,

Carolina Echeverri,

General Sub-director, MUNUR XVII

WELCOME LETTER

USG of United Nations

Sara Velilla





To all delegates, sponsors, general staff and visitors... Welcome to MUNUR XVII! My name is Sara Velilla, I'm twenty one years old and a student of International Relations.

First and foremost, I'm very excited and honored to be able to work with my fellow USG, Sara Buitrago. We've teamed up to create innovative, rigorous and entertaining committees for this edition. I deeply admire the personal touch we have both put into the project.

I would also like to recognize the job done by our excellent DAIS. Thank you for believing in our ideas from the very beginning, but most importantly: thank you for helping us shape them. This has been a mutual project at all levels. We wish them all the best success (and fun) during the days of the model. They are highly qualified for this challenge.

So, for us, academic quality is a priority. Nonetheless, we have made sure to build our project on other important values as well. We strive for a safe space where diplomacy stands out. We vow to promote respect among all presents, so that we can all enjoy the great debates and dilemmas that will surely arise in the committees. And for that, Sara and I will be available at all times to clear any doubts or settle any misunderstanding that arises.

Enjoy the little moments before reading the opening speech, when your hands could be trembling. Enjoy bumping into your friends after the session has ended. These are the moments we remember, and the moments we value. That is why I treasure my MUN memories with my whole heart. I want to thank all the friends life has given me through these spaces. I surely am because you all are. You have a big big place in my heart.

And so that's all! Without more to say, good luck!

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WELCOME LETTER

USG of United Nations

Sara Buitrago





Dear delegates, it is an honor for me to extend a warm welcome to you all to this edition of MUNUR XVII.

My name is Sara Buitrago López. I am 18 years old and a student of International Relations and Economics at the Universidad del Rosario. Alongside Sara Velilla, we have the honor of serving as the Under Secretary General for the United Nations committees at MUNUR XVII.

We are truly grateful to have the opportunity to help ensure that your experience in Models of United Nations is as enriching for you as it has been for us. These forums go far beyond debate; they are spaces where delegates develop leadership and public speaking skills and, above all, learn how to give voice to their ideas. We encourage you to see these committees as an opportunity to build the confidence needed to discover everything that can be achieved through negotiation and diplomacy.

With Saris and our working teams, we have worked to ensure that our committees maintain a strong academic focus. The topics you will discuss, from the risks of military air operations and the prevention of religious violence to investment arbitration and food security, are all highly relevant to today's international agenda. We hope that each of you leaves every committee with a deeper understanding of these issues and with knowledge of the diplomatic tools available to address them.

At the same time, delegates, MUNUR is much more than an academic experience. It is an opportunity to meet new people, build lasting friendships, and create memories that will stay with you long after the conference ends. Make the most of every debate, every speech, and every resolution you draft with your bloc, because what truly makes a Model United Nations unforgettable is the people with whom you share the experience.

Welcome to MUNUR XVII. We hope these four days become a time of learning, growth, and unforgettable moments, and that you carry every experience you live here with you long after the model comes to an end.

With that said, I wish you all the very best of luck!

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Welcome letter from the Honorable Dais

Anny Aristizábal

My name is Anny Aristizábal and it is with immense pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) of MUNUR. Having you here, representing nations, ideas, and voices from across the globe, is nothing short of an honor. This space belongs to you, and I consider it a privilege to serve as your Dais during these sessions.

Over time, I have come to believe that the heart of MUNs lies in two important things: a good previous investigation and preparation and the ability to transform that knowledge into genuine dialogue. The true art of diplomacy lies in negotiation, in listening, yielding where necessary, holding firm where it matters, and ultimately finding common ground within the international community. A resolution is not a trophy; it is a testament to the collective effort of minds that chose collaboration over competition.

So come prepared, but also come as yourselves. Bring your empathy to the table alongside your arguments. The delegate who can look across the chamber, understand a fundamentally different position, and still find a bridge between nations, that is the delegate who leaves a mark.

In this committee, we will be tackling one of the most complex questions in contemporary international security: Reducing the risk of conflict from military aircraft operations in sensitive airspace. This is not an abstract exercise. As we speak, aircraft from multiple nations operate in skies where sovereignty is disputed, where a miscalculation can escalate into a geopolitical crisis, and where the absence of clear protocols becomes a danger in itself.

This topic sits at the intersection of international law, military doctrine, diplomatic communication, and the physics of airspace itself. It demands rigorous thinking, but it also rewards creative diplomacy. I encourage you to push beyond the expected. Propose frameworks that are bold yet feasible. Challenge the assumptions of your own assigned nation. Explore the tension between state sovereignty and collective safety. This is a topic rich and layered as the skies it concerns, and I am genuinely excited to see where your imaginations take the debate.

I am currently in my fifth semester of Economics at Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, a city I love for its energy, its contradictions, and the warmth of its people. I am an active member of UN Society at EAFIT, a community that has shaped my understanding of multilateralism and deepened my passion for global dialogue.

Beyond the committee room, you will most likely find me exploring a new restaurant I have been meaning to try, I am a firm believer that food is one of the most honest forms of culture, or spending time with the friends and family who remind me why any of this matters in the first place. I share this not to fill a bio, but because I want you to know that behind this role is simply a person who cares deeply, both about ideas and about people.

I am here for you. Whether you need guidance on procedure, academic topics, or simply a word of encouragement before your first speech, I am present and accessible and I am committed to ensuring that every voice in this room is heard with equal respect.

At the same time, I expect seriousness and rigor from every delegate in this committee. Come with your position well-researched, your arguments well-constructed, and your spirit ready to engage in substantive debate. Diplomacy is not performance, it is craft. And it is in the craft that this committee will either rise or stall.

Welcome to DISEC. Welcome to MUNUR. I am honored to share this space with each and every one of you.

Anny Aristizábal

Welcome letter from the Honorable Dais

Danna Calvo

Hey everyone!

My name is Danna Calvo, I'm 19 years old, I'm currently in my sixth semester of law at the Universidad de Los Andes and I'm very excited to be your Dais for the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) of MUNUR.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this committee and to the discussions that await us. As delegates, you will represent the interests of your assigned nations while working together to address complex international security challenges. As your Dais, I am honored to guide you throughout this experience.

DISEC serves as one of the principal forums of the United Nations for addressing issues related to international peace, security, disarmament, and global stability. The committee challenges delegates to examine security concerns from multiple perspectives and to develop solutions that balance national interests with international cooperation.

This year, we will be discussing "Reducing the risk of conflict from military aircraft operations in sensitive airspace." As military activity in disputed regions continues to increase, the risk of miscommunication, accidents, and unintended escalation has become a growing concern. This topic invites delegates to explore how states can reduce tensions, strengthen communication mechanisms, and promote safer interactions while protecting their strategic interests.

Model United Nations is more than debate: it is an opportunity to strengthen critical thinking, diplomacy, and collaboration. I encourage you to come prepared, not only with knowledge of your country's position but also with the willingness to engage in meaningful negotiation and constructive dialogue.

Above all, I hope this committee becomes a space where every delegate feels confident contributing their ideas and perspectives. I am here to support you throughout the conference, and I look forward to meeting each of you.

Welcome to DISEC, and best of luck in your preparation.

Danna Calvo

ABSTRACT

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) addresses global challenges that threaten peace and security. In this occasion, DISEC will examine the risks of manned military aircraft operations in sensitive airspace where the legal framework for state aircraft remains fragmented. Military assets often operate in legal grey zones during routine missions such as reconnaissance patrols or high-speed interceptions. Without clear multilateral actions, technical miscalculations and the misidentification of approaching forces can occur in seconds. These tactical errors pose a constant threat of triggering unintended diplomatic and military escalation between states. High-stress environments near strategic borders increase the likelihood of accidental conflict and escalation remains a real possibility.

Two distinct dimensions of risk require urgent attention. First, frequent close-proximity intercepts in sensitive regions like the Taiwan Strait and ADIZ illustrate the danger of miscalculation between military aircraft. Risks are rising as informal deconfliction lines erode. Second, the surge of military activity in shared airspace can jeopardize the security of commercial flights. Recent near-midair collisions in the Caribbean demonstrate the danger when military-civilian coordination fails. DISEC serves as a vital forum for recommending voluntary Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) to mitigate these threats. These measures include establishing dedicated crisis management hotlines and adopting standardized operational procedures for aerial maneuvers. Fostering political consensus on transparency is essential to prevent single encounters from evolving into broader international crises.

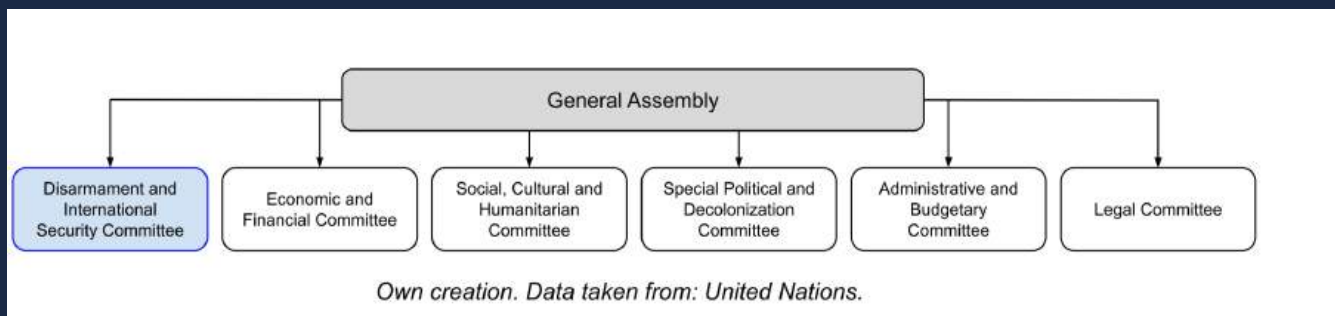


ABOUT THE COMMITTEE



INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is one of the six main committees under the United Nations General Assembly. DISEC addresses topics such as nuclear disarmament, conventional weapons, arms trade and emerging security threats, particularly those linked to technological advancements. Since its creation, the committee has played a significant role in advancing international disarmament efforts and fostering discussions that enabled the adoption of major arms-control agreements.



As every main committee of the General Assembly, DISEC is composed of all 193 member states of the United Nations, with each member state having one vote in committee proceedings. It is important to note that DISEC only meets during the regular annual session of the General Assembly, therefore not operating as a year-round committee.

DISEC serves as a recommendatory body, and a vital diplomatic channel where states voice concerns, contest positions, and construct the political consensus necessary for international agreements to eventually take shape. Its resolutions are not binding, but they frequently lay the groundwork for future treaties and binding agreements that ultimately shape global security policy.



Taken from: UN News

COMMITTEE HISTORY

The United Nations General Assembly established the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), also known as the First Committee, in 1945 following the end of the Second World War. The committee was established in a context where the international community recognized that global security could no longer rely solely on military alliances and balance of power, but that it required multilateral cooperation and arms regulation to prevent future global conflicts. The creation and use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated the unprecedented destructive capacity of modern warfare and made disarmament a central concern of the newly created United Nations system.

During the Cold War, DISEC became a central forum for discussions on arms control and disarmament, particularly regarding nuclear weapons. The military rivalry between global powers created a necessity for international treaties, most notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and advance nuclear disarmament. This treaty became one of the most important pillars of the global non-proliferation regime and remains central to DISEC discussions today.

Following the end of the Cold War, the focus of DISEC expanded beyond nuclear weapons to include other forms of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, serving as a forum and agenda-setter that facilitated the adoption of international agreements such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as initiatives to control small arms and light weapons, which had become the primary weapons used in internal conflicts and civil wars. This shift reflected a broader understanding of security that included intra-state conflict, terrorism, and illicit arms trafficking.



Taken from: The United Nations

In the 21st century, DISEC has increasingly focused on emerging security threats, including cyber warfare, the militarization of outer space, and lethal autonomous weapons systems, as technological development began to transform the nature of warfare.

COMMITTEE COMPETENCE

DISEC, as a main committee of the General Assembly, addresses global challenges related to disarmament or that pose a threat to international peace and security, and that fall within the scope of the United Nations Charter (United Nations, n.d.). According to Resolution 48/87 of the General Assembly, the thematic mandate of the First Committee falls under the following broad categories:

- Nuclear weapons;
- Other weapons of mass destruction;
- Conventional weapons;
- Regional disarmament and security;
- Confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments;
- Outer space (disarmament aspects);
- Disarmament machinery;
- Other disarmament measures;



Taken from: The United Nations

As a recommendatory body, DISEC does not possess the authority to adopt legally binding decisions, authorize the use of force, impose sanctions or negotiate treaties. Instead, the First Committee serves as a forum for consensus building on disarmament and international security issues. These resolutions frequently promote measures such as transparency and confidence-building initiatives, reporting mechanisms, capacity-building programs, voluntary norms of conduct, and frameworks for future negotiations. Although non-binding, these resolutions can shape state behavior, contribute to the development of international norms, and in some cases, lay the groundwork for future treaty-making processes.



Taken from: Humanitarian disarmament

As the Committee's regular sessions take place annually, its work is divided within three main stages. The General Debate involves the initial positions of the nations regarding the current international security circumstances. The Thematic Discussions focus specifically on the broad thematic categories mentioned above, accompanied by high-expert consultations and panels. Finally, the Action on the Draft includes the voting on the resolutions discussed during the previous stages.

However, the Committee's work is strongly supported by other organs and mechanisms that provide technical expertise:

- **United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC):** Although it operates independently from DISEC, the Commission's working groups produce specialized reports and recommendations that can be considered by the First Committee and contribute to broader discussions on disarmament and international security.
- **Conference on Disarmament (CD):** Based in Geneva, the CD is the world's primary multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament agreements. It is important to note that the Conference does not make part of the United Nations ecosystem, but holds a close relationship with the General Assembly, and therefore, the First Committee.
- **United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA):** UNODA is an office within the UN Secretariat. It serves as an administrative body that provides organizational support to UN member states and disarmament committees, including DISEC.
- **Groups of Governmental Experts (GGE):** Established by the General Assembly to examine specific disarmament and international security issues. GGEs bring together experts to conduct technical studies and develop consensus-based recommendations. Their findings frequently inform DISEC debates.

Finally, the First Committee is the only main committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records of its formal proceedings, as stated in Rule 58(a) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. This means that every word spoken during these sessions is documented exactly as delivered, rather than being condensed in summaries as is the case of other committees. This practice is vital for ensuring transparency and confidence-building.



Taken from: UN photo

DISEC

ABOUT THE TOPIC



INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Diverse geopolitical tensions around the world continue to influence the already complex dynamics of airspace. States deploy manned military aircraft to project power, monitor its rivals and maintain defensive preparedness. While most of these activities are standard to protect national sovereignty and security, they risk to take place in sensitive airspace. This term refers to areas where the proximity of air military activities to foreign borders or commercial flights paths creates a potential for tensions or incidents that could further escalate. Especially because manned military air operations can take several forms, for instance, reconnaissance patrols, live-fire training exercises, among others. Addressing this issue is more relevant now due an increase in the density of global air traffic, making it harder to coordinate military-civilian operations. As states continue to pursue strategic competition, the risk of a routine mission turning into a conflict or incident has become a real possibility.



Increased military activity near civilian air routes during US attacks on Iran (2026). Taken from: Facebook.

The danger of military air operations, even during peacetime, derives mainly from misidentification and miscalculation. In high-stress environments, a pilot or ground controller has a matter of seconds to make important decisions. For example, when it comes to misidentification, it is unknown whether an approaching aircraft is a legitimate threat or a routine patrol. It could even be a stranded civilian airliner (Yates & Sharman, n.d.). While, on the other hand, miscalculations involve technical factors. Aerial interceptions, for example, are a standard procedure. However, they involve high-speed close proximity maneuvers that leave the pilot and controllers with zero margin for error. Furthermore, technological capabilities such as GPS jamming can interrupt navigation radars, that leave space for accidental collisions or accidental intrusions into sensitive airspace (Ferro, 2026). Once an incident occurs, the escalation dynamics are difficult to predict: diplomatic crises, direct retaliation and other risks must be avoided.

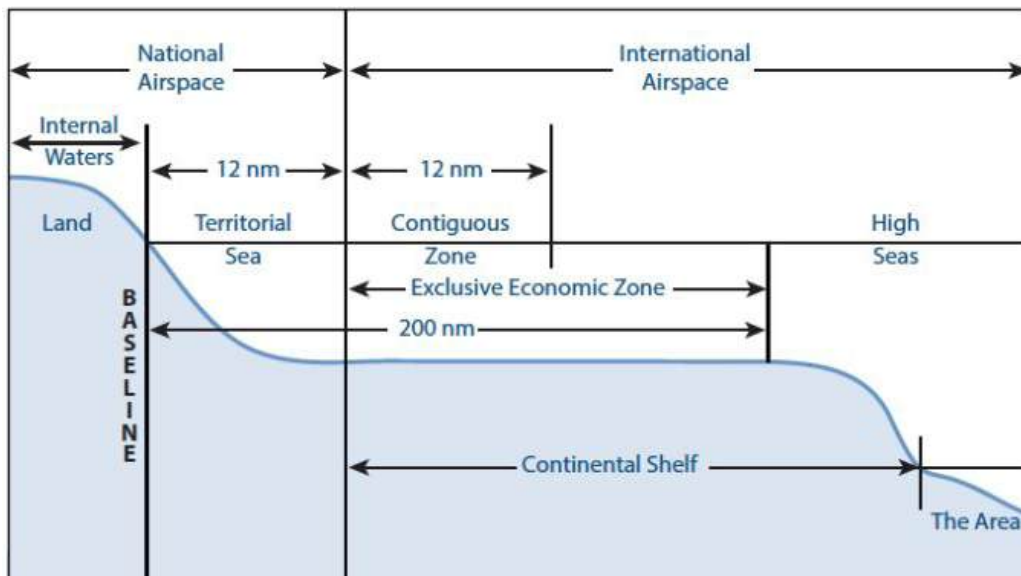
Sovereign vs. international airspace

Understanding where these operations take place is equally important for the topic, as airspace divisions each hold different characteristics. The distinction between sovereign and international airspace is the primary legal framework for understanding airspace interactions. Sovereign airspace comprehends airspace above a state's territory and extends onto its territorial waters. The state can exercise full jurisdiction and sovereignty over the sovereign airspace (UNCLOS, n.d.).



Example of the sovereign airspace of a country. Taken from: Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative

On the other hand, international airspace exists beyond this limit. Both civil and military aircraft have freedom of overflight over international airspace, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Overflights near sovereign airspace, but legally occurring in international airspace, can be perceived as an imminent threat by a defending state.



Taken from: Drishti IAS

Legal distinction of aircraft

The challenge of managing sensitive airspace is also complicated by the distinction between civil and state aircraft (military aircraft). Civil aircraft include commercial airlines and private flights, which operate under a rigorous and vast regulatory framework established by the Chicago Convention and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). On the contrary, state aircraft, which encompass military, customs and police aircraft, are exempt from standard civil aviation rules (SKYbrary, n.d.). This creates a significant regulatory gap where different types of aircraft share the same airspace.



Examples of military aircraft, a subcategory of state aircraft. Taken from: Global Power on Facebook.



Taken from: Free3D

Scope of the debate

The First Committee will only evaluate peacetime scenarios. This clarification is necessary because when armed conflict is present, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) applies and governs military operations under a completely different legal regime. The situations relevant for this committee are those where no armed conflict is taking place.

Accordingly, this guide examines situations in which peacetime military aircraft operations create risks of unintended incidents, diplomatic crises or interstate escalation before they materialize into hostilities or retaliations. This includes both military-military encounters and situations in which military operations directly affect civilian aviation.

Finally, the question of why states conduct manned military aircraft operations in sensitive airspace, and whether those operations are politically or legally legitimate falls outside of DISEC's mandate. Military operations exist and will continue to be pursued under the current geopolitical circumstances of the globe. The First Committee should rather treat how to prevent incidents in sensitive airspace that could trigger involuntary escalation between states. DISEC should serve as a forum to recommend Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), transparency mechanisms and other initiatives. These include clear procedures for military-civil coordination, the timely sharing of risk-related information between states, and the implementation of preventive measures designed to reduce the likelihood of accidental escalation (UNODA, n.d.).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Origins of the regulatory gap

The legal framework for military aircraft in international airspace was never really designed to regulate them in the first place. The 1919 Paris Convention established that states have full sovereignty over their airspace, but when it came to military aircraft, it simply required them to get special authorization (Paris Convention, 1919, art. 1, 32). In 1944, the Chicago Convention was signed and it carried the same logic: military aircraft were explicitly excluded from the entire framework (Chicago Convention, 1944, art. 3), left to be governed by bilateral arrangements and state practice rather than any treaty. States simply were not willing to subject their military aviation to multilateral oversight, so they didn't (Bourbonniere Haeck, 2001).



Taken from: IFATCA

The consequences of that choice became impossible to ignore as military aviation expanded through the postwar period. By leaving military aircraft in a legal grey zone, the international community essentially guaranteed that when incidents happened there would be no solid framework to fall back on. This was a deliberate political decision made by states that had just lived through a world war and had no interest in constraining their military capabilities. That decision, however, is exactly what set the stage for the dangerous encounters the Cold War would produce.

The Cold War and the normalization of military encounters

For the understanding on how to face the risk of conflict from military aircraft operations in sensitive airspace, it's important to trace back to the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union operated military aircraft closely to strategic and allied regions of each other in a repeated manner, especially near borders, areas where surveillance and sovereignty intersected, and over the High Seas. This created a persistent environment in which military presence, warning behavior, and interception were routine but highly dangerous.



Taken from: Smithsonian magazine

Aerial surveillance, border defense, and interception became routine practices as both superpowers tried to monitor one another's military activity and signal resolve. In practice, this meant that aircraft were often operating in conditions where each side saw the other's presence as a potential threat, and where routine patrols or surveillance missions could quickly become high-risk encounters. The air domain therefore became a space of constant proximity, where misinterpretation could escalate into political crisis (Naval Historical Foundation, 2017). The danger was not only collision or technical error, but also the possibility that one state would read the other's movement as preparation for attack (Air & Space Forces Magazine, 2001).

Early attempts at risk reduction: INCSEA

Now, the legal logic behind later regulation was rooted in the tension between sovereignty and safety. On the one hand, states claimed exclusive authority over the airspace above their territory and viewed foreign aircraft near that space as a violation or threat. On the other hand, the international system also had to protect the safety of civil aviation and prevent military responses from turning into unnecessary catastrophes. This tension explains why states eventually felt pressure to establish rules on identification, warning, interception, and restraint rather than leaving such encounters entirely to unilateral judgment.

A first major institutional response was the bilateral 1972 Incident at Sea Agreement. According to the U.S. the agreement emerged after years of concern over incidents involving ships and aircraft operation in close proximity, and negotiations were initiated because the United States and the Soviet Union both recognized the need to reduce dangerous encounters. The agreement reflected the idea that repeated close interactions between military forces could not be left to ad hoc judgment alone. It sought to reduce the chances that a routine encounter would escalate because of misinterpretation, excessive maneuvering, or weak communication (U.S. Naval Institute, 2018).



Taken from: Naval Historical Foundation

The Cold War generated a pattern of encounters in which the need for restraint became impossible to ignore. In that sense, this period established an early model of how great powers can attempt to regulate dangerous interactions without ending strategic competition itself. INCSEA therefore stands as an early example of practical risk reduction in a hostile strategic environment.

KAL 007 and civil aviation



Taken from: The Aviation Geek Club.

A second decisive turning point came with the shoot-down of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in 1983. KAL 007 was destroyed in a military-security context. The civilian airliner entered restricted Soviet airspace during heightened Cold War tensions. A Soviet Su-15 shot down the airliner mistaking it for a military intelligence aircraft. The incident showed that when identification procedures, warning standards, and rules on the use of force are unclear or applied too rigidly, the result can affect commercial flights and potentially a major international crisis (Dickinson Law, n.d.).

The aftermath of KAL 007 helped drive the adoption of Article 3 bis of the Chicago Convention in 1984. It reaffirmed that states must refrain from using weapons against civil aircraft and must refrain from using weapons against or the lives of those on board. In effect, it translated the lesson of a tragedy into an international legal constraint. That makes Article 3 bis one of the clearest legal responses to the risk created by military-aircraft operations near commercial aviation (ICAO, 1984).

Taken together, these developments show two different but connected responses to aerial risk. INCSEA, represented an effort to reduce the danger of military encounters through practical rules of conduct, while Article 3 bis addresses the specific vulnerability of civil aviation when military interception occurs. One focused on managing military decision-making. Both emerged from the same broader historical reality: in sensitive airspace, ambiguity can be deadly.

Beyond the Cold War

The end of the Cold War did not eliminate the risks associated with military aircraft operations. In 2001, a United States EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft collided with a Chinese fighter aircraft near Hainan Island after being intercepted during a surveillance mission. The collision resulted in the death of the Chinese pilot and forced the American aircraft to make an emergency landing in China. Although no armed conflict existed between the two states, the incident generated a major diplomatic crisis. It demonstrated that many of the dynamics of the Cold War remained in the twenty-first century (Air & Space Forces Magazine, 2001).



Taken from: The Aviationist

Although the geopolitical setting has changed, the core problem has not disappeared: states still face the challenge of balancing deterrence, sovereignty, and safety in environments where misreading an aircraft's purpose can have serious consequences. The Cold War therefore serves as the key historical testing ground for understanding how legal and operational rules can reduce the risks of military aviation.

CURRENT CONTEXT

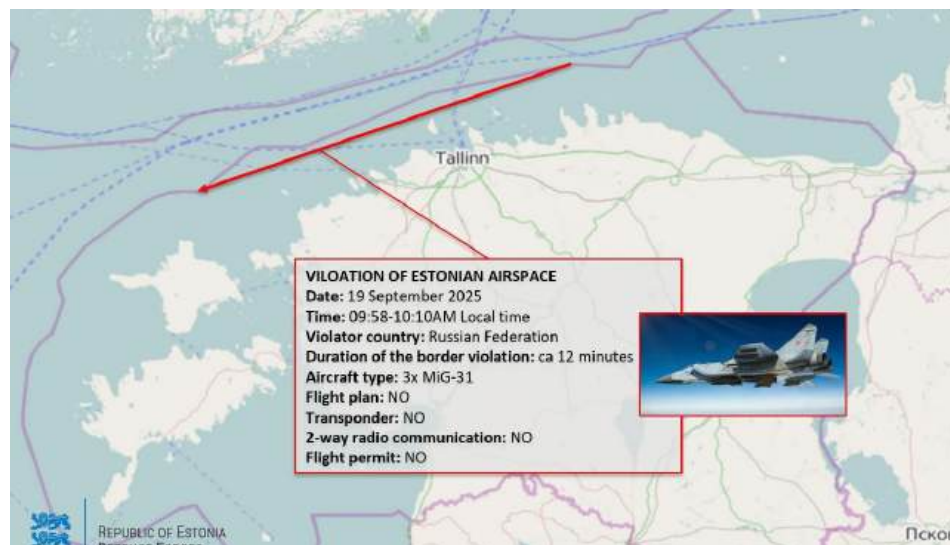
Military trends during peacetime

Military aircraft routinely operate during peacetime for deterrence, national defense or alliance commitments. These activities are a standard characteristic of state security policy. They reflect strategic competition between major powers, in which states have continuous presence in sensitive airspace. On top of that, global military activities have increased in the last few years. This is caused by escalation of tensions in the Middle East, joint drills in the Indo-Pacific and NATO deterrence activities. As a result, several types of military air operations have increased during peacetime: each having different implications for international security.

- **Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Flights:** ISR are a core element of peacetime situational awareness and early warning systems. They are conducted by manned military aircraft, equipped with sensors and radar systems to collect information on an adversary's activities or capabilities.

Recent patterns show ISR flights being frequently identified bordering sovereign airspace. And even though they are lawful when conducted in international airspace, their proximity to borders can trigger defensive responses from states. As a result, these missions increase the possibility of interceptions, miscalculations or unintended escalation.

For example, Russian reconnaissance aircraft operating near the Baltic Sea have been numerous identified by NATO authorities near Poland and Estonia. On some occasions, they have breached sovereign airspace. They were later escorted away from allied airspace by fighter jets (NATO, 2025).



Taken from: Estonian World

- **Interceptions:** When military aircraft operate frequently near sensitive airspace, aerial interceptions have also become a routine response, even during peacetime. This happens when an unidentified or potentially unauthorized aircraft enters sovereign airspace. Fighter jets are usually deployed to identify, monitor, and if necessary, escort the aircraft away. Military to military interceptions are regulated mostly by national security protocols.

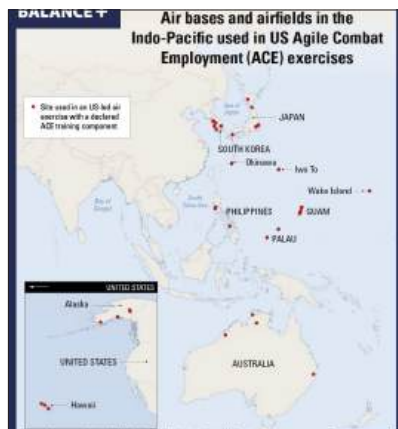
These operations involve high-risk maneuvers because they are conducted by high-speed jets. Leaving pilots and ground controllers seconds for making critical decisions, increasing the risk for miscommunications and miscalculations.

For example, in 2024, an American F-16 approached a Russian Su-35 following safety protocols. The Russian pilot responded with an “aggressive” and “unsafe” maneuver (Gordon, 2024).



Taken from: Task and purpose

- **Air Exercises:** Air exercises are large-scale training events where military aircraft conduct coordinated operations to simulate combat scenarios. These operations are used to enhance operational readiness and alliance coordination under controlled conditions.



Taken from: IISSorg

In practice, these exercises are conducted in heavily restricted airspace. Some exercises may include live-fire components, known as Live-Fire Training (LFX). These exercises are often large-scale and involve multiple states operating simultaneously, further increasing the intensity of activities in regional airspace.

As a matter of fact, the United States conducted its largest joint air drill in years in 2025. It involved more than 350 aircraft, 12,000 personnel and several allied countries (Atlamazoglou, 2025). At the same time, the United States is known to conduct joint drills with Japan and South Korea, which have raised tensions with neighboring North Korea.

- **Strategic overflights:** Apart from routine air exercises, states increasingly use strategic overflights as a way of projecting power. These missions are not primarily designed for training purposes, rather displaying operational capabilities and the ability to operate in sensitive airspace. Because the missions usually take place near sensitive airspace, they can cause defensive responses, ranging from aerial interceptions to heightened alert levels from neighboring states.

In some cases, these missions are conducted jointly by major powers, in an effort to show alliance coordination. A recent example involves a joint Russian-Chinese operation near Alaska. Bomber planes with nuclear capabilities were included in the exercise (Defense Security Asia, 2026).



Taken from: LBCI Lebanon

Civil aviation vulnerability

Civil aviation must navigate a complex use of airspace, where commercial routes frequently risk to intersect with sensitive airspace. For example, restricted zones can be temporarily designated for hazardous military activities like live-fire training or maneuvers, and are only transited by civil aircraft when authorized. During large-scale military exercises or official operations, civil aircraft are frequently rerouted to alternative corridors or directed to lower their altitude to avoid “hot airspace” (SKYbrary, n.d.). These disruptions can create significant pressure for civilian Air Traffic Control (ATC), as controllers must manage civil aircraft within limited corridors to avoid restricted areas.

On top of that, technical and procedural disparities make the situation more complex even during peacetime. It is now clear that civil aircraft adhere to vast safety standards. However, military aircraft are granted exemptions. For example, military aircraft may operate without ACAS II, which is a collision-avoidance technology required for civil aircraft (SKYbrary, n.d.). Some countries have installed ACAS II in their military aircraft, but it can be turned off during critical operations. The requirements for other positioning and tracking systems are also flexible, as they’re mostly determined by domestic authorities (Bellamy, 2019).

This lack of global standards can put civilian ATC in difficult conditions, as critical information such as speed, positions and even intentions of military aircraft can remain unknown. These factors create a margin for miscalculation risks that can jeopardize the security of civil aircraft. Even during peacetime, the actions of non-communicative military aircraft have led to dangerous encounters. In 2014, near southern Sweden, a Russian fighter jet almost collided with a commercial airliner (VOA, 2015).

The current legal framework governing aircraft is still fragmented and asymmetric. Civil aviation is still regulated thoroughly through the Chicago Convention and the regulations created by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). On the other hand, state aircraft are only briefly mentioned in Article 3 of the Convention and are primarily governed by customary international law.



Taken from: Aviation international News

Instrument	To whom it applies	Brief explanation	Legal status
Chicago Convention	Civil aircraft with a brief mention to military aircraft	The Chicago Convention grants jurisdiction of civil aircraft activities to the ICAO	Binding to states that have ratified it
Article 3(c) of the Chicago Convention	Military aircraft	Establishes that military aircraft are subject to special authorization when entering foreign airspace	It is a binding treaty provision, but reflects customary international law
Article 3(d) of the Chicago Convention	Military aircraft	Requires that military aircraft must operate with due regard and caution to safeguard civil aircraft activities	It is a binding treaty provision, and a widely accepted customary norm
Article 3bis	Military aircraft	Procedures for interception military-civil encounters	Binding to states that have ratified it
ICAO Annex 2 Rules of the Air	Civil aircraft	General flight rules, visual flight rules and instrument flight rules	Binding to states that have ratified it
ICAO Guidance on Civil/Military Cooperation Draft	Both	Set of global guidelines and policies designed to optimize airspace capacity and safety	Non-binding (soft law-advisory)
Manual concerning Interception of Civil Aircraft (Doc. 9433)	Both	It outlines universal procedures, visual signals, and safety recommendations for military and police authorities when intercepting a civil aircraft to ensure flight safety.	No, they serve as guiding principles or soft-law

Emerging technological challenges

Operational risks are not limited to the behavior of pilots or ground controllers during close air military encounters. Advancements in military technology have introduced new challenges that can affect near aircraft

before pilots are even aware of a developing situation. Electronic warfare systems can affect navigation and can reduce an aircraft detectability. These technological capabilities can influence both civilian and military aircraft operating in shared airspace.

- **GPS jamming and spoofing:** Almost every modern aircraft, whether civilian or military, depends on satellite navigation (GPS) to know its location in the sky. Two related problems threaten that dependence. First, GPS jamming blocks the satellite signal, so the aircraft's navigation system loses its position entirely. Spoofing is more complex, as it feeds the aircraft with a fake satellite signal that looks legitimate, resulting in the system displaying a wrong navigational position. (FAA, 2026). Electronic warfare military aircraft have the capacity to execute GPS jamming, such as the U.S. Air Force EA-37B. Nonetheless, most GPS jamming and spoofing transmitters are ground-based. Rather than a theoretical situation, disruptions have become a reality with over 700 civil aircraft in the Gulf Region experiencing spoofing events by March of 2026 (Ivannikova, 2026).



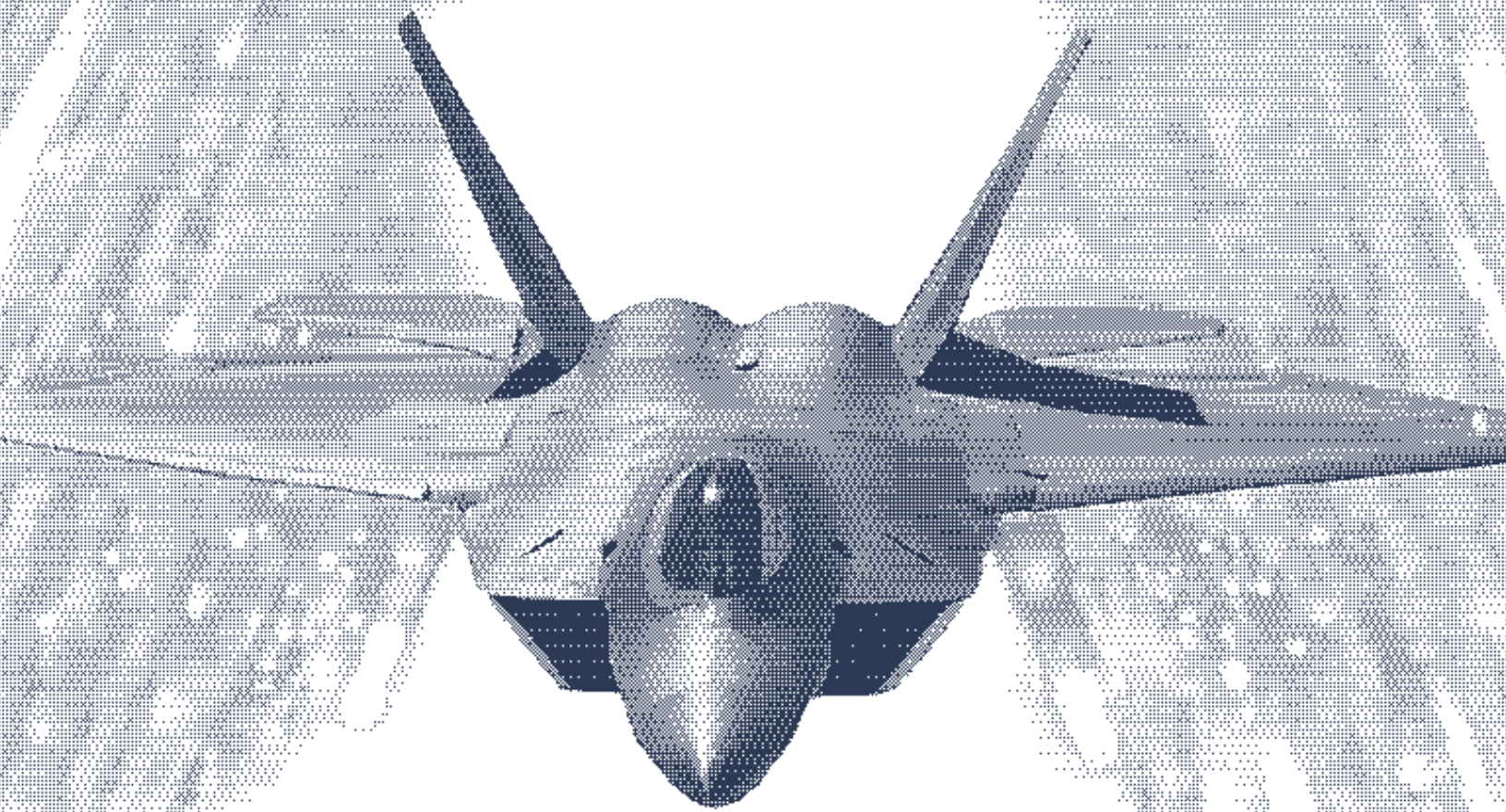
Taken from: Airforce Technology

- **Stealth Aircraft:** The purpose of a stealth design of a military aircraft is to shrink what is called the aircraft's "radar cross-section". This is so that on a radar screen, a fighter jet can appear more like a small bird than a large metal object, buying the fighter extra time to fly untracked (Hutchinson, 2021). Aircraft such as the U.S. Air Force F-22, F-35 and China's J-20 are built with this technology. A stealth

aircraft is not designed to hide from civilian air traffic control and is not a direct source of civilian disruptions the way GPS jamming can be. Rather, stealth aircraft reduce the warning time a defending state's radar operators have to identify an incoming aircraft. This significantly impacts the small decision window that may lead to miscalculation or misidentification of threats.



Taken from: CGTN



CASE OF STUDY A

**MILITARY AIR ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN CHINA, TAI-
WAN AND ALLIES (2024 2026)**

CURRENT SITUATION

The Taiwan Strait is one of the most heavily monitored and operationally congested corridors of manned military aviation anywhere in the world. At its narrowest point the waterway is roughly 130 kilometers wide. However, it lies over overlapping air defense identification zones (ADIZs) administered by Taiwan and transited daily by aircraft of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). Manned fighter jets, bombers and reconnaissance aircraft from multiple air forces now operate in close proximity on a near-daily basis, a density that did not exist a decade ago.

Before going further, it's worth clarifying what an ADIZ actually is. An Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) is not sovereign airspace. It is rather a zone that a state unilaterally declares around its territory, in which any aircraft is expected to identify itself so that the state can assess whether it poses a threat before it reaches actual national airspace (FPRI, 2024). Taiwan's ADIZ is far larger than its territorial airspace and overlaps in places with airspace China also treats as its own. This is precisely why "ADIZ entry" and "airspace violation" are not the same thing.



Taken from: Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative

Entries by PLA aircraft into Taiwan's ADIZ reached unprecedented levels in 2024, with both the total number of missions and the number of days on which entries occurred continuing to climb (Jamestown, 2025). Independent tracking based on Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense data recorded 3,615 PLA aircraft missions into the ADIZ in 2024, more than double the 1,669 recorded in 2023. That escalation did not pause going into 2025: a further 739 aircraft were tracked in January and February 2025 alone (Janes, 2025).

A parallel trend is the erosion of the Taiwan Strait median line, an informal boundary drawn in 1955 that for decades served as a tacit deconfliction line between Taiwanese and Chinese forces. Since PLA operations shifted focus to the Strait, that line has been crossed so routinely that analysts now describe it as effectively erased (Global Taiwan Institute, 2024).



Taken from: The Japan Times

Taiwan classifies the PLA aircraft responsible for daily activity as "main combat aircraft," a category that includes fighter jets and bombers. Alongside "main auxiliary combat aircraft" such as aircraft specialized in electronic warfare. Beyond routine patrol activity, the PLA has executed a series of large exercises that produce sharp short-term spikes in mission density. Mission Joint Sword-2024B involved 153 aircraft missions in October 2024, of which 111 entered the ADIZ. Strait Thunder-2025A directed 135 missions in April 2025, 68 of which crossed into the ADIZ (Li, 2026). The rising tensions sparked air military activities near the strait and in the South China Sea that involved other countries interested in the region, such as the United States. The following are mere examples of constant patterns of interactions between foreign military aircraft in the zone.

- **Interceptions:** In 2023, a PLA J-16 fighter flew directly in front of a U.S. Air Force RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft, closing to roughly 400 feet. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command called the maneuver “unnecessarily aggressive and unprofessional” (ABC News, 2023). Later that year, A PLA J-11 fighter came within roughly 10 feet of a U.S. B-52 bomber during nighttime operations over the South China Sea. The Pentagon said the Chinese pilot displayed poor airmanship and appeared unaware of how close he came to causing a collision (Martinez & Seyler, 2023).



Actual footage from the J-16 interception taken from the RC-135 aircraft. Taken from: ABC News

- **Shadowing:** PLA aircraft shadowed a U.S. Navy surveillance plane as it flew through the Taiwan Strait in international airspace. Chinese officials publicly labeled the transit a “provocative move,” while the U.S. described the flight as consistent with international law (CBS News, 2023).
- **Exercises involving flares:** During PLA exercises designated “Justice Mission 2025,” a J-16 fighter fired flares at a Taiwanese F-16 that had been deployed to intercept it after it crossed the median line. A separate J-16 was reported flying closely behind another F-16 in what a defense-ministry account described as effectively a firing position (Taiwan News, 2026).

On top of the rising incidents, there is an absence of a reliable prevention architecture for manned aviation in this specific region. The only bilateral tools in the region are the U.S.-China 2014 Memorandum of Understanding on Notification of Major Military Activities and the 2015 annex on Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters, both of which are voluntary and contain limited operational detail. Taiwan itself sits entirely outside these mechanisms and has no equivalent bilateral instrument with the authorities in Beijing at all. The result is a corridor where reaction windows are small and the few crisis-communication tools that exist between the U.S. and China do not extend to the Taiwan-specific context at all.



Taken from: Observatorio de la politica china

RELEVANT ACTORS

- **People’s Republic of China PLA Eastern Theater Command:** The Eastern Theater Command is the operational headquarters responsible for the vast majority of PLA fighter, bomber, and airborne-early-warning missions around Taiwan and through the Strait. Its spokesperson has repeatedly stated that PLA forces “monitor” foreign aircraft “the whole course” of their transit (Radio Free Asia, 2025).
- **The Republic of China Air Force (Taiwan Air Force):** The Republic of China Air Force operates in closest proximity to the PLA aircraft on a daily basis. It launches combat air patrol missions to intercept and monitor PLA activities detected in the ADIZ. The intensity of the missions has shortened the reaction window for ground controllers interpreting the intentions of approaching PLA aircraft.
- **United States Indo-Pacific Command and 7th Fleet:** U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the 7th Fleet conduct the reconnaissance, bomber and cargo transits that appear in most of the close-intercept incidents cited in this case study. They consistently describe these operations as routine exercises of international freedom-of-navigation and freedom-of-overflight rights beyond any coastal state’s territorial sea. Pentagon officials are also the source of the characteristics of many PLA intercepts as part of a coordinated coercive campaign rather than isolated pilot error.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The significance of these situations is not primarily about sovereignty claims in the broader China-Taiwan context, which lie outside this committee’s mandate. Rather, the issue is about the physical proximity of military aircraft operating without a reliable toolkit of operational standards and communication practices during military-military encounters. A practical approach is revising the application of procedures such as separation distances, prohibitions on aiming weapons or firing flares during an intercept, previous notification of exercises or the creation of crisis management hotlines. Regarding the hotlines, separating operational safety channels from politically symbolic head-of-state hotlines is vital. For the sake of these practical revision of procedures, it could be useful to revise the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) work on Military confidence-building measures. These set of measures promote transparency and allow the operations of each actor to be pursued following protocols that avoid unintended escalation that could lead to a full on conflict in the region. Therefore, if one of the pillars of the importance of the topic is prevention of incidents, the other very important aspect is deescalation when unintended incidents have already occurred.

DISEC

CASE OF STUDY B

US AIR ACTIVITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN (2025)



CURRENT SITUATION

As part of a larger security and counter-drug policy, the United States greatly increased its military presence in the vicinity of Venezuela during the second half of 2025. These activities were conducted under “Operation Southern Spear”, a military campaign that included fighter planes, surveillance aircraft, naval deployments, and aerial refueling stations around the Caribbean. The action was part of the Trump administration’s larger pressure campaign against Nicolás Maduro’s government (CNN, 2025).

Illusion-avoidance technology (ICAO n.d.). In busy airspace, even a brief loss of visibility can create dangerous situations.

As tensions around Venezuela continued to rise, aviation authorities began issuing formal warnings. In November 2025, the United States’ Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released security NOTAM KICZ A0012/25, cautioning airlines about possible hazards linked to military operations and instability in the Maiquetía Flight Information Region (FIR). The advisory stressed that the risks were not limited to a specific altitude, meaning that commercial departures, arrivals, and overflights across the region could all be affected.

WAR FOOTING

US Military assets take position near Venezuela amid fears of all-out war



Taken from: *The Sun*

The growing militarization of the Caribbean region quickly became a source of concern for the international aviation community. Civil aviation depends on constant coordination between aircraft, air traffic controllers, and surveillance systems, especially in crowded airspace. Under ICAO regulations, civil aircraft travelling through heavily used flight corridors are expected to keep their transponders activated so they remain visible to radar systems and onboard co-



Taken from: *San Juan CERAP*

The warning had immediate consequences. Several international carriers, among them Iberia, TAP Air Portugal, LATAM, and Avianca, adjusted or suspended routes involving Venezuelan airspace altogether. Around the same time, aviation monitoring groups such as OPSGROUP reported increasing problems tied to GPS interference and weak coordination between military and civilian authorities, adding further uncertainty for pilots and operators flying through the southern Caribbean (OPSGROUP, 2025). It was with this context of growing geopolitical tension and operational instability that the events of December 12 and 13, 2025 unfolded.

Near Mid-Air Collision Between JetBlue Flight 1112 and a U.S. Air Force Tanker in the Curaçao FIR (December 2025)

On December 12, 2025, JetBlue Flight 1112 departed from Curaçao International Airport to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. The aircraft was an Airbus A320 and it was carrying approximately 150 passengers. The plane was cleared to climb toward cruising altitude. Shortly after departure, the crew of JetBlue Flight 1112 encountered what appeared to be a military aircraft that crossed directly in front of them. Later communications obtained by several media organizations revealed that the military aircraft could not be detected on the commercial aircraft Traffic Collision Avoidance System (ACAS) or civilian radar because its transponder had apparently been turned off. Because of this the JetBlue pilots suddenly had to stop their climb to avoid what could have become a midair collision. During conversation with air traffic control, one of the pilots reportedly called the situation “outrageous”, stressing that the aircraft had crossed directly in front of them without appearing on any onboard warning systems (BBC News, 2025).

Reports published afterward identified the aircraft as a U.S. Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker that had been supporting military operations in the region (CNN, 2025). The KC-135 is primarily used for aerial refueling and often assists surveillance aircraft, combat missions, and other long-range operations. Although military aircraft sometimes deactivate transponders during sensitive missions, the incident sparked criticism because the tanker was apparently flying close to an active civilian flight corridor without sufficient coordination with civilian air traffic authorities.



Taken from: TWZ

Concerns intensified only a day later. On December 13, 2025, pilots operating a Falcon 900EX business jet from Aruba to Miami reported another close encounter near Venezuelan airspace involving a large unidentified aircraft (CNN, 2025). Audio recordings later reviewed by journalists and aviation specialists suggested that the aircraft passed dangerously close during the jet’s climb, raising fears that similar military activity was continuing across the region.

Since the two incidents happened within less than twenty-four hours, many observers no longer viewed the situation as an isolated operational mistake. Instead, it began to look like a broader aviation safety issue with international implications. Soon afterward, U.S. Southern Command confirmed that it was aware of both events and stated that an internal review was underway. JetBlue also confirmed that its crew had reported the incident through the appropriate federal channels and reiterated that passenger safety remained the airline’s top priority (BBC News, 2025).



Taken from: OPSGROUP

It is significant that both encounters occurred inside the Curaçao FIR rather than the Maiquetía FIR, covered by the NOTAM issued by the FAA. Therefore, civil aircraft were regularly operating in airspace where there was no active security notification, despite the abnormal surge of military aircraft in the region.

The incidents also deepened political tensions between Washington and Caracas. U.S. authorities continued defending the operations as necessary for regional security and anti-narcotics efforts. In the end, the near encounters came to represent more than just technical aviation failures. They also reflected the wider risks that can emerge when geopolitical disputes begin affecting civilian transportation systems directly and the consequences it can have in broader geopolitical conflicts.



Obtenido de: CNN

RELEVANT ACTORS

- **United States Air Force/ U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM):** The military actions surrounding the incident involved direct involvement from SOUTHCOM and the U.S. Air Force. Operation Southern Spear was coordinated by SOUTHCOM, which is in charge of American military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Maintaining military secrecy, strategic adaptability, and operational efficacy throughout the region was their key concern. However, concerns about aviation safety and accountability were raised by the use of transponder-off activities close to civilian air routes.
- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):** By having the authority to issue NOTAMs alerting aircraft of the increased dangers near sensitive airspace, the FAA played a crucial role. The agency has minimal control over military flight protocols, despite having responsibility over civilian aviation safety regulations. As a result, there was a governance gap whereby the organization that could recognize the threat did not have the power to completely remove the operational risk.
- **International Airlines:** Several international carriers became indirect stakeholders after modifying or suspending operations due to the deteriorating regional security environment. Airlines such as Iberia, LATAM, TAP Air Portugal, and Avianca faced operational disruptions and financial consequences associated with the instability affecting Venezuelan airspace. JetBlue Airways, following the near-collision incident on Flight 1112, emerged as the primary civilian actor. The airline's top priorities were cooperation with government authorities and passenger safety.

- **Curaçao Air Traffic Control Authorities:** Due to reports that the military aircraft did not show up in radar systems, air traffic controllers in Curaçao were directly impacted.
- **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO):** The main international organization in charge of overseeing international aviation safety regulations. Its frameworks for air traffic control, transponder visibility, and civil-military coordination are essential to comprehending the case's operational and legal aspects.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Operation Southern Spear officially concluded after the extraction of Nicolás Maduro from Venezuela by the U.S. Military Forces. Nonetheless, the December 2025 incidents should not be viewed as isolated events. Rather, they are an illustration of broader challenges likely to emerge in future military operations or activities conducted near air civilian routes. Most importantly, they demonstrate how even unintended military-civil incidents have the potential to generate diplomatic friction if effective coordination mechanisms are absent.

These circumstances raise questions about the practical implementation of civil-military coordination frameworks in airspace. Existing procedures can be insufficient when missions involving national security limit the exchange of information with civilian authorities. Therefore, it is vital to explore efficient and practical voluntary practices, crisis management mechanisms, among other materializing measures. On top of that, it is important to take into account the different actors that play a role during coordination of civil-military airspace activities. For instance, how responsibility for preventing, reporting, investigating and learning from incidents should be approached both by military and civil authorities.



Taken from: Getty images

QARMIAS

- How should states be required to notify civilian air traffic authorities before conducting military operations near shared commercial aviation routes?
- How can the “due regard” principle in Article 3(d) of the Chicago Convention be operationalized into concrete, enforceable obligations for military aircraft?
- What investigation and accountability mechanisms should exist when military operations endanger or disrupt civil aviation in sensitive airspace?
- What operational practices conducted by military aircraft most increase the likelihood of unintended incidents or unintended escalation?
- How can states reduce the risk of unintended incidents or escalation without compromising legitimate operational or national security objectives?
- To what extent should existing international aviation and military guiding frameworks be expanded?
- What technological developments in the equipment of manned military aircraft pose a new challenge to mid-air interactions?

Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS): “Aircraft system based on transponder signals. ACAS II interrogates the transponders of nearby aircraft (‘intruders’) and from the replies tracks their altitude and range and issues alerts to the pilots, as appropriate. ACAS II will not detect non-transponder-equipped aircraft” (SKYbrary, n.d.).

Civil Aircraft: Aircraft used for non-military purposes, including commercial aviation, cargo transport, and private travel.

Flight Information Region (FIR): “Specified region of airspace in which a flight information service and an alerting service are provided. Operational control is delegated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to a specific country. FIR has nothing to do with sovereign airspace, it is a way of managing air and traffic control” (GLOBE AIR, n.d.).

International airspace: International airspace comprehends zones referred to as the High Seas and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Both civil and military aircraft have freedom of overflight over international airspace, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Manned military aircraft: Aircraft operated by military personnel and used for defense, surveillance, training, or combat purposes, as opposed to unmanned systems.

Misidentification: The incorrect classification of an aircraft, which can lead to dangerous or even fatal consequences.

Navigational interference: Disruptions to an aircraft’s navigation systems, often caused by military activities such as jamming or electronic warfare.

Notice to Airmen (NOTAM): Real-time safety notification that provides information about temporary hazards or changes that are not included in standard flight maps (CAA Infringement Tutorial, 2026). A NOTAM can only be issued by authorized aviation authorities.

Sovereign airspace: The portion of the atmosphere controlled by a State above its territory, including land and territorial waters, limits stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

GLOSSARY

Sorties: “A short, quick attack by a military force, such as a small group of soldiers or an aircraft, made against an enemy position” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

Stealth aircraft: “Specially designed military planes that utilize advanced technology to evade detection during combat operations, giving them a strategic advantage. While it is impossible for any aircraft to be completely invisible, stealth designs significantly minimize radar cross-sections by either absorbing or reflecting radar waves, enabling them to appear smaller and less detectable” (Hutchinson, 2022).

Transponder: Aircraft use transponders to broadcast their altitude, speed, and unique identity code. When ground radar “interrogates” the plane, the transponder instantly replies, allowing controllers to safely track and separate flights (Learn ATC, n.d.).

GLOSSARY

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