

The North American Chapter of the International Society for Military Ethics is hosting its annual conference in Cleveland OHIO, 31 Jan-1 Feb 2019. This year's theme is "Space War and Ethics"

CONTEXT

2019 will be the fiftieth anniversary of Neil Armstrong's walking on the moon. For over thirty years after the moon landing the only superpowers big enough to be contenders in the space race were the USA and the USSR. In the past ten years, however, much has changed in the space environment – specifically there has been an exponential increase in the number of countries and companies now operating there. What was considered science fiction only twenty years ago is now close to being a reality. As our reliance on space through the use of satellites has increased, so too has the risk of conflict in space.

The US Pentagon plans to launch Space Force as its sixth separate military service. As a developing warfighting domain, Space Warfare needs to be treated with the same ethical scrutiny as all other domains of conflict, and the new Space Force needs to be subjected to the same scrutiny as the Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard. This conference offers an opportunity to bring together ethicists from around the world to debate questions about space warfare and its interaction with military ethics.

THEMES

Papers for the International Society of Military Ethics Conference on "Space War and Ethics" are invited to explore the issues surrounding the military use of space in regard to conflict. Some suggested areas of discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- Do the requirements of Just War Theory (JWT) apply to the space environment? Or is space warfare, like cyber, a special case? Should it be considered separately from JWT principles (such as those of *jus in bello*)? What are the ethics of space warfare?
- What are some of the problems posed by non-state groups and rogue states taking part in terrorist acts in space?
- What will be the requirement for new technologies in space war; what will be the impact on the human nature of war; what are the repercussions back on geopolitical relationships and conflicts?
- Much of the world now relies on satellites for navigation, time-keeping, food distribution, health systems, financial markets, communication, etc. Does this heavy reliance on satellites by civilian communities then mean that satellites should be given protected status in war, in a way similar to power plants and dams? Does the military have "first rights" to the contested area of space, before civilian uses of space?
- Is space warfare the ultimate example of remote war? Does this lower the threshold for war in space? Or will be the consequences be perceived as so remote that it might actually increase the threat of space warfare?
- Space debris is increasing as a problem for all nations in their use of space. How would a conflict in space be impacted by and impact on the space debris problem, and does this alter how we should conduct conflict in space?
- What problems does the rapid increase of commercial operators in the space environment (such as Space X) pose for the future of space conflict? Should private companies be allowed to have private security firms protecting and policing their space-based assets? What is the role of industry in space warfare?

- What are some of the ethical challenges around the proposed creation of the US “Space Force”?
- What are some of the problems of dual-use technologies in the space environment?
- The Woomera Manual on the International Law of Military Space Operations aims to be concluded by 2020. What are some of the ethical issues around codifying existing international law (*lex lata*) so as to make it applicable to military space operations?
- Currently the Outer Space Treaty bans the use of weapons of mass destruction in space, but allows the use of conventional weapons. Should this distinction continue, and why?
- If a manned mission is sent to Mars, who will have sovereignty over the planet, and who will arbitrate disputes between countries in regard to off-earth colonies and off-earth mining and resource collection?

While priority will be given to abstracts submitted along one of these axes of research, submissions related to any issues in military ethics will also be considered.

CALL FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

All abstracts will be peer reviewed.

The format for presentations at the conference will be moderated panels on specific themes (based on submissions received) with extensive Q&A, rather than panelists reading prepared papers.

Presenters will be required to submit potential discussion questions pertaining to their work to their panel moderators in advance of the conference and will be given only 10 minutes to briefly summarize their work before engaging in lively and in-depth discussions with fellow panelists, managed by the panel moderator and including questions from the audience. Students are encouraged to submit abstracts, as there will be a student panel and a prize for best student contributor.

Deadline for abstracts submissions: October 15th, 2018.

Researchers will receive an answer by November 5th, 2018. Presenters will have to register prior to November 30th, 2018 in order to be considered for the programme. If early bird registration rate ends November 30th, 2018, general registration at regular rate will end the day prior to the start of the conference.

The webpage for submission of proposals will be available shortly. Abstracts received via email will not be considered.

REGISTRATION

The webpage for registration will be available shortly.

POSSIBLE PUBLICATION

Selected papers will receive an invitation for a publication in a peer reviewed collection on Space, War and Ethics, edited by Nikki Coleman, through Howgate. More information regarding this will follow.

Questions to: stephanie.belanger@rmc.ca