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SEVENTEENTH SESSION
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FIRST COMMITTEE, 1292nd MEETING

Wednesday, 5 December 1962, at 11.5 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL (Sudan).

Organization of work (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the proposal submitted by Ghana at the previous meeting that the question of inviting representatives of Korea should be taken up at the present meeting. He reminded the Committee that if the proposal was adopted, the debate on international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space would be suspended and resumed the next day.

A vote was taken by roll-call.

Hungary, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Hungary, Indonesia, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia, Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea.

Against: Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Federation of Malaya, France, Greece, Haiti.

Abstaining: India, Israel, Jordan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Sudan, Syria, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Chile, Cyprus, Finland, Guatemala.

The proposal was rejected by 30 votes to 19, with 25 abstentions.

2. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that as he understood it, the decision which had just been taken applied only to the two meetings scheduled for 5 December; in other words, the same question could be raised at later meetings. He had voted in favour of the Ghanaian proposal, which had indicated the proper procedure for the consideration of the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea. It was surprising that the United States delegation, which had finally voted for the inclusion of that item in the agenda, was now trying to block debate on it, and had therefore voted against the Ghanaian proposal.

3. Mr. ROWAN (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that the Committee had just expressed its opinion by its vote, and that there were no grounds for pursuing the debate on the matter.

4. The CHAIRMAN, replying to the Soviet representative's first observation, confirmed that the Committee was free to decide its own procedure, and that there was nothing to prevent it from taking up the Korean question at a later meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 27

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union (A/5181; A/5203, chap. VII, sect. IV; A/5229; A/5237; A/C.1/879; A/C.1/880; A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

5. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) apologized to the United Kingdom representative for not having mentioned the United Kingdom draft declaration in document A/C.1/879—of whose existence he had been unaware—in his statement at the 1290th meeting, when he had analysed the United States and Soviet draft declarations of the principles governing the activities of States pertaining to the exploration and use of outer space. The United Kingdom deserved congratulations for having set forth in its declaration the most important principles on which the legal régime of outer space should be based. Those principles coincided with the principles which had been laid down by the United States, and with some of those formulated by the Soviet Union. Thus, the nuclear Powers were agreed on five basic principles. The only thing to be regretted was that there was no clear indication in the draft declarations of what jurisdiction was to be exercised by the international community. It was to be hoped that the United Kingdom, with its experience of the discipline of the Commonwealth, would ultimately recognize the need for setting up an international authority to settle any disputes which might arise in relation to outer space.

6. Mr. HASEGANU (Romania) paid tribute to the Soviet Union and the United States for their outstanding achievements in the exploration of outer space. The Vostok III and Vostok IV launchings had enabled scientists to study the physical reactions of the astronauts, and the latter had been able to control their space

vessels. Only recently, on 1 November 1962, the Soviet Union had placed in orbit a heavy satellite from which a rocket had been launched towards Mars. He noted with satisfaction the work done by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and by WMO and ITU, and he trusted that the difficulties still hampering their activities would be surmounted. If that was to be done, fresh efforts would have to be made to reconcile the positions of States with regard to co-operation in outer space, and thus to establish solid foundations for the future work of that Committee.

7. The three groups of technical recommendations submitted by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space were most useful. International co-operation would become more and more essential with the development of science and technology. Such co-operation was indispensable if, for example, the projects for the study of the earth's magnetic pole and for the establishment of a system of international telecommunications by means of satellites were to be carried into effect. The applications of space activities studied in the WMO and ITU reports were also of great interest; it was important for countries like Romania, in whose economies agriculture played a significant part, to be able to apply meteorological discoveries to promote grain production. Moreover, the work of ITU, particularly in the assignment of frequencies at the 1963 conference, would help to extend international co-operation in outer space.

8. Unfortunately, the progress made towards scientific and technical co-operation had not been accompanied by equivalent progress in the legal field. It was a matter of urgency, in particular, that the principles of law governing the space activities of States should be defined. The two basic principles laid down by the General Assembly in its resolution 1721 A (XVI) were undoubtedly most valuable, but they were not enough. What was also needed was a binding declaration specifying the rules to be followed with a view to the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations in outer space. The two principles laid down by the Assembly were of a general character, and were open to divergent interpretation. Thus, while it had proclaimed the principle of the free exploration and use of outer space, the Assembly had not specified in its resolution the bounds within which a State could explore or use outer space without infringing the legitimate right of another State to engage in similar activities. Nor did it lay down a line of demarcation between lawful activities and unlawful activities such as those intended to provide information on the territory of other States, which flew in the face of all international rules. The question of the legal regulation of outer space should therefore be settled without delay, particularly as the advance of science might well multiply the risks of conflict. He had noted the Soviet draft declaration (A/5181, annex III, sec. A), the draft code for co-operation proposed by the United Arab Republic (ibid., sect. E) and the United Kingdom draft declaration (A/C.1/879), which the Romanian delegation had not yet had time to study.

9. In his delegation's view, a declaration of principles should include provisions prohibiting States from taking any measures likely to interfere with the exploration and use of outer space by other countries. It ought also to condemn the use of artificial satellites for espionage purposes. That would resolve the present differences, and would contribute to international co-operation while ensuring respect for the sovereignty of all States. Lastly, so that the responsibility for actions affecting outer space should be clearly defined, it should be laid down in the declaration that space activities should be carried out exclusively by States, which should accordingly retain their sovereign rights to all objects launched by them into outer space. Those were the essential rules without which fruitful co-operation between countries would not be possible. In the drafting of the declaration, the principles laid down in the Soviet draft could be supplemented by certain provisions in the draft code submitted by the United Arab Republic.

10. The Romanian delegation supported the Soviet proposal for the conclusion of an international agreement for the rescue of astronauts and space ships making emergency landings (A/5181, annex III, sect. B), for it held that the legal instrument relating to space activities would be effective only if they were binding. Accordingly, the precedent established in the law of the sea and the air should be followed. His delegation was also ready to study the legal content of the United States draft declaration, the United States proposal relating to liability for space vehicle accidents and any other proposal which might be submitted on the legal aspects of the question. The most important thing was that all countries should display a genuine desire for co-operation in outer space—an area in which, as in disarmament and economic development, man had the capability of translating his boldest dreams into reality.

11. Mr. OKAZAKI (Japan), after referring to the principle strongly advocated by his delegation that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only, through international co-operation—openly, and in an orderly manner—pointed out that although all countries might not be able to carry out spectacular space projects, they could, even if their resources were limited, participate effectively in space research and in the use of outer space. For example, several countries already possessed or were developing rocket launching capabilities, and an even larger number were participating actively in space exploration through the tracking of space vehicles and analysis of data obtained therefrom. Being aware of the need for international co-operation in the matter of national programmes, the Japanese Government had in 1960 established a National Space Activities Council. In its report issued in May 1962, that Council had recommended a comprehensive outer space programme to be carried out over a period of approximately five years and had laid down the fundamental principles upon which those activities should be undertaken. According to those principles, Japanese space activities were to be directed towards peaceful purposes only; every detail of space vehicles, instruments and results obtained by experiments were to be made available to all scientific and technological communities; and although Japanese scientists would plan and devise the experiments, international co-operation was to be sought whenever possible. The focus of the programme envisaged by the Council for the immediate future was on basic scientific research by means of ground-based observation and sounding rockets. Ground-based observation had been started in Japan in 1955 in connexion with the International Geophysical Year. Japan had launched its first sounding rocket in 1957, and since then had conducted more than fifty launchings, including test flights. Some Japanese sounding rockets were even exported to other countries. The technical details of the various

types of rockets which had been developed by Japan had been reported to COSPAR. For example, the latest version of the Kappa rocket achieved an altitude of 350 kilometres with a payload of 40 kilogrammes, and the target for rocket development during the five-year programme was the attainment of an altitude of 1,500 kilometres with a payload of 30 kilogrammes. By promoting efficient co-ordination among the activities of various agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, Japan was attempting constantly to improve the efficiency of its own national programmes, while at the same time facilitating international co-operation. Among the international activities in which it was participating were the optical and radio tracking of satellites, the receiving of telemetred messages sent from satellites, and detailed scientific analysis of data communicated by the satellite-launching countries. Furthermore, the Japanese Meteorological Agency was arranging to rebroadcast to other Asian countries the data which were received from the United States Tiros satellites, which were particularly useful for the forecasting of typhoons. An agreement had recently been concluded between the Japanese and United States Governments for technical co-operation concerning the testing of experimental communications satellites launched by the National Aeronautics and Space Agency of the United States.

12. Turning to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, he expressed the view that the recommendations of that Committee deserved urgent and favourable action by the General Assembly, since, even though modest in nature, they represented an invaluable first step towards more complete implementation of General Assembly resolutions 1472 (XIV) and 1721 (XVI) and could not fail to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

13. If, as stated in the preamble to resolution 1721 A (XVI), the exploration and use of outer space was to be only for the betterment of mankind and to the benefit of States, then space activities must be based upon an established law and order. Because of the great rapidity with which those activities were developing, there was a pressing need, before it was too late, to develop basic principles which would ensure that outer space would be used peacefully, openly and in an orderly manner for the welfare of mankind. The guiding principles enumerated in resolution 1721 A (XVI) provided a good starting-point and could be further elaborated and clarified. Japan earnestly hoped to see some further accomplishments in that regard in the near future.

14. Beneath the amazement felt by the peoples of the world over the spectacular achievements that had been made by the great Powers in the conquest of space, there was an undercurrent of apprehension about the possible military implications of those achievements. He accordingly welcomed the statement by the United States representative (1289th meeting) that his Government had no intention of placing weapons of mass destruction in orbit unless compelled to do so, and he believed, as did the United States representative, that it was important for steps to be taken to prevent the arms race from spreading into space and that it should certainly be easier to agree not to arm an environment that had never been armed than to agree to disarm ones that had already been armed. That aspect of the question of outer space should probably be studied within the context of disarmament, and appropriate means of effective verification and control should be worked out for its final solution. Although the difficulty and complexity of the task were apparent, the conclusion in 1959 of the Antarctica Treaty, and the similarities between the problems of Antarctica and of outer space, both being new areas of exploration, gave the hope that the necessary solutions could be worked out with regard to outer space.

15. The question of banning nuclear weapon tests in outer space seemed to present much less difficulty than it had some time earlier. It was fervently hoped that agreement on that question would be forthcoming in the very near future.

16. Although there were many other problems to be taken up in considering the question of principles, the Japanese delegation attached great importance to open dealing in carrying out space programmes and activities. Serious consideration should also be given to the need to perfect the system of furnishing information, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1721 B (XVI), on launchings of objects into outer space.

17. With regard to specific legal problems of a practical nature, his delegation was looking to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee to promote further study of those problems.

18. He expressed the hope that the General Assembly would seize the opportunity which it now had to promote international co-operation in the field of outer space and to stress once again that the United Nations should do everything in its power to ensure that the exploration and use of outer space would be conducted openly and in an orderly manner for peaceful purposes only and for the welfare of all mankind. He pledged Japan's full co-operation and devoted efforts towards the attainment of that objective.

19. Mr. STEVENSON (United States of America) recalled, first of all, that the President of the United States, Mr. Kennedy, in his message of 30 January 1961, had invited all nations to co-operate in the peaceful uses of outer space. In an exchange of letters in March 1962, Mr. Kennedy and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, had made more detailed proposals for co-operative efforts. In addition, United States and Soviet scientists had met at New York and at Geneva. In June 1962 an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union had been reached for co-operation in three fields of space activity: first, co-ordinated launchings of meteorological satellites and the exchange of data thus obtained; second, co-ordinated launchings of satellites to map the earth's magnetic field; and third, experiments in space communications by means of a United States passive reflector satellite, with consideration to be given to future co-operation in joint experiments using active repeater satellites. The agreement provided that among matters to be discussed in future meetings was the working out with other countries of an experimental system of global space communications. It had been agreed that the results of those experiments would be made freely available to all interested States. The United States and the Soviet Union had requested the Secretary-General to circulate that agreement to the Members of the United Nations, and it appeared in document A/C.1/880. The United States Government was hopeful that the agreement would lead to an expansion of outer space co-operation with the participation of many countries and the encouragement and assistance of the United Nations.

20. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) informed the Committee that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had received from the chairman of the Soviet delegation and the chairman of the United States delegation a letter transmitting to him the documents relating to the agreement concluded between the two countries on co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Among those documents, which were being circulated to the members of the First Committee (A/C.1/880), was a letter from the President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR announcing that Soviet scientists were prepared to co-operate in giving effect to that agreement, which, in the President's opinion, would provide an excellent starting-point for the future development of co-operation between Soviet and United States scientists with a view to the advancement of science and the strengthening of world peace.

21. Mr. SOULEYMANE (Mauritania), supported by Mr. ANUMAN RAJADHON (Thailand), proposed that the afternoon meeting should be cancelled, as there were only two names on the list of speakers and a very important matter was to be considered at the plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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