

occupation by the first comer. There were also objections to the idea that outer space, like the high seas, should be regarded as incapable of appropriation by any, but open to use by all. It seemed conceivable that the legal problems involved might be solved, not by the adoption of any general system in advance, but in a more piecemeal fashion.

20. In any case, the answers to such questions should be settled before individual States had been driven by events to improvise their own individual answers. They could, however, be settled only in the light of technical information, and the gathering of that information would be part of the work of the *ad hoc* committee proposed in the twenty-Power draft resolution.

21. His delegation considered that the proposed *ad hoc* committee should be made up of representatives of Governments—assisted as necessary by experts—drawn in part from countries which had already made substantial progress in space research or were well equipped to appreciate the emerging problems, and in part from other countries chosen to establish a reasonable geographic balance. While the committee should remain small at the initial stage, a slightly larger number than the nine proposed by the United States representative (983rd meeting) might have to be envisaged, in order to obtain a representative group. The committee's first task should be to obtain a general picture of what was being done in outer-space research and to make some assessment of promising lines of development. It should also, as the twenty-Power draft resolution provided, consider the activities and resources of the United Nations and other bodies, including the specialized agencies, which at present bore on the peaceful uses of outer space or could be directed towards assuring that activities in outer space would be developed in the interests of all mankind. It should then prepare proposals regarding the organizational arrangements to be made in order to promote further international co-operation. It should also, without losing itself in the study of specialized legal questions, consider the nature of the legal problems which might arise, as a guide to future action by the United Nations. In all its work, the committee would have the assistance of the Secretary-General, who should feel free also to submit concrete proposals for its consideration.

22. In commending the twenty-Power draft resolution to the Committee, he wished to stress that its approach was non-political, as befitted the subject. His delegation therefore hoped that it would be adopted enthusiastically by the Committee.

23. Mr. DE FREITAS VALLE (Brazil) said it gave his Government deep satisfaction that the question of the peaceful use of outer space was being considered at the present session. Although small and medium Powers

could not be expected to embark on expensive programmes for the exploration of space in the near future, developments in that field were unquestionably of the utmost importance for all States, large and small. It was for precisely those reasons that the United Nations seemed the proper forum in which to deal with the question.

24. It would, however, be self-deception not to recognize that efforts to conquer outer space were intimately connected with the development of military technology and that the two great Powers which had until now been alone in exploring outer space had done so within the framework of their military effort. There was, moreover, every indication that it would not be easy to dissociate future progress in the field from the strategic requirements of the great Powers.

25. The two draft resolutions before the Committee reflected the different approaches to the problem of the two Powers directly concerned with it. The Soviet draft resolution would make any agreement for the peaceful use of outer space dependent upon acceptance of a clause which could be considered only within the context of a comprehensive disarmament agreement and obviously fell within the purview of the Disarmament Commission. Moreover, the Soviet draft resolution made no mention at all of the far-reaching legal problems which might arise in connexion with the use of outer space. Some of the classical principles of international law regarding the sovereignty of States over the space above their territories had broken down as a result of the initiation of outer-space exploration; the United Nations now had an opportunity to construct a new set of regulations that would terminate the present *de facto* situation. The situation should not be allowed to get out of control. That was an area in which the small and medium-sized Powers were properly concerned and in which their voices should be heard.

26. The twenty-Power draft resolution which was the alternative proposal before the Committee included a reference, inserted at the suggestion of the representatives of Argentina and Brazil, both to the principle of the sovereign equality of States and the idea of equal opportunity to participate in the benefits of the peaceful exploration of cosmic space. His delegation considered that the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to scrutinize the problems involved in the peaceful use of outer space was the right thing to do at present, for the question involved pioneer scientific, technological and legal studies which could not be the specific concern of a political body. His delegation hoped that a decision on the substance of the problem would be taken when the *ad hoc* committee had reported to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



Friday, 14 November 1958,  
at 10.50 a.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

## AGENDA ITEM 60

Question of the peaceful use of outer space (A/3818 and Corr.1, A/3902, A/C.1/L.219, A/C.1/L.220) (continued):

- (a) The banning of the use of cosmic space for military purposes, the elimination of foreign military bases on the territories of other countries and international co-operation in the study of cosmic space;
- (b) Programme for international co-operation in the field of outer space

### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. AMADEO (Argentina) was glad that the question of outer space had been included in the Committee's agenda. In spite of the fact that very few countries were in a position to explore cosmic space, the question concerned the whole international community. Consideration of the question by the General Assembly was therefore timely. The difficulties raised by that question were so complex, however, that it seemed indispensable to establish a special body to study them and to propose solutions to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session. In the meantime, to adopt a position in advance would amount to prejudging that body's conclusions.

2. His delegation considered that it was necessary to make a clear distinction between the peaceful use of cosmic space and the question of disarmament, so as to separate political questions from matters of a technical, cultural or scientific nature. That was why it could not support the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219), which again raised questions connected with disarmament.

3. It would, however, support the twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220), which dealt with the question of the peaceful use of outer space quite apart from current political tensions. From that point of view, the draft resolution was in keeping with the spirit of the International Geophysical Year, which provided an

example of the possibilities for co-operation in such matters between countries separated by deep ideological differences. The draft resolution consequently merited the support of all Members of the General Assembly and particularly those which by their unceasing efforts had made possible the present consideration of the question.

4. A tribute should certainly be paid to the countries which had taken the initiative in exploring outer space, but their privileged position could not in any circumstances prejudice the legitimate right of other States to use outer space. It followed that, without prejudging the legal status of outer space, the Assembly should affirm at once that all States had absolutely equal rights with regard to the use of outer space. He was grateful to the sponsors of the twenty-Power draft resolution—and particularly to the United States representative—for having, on the whole, taken into account the concern originally expressed by the representatives of Brazil and Argentina and shared by the delegations of other Latin-American countries.

5. His delegation agreed that the *ad hoc* committee proposed by the twenty Powers should not have too many members, but was of the opinion that that body should not be composed solely of the countries most advanced in astronautics; there should also be room in it for some countries representing those which were not yet in a position to explore outer space.

6. His delegation interpreted operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution not only as meaning that the committee would avail itself of the help of such experts and private organizations as it might wish to consult, but above all that it would be invited to seek the very useful collaboration of existing bodies.

7. His delegation considered that the "international centre for outer-space research and experiments" proposed by the Italian representative at the 982nd meeting would be a useful by-product of the General Assembly's discussions and that no better choice could be made for the headquarters of that body than the capital of Italy.

8. Mr. WEI (China) noted that, although the two new fields of exploration which science had penetrated, the atomic world and outer space, offered to some an opportunity to acquire new knowledge of great importance and to others the prospect of improving the life of mankind, they were full of promise and danger for every man and nation of the world. Only effective international co-operation could save the human race from annihilation and enable it to enjoy the fruits of science.

9. Since the creation of the United Nations, the danger of atomic weapons had grown steadily, in spite of the General Assembly's resolutions and the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency in pursuance of the programme called "Atoms for peace", and as had

happened in the case of stocks of fissionable materials, in a few years it might be impossible to draw up any inventory of modern weapons which made use of outer space for their delivery. With regard to outer space, the situation today was the same as it had been in 1953 for atomic energy. His delegation supported the twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220), which it thought might be entitled "Space for peace".

10. The exploration and use of outer space constituted an undertaking with important consequences. A broad space programme would give impact to fundamental and applied research in many fields of science and engineering. Scientists from many countries would certainly want to participate in the great task. Inasmuch as few countries could afford to sponsor a major space project, opportunities should be given to competent scientists of small nations to give their assistance. His delegation was of the opinion that the exchange of scientific personnel might start before the proposed *ad hoc* committee had submitted its report.

11. He agreed with those who thought that the juridical aspects of the question should be left to the *ad hoc* committee, and he would therefore refrain from stating the views of his delegation on those matters. He did, however, wish to make an earnest appeal on three important points to all members of the Committee, and especially to the Governments of those countries which were conducting or intending to conduct scientific space experiments.

12. First, it was essential to safeguard celestial bodies for the sake of science. There was a general interest in the question whether there was any form of living organism on the planets. Unless proper precautions were taken, a probe might inadvertently introduce some living organisms from the earth into

the planets. Such an accident might cause irreparable damage.

13. Secondly, while some secrecy was bound to exist in military and industrial matters, there should be none in international scientific co-operation. At the Second International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, held at Geneva from 1 to 13 September 1958, all representatives had greatly appreciated the frankness with which the "nuclear Powers" had reported their efforts to achieve nuclear fusion.

14. With regard to outer space, the situation was unfortunately different. He quoted an article from *The New York Times* of 6 October 1957, according to which five days before the launching of the first sputnik on 4 October 1957 by the USSR, three Soviet scientists participating at Washington in an exchange of views among scientists sent by a dozen nations in connexion with the International Geophysical Year had refused to give any relevant details of the Soviet satellite to be launched or any indication of the date of its launching.

15. Thirdly, the space-nuclear age would demand one open world for all mankind. According to present scientific forecasts, it would be possible in a few years to install telescopes and television instruments on artificial satellites and full information on the universe would thus become available to man. Such scientific progress would also permit an aerial inspection of the earth's surface, which would automatically put into effect President Eisenhower's "open-skies" plan. He expressed the hope that such technical advances would help break the deadlock over disarmament.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTEENTH SESSION  
Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE 984th  
MEETING

Thursday, 13 November 1958,  
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

AGENDA ITEM 60

Question of the peaceful use of outer space (A/3818 and Corr.1, A/3902, A/C.1/L.219, A/C.1/L.220) (continued):

- (a) The banning of the use of cosmic space for military purposes, the elimination of foreign military bases on the territories of other countries and international co-operation in the study of cosmic space;
- (b) Programme for international co-operation in the field of outer space

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. SANDLER (Sweden) said that his delegation had welcomed the suggestion that the United Nations should study the question of the peaceful use of outer space and the announced desire of the Western Powers to begin the study of that question without waiting for agreement on other problems of disarmament. Sweden supported that approach, for if effective work was to be done on the problem, it should not be bound up with other more controversial questions. The goal was to prevent the firing of military devices through space and in that connexion thought should be given to intermediate, as well as intercontinental or even interplanetary, missiles. If that point of view was adopted, there would be no convincing reason for introducing the question of existing military bases into the discussion.

2. As the Committee's discussion had already shown, the term "outer space" was extremely vague; its meaning in terms of altitude should be clearly defined. It was also necessary to clarify questions of sovereignty over the atmosphere or outer space,

including the rights and responsibilities of neutrals. In that connexion it was encouraging that no protests had been made by States against the flight of artificial satellites over their territory, for outer space should be as open to peaceful traffic as the high seas. However, the fact that no protests had been made in no way meant that general agreement on the altitude at which outer space began had been established.

3. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would, by deciding on the proposed study at the current session, take a first step towards the universally accepted goal of accelerating and controlling the peaceful use of outer space. It therefore recommended the adoption of the twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220), which it had co-sponsored.

4. Mr. TINAUD (France) said his delegation was glad that the question of the peaceful use of outer space had been brought before the United Nations, for the time had come to co-ordinate the efforts and research of all countries, under United Nations auspices, in order to serve the welfare of mankind as a whole.

5. It was, however, disturbing that two other questions, the banning of the use of cosmic space for military purposes, and the elimination of foreign military bases, both of which were directly related to disarmament and should be dealt with in that context, had been introduced into a debate devoted to international scientific co-operation. To link the three questions would have the practical result of obstructing the development of international co-operation for the study of the peaceful use of outer space; for that reason his delegation could not support the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219).

6. The subject of outer space was new and unfamiliar. His delegation therefore considered that a debate by the Committee on the substance of the question was premature and unlikely to lead to practical conclusions. The task of making a systematic study of the problem and of laying the groundwork for an organization which would co-ordinate work on it might well be assigned to an *ad hoc* committee. The twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220), which his delegation had co-sponsored, was in complete conformity with France's ideas in that respect, and had the advantage of proposing an immediate start on the preparation of programmes of international co-operation in accordance with a practical, rational and realistic plan. For its part, France would co-operate fully with the proposed committee.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.