

of outer space; it was actually attempting to gain military advantage by banning certain weapons which it did not possess while retaining its own weapons and its military bases.

26. In its new draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219/Rev.1), the Soviet Union had proposed the establishment of an international committee for co-operation in the study of cosmic space for peaceful purposes. However, the United Nations must ultimately turn its attention to the military as well as the peaceful aspects of the problem of outer space, for its main function was to take action to remove threats to the peace.

27. Mr. ERALP (Turkey) said that the question of the elimination of foreign military bases on the territories of other countries should be discussed under the heading of disarmament, not in connexion with the peaceful use of outer space. The opportunity for genuine peaceful scientific co-operation in the field of outer space might otherwise be lost amid frustrating wrangling over general disarmament.

28. There were no "foreign military bases" in Turkey in the sense implied in the wording of the agenda item before the Committee. In the exercise of the right of collective defence proclaimed in the United Nations Charter, Turkey had freely joined a defensive alliance in order to provide for the security of its people. The so-called "bases" in Turkey had been set up by agreement between the members of that alliance and with Turkey's consent; they would disappear as soon as the fear of external aggression had been dispelled.

29. He urged adoption of the twenty-Power draft resolution; the *ad hoc* committee proposed in that document was needed to study the various aspects of the question of outer space and the possibilities of international co-operation in its peaceful use, including the possibility of ultimately drawing up a legal code for outer space.

30. He was gratified to note that the new Soviet draft resolution had eliminated the reference to foreign bases contained in the original draft, thus bringing the Committee nearer to unanimity on the question before it. While his delegation felt that the twenty-Power draft resolution, of which it was a sponsor, was more in keeping with the practical requirements of the problem, it would carefully study the new Soviet draft resolution.

31. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru), replying to the earlier remarks of the representative of Hungary (989th meeting), said that obedience to the international community

did not apply in all cases. There were, however, juridical obligations incumbent on all Member States under the Charter, which, quite apart from the moral authority of the United Nations—which should influence their decisions and their actions—had to be fulfilled. Those obligations weighed equally on all States regardless of their ideological or economic differences, and whenever they were recalled in recommendations of a juridical nature by the Security Council or the General Assembly, they demanded compliance.

32. The Charter itself required that all nations should share in what might be called the moral "capital" or assets built up by the United Nations. That capital comprised the ideas of collective security, of the maintenance of peace as a primary responsibility, and of international co-operation for the common good. The competence of the United Nations to deal with matters of security was also an integral part of the Organization's moral "capital", and it had been expressly conferred upon the Organization by the Charter.

33. He was prepared to accept the doctrine that outer space should be considered *res communis*, provided that its use was subject to a system imposed by the international community. For that reason, it was important to recognize that the international community was something above and beyond the ideological and political structures of States. In the absence of a multi-lateral convention on the use of outer space by which all parties would voluntarily be bound, the jurisdiction of the international community would prevail. The question of the use of outer space was clearly a matter of international concern; that concern was that space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Consequently, Peru welcomed the principle of absolute equality defined by the delegations of Brazil (986th meeting) and Argentina (985th meeting) with respect to the position of all nations regarding the use and ownership of outer space, as well as the recognition of the overriding competence of the international community.

34. It had been gratifying to learn that the people and Government of the United States were strongly united on the question of the peaceful use of outer space and that the USSR had modified its original proposal in such a way as to foster the hope that the Committee could reach unanimous agreement on a single solution of the space question.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**  
THIRTEENTH SESSION  
Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE 989th  
MEETING

Tuesday, 18 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. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that everyone was in agreement on the need to use cosmic space for purely peaceful purposes. His Government was prepared to conclude an agreement to that effect forthwith. The co-operation of all countries, great and small, was essential if such an agreement, which would have to take into account the views of all parties concerned, was to be worked out.
2. One hard fact had to be borne in mind: inter-continental missiles were not the only ones capable of carrying atomic and hydrogen weapons. Consequently, any decision to ban them which was not accompanied by a solution of the problem of military bases would be detrimental to the interests of the Soviet Union.
3. It was evident from the statements made by the delegation of the United States that that country, which in 1957 had been the first to raise the question of banning the use of cosmic space for military purposes, was no longer prepared to give immediate consideration to the specific problems which that question presented. It was significant that the United States' change of attitude dated from the day when the Soviet Union had linked that problem with the question of eliminating military bases on the territories of other countries, for those bases were one of the chief instruments of United States policy.
4. The arguments advanced by the United States representative to justify the existence of his country's

foreign bases could convince no one. Senator James W. Fulbright, in a statement made in the United States Senate on 20 June 1958, had acknowledged that United States bases constituted a threat to the Soviet Union. As for the consent given by the countries on whose territories the bases were situated, examination of the actual situation showed that the United States had been able to obtain it only by resorting to various means of pressure—in most instances, by taking advantage of the economic and financial difficulties of the countries concerned. Thus, according to *The New York Times* of 5 July 1958, the \$1,000 million in economic and military aid extended to Spain was the price paid for the right to establish military bases in that country. According to the same newspaper, the Philippines had received \$280 million for leasing land to be used for launching sites for guided missiles and runways for bombers. Moreover, in a great many countries, such as Morocco, Iceland and Japan, the people were protesting against the maintenance of such bases. According to the Tunisian newspaper *L'Action*, the Prime Minister of Morocco had stated in July 1958 that the United States bases had been established without the consent or participation of Morocco, which did not recognize them. Meanwhile, *The New York Times* had been writing that United States diplomacy should be directed towards maintaining and modernizing the foreign bases.

5. Quite apart from the question of bases, the United States did not want an agreement on the purely peaceful use of outer space and international control of rockets. It was waiting first until it possessed inter-continental ballistic missiles, as evidenced by the statement by Mr. Roy Johnson William published in the *New York Herald Tribune*, the views expressed by Mr. Neil H. McElroy Secretary of Defense, at his press conference on 13 November 1958, and an article by Mr. Thomas J. Hamilton in *The New York Times* of 16 November.

6. At the 986th meeting, the United States representative, Mr. Johnson, had stated that his country's aim was to guarantee peace and unity in cosmic space. That aim was affirmed in the resolution adopted on the subject by the United States House of Representatives. How, then, was one to explain the fact that the United States intended to limit itself to considering the question of a programme of international scientific co-operation, which, however important it might be, was not the basic question? While still convinced that the General Assembly should examine in detail and resolve the problem of banning the use of cosmic space for military purposes, his delegation was compelled to note that the Western Powers were not prepared to follow it in that course of action.

7. Desiring to achieve a reconciliation of views and to facilitate the conclusion of an agreement, his delegation was therefore prepared to examine the aspect of the problem relating to international co-operation in

the peaceful use of outer space and to make every effort to promote an agreement on the matter. Even in that field, however, the Western Powers did not go very far; they limited themselves to proposing the establishment of a committee which would report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session. Yet, all the necessary conditions were present for taking a decision on the substance of the question at the present session.

8. International scientific co-operation in the field of outer space was already a reality. In October 1958, the International Council of Scientific Unions, which had sponsored the organization of the International Geophysical Year, had established the Special Committee on Space Research and assigned it the task of submitting to the International Council a plan for coordinating research and a programme for exchanging information on the subject. It was believed that within a year it would be possible to draw up co-ordinated plans and establish a permanent body on international scientific co-operation to replace the Special Committee, which had just held its first meeting in London. When it was remembered that most of the speakers in the present debate had emphasized the role devolving upon the United Nations in that field and the urgency of the problem, the inadequacy of the Western Powers' draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220) became apparent.

9. That was why the Soviet Union had submitted a revised draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219/Rev.1). The draft recommended the establishment of an international committee for co-operation in the study of cosmic space for peaceful purposes. For that purpose, it provided for the creation of a preparatory group composed of eleven members, thereby meeting the desire expressed by many delegations for a group of fairly broad composition. Lastly, it proposed that the group should be given the task of drafting the programme and rules of the international committee.

10. The Soviet Union had tried to take into account all the views expressed in the First Committee. It felt that it should be possible to reach agreement at the present session on the general direction of the work to be undertaken in the field under consideration, and it hoped that the sponsors of the twenty-Power draft resolution would prove flexible and take the road leading to an understanding.

11. Mr. VIDIC (Yugoslavia) remarked that once again the Committee, whether it liked it or not, was dealing with a question in the field of disarmament. None of the previous speakers had denied the existence and extreme importance of the military aspect of the question under consideration, although the view had been expressed that consideration of the question of co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space for scientific and other purposes should be dissociated from the military aspect.

12. The entire Yugoslav people had hailed the remarkable scientific successes of the Soviet Union and the United States when the first earth satellites had been launched. There was, however, justified anxiety that that memorable triumph of human ingenuity might be turned against the interests of mankind and introduce new elements into the armaments race. The ordinary man was more impressed by the accumulation of negative factors in the present relations between countries than moved to enthusiasm over the noble achievements of science. It was manifestly necessary

to overcome the division of the world into antagonistic military blocs and to inaugurate an era of understanding, mutual respect and non-interference. Although it seemed difficult, at present, to achieve agreement on the prohibition of the use of outer space for military purposes, under adequate control, that supremely important objective should not be lost sight of.

13. The two draft resolutions before the Committee were, despite some differences, fundamentally so much alike that the best course would be for the sponsors to make additional efforts to agree on a single text. Such an outcome would be an achievement that could contribute to further progress in a field of the greatest significance for mankind.

14. Referring to the legal aspects of the problem of outer space, he agreed with other speakers that the existing provisions of international law did not envisage anything that could constitute a generally acceptable international norm on the uses of outer space. He particularly had in mind the problems of the so-called "openness" of outer space, freedom of movement in it, the sovereignty of States over outer space above their territories, and the possibility of violating the territorial sovereignty of States through certain activities from vehicles moving in outer space, even when outside the space above the territories of those States.

15. In his delegation's opinion, there could be no question of a "right" to unlimited launching of vehicles into outer space, irrespective of the nature of their activities. Similarly, it would be difficult to insist on the right of total sovereignty of States over the space above their territories extending to infinity. By virtue of its very nature and of the fact that penetration into it had been brought about by the common efforts and progress of the whole of mankind, no less than by virtue of the fact that its abuse could be fatal to the whole world, outer space could only be regarded as res communis.

16. There was an urgent need for a thorough study of the legal aspects of the problem. Obviously, any regulation of the use of outer space by international law required political accord and assurances that the essential conditions for the development of international co-operation in that field would be fulfilled.

17. The work undertaken under the International Geophysical Year programme, in which Yugoslavia was actively participating, would compress into eighteen months more than ten years of normal research by world organizations. That fact strengthened his delegation's belief that it was indispensable to continue that beneficial co-operation and to organize it even better through the activities of the United Nations.

18. Mr. PETER (Hungary) recalled that a meteorite of considerable size, which had fallen a century ago, was being preserved in Hungary. The International Geophysical Year had offered new opportunities for experts to analyse the composition of the meteorite and define more closely the type of life whose existence on another planet it had proved. The concrete example illustrated the rapidity of the development of cosmic science in recent months. It was not difficult to foresee that within a short period man would experience the same horror at the destructive possibilities discovered in the universe that he had already experienced in regard to the devastating possibilities of nuclear and

thermo-nuclear devices. The more science advanced and the more the results of research were exchanged by scientists in different parts of the world, the greater became the danger of the military use of those secrets, unless an agreement on the prohibition of the use of outer space for military purposes was concluded at the very outset of the new scientific era.

19. The discussion on nuclear weapons tests in the First Committee had shown the deadlock reached by the United Nations in its search for a solution to the problem. The Hungarian delegation feared that the United States proposal on outer space might also lead to a deadlock, because it dealt only with international co-operation, without providing for the exclusion of the military use of discoveries made in the field of outer space. That could not fail to intensify the armaments race and, as science progressed, outer space would also become a source of unknown dangers for humanity.

20. Unfortunately, the General Assembly did not seem able, at its present session, to take the necessary steps to encourage international scientific co-operation and at the same time to prevent the dangers of military rivalry among the Powers from acquiring new dimensions.

21. Referring to the statement by the Peruvian representative (983rd meeting), he said that the theoretical conclusions of the first part of the statement went too far, whereas those bearing on the matter under discussion did not go far enough. It should be remembered that the United Nations had been founded by nations with different social, economic and political systems and with different ideological convictions. Its founders had embodied in the Charter of the United Nations the highest common demands of those different countries. However, the Peruvian representative had gone too far in stating that all the Members of the Organization were obliged to obey it unreservedly. The Hungarian delegation recognized the need for obedience when a matter concerned the Charter, but when that obedience was claimed in connexion with resolutions, it believed that the validity of the resolutions depended on their conformity with the provisions and spirit of the Charter. To affirm the contrary would be to proclaim a new dogma of the infallibility of the organs of the United Nations. When the United Nations had come together to create that magnificent institution they had been aware that they were not founding a new church and it had never entered their thoughts that the dogma of infallibility should be incorporated in its constitution. It was conceivable that a resolution in contradiction to the provisions of the Charter would, although passed by a great majority, be re-examined and withdrawn, in order that a true and helpful solution might be found. The resolutions on the Korean question belonged to that category.

22. In the latter part of his statement, the Peruvian representative had merely mentioned the incontestable connexion between the exploration of outer space and the problems of disarmament, but had omitted to deal with that connexion.

23. The logic of the facts showed not only that scientific research in outer space could not be separated from the military problems in that field, if the peaceful use of outer space was really desired, but also that the peaceful use and military aspects of outer space could not be separated from other aspects of the disarmament problem. According to the same logic, the

question of military bases abroad was a counterpart of the problems of outer space. Both cases dealt with military activities beyond the boundaries of the States concerned.

24. It was a strange fact that, when the Committee had considered the problem of nuclear weapons tests, the United States delegation had favoured a general debate on the whole disarmament question. Now, when it was proposed to discuss the question of outer space together with its connexion with other military problems, the United States delegation wished to separate the question of the peaceful use of outer space, not only from the general question of disarmament, but also from the military aspects of the problem of outer space.

25. His delegation believed that the new Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219/Rev.1) was a realistic and honest compromise. That draft took into account the present state of affairs in the General Assembly and also the complexity of the problem and the urgent need for early action. His delegation felt, therefore, that unanimous agreement could be reached on the basis of the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union.

26. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) said that, contrary to the Soviet representative's assertion, the United States was eager to reach an agreement to ensure that outer space would be used for peaceful purposes. All that was needed was Soviet agreement to begin the necessary technical talks with a view to creating the essential international inspection system. The Soviet Union had still not replied to the proposal on that subject submitted in 1957 to the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission by Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States (DC/113, annex 5). The United States hoped that the Soviet Union would enter into the necessary technical talks, a means which had already proved itself.

27. The Soviet Union's charge that the United States had forced countries against their will to accept military bases intended for aggressive purposes was so absurd that it answered itself. However, it ill became a country to make such charges when its bases dominated the satellite countries of Eastern Europe where they had been established against the will of the countries concerned and when it was acting in Hungary in defiance of United Nations resolutions. Moreover, a nation which really wanted to be peaceful and conciliatory did not begin by insulting other countries and impugning their motives.

28. With that reservation, he was glad to observe that there was encouragement in the fact that the Soviet Union appeared to have dropped its previous insistence that co-operation in the field of outer space be based on the satisfaction of extraneous and obviously unacceptable demands, namely that the free world should give up its collective defence system. He noted with satisfaction that the Soviet Union appeared to have recognized that work with regard to outer space should be begun without delay, so as to focus the energies of nations on positive programmes of co-operation instead of on international tensions and conflicts. It looked as though some progress had been made. The United States delegation was eager for such progress and its Government was very carefully examining the new Soviet draft resolution.

29. Mr. BRUCAN (Romania) protested against the United States representative's use of the word "satellite", which was insulting to a number of countries, and contrary to the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

30. Mr. RITCHIE (Canada) agreed that it was important that a positive programme of co-operation and research in the peaceful uses of outer space should be developed without delay. There was also a manifest need to formulate the principles that would govern activity in outer space as soon as possible. As the Canadian Prime Minister had stated in February 1958, outer space should belong to the world as a whole and jurisdiction over it should be vested in the United Nations. To that end an international space organization might be set up, which would have the right to exercise control over all outer-space operations and would ensure that outer space was used for scientific and peaceful purposes only. The Canadian Prime Minister had also contemplated the possibility of a declaration recognizing the equal territorial rights of all nations in outer space, and an international convention under which nations would undertake to give prior notification of the launching of space missiles and to make available all the information obtained. Account should also be taken of the Secretary-General's views as expressed in the introduction to his annual report, in which he voiced the hope that the various countries would be able to agree that outer space, and the celestial bodies therein, were not considered as capable of appropriation by any State (A/3844/Add.1, p.3).

31. Before those long-term objectives could be achieved, it would be necessary first to define the limits of outer space and the nature of the manifold problems human activities there would raise. The International Law Commission might well have a useful part to play in the solution of the legal problems, while specialized agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization could give assistance in the study of technical problems. However, the most important question was still that of resources. It was essential that the exploration of space should not become the province of a few major Powers alone and that the other countries should also enjoy the fruits of research and of the exploitation of outer space. In order to achieve that end, all activities concerning the exploration of space might be entrusted to an appropriate United Nations body. On the other hand, it might be more practical to continue national programmes, preferably without secrecy and under the co-ordination of such a United Nations body, thus allowing an international programme to be developed with the assistance of the material resources and technical information of the major Powers. In any case, the possibility should be examined of extensive international collaboration in that field, and not merely the co-ordination of national projects and the exchange of information.

32. The committee proposed in the twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220), of which Canada was a sponsor, offered a practical approach to the problem. The Soviet Union's new proposal seemed at first sight

to be more in the same direction and he shared the hope expressed by the Yugoslav representative that a unanimous agreement would soon be reached on the question. In any case, his delegation hoped that the terms of reference of whatever body was set up would be wide enough to allow it to examine all aspects of the peaceful use of outer space. The body in question might, among other things, collate the information furnished by Member States and consider methods of pursuing the research started under the International Geophysical Year. Canada would have a contribution to make in that regard as a result of the large-scale work which it was doing in that field.

33. To do its job properly, the proposed *ad hoc* committee must be a good technical body capable of producing an expert study of the question. The essential criterion of membership should therefore be the technical and scientific experience of the countries to be represented. Care must also be taken to see that all regions of the world were represented on the committee, which should be of manageable size, but not too restrictive. The members should be representatives of Governments assisted by scientific advisers.

34. His delegation believed that it would be advantageous to examine the possible forms of collaboration and discuss the nature of the international agency to be set up without waiting for agreement on the difficult problems of disarmament. It recognized, however, that the peaceful use of outer space was related to the question of disarmament, since the former must not give military advantages to any particular country. His delegation also believed that it was of urgent importance to consider the disarmament aspects of the question of outer space. In that connexion Canada maintained the proposal it had submitted in 1957, together with France, the United Kingdom and the United States, concerning the establishment of a technical committee to study the design of an inspection system to ensure the peaceful use of outer space (DC/113, annex 5, sect. VI). There could be no question of accepting the elimination of all military bases abroad in order to secure the establishment of a United Nations space organization. But it would not be unreasonable to expect that any serious discussion of the disarmament aspects of the question of outer space would take into consideration the other aspects of disarmament which were strategically related. In that respect, it would appear that any agreement relating to the prohibition of the use of outer space for warlike purposes could scarcely fail to provide for international restrictions on missiles over a certain range.

35. Sir Pierson DIXON (United Kingdom) said that he was glad that the Soviet representative had withdrawn his proposal which made the banning of the use of outer space for military purposes dependent on the elimination of so-called foreign bases. He felt that the new Soviet draft resolution was a move in the right direction, although he preferred the twenty-Power draft resolution, which offered a more practical way of getting to grips with the problem. Moreover, the composition of the committee proposed by the Soviet delegation seemed unlikely to command general acceptance. It was to be hoped that the Soviet Union would be able to come even closer to the twenty-Power draft and that the Committee would thus be able to take a unanimous decision.

Order of discussion of agenda items (A/C.1/806) (continued)<sup>1/</sup>

36. After an exchange of views in which Mr. DELGADO (Philippines), Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) and Mr. ERALP (Turkey) took part, the CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee, in accordance with a suggestion by Sir Pierson DIXON (United Kingdom),

<sup>1/</sup> Resumed from the 972nd meeting.

should not take a final decision as to which question should be considered next until it had finished considering the question of the peaceful use of outer space. He noted, however, that the countries most directly concerned seemed ready to take up the question of Cyprus.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.