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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES
OF OUTER SPACE

LETTER DATED 21 MARCH 1962 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ADDRESSED TO THE ACTING
SECRETARY-GENERAL

I enclose the text of a message dated 20 March 1962 from Mr. N.S. Khrushchev,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to Mr. John F. Kennedy, President
of the United States of America, concerning the study and use of outer space.

Please arrange for this message to be circulated as an official United Nations
document.

(Signed) P. MOROZOV

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Message dated 20 March 1962 from Chairman Khrushchev to
President Kennedy on the question of the Exploration and
Use of Outer Space

Mr. President,

After carefully studying your message of 7 March 1962, I note with satisfaction that my message to you of 21 February, proposing that our two countries should pool their efforts to explore outer space has been received with the requisite understanding by the United States Government.

In putting forward this proposal, we proceeded from the premise that all peoples, all mankind, are concerned with the task of exploring outer space and putting it to peaceful uses and that the gigantic scale of this task, and the difficulties which have to be overcome, make it imperative for States to pool their scientific, technical and material ability and resources to a considerable extent. Even now, when the space age is just dawning, it can be seen how much man has to accomplish.

If today the genius of man has created space-ships capable of landing on the surface of the moon with the greatest accuracy and carrying the first astronauts into orbit around the earth, tomorrow space vehicles controlled by man could travel to Mars and Venus, and as they go further, man's prospects of penetrating the farthest reaches of the universe will become greater and vaster.

The exploration of space in the interests of all mankind will be more rapid the greater the number of countries making a contribution to this very complicated task, which also involves considerable expenditure. And this means that all States should be given equal opportunities to take part in international co-operation in this field. It is precisely such international co-operation that the Soviet Union, true to its policy of developing and strengthening friendship between peoples, has steadfastly advocated. Early in 1958, the Soviet Government proposed that a broad international agreement should be concluded on co-operation in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space and took the initiative of putting this question forward for the consideration of the United Nations. In 1961, immediately after the Soviet Union had carried out the first manned space flight, we again declared our readiness to co-operate and join with other countries, and above all with your country, which was then preparing for similar flights.

My message to you of 21 February 1962 was motivated by the same desire and directed towards the same end.

The Soviet Government has always considered and still does consider our country's successes in space exploration as achievements not just of the Soviet people but of all mankind. The Soviet Union is taking practical steps to make the results of the work of the Soviet scientists and astronauts available to all countries. We give wide publicity to all our launchings of satellites, space-ships and space-rockets, providing full information about orbits, weights, radio frequencies, etc.

Soviet scientists have established fruitful practical contacts with their colleagues abroad, including those in your country, in such international organizations as the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation.

It seems to me, Mr. President, that it is now generally recognized that further practical steps are needed in the noble cause of developing international co-operation in space research for peaceful purposes. Your message shows that your thinking on this matter is not essentially different from our idea of practical measures of co-operation in this field. Where should a beginning be made?

In this connexion, I should like to list some of the problems connected with the exploration and peaceful use of space whose solution, in our opinion, requires States to pool their efforts. Some of them, which are envisaged in a recent General Assembly resolution adopted at the initiative of our countries, are mentioned in your message.

1. Scientists consider that at the present stage of space exploration it would be quite possible to use artificial earth satellites to set up international long-distance communications systems. Such projects could lead to a considerable improvement in communications and television facilities on the earth. People would have a reliable means of communication, and unprecedented opportunities for extending contacts between peoples would be opened up. Let us therefore begin by investigating the practical possibilities of co-operation in carrying out this task. I understand from your message that the United States is ready to do this.

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2. One can scarcely overestimate the benefit which mankind would derive from the organization of a world-wide weather observation service with the aid of artificial satellites. Accurate and timely weather forecasts would be another important step towards the mastery of the forces of nature by man; they would make it possible to deal with natural calamities more successfully and would open up new prospects of increasing the welfare of mankind. Let us co-operate in this field, also.

3. It seems to us that it would be profitable to reach agreement on the organization of a joint programme for making observations by radio and by optical means on objects launched towards the moon, Mars, Venus and other planets in the solar system.

In the opinion of our scientists, it would undoubtedly be beneficial if States joined together to speed up scientific progress in the study of the physics of interplanetary space and celestial bodies.

4. At the present stage of man's exploration of outer space, it would be very desirable to draft and conclude an international agreement providing for assistance in searching for and recovering space-ships, satellites and capsules which come down to earth by accident. Such an agreement is all the more necessary because it may be a question of saving the lives of astronauts - those intrepid explorers of the universe.

5. Your message contains proposals for co-operation between our two countries in drawing up charts of the Earth's magnetic field in space with the aid of satellites, and also for the exchange of knowledge in the sphere of space biology. I can say that Soviet scientists are ready to engage in co-operation of this kind and to exchange information on these questions with scientists of other countries.

6. I think, Mr. President, that the time has also come for our two countries, which have gone further than any others in exploring space, to try to find a common approach to the solution of important legal problems which are forced on States in the space age by the logic of events. In this connexion, I consider it a sign of progress that at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union and the United States were able to agree on a

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resolution concerning the initial principles of space law, which was later approved unanimously by all States Members of the United Nations: the resolution stated that international law, including the United Nations Charter, applied to outer space and celestial bodies and that outer space and celestial bodies were free for exploration and use by all States in conformity with international law and were not subject to national appropriation.

Now, in our opinion, we should go further.

The growth of space research by individual States undoubtedly makes it necessary to come to an agreement that in carrying out experiments in outer space, no one should create obstacles to the study and use of space for peaceful purposes by other States. It should, perhaps, be specified that any experiments in outer space which may hinder the exploration of space by other countries should be the subject of preliminary discussion and of an agreement concluded on a proper international basis.

Mr. President, I have mentioned only some of the questions which, in our opinion, are ready for solution and require co-operation between our countries. If we can lay a solid basis now for international co-operation in space exploration, there can be no doubt that such co-operation will in the future spread to ever new fields of space research. We hope that the scientists of the USSR and the United States will be able to prepare and carry out many space research projects hand in hand and together with scientists of other countries.

The USSR representatives in the United Nations Committee on Outer Space will be given instructions to meet with the United States representatives in order to discuss specific questions connected with co-operation in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space which are of interest to our countries.

Those, Mr. President, are our views on, as it were, heavenly matters. We sincerely hope that we can arrange to co-operate in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space and thus help to improve relations between our countries, reduce international tension and create a favourable situation for the peaceful settlement of urgent earthly problems.

At the same time, it seems to me obvious that the extent to which we can co-operate in the peaceful exploration of space, and the choice of those fields

in which such co-operation is possible, will depend to a certain degree on the solution of the disarmament problem. Until an agreement is reached on general and complete disarmament, both our countries will still be limited in their ability to co-operate in the peaceful use of outer space. It is no secret that rockets designed for military purposes and space-ships used for peaceful purposes are based on the same scientific and technical discoveries. It is true that there are already some differences: space rockets require more powerful engines, since they are used to lift greater loads to a greater height, whereas military rockets, on the whole, do not need such powerful engines, as the existing engines can carry warheads of very great destructive power and deliver them to any point on the earth's surface. You know, however, Mr. President, as we do, that the principles of design and production are the same for military and space rockets.

I am putting forward these considerations simply because it is better if we have a clear picture of all aspects of the question. We must try to overcome the obstacles which may arise to international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of space. It may be that we shall succeed in doing so, and that will be useful. Considerably greater prospects for co-operation, for pooling our scientific and technical efforts, including even joint development of space-ships which can be sent to other planets - the moon, Venus, Mars - will be opened up when agreement is reached on disarmament.

We hope that an agreement on general and complete disarmament will be reached; we are making every effort to achieve this and shall continue to do so. I should like to believe that you too, Mr. President, will spare no effort to act in the same direction.

(Signed) N. KHRUSHCHEV