



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9630th meeting
Monday, 20 May 2024, 3 p.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Afonso (Mozambique)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Koudri
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Non-proliferation

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/383, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belarus, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We all remember how, on 24 April here in the Chamber (see S/PV.9616), the United States, Japan and their allies were ultimately unable to explain the added value behind their draft resolution (S/2024/302) on the non-placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, which reaffirmed the obligations that arise for all signatories to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. They were unable to argue in a reasonable way their refusal to introduce in the draft resolution our proposal on preventing an arms race in outer space, which would have lent some sense of purpose to the document. The voting revealed that the Western initiative had a single motivation behind it, namely, to attempt to portray the Russian Federation in an unfavourable light and, in an unsubstantiated way, to ascribe to us a certain course of action and plans that we do not have.

This situation has dealt a major blow to international efforts geared towards keeping outer space peaceful. However, insofar as preventing an arms race in outer space and safeguarding space for peaceful purposes is a paramount priority for us, we decided to provide our Western colleagues with another opportunity — not in word, but indeed — to demonstrate the peaceful nature

of their intentions. For that purpose, we prepared an alternative draft resolution (S/2024/383). Unlike the blatantly politicized American and Japanese draft resolution, this draft resolution will help to guarantee the exclusively peaceful exploration and use of outer space. We are confident that the peaceful use of outer space, which became a symbol of the great achievements in science and technology, is intended to serve as an effective means for resolving many global problems, including issues related to economic development, for which the international community has been striving for more than half a century now.

We are also persuaded of the need to prevent outer space from becoming another arena for armed confrontation and warfare. Now more than ever before, outer space must be completely excluded from the arms race and preserved for peaceful purposes, and those must become universally recognized international norms.

The draft resolution that we submitted is comprehensive and contains well-known provisions that reflect the interests and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States. Thanks to its broad scope, it is aimed at reaffirming States' commitments not to use outer space for the placement of any kind of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. This is incidentally the language that our United States colleagues, with trumped-up pretexts, demonstrably refused to include in their draft resolution from the very beginning.

While working on the document, we adopted a responsible approach in taking into account the concerns of all Council members. I further note that we made concessions to our Western colleagues and even removed a crucially important reference to the Russian-Chinese draft treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. Incidentally, that document is still being negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. At the same time, the draft treaty retains its relevance and is seen as the basis for future negotiations on a multilateral legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The draft resolution is of the utmost importance in the context of the challenges that we are encountering in outer space. Its adoption will help to reaffirm our collective commitment to preserving the peaceful nature of outer space and making a meaningful contribution to international peace and security. Today's vote is a

unique moment of truth for our Western colleagues. If they do not support the draft resolution, they will clearly show that their priority is to maintain a free hand to expedite the militarization of outer space. That would be especially blatant given that all the provisions promoted by the United States and Japan on the non-placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, including nuclear weapons, are preserved in our draft resolution without any changes.

We call on all responsible participants in outer space activities to support our draft resolution.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): We are here today because Russia seeks to distract global attention from its development of a new satellite carrying a nuclear device.

On 24 April, Russia vetoed (see S/PV.9616) a draft resolution (S/2024/302), supported by 13 members of the Security Council, that called on all Member States not to develop nuclear weapons specifically designed to be placed in orbit. That draft resolution, which was a product of nearly two months of constructive negotiations and co-sponsored by 65 countries, reflected a simple reality: the placement of a nuclear weapon into orbit would not only violate the Outer Space Treaty, it would also threaten human space flight, as well as the vital communications, scientific, meteorological, agricultural, commercial and national security services that any and all satellites provide to people around the globe.

We have heard President Putin say publicly that Russia has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space. If that were the case, Russia would not have vetoed that draft resolution.

Over the past several weeks and following widespread condemnation from a geographically diverse group of Member States in the General Assembly on 6 May, Russia has sought to distract from its dangerous efforts to put a nuclear weapon into orbit. The culmination of Russia's campaign of diplomatic gaslighting and dissembling is the draft resolution (S/2024/383) before us today. Drafted through a hasty process that did not take into account legitimate, repeated and shared concerns by a majority of Council members, Russia's draft resolution does not achieve the simple task that we set out to achieve several months ago: reaffirm the basic obligations of the Outer Space Treaty and avoid a nuclear arms race in space.

Consequently, the United States will not support this disingenuous draft resolution. We urge the Council to reject it and instead reiterate our call for Russia to join every other member of the Council in supporting the common sense, straightforward text that dozens of Member States supported only four weeks ago.

Again, Russia does not want the Security Council to focus on its dangerous actions in space. Its veto then requires that we be sceptical of its statements today and its intentions in putting forward this draft resolution.

It is also vital that we do not lose track of some simple facts.

First, rather than enhance arms control, the Russian text put forward today would narrow the scope of efforts in other United Nations bodies in a way that would be detrimental to preventing an arms race in outer space.

Secondly, by seeking to use this draft resolution to put forward language on other topics that Russia knows does not have consensus support in the Council, Russia's text also distracts from affirming the important obligations of all 116 States parties to the Outer Space Treaty, including that no nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction be put into orbit.

Thirdly, the text that Russia vetoed on 24 April went to great lengths to address every Council member's concerns in a broader and more inclusive manner than what Russia has forced on the Council today. To repeat: the draft resolution that Russia vetoed was supported by 13 members of the Council and was co-sponsored by 65 Member States. It reflected the strong global consensus, as the President of the General Assembly Ambassador Francis later declared, during the Assembly's 6 May meeting that:

“Outer space does not belong to individual nations. Its peaceful and sustainable use is not subject to national appropriation and must be a place of peace and cooperation for the benefit and in the interest of all countries.”

The United States could not agree more.

For its part, the United States will continue to demonstrate how space activities can be conducted in a responsible, peaceful and sustainable manner in order to preserve the benefits of space for current and future generations. We also will continue to put a bright spotlight on Russia's troubling actions in space and how they diverge from its statements here in the Security Council.

Indeed, just last week, on 16 May, Russia launched a satellite into low Earth orbit that the United States assesses is likely a counterspace weapon presumably capable of attacking other satellites in low Earth orbit. Russia deployed that new counterspace weapon into the same orbit as a United States Government satellite. Russia's 16 May launch follows prior Russian satellite launches likely of counterspace systems to low Earth orbit in 2019 and 2022.

We urge Council members to vote no on this distraction and to join us in pressing Russia to cease its obstruction here in the Security Council. And we urge them to join us in making clear to Russia that the world will not turn a blind eye to its dangerous and unprecedented efforts to develop a new satellite carrying a nuclear device, which undermines its obligations under the Outer Space Treaty and counters the views of an overwhelming majority of members of the Security Council.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): While listening to the zealous statement of the United States representative, we were not certain which draft resolution he was speaking about. Did he read the draft resolution (S/2024/383) that was submitted?

It is not the first time that the United States has accused Russia of attempting to place nuclear weapons in outer space. The United States representative has just referred to a satellite that he believes is likely to presumably carry a nuclear device. I did not even fully understand what he meant, but that is not what is most important.

If the United States is accusing Russia of seeking to place nuclear weapons in outer space, then what does the United States representative not like about the draft resolution we have proposed? It contains wording that is identical to the United States draft resolution (S/2024/302) that we vetoed, for good reason, on 24 April (see S/PV.9616), because the scope of the draft resolution was limited to only weapons of mass destruction. We are now proposing a draft resolution that encompasses both weapons of mass destruction and all other forms of weapons in outer space. We are talking about preventing an arms race in outer space. Let the United States representative, if he can, try to explain to us where he sees a defect in our draft

resolution, considering that it is virtually identical to the text proposed by the United States and supplements it with provisions on all other forms of weapons that we believe should not be placed in outer space.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again, but I obviously need to respond to the remarks made by the Russian representative.

In answer to his question — yes, I read his bad text. It includes a lengthy binding mechanism that cannot be verified. That is clear. We have had discussions in Geneva previously with regard to the type of treaty that his Government would like to see put in place, and we have therefore seen this movie before. But what I want to submit to my Russian colleague is that we let the Council decide on his text. And we are about to do that.

The President: I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Ecuador, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone

Against:

France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Switzerland

The President: The draft resolution received 7 votes in favour, 7 against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria): Algeria voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/383, as it aligns with our long-standing position on the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of its weaponization. As our unwavering position outlines, Algeria firmly believes that outer space is a common heritage of humankind. It must be explored and utilized for the benefit of all nations, irrespective of their level of economic or scientific

development. The draft resolution rightly calls on all States, particularly those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race there. In the interests of maintaining international peace and security, we reiterate how important it is that all States refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to existing treaties.

The text makes commendable reference to key documents such as the Outer Space Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Space2030 Agenda, underlining the importance of international law and the crucial role of the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating multilateral agreements. Its emphasis on strict compliance with the Outer Space Treaty and other relevant legal instruments is crucial. Upholding and promoting universal adherence to those treaties is essential to preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. The draft resolution rightly underscores the urgent need for further measures, including legally binding instruments, to prevent an arms race in outer space. We have consistently championed the importance of negotiating such instruments.

In conclusion, Algeria reiterates its unwavering commitment to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea voted against draft resolution S/2024/383 for two reasons.

First, the Russian draft resolution contained language that did not reach consensus among Security Council members, including one operative paragraph, paragraph 8, that was identical to the text in the Russian amendment (S/2024/323) that was not adopted at the previous meeting on this topic on 24 April (see S/PV.9616).

Given the dual-use nature of many space systems, it is very difficult to define a weapon in space, and it is also difficult to verify compliance, even with a legally binding agreement. Ambiguity could lead to legal divergences and open the door to the intentional evasion of legal obligations. That is why many States, including the Republic of Korea, believe that we need to further develop rules, norms and principles to address and tackle the current and potential threats in the domain of space in a relevant manner. The Russian text did not properly reflect those views.

Secondly, the draft resolution was put to a vote without sufficient consultations. Despite several Council members' requests asking that it be balanced, the Russian Federation barely changed the text and put it in blue as soon as the no-objection procedure was broken. Apparently, it did not intend to conduct the negotiations in good faith. That is all the more regrettable because Russia vetoed a draft resolution (S/2024/302) on the same topic that enjoyed 13 votes in favour, including by all 10 elected members of the Council (see S/PV.9616).

The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the Security Council needs to be more proactive in addressing emerging security challenges, especially in the space and cyber domains. Throughout its term on the Security Council, the Republic of Korea stands ready to work with other Council members to make it more agile and relevant in maintaining international peace and security in our rapidly changing world.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): Malta voted against draft resolution S/2024/383, which failed to include the views of many Council members. We did so on substance and even more so on procedural grounds.

With regard to the draft text, while it is largely based on draft resolution S/2024/302, presented by Japan and the United States, it removes key elements, including a reference to the applicability of international law in outer space. That reference was supported by many Council members, and we regret its deletion. Furthermore, the draft contains two additional non-consensual operative paragraphs that seek to divide the Council rather than to achieve consensus. In fact, the same language in one of the two operative paragraph was recently voted down in this very Chamber when it was presented as an amendment (S/2024/323) to the draft resolution submitted by Japan and the United States.

On the other hand, we are disappointed by the penholder's approach. It is regrettable to see a permanent member first veto a draft resolution on this topic (see S/PV.9616), stressing that the Council should not discuss outer space and should not reaffirm existing obligations, only to then present its own draft resolution on the same topic. Moreover, after only one round of consultations, it placed under silence a text that failed to address almost all the concerns expressed by other members. That is not striving for consensus. It is not how we advance the interests of the wider

United Nations membership. Such initiatives only contribute to discrediting the Security Council. As we have said before, we had a timely opportunity to adopt the Council's first draft resolution on outer space and reaffirm the principles of the Outer Space Treaty. We missed that opportunity with last month's veto of the draft resolution. Our collective goal is to ensure that outer space remains a peaceful domain for the benefit of all humankind. As space capabilities continue to increase, we believe that the Council should play a role in addressing related threats to international peace and security.

In conclusion, we once again reaffirm our principled position against all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, in outer space, on Earth and anywhere else. We stand ready to engage constructively in outer space discussions in all the relevant forums, including the Security Council.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Let me begin by reminding the Council what our Russian colleague said in this Chamber just a few weeks ago. He stated that

“[d]iscussions on outer space security and decisions taken on the matter should be comprehensive” and should “involve all Members of the United Nations.... Otherwise, this is nothing but a blatant attempt to impose the opinion of Security Council members on the rest of the United Nations membership” (S/PV.9616, p.11).

The same delegation has now proposed a draft resolution on outer space security (S/2024/383) to the Security Council that the rest of the United Nations membership would not accept. We cannot find consistency in its approach.

Throughout the negotiations on this draft text, our delegation made every effort to find a compromise by offering concrete proposals to bring together Council members' divergent views. We regret that the penholder did not fully take into account those constructive suggestions and instead decided to put forward a text with a number of divisive elements. For example, where the prevention of an arms race in outer space is concerned, while there is consensus on taking further measures and appropriate international negotiations in accordance with the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty, at this stage there is no consensus among Member States on a specific way forward. That is why the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament continue to discuss this important issue.

Maintaining the peaceful nature of outer space is highly relevant to the work of the Security Council. However, we believe that the Council should complement the efforts made in other relevant forums rather than pre-empt or prejudge the results of such efforts. Japan reiterates its strong commitment to ensuring the security, stability and sustainability of outer space and the objective of preventing an arms race there. However, significant challenges remain in defining and verifying weapons in outer space. That derives from the dual-use nature of space objects and technologies and the need to address space threats in a comprehensive manner. In order to address security challenges in outer space, it is crucial to focus on how certain objects or capabilities are applied and used. Based on that position, we voted against the draft resolution today.

Before I conclude, there is another point that I would like to emphasize. Operative paragraph 7 of this draft resolution calls on Member States to refrain from developing nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction specifically designed to be placed in outer space. We are pleased to see that the proponents of the draft resolution are now ready to proactively commit to that important principle, which Japan and the United States wanted to deliver in our draft resolution presented last month (S/2024/302). Outer space should never be an arena for a nuclear arms race.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Ensuring the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space contributes to our security and prosperity and is in the common interest of all States. It is the responsibility of the Security Council, as well as the bodies dedicated to the specific purpose, to preserve space for future generations.

Switzerland underscores that the various approaches to space security are complementary. We remain committed to our position that it is imperative to prevent an arms race and armed conflict in outer space, and to that end, that the placement of all types of weapons, including conventional ones, should be prohibited. We believe it is necessary to develop standards of responsible behaviour and legally binding instruments in order to achieve those objectives.

Considering the negotiations on draft resolution S/2024/302, put forward by Japan and the United States, which unfortunately failed thanks to a veto, and after examining Russia's current draft resolution

(S/2024/383), we believe there would be enough common ground to reach consensus. Although we support several elements of the draft presented, we regret the lack of a spirit of flexibility and a framework of trust and that our suggestions for producing a text that would unite rather than divide us were not taken into account. We therefore decided to abstain in the voting on the draft.

The Council should nevertheless act in a spirit of cooperation and make issues such as space safety a common ground for understanding rather than an arena for confrontation in which everyone tries to score points. We regret that that was not the case this time, and we hope that we can take advantage of future opportunities to reconcile members' positions and reach common ground. Switzerland stresses that all of the States parties to the Outer Space Treaty are obliged to implement its provisions, and we once again call on States that have not yet done so to accede to it without delay.

Switzerland believes firmly that it is essential and possible for the Council to agree on a product on this issue, which is so important for international security and the prosperity of all our countries. We call on all members to unite and seek solutions, focusing on commonalities rather than differences, in order to achieve results that advance disarmament rather than deepening divisions.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is committed to preventing an arms race in outer space. That is why we introduced a draft resolution in the General Assembly last year establishing norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours to reduce threats to space systems (resolution 78/20). It was adopted with the overwhelming support of 166 Member States, and it is why the United Kingdom supported draft resolution S/2024/302, submitted to the Council by the United States and Japan, which sought to affirm the basic obligations of the Outer Space Treaty and prevent any nuclear weapons being placed in orbit around Earth.

The detonation of a nuclear weapon in space could destroy or permanently damage a significant proportion of satellites in orbit around Earth, with highly disruptive and potentially life-threatening consequences for the essential space technology applications that we all rely on. It should be deeply concerning to all of us that Russia vetoed that draft resolution.

Russia's counter draft resolution (S/2024/383), which we voted on today, was simply not credible. It was a cynical attempt to distract attention away from reports that Moscow is developing a new satellite carrying a nuclear device. The draft resolution was built around language that was voted down just a few weeks ago by the Council and was widely opposed again in negotiations. So why put it to a vote today? This was not a serious attempt to address the security of space. And Russia knows very well that its proposals were not verifiable or enforceable. Coming from a country that has flouted so many obligations in arms control, this raises a red flag.

Let me remind the Council of Russia's recent track record — plans to withdraw ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies and the comprehensive forces in Europe treaties, suspending participation in the New START Treaty, violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention and, of course, breaching the Council's resolutions on Iran and Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We need to redouble efforts to avoid an arms race in outer space and to ensure our collective security. That requires serious good-faith discussion about the arms control architecture. We remain ready and willing to engage in those as a matter of urgency.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): Guyana voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/383, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space and outer space security", submitted by the Russian Federation.

We supported the draft resolution, as it is consistent with our positions on General Assembly resolution 78/238 and Security Council draft resolution S/2024/302, submitted by Japan and the United States less than a month ago (see S/PV.9616), on the prevention of nuclear weapons in outer space, which, unfortunately, was not adopted due to Russia's veto. As a nation committed to the equitable and peaceful use of outer space, we recognize the importance of the draft resolution's call for space to be free from all weapons. The prospect of weaponizing this domain poses a grave threat — not only to global security, but also to the future of humankind's shared heritage in space.

In that regard, we believe the draft text, which was not adopted, could have contributed to averting this grave threat. Guyana underscores that outer space

must remain free of all weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. It is crucial that we safeguard this shared global common from the scourge of arms races, which can only exacerbate the threats to our collective security and hinder our development agendas.

Guyana reiterates the importance of nuclear-weapon States upholding their international obligations and committing to not place nuclear weapons in outer space. We also reiterate our commitment to supporting efforts to guarantee the right of all countries to benefit equitably from the peaceful use of outer space.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador is firmly committed to the promotion of international peace and security and believes that the regulation of outer space activities is one of the essential elements of the architecture necessary to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Therefore, true to its principles and consistent with its position, my country voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/383. Ecuador recognizes the importance of preserving outer space as a peaceful environment and opposes its anarchization and, in particular, its militarization, which includes the placement in space of any type of weaponry — especially weapons of mass destruction.

It cannot be overlooked that the basis of the text submitted for the consideration of the Council is based on S/2024/302, the draft resolution vetoed on 24 April (see S/PV.9616), including the language of its draft amendment (S/2024/323), which did not have the number of votes necessary for its adoption. As such, a similar result was foreseeable. Why set the Council up with a useless process whose outcome was already known?

It is concerning to note the growing polarization and confrontation in the consideration of issues that fall within the purview of the Council and that impose on all its members an individual and collective responsibility in the search for constructive solutions for addressing global challenges, including the issue of weapons in outer space. We must not politicize the Security Council and use it as yet another arena to reflect current geopolitical tensions.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Ecuador's commitment to continue acting in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on the basis of dialogue and cooperation among its Members.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): France voted against the draft resolution (S/2024/383) submitted today.

We deplore the obstructive method used by Russia, who clearly sought only to divide the Council and place the responsibility for the failure of this draft text without genuinely supporting its objectives. France's vote today reflects our rejection of the method.

On 24 April (see S/PV.9616), Russia vetoed draft resolution S/2024/302, on outer space, drafted by the United States and Japan. We wish to once again to commend the efforts made by those two States during open discussions in order to reach a compromise. Their draft resolution reaffirmed the importance of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which is the basis of international space law, and underlined the role of specialized bodies, such as the Conference on Disarmament, in continuing to develop the legal framework to govern space.

After blocking — alone — the adoption of the draft resolution, Russia submitted to the Council an alternative text (S/2024/383), with 15 paragraphs taken directly from the proposal of the United States and Japan. It is astonishing that Russia vetoed a text that it used then as an inspiration for its own draft.

France's position is clear. We support the paragraphs that recall the role of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, but Russia is seeking to impose new provisions that only serve to distance the Council from reaching an agreement. Those additions aim to incorporate references to the draft treaty on the placement of weapons in outer space, which does not enjoy consensus and is being discussed in disarmament bodies. France has reservations about this draft treaty, which would run up against the stumbling block of defining terms and establishing effective verification mechanisms. During negotiations on this draft resolution, we, like many other members of the Council, called on others to not prejudice the ongoing debates in disarmament bodies.

In a spirit of compromise, we accepted that the draft resolution did not mention the reduction of space threats through the definition of norms for responsible behaviour, although some 170 States supported A/C.1/78/L.15/Rev.1 in the First Committee, a draft resolution promoting such an approach.

For its part, Russia persisted in wanting to incorporate into the text its proposal for a treaty when it knew that it did not enjoy the majority support of the

Council. It is Russia's refusal to negotiate, as well as the veto it cast a few weeks ago, which leads us to doubt Russia's credibility when it claims to bring together the international community to negotiate an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

It is in the interests of all for outer space to remain safe and stable and for it to be used for peaceful ends. France is committed to respect for the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and international law, as well as to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In furtherance of that goal, we are mobilized in discussions in the competent bodies on disarmament, including on the definition of political commitments and appropriate binding instruments.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to promoting peace, security, and stability in outer space and beyond. In line with our principled stance on preventing the weaponization of outer space, Sierra Leone voted, on 24 April (see S/PV.9616), in favour of draft resolution S/2024/302, sponsored by Japan and the United States and co-sponsored by 65 Member States, on weapons of mass destruction in outer space. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to a non-concurring vote of a permanent member. We also voted for the amendment (S/2024/323) proposed by the Russian Federation and China, recognizing the urgent need for measures to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space.

Sierra Leone has voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/383 to re-echo its consistent and fundamental belief in the peaceful uses of outer space and prevent any potential militarization. We observe that the draft resolution sponsored by the Russian Federation largely comprises elements of the draft resolution co-authored by Japan and the United States, which was not adopted.

We recognize the concerns of some Security Council members regarding the lack of broad consensus on broad elements of the draft resolution. However, the urgency of preventing any militarization of outer space necessitates strong and decisive measures. Sierra Leone firmly believes that the adoption of any draft resolution that calls for the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a pivotal step towards mitigating the risks.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone remains dedicated to the pursuit of peace and security in outer space. Our vote in favour of the draft resolution signifies our commitment to maintaining outer space as a sanctuary for peaceful activities, free from threats, military confrontation

and conflicts prevalent on Earth — a realm where humankind can unify in the pursuit of knowledge, exploration and mutual advancement.

We call upon all Member States to collaborate earnestly in future negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to develop a universally accepted legally binding framework that will safeguard our shared outer space heritage for the betterment of present and future generations.

Sierra Leone stands ready to continue its constructive engagement in these vital discussions to ensure that outer space remains a secure and peaceful environment for present and future generations.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): Slovenia regrets to see another divisive vote on a topic that should unite us. Slovenia engaged in good faith, with openness and flexibility, in the negotiations on this draft resolution (S/2024/383) with the aim of ensuring a safe and secure space environment. We proposed a number of amendments. However, none of our concerns were taken on board.

We underline that the international space law, with the Outer Space Treaty at its centre, represents the cornerstone of the global governance of outer space. They include central provisions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with the prohibition of the placement of weapons of mass destruction above Earth's atmosphere. Those obligations need to be reiterated and strengthened in order to avoid potentially harmful interference with the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

Slovenia supports the majority of the submitted text. However, the proposal put forward by the Russian Federation does not effectively address the many challenges associated with the prevention of an arms race in outer space and would, in our view, have ambiguous implications for the security of outer space. For those reasons, Slovenia voted against the draft resolution.

Slovenia remains steadfast in its commitment to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It supports the strengthening of existing commitments through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour, as well as legally binding measures. We reaffirm our dedication to engaging constructively in all efforts aimed at ensuring the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of present and future generations.

We urge all spacefaring nations to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that could lead to the weaponization of outer space. We appeal to them to demonstrate responsible behaviour in order to secure a peaceful and sustainable use of outer space.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On the whole, we are pleased with the results of the voting, which, beyond the numbers, demonstrated a watershed between those who seek the peaceful exploration of outer space and those who seek its militarization. Western countries are now essentially isolated in the Council, and that is symptomatic.

We deeply regret that the Western members of the Security Council have prevented the Council from taking a balanced and much-needed decision today in favour of preserving the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. They have thereby definitively cast aside their masks, revealed their hand and presented themselves as they truly are.

As recently as last month, the United States and its allies, with their characteristic cynicism, were literally beating their chests, loudly proclaiming their commitments to a peaceful outer space. Now that they have confirmed their real intentions to continue militarizing space and developing relevant weapons, what is particularly cynical and hypocritical are their attempts to justify their actions with the allegedly non-consensual nature of our draft resolution, not to mention the sudden awakening of their recognition of the importance of discussing the question of preventing an arms race in outer space at specialized disarmament forums — the position which they criticized Russia for just a few weeks ago. And today the representative of Japan tried to put the ball in our court. However, we all recall that it was they who placed that subject on the Council's agenda. The reason why they did not support our draft resolution today is simple and banal: they simply want to keep a free hand in the use of outer space for military purposes and in the placement of any kind of weapons there.

I am sorry to say that the so-called “explanation” that the United States representative provided before the voting was laughable and could not withstand any criticism, because he failed to answer the main question: does the United States want to prevent the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space? That is included in our draft resolution (S/2024/383) and was actually taken from the draft resolution (S/2024/302)

submitted by the United States and Japan. I ask the United States representative to please explain why the United States cannot accept a prohibition on the placement of all other types of weapons in outer space. As for the other delegations who voted against our draft resolution, they had essentially nothing to say today.

We urge all Council members to consider the consequences that the Earth's residents would face in the event of a militarization of outer space. And, unfortunately, the probability of such a scenario, as the United States and its allies have once again demonstrated today, is increasing. We do not hide — or have hidden in the past — the fact that the active military exploration of outer space by Western countries is a matter of great concern to us. Suffice it to read the regularly published reports and statements of Western specialized agencies, in which such actions are called “self-defence” and are supported by generous funding, to fully realize that our fears are not unfounded. At the same time, no one except the United States and its allies declared outer space a theatre for military action or is placing strike combat systems there.

Today we heard a great deal of hypocritical assessments and opinions from Western delegations regarding both our draft resolution and our intentions, as well as blatant lies about the methods of work on the draft resolution, on which we held consultations, gathered written comments and repeatedly extended the silence procedure at the request of delegations.

At the same time, today's vote was a defeat for all those who, like Russia, are trying to avoid a confrontation leading to a conflict in low Earth orbit. Of course, the current situation will require analysis and reciprocal steps on our part. At the same time, Russia will remain committed to its obligations in outer space in accordance with international law. Incidentally, that is what the United States representative rightly referred to. We have repeatedly reaffirmed, and are reaffirming, our commitments. Despite the aggressive attitude of the United States and its allies, we will continue to work actively in this area and make every effort, together with responsible Member States of the United Nations, to keep outer space peaceful.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Outer space, a global public domain, has a bearing on the security and well-being of all humankind. Ensuring the peaceful attributes of outer space and promoting

cooperation therein is a universal pursuit of the international community as well as the shared responsibility of all Member States.

The development and use of outer space began 60 years ago. Since then, the international community has been striving to improve the system of outer space governance. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the first international treaty relating to outer space, establishes the important principles of peaceful use, free exploration and international cooperation, while categorically prohibiting the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, thereby making significant contributions to the maintenance of peace, security and the sustainability of outer space.

Meanwhile, with the advancement of space technology, some new threats and challenges have emerged in outer space. A certain country has defined outer space as a “war-fighting domain”, accelerated the buildup of its space force and deployed anti-missile systems and offensive weapons in outer space. Although not explicitly prohibited by the Outer Space Treaty, such acts exacerbate risks of conflict in outer space, clearly violate the principle of the peaceful use of outer space established by the Treaty and run counter to the international community’s goal of upholding security in outer space and advancing the cause of its peaceful use.

Given that context, the General Assembly has annually adopted a resolution, by an overwhelming majority, calling on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to negotiate and conclude a treaty on arms control in outer space and to explicitly prohibit the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space, so as to provide a fundamental institutional guarantee for the maintenance of outer space security. That represents the mainstream voice of the international community in promoting the governance of outer space, and the CD has been engaged in ongoing, in-depth discussions on the issue.

China is of the view that the Security Council, pursuant to its own mandates, can consider the issue of space security in an appropriate manner. But in

doing so, it is important to reflect the consensus of the international community, to the greatest extent possible, with the objective of promoting mutual trust and cooperation among all parties on the issue of outer space, while supporting and complementing the relevant discussions taking place in specialized forums.

Last month (see S/PV.9616), the Security Council failed to adopt a draft resolution (S/2024/323) on outer space security, proposed by the United States and Japan. Since then, Russia put forward a new draft resolution (S/2024/383), which recognizes the role and contributions of the Outer Space Treaty while addressing the gaps contained therein by explicitly prohibiting the placement of weapons of any type in outer space and calling for the early conclusion of a treaty on arms control in outer space. Those elements received support from more than two thirds of United Nations States Members at the General Assembly, hence capturing the widespread concerns and voices of the international community, and of developing countries in particular. China supported and co-sponsored the draft resolution presented by Russia. However, due to different positions, the draft resolution was not adopted in the vote we just held. China finds that deeply regrettable.

The recent voting results at the Security Council on the two draft resolutions on outer space security indicate that parties still have different understandings and views on the issue; it will take long-term efforts to build consensus. When it comes to the governance of the space, much remains to be done. The international community should uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, continuously strengthen dialogue, enhance mutual trust and deepen cooperation, so as to turn outer space into a new frontier of durable security and common development. China is ready to continue to work with the international community to make positive efforts and contributions to the maintenance of outer space security and the promotion of its peaceful use.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.