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Agenda item 53

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

Report of the First Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 44/112 of 15 December 1989.
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. At its 2nd meeting, on 9 October 1990, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on the disarmament items allocated to it, namely, items 45 to 66. At its 4th meeting, on 16 October, the First Committee decided to consider jointly with other disarmament items agenda item 155, which was allocated to the First Committee upon a decision of the General Assembly at its 30th plenary meeting, on 15 October. The deliberations on those items took place between the 3rd and 23rd meetings, from 15 to 30 October (see A/C.1/45/PV.3-23). Consideration of and action on draft resolutions on those items took place between the 24th and 39th meetings, from 2 to 16 November (see A/C.1/45/PV.24-39).
4. In connection with item 53, the First Committee had before it the following document: report of the Conference on Disarmament. 1/

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/45/27).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.17

5. On 30 October, Bangladesh, Brazil, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia submitted a draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/45/L.17), which was later also sponsored by Chile, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nigeria, the Sudan, Swaziland, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Zimbabwe. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka at the 26th meeting, on 5 November.

6. At the 36th meeting, on 14 November, the Committee voted on draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.17 as follows:

(a) Operative paragraph 9 was adopted by a recorded vote of 109 to 1, with 21 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(b) Draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.17, as a whole, was adopted by a recorded vote of 129 to none, with 1 abstention (see para. 11, draft resolution A). The voting was as follows:*

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: United States of America.

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.22 and Rev.1

7. On 30 October, Argentina, Brazil, India, Mexico, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution entitled "Confidence-building measures in outer space" (A/C.1/45/L.22), which was later also sponsored by Bolivia, Chile, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the United Republic of Tanzania.

8. On 12 November, the sponsors submitted a revised draft resolution (A/C.1/45/L.22/Rev.1), which contained the following changes:

* Subsequently, the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics indicated that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

(a) In the seventh preambular paragraph, "work carried out so far" was revised to read "work being carried out", and "has contributed to identifying" was replaced by "contributes to identifying";

(b) At the end of operative paragraph 3, "forty-seventh session" was replaced by "forty-eighth session".

9. In connection with the draft resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a statement on its programme budget implications (A/C.1/45/L.59).

10. At the 37th meeting, on 15 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.22/Rev.1 by a recorded vote of 129 to none, with 1 abstention (see para. 11, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: United States of America.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

11. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

A

Prevention of an arms race in outer space

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Reaffirming the will of all States that the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be for peaceful purposes, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind,

Reaffirming also provisions of articles III and IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, 2/

Recalling the obligation of all States to observe the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the use or threat of use of force in their international relations, including in their space activities,

Reaffirming paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, 3/ in which it is stated that in order to prevent an arms race in outer space further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty,

Taking note of its previous resolutions on this issue and of the Declaration adopted by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, 4/ and taking note also of the proposals submitted to the General Assembly at its tenth special session and at its regular sessions, and of the recommendations made to the competent organs of the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament,

Recognizing the grave danger for international peace and security of an arms race in outer space and of developments contributing to it,

2/ Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

3/ Resolution S-10/2.

4/ See A/44/551-S/20870, annex.

Emphasizing the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal régime concerning the use of outer space,

Noting that bilateral negotiations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America have continued since 1985 with the declared objective of working out effective agreements aimed, inter alia, at preventing an arms race in outer space,

Welcoming the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space at the 1990 session of the Conference on Disarmament, in the exercise of the negotiating responsibilities of this sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, to continue to examine and identify, through substantive and general consideration, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

Noting that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, taking into account its previous efforts since its establishment in 1985, continued the examination and identification of various issues, existing agreements and existing proposals, as well as future initiatives relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, 5/ and that this contributed to a better understanding of a number of problems and to a clearer perception of the various positions,

Emphasizing the mutually complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts in the field of preventing an arms race in outer space, and hoping that concrete results will emerge from these efforts as soon as possible,

Convinced that further measures should be examined in the search for effective and verifiable bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to prevent an arms race in outer space,

1. Reaffirms the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and the readiness of all States to contribute to that common objective, in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies;

2. Recognizes, as stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, that the legal régime applicable to outer space by itself does not guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space, that this legal régime plays a significant role in the prevention of an arms race in that environment, the need to consolidate and reinforce that régime and enhance its effectiveness, and the importance of the strict compliance with existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral; 6/

5/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/45/27), para. 118.

6/ Ibid., para. 63 of the quoted text.

3. Emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective provisions for verification to prevent an arms race in outer space;
4. Calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation;
5. Reiterates that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects;
6. Requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space;
7. Also requests the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its consideration of the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, building upon areas of convergence and taking into account relevant proposals and initiatives, including those presented in the Ad Hoc Committee at the 1990 session of the Conference and at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly;
8. Recognizes, in this regard, the relevance of considering measures on confidence-building and greater transparency and openness in space as stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee;
9. Requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1991 session and to continue building upon areas of convergence with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects;
10. Urges the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to pursue intensively their bilateral negotiations in a constructive spirit with a view to reaching early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space, and to advise the Conference on Disarmament periodically of the progress of their bilateral sessions so as to facilitate its work;
11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

B

Confidence-building measures in outer space

The General Assembly,

Conscious of the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space,

Recalling that, in accordance with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, 7/ the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind,

Aware of the fact that more and more States are taking an active interest in outer space or participating in important space programmes for the exploration and exploitation of that environment,

Recognizing, in this context, the relevancy space has gained as an important factor for the socio-economic development of many States, in addition to its undeniable role in security issues,

Emphasizing that the growing use of outer space has increased the need for more transparency as well as confidence-building measures,

Recalling that the international community has unanimously recognized the importance and usefulness of confidence-building measures, which can significantly contribute to the promotion of peace and security and disarmament, in particular through General Assembly resolutions 43/78 H of 7 December 1988 and 44/116 U of 15 December 1989,

Noting the important work being carried out by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space of the Conference on Disarmament, which contributes to identifying potential areas of confidence-building measures,

Aware of the existence of a number of different proposals and initiatives addressing this subject, which attest to a growing convergence of views,

1. Reaffirms the importance of confidence-building measures as means conducive to ensuring the attainment of the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space;

2. Recognizes their applicability in the space environment under specific criteria yet to be defined;

7/ Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

3. Requests the Secretary-General to carry out, with the assistance of government experts, a study on the specific aspects related to the application of different confidence-building measures in outer space, including the different technologies available, possibilities for defining appropriate mechanisms of international co-operation in specific areas of interest and so on, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.
