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Agenda item 60

QUESTION OF THE PEACEFUL USE OF OUTER SPACE:

- (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

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Dr. Franz MATSCH (Austria)

1. On 15 March 1958, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics requested (A/3818 and Corr. 1, English only) the inclusion in the agenda of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "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". An explanatory memorandum was forwarded.
2. On 2 September, the United States of America requested (A/3902) the inclusion in the agenda of the thirteenth session of an item entitled "Programme for international co-operation in the field of outer space", and forwarded an explanatory memorandum.
3. At the 752nd plenary meeting on 22 September, the General Assembly decided to include in its agenda the items proposed by the USSR and the United States as sub-items (a) and (b) of item 60 entitled "Question of the peaceful use of outer space", and referred it to the First Committee for consideration and report.
4. The Committee considered the item at its 981st to 995th meetings, held from 11 to 24 November 1958.

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5. On 7 November, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219) whereby the General Assembly would recognize the necessity for concluding an agreement to prohibit the launching of rockets into cosmic space for military purposes and to eliminate all foreign military bases on the territories of other countries, such agreement to be based on the following principles:

- (1) A ban on the use of cosmic space for military purposes and an undertaking by States to launch rockets into space only under an agreed international programme;
- (2) The elimination of foreign military bases, primarily in Europe, the Near and Middle East and North Africa;
- (3) The establishment of appropriate international control within the United Nations framework over the implementation of the obligations set forth above;
- (4) The establishment of a United Nations agency for international co-operation in the study of cosmic space which could have the following functions: To work out an agreed international programme for launching inter-continental and space rockets with the aim of studying cosmic space and supervise the implementation of this programme; to continue on a permanent basis the cosmic-space research now being carried on within the framework of the International Geophysical Year; to serve as a world centre for the collection, mutual exchange and dissemination of information on cosmic research; to co-ordinate national research programmes for the study of cosmic space and render all possible assistance towards their realization.

6. At the 983rd meeting on 13 November, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Denmark, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Turkey, the Union of South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220) whereby the General Assembly would: (1) establish an ad hoc committee on the peaceful uses of outer space consisting of the representatives of ... and request it to report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session on the following:

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(a) The activities and resources of the United Nations, of its specialized agencies, and of other international bodies relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

(b) The area of international co-operation and programmes in the peaceful uses of outer space which could appropriately be undertaken under United Nations auspices to the benefit of States irrespective of the stage of their economic or scientific development;

(c) The future United Nations organizational arrangements to facilitate international co-operation in this field;

(d) The nature of legal problems which may arise in the carrying out of programmes to explore outer space;

and (2) request the Secretary-General to render appropriate assistance to the above-named Committee and to recommend any other steps that might be taken within the existing United Nations framework to encourage the fullest international co-operation for the peaceful uses of outer space.

7. At the 989th meeting on 18 November, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted a revised version (A/C.1/L.219/Rev.1) of its draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219) whereby the General Assembly would:

(1) Recommend the establishment within the United Nations framework of an international committee for co-operation in the study of cosmic space for peaceful purposes;

(2) Recommend the establishment of a preparatory group consisting of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, India, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, the United Arab Republic, Sweden and Argentina to draft a programme and rules for the proposed international committee;

(3) Recommend that in its work, the preparatory group should proceed on the basis that the international committee should have, inter alia, the following functions:

(a) To continue on a permanent basis the cosmic-space research now being carried on in connexion with the International Geophysical Year;

(b) To organize the mutual exchange and dissemination of information on cosmic-space research;

(c) To co-ordinate national research programmes for the study of cosmic space and to render all possible assistance in the realization thereof;

(4) Request the preparatory group to report to the fourteenth session of the General Assembly on the results of its work;

(5) Recommend that, upon its establishment, the international committee should decide on an appropriate form of agreement providing for close links with the United Nations.

8. On 21 November, a revised version (A/C.1/L.220/Rev.1) of the twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220) was submitted changing operative paragraph 1 of the original draft (see para. 6 of the present report) as follows:

(a) The names of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America were inserted as members of the ad hoc committee.

(b) In sub-paragraph 1(b) the words "the stage of their economic or scientific development" were replaced by the following: "the state of their economic or scientific development, taking into account the following proposals, among others:

- "(i) Continuation on a permanent basis of the outer space research now being carried on within the framework of the International Geophysical Year;
- "(ii) Organization of mutual exchange and dissemination of information on outer space research; and
- "(iii) Co-ordination of national research programmes for the study of outer space, and the rendering of all possible assistance and help towards their realization;"

(c) Sub-paragraph 1(c) was revised to read: "The future organizational arrangements to facilitate international co-operation in this field within the framework of the United Nations".

9. At the 995th meeting on 24 November, Burma, India and the United Arab Republic submitted a draft resolution which in its revised form (A/C.1/L.224/Rev.1) provided that the First Committee would request the USSR and the United States to

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consider the urgent need to take positive and constructive steps in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space and to report to the First Committee on an urgent basis on an agreed and practical approach to this problem.

At the same meeting, the Committee voted on the draft resolutions before it, having decided, without objection, to give priority in voting to the three-Power draft. The results of the voting were as follows:

(a) The three-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.224/Rev.1) was rejected by a roll-call vote of 25 to 14, with 42 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Ghana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Against: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, Greece, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

(b) The representative of the USSR said that the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.219/Rev.1) had been submitted as a basis for a unanimous decision and that if no unanimous decision was in sight his delegation would not put its proposal to a vote.

(c) The twenty-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.220/Rev.1) was voted upon as follows:

Operative paragraph 1 beginning with the word "establishes" and ending with the words "United States of America" was adopted by a roll-call vote of 51 to 9, with 21 abstentions, as follows:

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In favour: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Federation of Malaya, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Austria, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

The first preambular paragraph was adopted by 67 votes to 9, with 2 abstentions.

The draft resolution as a whole was then adopted by 54 votes to 9, with 18 abstentions.

10. The First Committee therefore recommends the adoption by the General Assembly of the following resolution:

Question of the peaceful use of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the common interest of mankind in outer space and that it is the common aim that it should be used for peaceful purposes only,

Bearing in mind the provision of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which states that "the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members",

Wishing to avoid the extension of present national rivalries into this new field,

Desiring to promote energetically the fullest exploration and exploitation of outer space for the benefit of mankind,

Conscious that recent developments in respect of outer space have added a new dimension to man's existence and opened new possibilities for the increase of his knowledge and the improvement of his life,

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Noting the success of the scientific co-operative programme of the International Geophysical Year in the exploration of outer space and the decision to continue and expand this type of co-operation,

Recognizing the great importance of international co-operation in the study and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that such co-operation will promote mutual understanding and the strengthening of friendly relations among peoples,

Believing that the development of programmes of international and scientific co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be vigorously pursued,

Believing that progress in this field will materially help to achieve the aim that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only,

Considering that an important contribution can be made by the establishment within the framework of the United Nations of an appropriate international body for co-operation in the study of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Desiring to obtain the fullest information on the many problems relating to the peaceful uses of outer space before recommending specific programmes of international co-operation in this field,

1. Establishes an ad hoc committee on the peaceful uses of outer space consisting of the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America and requests it to report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session on the following:

(a) The activities and resources of the United Nations, of its specialized agencies and of other international bodies relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

(b) The area of international co-operation and programmes in the peaceful uses of outer space which could appropriately be undertaken under United Nations auspices to the benefit of States irrespective of the state of their economic or scientific development, taking into account the following proposals, among others:

- (i) Continuation on a permanent basis of the outer space research now being carried on within the framework of the International Geophysical Year;
- (ii) Organization of mutual exchange and dissemination of information on outer space research; and
- (iii) Co-ordination of national research programmes for the study of outer space, and the rendering of all possible assistance and help towards their realization;
- (c) The future organizational arrangements to facilitate international co-operation in this field within the framework of the United Nations;
- (d) The nature of legal problems which may arise in the carrying out of programmes to explore outer space;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to render appropriate assistance to the above-named committee and to recommend any other steps that might be taken within the existing United Nations framework to encourage the fullest international co-operation for the peaceful uses of outer space.
