

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  

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(SIXTEENTH SESSION)

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Item 21: Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Statement by Senator the Honourable Alfred J. Brooks, P.C., Q.C., Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, New York City, December 4, 1961.

Mr. Chairman,

The Canadian statement in the General debate on October 3 opened with the observation that "at no other time in its 16 years has the United Nations faced so many large issues, some of which threaten its survival". As the Secretary of State for External Affairs stressed in that address, one of the questions in this potentially fateful category is that of outer space. Mr. Green emphasized that "unless there is some body of law, outer space could be exploited for aggressive purposes with greatly increased danger for all nations on this earth".

All of our governments and our anxious peoples have noted the Soviet claim that new bombs can be produced with a yield equivalent to 100 million tons of TNT, and that rockets similar to those used in orbital flights by astronauts can be used to deliver weapons of this fearsome character to any point on the globe. The two greatest powers which, at this moment in history, are alone capable of the giant effort required to send satellites into orbit in outer space or beyond are here on earth postured in tense mutual suspicion and vigorous competition. All of us must welcome the indications there have been that neither of these two great states intends a selfish conquest of space. Nevertheless, none of our countries can rest easy while nagging concern remains that the earthly rivalry of these two powers, and perhaps of other states, may yet be carried into the infinite reaches of the universe.

The spectre of a titanic struggle for mastery of space fills the most complacent of us with foreboding for the future. It is that spectre which has prompted the Prime Minister of Canada on many occasions, over a number of years, to assert that "outer space should be available for peaceful purposes for all nations, great and small, and outlawed for military uses; an international ban should be placed on the mounting of armaments on orbital satellites, and no planet or other body in space should be appropriated by any nation".

I do not believe there is any dispute as to the urgency and importance of our concern for outer space. It has been said in this room that whatever we may or may not decide under Item 21, outer space will still be where it is -