

GOVERNMENT



OF CANADA

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 58/48

### THE NEW DIMENSION OF SPACE

Statement on outer space by Mr. C.S.A. Ritchie, Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in the First Committee of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, on November 18, 1958

Other speakers in this debate have rightly pointed out that the projection of human enquiry and endeavour into outer space creates tremendous new potentialities which are capable of application either for the advancement or for the destruction of mankind. We have no natural reason to assume that man's activities in this new dimension of space will be any more kind to his fellow man than they have been in our earth-bound experience in the past, unless concerted efforts are made to guide them into constructive channels. It is, therefore, vitally important that we should develop soon a positive international programme of co-operation and research in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Such uses are no longer a matter of theory alone. Their initial stage is already a hard fact and raises problems which can only be satisfactorily solved by international action and agreement. Experience has already shown that information of great value can be obtained from earth satellites. We confidently anticipate that the value of this information will be enhanced as instruments are sent farther into space. Every effort should be made for the free exchange and distribution of the scientific information that results.

Space exploration, whether manned or unmanned, will be capable of important civil as well as military applications. It will raise a host of significant problems, to which previous speakers have in part referred. It will take place in a region where national sovereignty is at least doubtful but which might be claimed or dominated by those nations which can gain a technical lead. The development of space vehicles requires enormous financial and technical resources and a

large body of competent scientists and engineers. It also requires large uninhabited test ranges which must, nevertheless, be reasonably accessible. Only the United States and the USSR have so far been able to devote resources sufficient for a comprehensive national programme of space exploration.

There is a manifest need to promote an international regime for outer space, to establish the rule of law there while there is still time, and to maintain the freedom of space for peaceful activities.

In a speech in February this year, the Canadian Prime Minister emphasized that the establishment of rules and principles in conformity with justice could not be delayed. He urged that outer space should be regarded as beyond the control of any nation and should belong to the world as a whole, and that the jurisdiction of outer space should be vested in the United Nations. If this were done, he envisaged that an international space agency might be set up which would have inspection and control powers covering all operations of outer space, and which would ensure that outer space was used for scientific and peaceful uses only. He also envisaged the possibility of a declaration that every nation, however weak, should have the same territorial rights in space as the most powerful; and of an international convention designed to ensure that the launching of all space missiles would be subject to prior notification and full dissemination of the information obtained.

We should also take account of the Secretary-General's views as expressed in the introduction of his Annual Report on the work of the United Nations for 1957-58. There he pointed out that the beginning of space exploration created a new challenge to the development of international law. He expressed the hope that it would be possible to move ahead toward agreement on a basic rule that outer space, and the celestial bodies therein, would not be considered as capable of appropriation by any state, and an assertion of the overriding interest of the community of nations in the peaceful and beneficial use of outer space.

These may be regarded as long-term objectives. In the short term, the first requirement is clearly to define the limits of outer space and the nature of the manifold problems which human activities there will raise. The distinguished Representatives of Brazil, Italy, the Netherlands, Peru and Sweden, among others, have already indicated many of the problems of a juridical nature which will arise. In the eventual solution of these problems the International Law Commission may well have a useful part to play. There is also a wide variety of problems of a technical nature to

which such Specialized Agencies as UNESCO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Meteorological Organization will have a considerable contribution to make.

Transcending these questions, however, is the fundamental problem of resources. If the international regime we wish to establish for outer space is to have practical validity, it is essential that space exploration should not become the province of a few major powers alone. States that do not dispose of resources sufficient to take an early lead in projecting vehicles into outer space should not be denied the fruits of such research and exploitation.

We must, therefore, examine the international means which might be devised to enable other nations to participate and co-operate in this field of technical endeavour. This might be done by entrusting all space exploration activities to an appropriate United Nations body. On the other hand, it might be more practical to continue national programmes, preferably without secrecy and under the co-ordination of such a United Nations body, thus allowing an international programme to be developed with the assistance of the material resources and technical information of the major powers. In any case, the possibility should be examined of extensive international collaboration in space exploration, and not merely the co-ordination of national projects and the exchange of information.

The draft resolution before us which Canada has joined in sponsoring (Document A/C1/L.220 of November 13) provides for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to examine these matters and to report to the next session of the General Assembly. This, we think, is a practical approach. This afternoon the Soviet Representative introduced a new proposal which seems at first sight to represent a welcome move in this direction. We shall all wish to study this text closely, of course, before expressing any final opinion upon it. We hope that a unanimous approach to this problem may be at hand. In any case, we trust that the terms of reference of whatever preparatory body is set up will not be regarded as restrictive or all-inclusive. Any aspect of the peaceful uses of outer space which might appropriately be of concern to the United Nations should be the legitimate business of the proposed ad hoc committee. For example, the committee might usefully receive, exchange or collate information on outer space contributed by member governments. It might also examine means of pursuing the outer space research started under the International Geophysical Year.

Canada will have a contribution to make in this regard. The Canadian programme for the International Geophysical Year has included work in all the related disciplines. Although Canada has launched no satellite, Canadian scientists have assisted in tracking satellites and have supplied information on trajectories.

As a consequence of its latitude, the upper atmosphere over Canada presents unique environmental conditions of ionization and radiation to high altitude rockets and satellites. Canada for twelve years has carried on a major research programme into the ionosphere, aurora, meteors, cosmic and solar radiations and the geomagnetic fields.

With the advent of high altitude rockets and satellites for atmospheric and spacial investigations, an expanded programme of high altitude rocket instrumentation and research has been initiated. Canada has been acting as host to the United States IGY Rocket Programme at Fort Churchill, on Hudson Bay, and various Canadian agencies have assisted the United States Rocket Team by supplying needed information. The first two Canadian instrumented rockets were successfully fired at the Fort Churchill range this month. Additional rockets will be fired in 1959. A high altitude rocket of Canadian design and using solid propellant is under development. To facilitate the tracking of high altitude rockets and satellites at extreme ranges, a very powerful radar station is now being installed at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

To do its job properly the proposed ad hoc committee must be a good technical body, capable of producing an expert study of what has been done and what can be done with respect to the peaceful potentialities and resources of outer space. It will be an exploratory body rather than a decision-taking or executive body. For this purpose the primary and essential criterion of membership should be the technical and scientific experience of the countries to be represented. After that, geographical representation should be taken into account in order to ensure that the most important regions of the world are represented. We agree with the Australian and Brazilian Representatives that the Committee should be of manageable size but not too restrictive. We also agree with the United States Representative that it should consist of government representatives assisted by scientific advisers.

My Delegation believes that it would be advantageous to examine in this way the possible forms of collaboration and to hold preparatory discussions on the nature of an international agency in this field, without waiting for agreement on the difficult problems of disarmament. We believe it is possible and desirable to separate the peaceful use aspects

from the disarmament aspects at the present stage. But, of course, the two are closely related and the disarmament aspects of outer space are related to the general problem of disarmament. The peaceful use of outer space under an international programme should not give military advantages to any particular countries.

We also believe that it is of urgent importance to consider the disarmament aspects of outer space in an appropriate manner. No country more than Canada, which could be at the centre of a missile war, desires to ensure that outer space should not be used for destructive or aggressive purposes. We think, however, that this should be dealt with, and dealt with urgently, by the United Nations organs set up to consider disarmament. In August 1957 Canada joined with the United States, the United Kingdom and France in proposing the establishment of a technical body to study the design of an inspection system to ensure the peaceful uses of outer space. This proposal was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 1148 (XII) adopted last year. I wish to reiterate it now.

The time to control missiles in outer space is now, not when large numbers exist. The Canadian Prime Minister, in commenting on the Soviet announcement of the first successful test of an ICBM in August last year, expressed the hope that the first effect of that event would be redoubled sincerity and effort to ensure that the passage of time did not bring to the problem of missiles the complications which delays in reaching agreement had introduced in the field of nuclear weapons.

However, we are not interested in mere pious declarations. The restriction of outer space to peaceful purposes only, must be controlled and must be part of a balanced disarmament programme. We were glad to note that the Soviet Representative has also recognized, as he said in his statement last week, the necessity for control to be established within the framework of the United Nations over the implementation of such measures.

We agree, as we always have, that all aspects of disarmament are related. There can be no question of accepting the elimination of all bases in order to secure the establishment of a United Nations space organization, but it would not be unreasonable to expect that any serious discussion of the disarmament aspects of outer space would take into consideration other aspects of disarmament that were strategically related. It would appear to us that any agreement related to the prohibition of use of outer space for war-like purposes can scarcely fail to provide for international restrictions of some sort on all missiles over a certain range.

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