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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM  
IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTIETH SESSION

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL EXPLOITATION OF  
OUTER SPACE UNDER CONDITIONS OF ITS NON-MILITARIZATION

Letter dated 15 August 1985 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the  
Secretary-General

The Soviet Union requests the inclusion in the agenda of the fortieth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization".

In preparing this item, the Soviet Union is guided by the consideration that mankind is now confronted by a choice: either outer space will yield increasingly tangible improvements in the living conditions of our planet's inhabitants, or it will become a source of new mortal danger for them. The only rational choice fit for the space age in which the people of the Earth are now living can and must be a decision to prevent the militarization of outer space and to preserve it for peaceful activities.

This question has assumed an urgent character. It must be settled before weapons have made their way into outer space. And the risk that that will happen is growing daily. Specific actions aimed at creating space strike weapons are already being undertaken. If this process is not stopped, the arms race in all its aspects will grow even greater in scope and more intense, consuming still more material and intellectual resources and creating insurmountable obstacles to joint peaceful space activities on the part of States.

The Soviet Union proposes that the General Assembly should again appeal in the strongest possible terms to all States, in particular those with major space capabilities to agree immediately on effective measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, an act which would create the conditions for wide-ranging international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The Soviet Union is proposing the implementation of a set of practical measures that would help unite the efforts of States in the peaceful exploration of space and the use of space technology for the benefit of all States, including the provision of comprehensive assistance in this area to the developing countries. It is obvious that this task, the common task of all mankind, can be successfully accomplished if agreements for effectively ensuring the non-militarization of outer space are reached.

Guided by a desire to promote more rapid progress in ensuring the peaceful exploitation of outer space, the Soviet Union is submitting for consideration at the session of the General Assembly a document entitled "Main lines and principles of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization (Proposals put forward by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)".

I request you, Sir, to regard this letter as an explanatory memorandum under the rules of procedure of the United Nations General Assembly and to circulate it, together with the enclosed document entitled "Main lines and principles of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization (Proposals put forward by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)" and draft resolution, as an official document of the General Assembly.

E. SHEVARDNADZE  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the Union of Soviet  
Socialist Republics

ANNEX

Main lines and principles of international co-operation in the  
peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its  
non-militarization

(Proposals put forward by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

The breakthrough into outer space and the transition to the practical utilization of that limitless expanse constitute one of mankind's most outstanding scientific and technical achievements.

During the period, short on a historical scale, that has elapsed since the Soviet Union launched the world's first artificial earth satellite in 1957 and since the VOSTOK spacecraft, manned by Yuri Gagarin, our planet's first cosmonaut, rose into orbit in 1961, a giant leap has been made in the peaceful exploitation of outer space.

Mankind has begun essentially to make circumterrestrial space habitable. There are now hundreds of satellites in orbit, and space stations in which crews of scientific and technical specialists, including some international crews, alternate and work for months at a time, are operating on a permanent basis. Interplanetary scientific stations are exploring the depths of the solar system. Space vehicles are being used for the systematic study of the Moon, Venus and Mars. Mankind's horizons in space are becoming ever broader and more majestic.

However, there is today a growing possibility that outer space may become a source of terrible military danger. Plans now being proclaimed and activities now being undertaken are aimed at developing and deploying space strike weapons to destroy objects in space and to launch attacks from space against objects in the atmosphere and on Earth, including the creation of a large-scale anti-missile system with space-based components.

The implementation of plans to militarize outer space would bring a sharp increase in the nuclear threat and would deprive the peoples of the world of any hope for the coming of a day when nuclear weapons will disappear from the face of the Earth. Moreover, the arms race would take on a radically new and even more dangerous dimension in all its aspects. Into its fires would be cast additional vast resources that could be used for the peaceful development of mankind and the solution of its urgent problems.

Militarization would strike the entire field of space activity like a severe and incurable disease and would raise insurmountable obstacles to the development of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space.

The peoples and Governments of all countries must recognize the magnitude of the problem confronting mankind and the full measure of their historic responsibility for its solution.

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We have arrived at a point in the development of civilization at which either the age of large-scale exploitation and utilization of outer space for man's benefit will begin or outer space will become a source of deadly danger to man.

The Soviet Union is resolutely opposed to competition in weapons of any kind, including space weapons. The efforts it is making today to prevent the militarization of outer space are a continuation of its consistent and purposeful policy aimed at making sure that outer space is used for the benefit of mankind. As early as 1958, when it blazed the first trails in outer space, the USSR introduced in the United Nations a proposal on banning the use of cosmic space for military purposes.

Although a radical solution of the problem of keeping space non-militarized proved impossible at that time, the 1960s and 1970s saw the conclusion of important treaties which substantially limited the possibility of its military use. These were the multilateral treaties on the prohibition of the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water (1963) and on principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies (1967), the Soviet-United States treaty on the limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems (1972) and a number of other agreements.

Those documents created favourable conditions for the first steps in organizing mutually beneficial co-operation between States in outer space. Even today, if a reliable barrier could be set up to prevent the placement of weapons in space, States would have an opportunity to combine their efforts and resources in making sure that the results of the space activities of all States will be used not for destruction but for creation, for the well-being of all the peoples living on our planet.

The USSR is in favour of such co-operation. It appeals to all countries and peoples with a proposal to do everything they can in order to prevent any arms race in outer space and work together for its peaceful investigation and exploitation to the advantage of all mankind.

First. The non-militarization of space - that is to say, abstention on the part of States from the production of space strike weapons (including research), their testing and their deployment - and the joining of forces by States in peaceful space activity would promote the spread of mutual understanding and co-operation between them and the effective utilization of mankind's material and intellectual resources. This would give a new impetus to the development of science and technology and would open truly limitless prospects for the utilization of space achievements to promote the economic and social progress of the world's peoples and to solve the global problems confronting mankind, including such urgent problems as the elimination of hunger and disease and the overcoming of the economic backwardness of developing countries, including assistance to those countries.

Global peaceful co-operation in space research would be set up and developed on an increasing scale, from the exchange of scientific and technical information

and simple forms of co-operation to the combining of States' capacities to solve the large-scale problems involved in the exploitation of outer space.

If that is done, it will be in mankind's power to achieve even such a long-term goal as the industrialization of circumterrestrial space, merging space complexes designed for various purposes with the terrestrial economies of States, and the operation of orbital factories set up to produce new materials and industrial goods under conditions of high vacuum and weightlessness. The inexhaustible storehouses of space, including the resources of celestial bodies and the energy of the Sun, would be placed at the service of mankind.

Second. International co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space, as the USSR sees it, could be carried out along the following fundamental lines:

1. Basic scientific research in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, and the launching of interplanetary spacecraft for those purposes.

2. The application of the results of space research and experiments and the utilization of space technology, inter alia, in such fields as biology, medicine, materials science, weather forecasting, study of climate and the natural environment, global satellite communications systems and solution of the problems involved in remote-sensing of the earth to obtain data for geology, agriculture and exploitation of the seas and oceans, and assistance in searching for, locating and rescuing victims of sea and air disasters.

3. The creation and utilization of space technology, including large international orbital scientific stations and manned spacecraft of various types.

Third. The peaceful exploitation of outer space must be carried out with scrupulous regard for previously concluded treaties aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, as well as on the basis of the following general principles arising out of the Charter of the United Nations:

Refraining from the use or threat of force and settling disputes solely by peaceful means;

Equality of rights, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States;

Conscientious co-operation, mutual assistance and due regard for the interests of other States.

Fourth. For the organizing and implementation of co-operation between States, it would be possible to set up a world space organization dealing with international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization.

Such an organization would have the following duties:

(a) To ensure, under conditions of mutual advantage, the access of all States on a non-discriminatory basis to the results of scientific and technical achievements connected with the study and peaceful exploitation of outer space;

(b) To carry out international projects connected with the uniting of efforts and resources for the scientific investigation of outer space and the utilization of space technology;

(c) To provide assistance of every kind to developing countries in gaining access to the exploration and use of outer space and in using the practical results of such activity to speed the economic and social development of those countries, according to their needs and without any conditions limiting their sovereignty;

(d) To co-ordinate on an international scale the activities of other international organizations in connection with the peaceful utilization of outer space;

(e) To help, where necessary, in monitoring the observance of agreements which have already been concluded or will be concluded, with a view to preventing an arms race in space.

Fifth. The USSR proposes the convening of a representative international conference, with the participation, among others, of the States with major space capabilities, in order to consider in all its aspects the question of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of space under conditions of its non-militarization and the harmonization of the main lines and principles of such co-operation.

That conference would also consider the question of establishing a world space organization dealing with international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, bearing in mind that the practical establishment of such an organization will be possible only when agreements effectively ensuring the non-militarization of space have been reached.

The peaceful exploitation of space, as people already know from experience, can yield many benefits for the development and improvement of life on earth. The Soviet Union is convinced that outer space, the common property of mankind, must be placed at the service not of war, but of peace and security and of the economic and social progress of all peoples. The road to that goal leads through the collective efforts of all States on our planet.

In a spirit of goodwill and with a recognition of its responsibility for the fate of our planet, the Soviet Union appeals to all countries and peoples to set about solving this historic problem. Endeavouring to make its contribution to the common cause, it puts forward for consideration by the United Nations the present proposals concerning the main lines and principles of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation and utilization of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization.

APPENDIX

International co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization

The General Assembly,

Determined to ensure that the exploitation and use of outer space will be an area of broad, equitable and mutually beneficial international co-operation under conditions of peace,

Recognizing the urgent need to prevent, before it is too late, an arms race in outer space, which would lead to a sharp intensification of the danger of nuclear war, undermine the prospects for limiting and reducing armaments in general and create insurmountable barriers to the development of international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space,

Guided by a desire to ensure that the exploration and use of outer space will most effectively serve the scientific, technical, economic and social progress of all peoples and the solution of the global problems facing mankind, including the tasks of development and of overcoming economic backwardness,

1. Calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to do everything possible for the adoption of effective measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, thereby creating conditions for broad international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

2. Expresses its conviction that, under conditions in which the non-militarization of outer space is effectively ensured, a major practical step in the peaceful exploitation of space and the development of international co-operation in that field would be the setting up of a world space organization to harmonize, co-ordinate and unite the efforts of States in respect of peaceful space activities, including the provision of assistance in that field to developing countries, and also to facilitate the necessary monitoring of compliance with agreements which have already been concluded or will be concluded with a view to preventing an arms race in outer space;

3. Decides to convene not later than 1987 an international conference with the participation of States with major space capabilities and of other interested countries to consider in all its aspects the question of international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization and the harmonization of the main lines and principles of such co-operation. The conference would also consider the question of setting up a world space organization, bearing in mind that the practical establishment of such an organization will be possible when agreements which effectively ensure the non-militarization of outer space have been reached;

4. Establishes an open-ended preparatory committee with the participation of States with major space capabilities for the purpose of convening the international conference;

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5. Requests the preparatory committee to submit a report on the work carried out and appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-first session;

6. Invites all States to communicate to the Secretary-General not later than 1 March 1986, for transmittal to the preparatory committee, any views and suggestions with regard to the convening of the international conference;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-first session an item entitled "International co-operation in the non-militarization and peaceful exploitation of outer space".

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