



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9616th meeting

Wednesday, 24 April 2024, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Ms. Persaud
Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Non-proliferation

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/302, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): The United States and Japan are proud to introduce a draft resolution (S/2024/302) that will strengthen and uphold the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including in outer space. We have only begun to understand the catastrophic ramifications of a nuclear explosion in space, how it could destroy thousands of satellites operated by countries and companies around the world and wipe out the vital communications, scientific, meteorological, agricultural, commercial and national security services we all depend on. With such grave consequences for the long-term sustainability of outer space and sustainable development goals, there should be no doubt that placing a nuclear weapon into orbit would be unprecedented, unacceptable and deeply dangerous. Every one of us has a shared interest and responsibility in ensuring that States do not go down that dark path.

Therefore, the draft resolution before us today should not be controversial. Among other things, it emphasizes the shared goal of preventing an arms race in outer space and urges exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes. It calls on States Members of the United Nations to not develop any nuclear weapons or other weapons for mass destruction (WMD) that are specifically designed to be placed in orbit around Earth. And it affirms the obligations of all States parties not to place any objects carrying nuclear weapons or other WMDs in orbit around Earth, in full compliance with the Outer Space Treaty, a treaty that 115 countries have joined, including Japan and the United States, every other permanent member of the Council and the vast majority of its elected members.

Ultimately, the matter of nuclear weapons in space affects us all. This draft resolution reflects that reality, as does the negotiating process that brought it to the table today. The United States and Japan have gone to great lengths to forge consensus, ensuring that Council members' views are respected and incorporated as much as possible. We would like to thank the 63 cross-regional co-sponsors that joined us in support.

We know that the existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework is under increasing strain. As an international community, we have the urgent responsibility to take stock of current and emerging threats and, more important, to commit to addressing

them. This draft resolution allows us to do just that: to help to ensure that countries will not deploy nuclear weapons around our Earth, which would pose a grave threat to international peace and security. We must adopt this draft resolution in unity.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today the Security Council is once again involved in a rogue show staged by the United States and confronted with cynical forgery and deception, this time promoted by the American and Japanese authors of the draft resolution that is being put to the vote (S/2024/302). At first glance, it looks harmless and even positive because officially it is devoted to a topic of great importance to the international community, namely, the non-deployment of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in outer space. However, behind that screen is our Western colleagues' cunning plan, which has nothing to do with that noble task. I would like to remind members that the ban on deploying WMDs in outer space is already enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty and has been in force for 57 years, since 1967.

What, then, is the real reason behind the American-Japanese idea of reaffirming that ban in 2024? By separating WMDs from all other types of weapons, Washington, Tokyo and their allies are trying to camouflage their disinterest in not deploying all types of weapons in outer space, on which Russia and China have been insisting since at least 2008. This is like trying to install a roof on a house before the walls are built and the overall design is approved. We are not opposed to discussing this topic, but we must first agree on all the other components of the structure, and that is exactly what Western delegations are refusing to do. They are attempting to portray our country as being uninterested in preventing an arms race in outer space and as not complying with its obligations under international treaties, which is completely absurd.

As the author of several fundamental initiatives aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, Russia has always sought to keep outer space free of any type of weapons and prevent outer space from becoming another sphere of tension and armed confrontation, and it continues to do so. For us, those are priority tasks in the context of ensuring international security and strategic stability. We believe that achieving those goals is a prerequisite for free and equal access to outer space for all States without exception, as well as their equal participation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes for successful national, regional

and global development. We stand ready to support any initiative that can bring the global community closer to achieving that noble goal.

That is why, despite the absolutely absurd and politicized nature of the draft resolution proposed by our American and Japanese colleagues, throughout the entire five-week period of work on it, the Russian Federation participated in discussing the text with a view to reaching a balanced product that would properly cover all aspects of preventing an arms race in outer space. We proposed a number of relevant amendments. However, none of our concerns were taken into account. We tirelessly called on the authors of the draft resolution to abandon their biased line and to return to constructive dialogue to take into account the views of all Council members. But they had no intention of taking into consideration all members' opinions and reaching a consensus text. The document on which the Council is to vote today is still limited and politicized, aimed only at deepening the divisions among Council members. It has nothing to do with the issues of peace and space and is not aimed at a comprehensive solution to the problem of preventing an arms race in outer space.

We therefore believe that it is necessary to introduce a balancing draft amendment (S/2024/323) that will allow the Council to send a strong and unequivocal signal to the international community about our firm intention to exclude outer space from the sphere of an arms race — any arms race, not just nuclear arms or WMDs — and to preserve it for peaceful purposes. That should become a strict norm of State policy and a universally recognized international obligation. There is no other way forward. Only guaranteeing the prevention of an arms race in outer space will make it possible to peacefully explore outer space and use it to solve the major problems of economic, social and cultural development facing humankind today and to combine States' efforts in that area. Only then, and not in isolation from that task, will it be possible to discuss various tracks of this task, including those relating to different types of WMDs.

To that end, together with the delegation of China, we suggest introducing a new operative paragraph as follows.

(*spoke in English*)

After operative paragraph 6, we should insert a new paragraph, which would be number 7:

Calls upon all States, and above all those with major space capabilities:

- (a) To take urgent measures to prevent for all time the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space, from space against Earth and from Earth against objects in outer space;
- (b) to seek through negotiations the early elaboration of appropriate reliably verifiable legally binding multilateral agreements.

(spoke in Russian)

I would like to reiterate that, by introducing this draft amendment, Russia and China are not removing from the draft resolution the call to refrain from developing WMDs and deploying them in outer space, but only supplementing it with provisions on the inadmissibility of all types of weapons in outer space. That is, we are adding all the other necessary components of the house to the roof proposed by the United States and Japan.

That is what the overwhelming majority of States now expect from the Council. We call on all responsible States engaged in space activities to support our proposal. The 15 delegations today have a special responsibility to refrain from taking a step that, instead of addressing the task of preventing an arms race in outer space, will lead to division and disunity. The Council should not play along with the sly initiatives of our American and Japanese colleagues. Instead, it should look for common ground and resolve the problems that are actually emerging and are not just hypothetical.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: Outer space is a global commons that has a major bearing on the security and well-being of all humankind. In recent years, threats and challenges to outer space security have been increasing, and the risk of the weaponization of outer space has been on the rise. Preventing an arms race in outer space and ensuring the use of outer space for peaceful purposes is a priority and an urgent task of the international community.

Outer space security is of vital interest to the 193 Member States. It is also a highly technical and specialized issue. China has always advocated that discussions dedicated to the issue should be held on platforms such as the Conference on Disarmament, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the First Committee of the General Assembly, among others. That is in line with the division of labour and the

respective mandates among United Nations bodies. It is also conducive to safeguarding the general membership's right to participate in deliberations on an equal footing.

Meanwhile, taking into account the linkage between the issue of outer space security and the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the strong will of some members, China has participated in a constructive spirit in the discussions and consultations of the Council on this issue. In this process, we have always maintained that, as the Council considers the issue of outer space security and proposes to take action, it should pay attention to and reflect the general concerns and voices of the international community. It should accommodate the views of all parties as much as possible and strive for consensus, so as to support and complement the professional discussions on the relevant platforms. China agrees with the content of the current draft resolution relating to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (S/2024/302). However, those elements represent only one aspect of the governance of outer space security, and the draft resolution should be supplemented with other substantive elements.

On the basis of the General Assembly resolutions on outer space adopted by an overwhelming majority in recent years, China and Russia made proposals to amend the draft resolution, proposing the inclusion of such elements as calling upon all States to take measures to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space — I want to emphasize that that includes all types of weapons — and the early negotiation and conclusion of legally binding multilateral agreements. I would like to point out that the amendment (S/2024/323) is not a new text, but rather made up of elements from a General Assembly resolution supported by more than two thirds of Member States (General Assembly resolution 78/21). I believe that the incorporation and adoption of the amendment will make the current draft more complete, comprehensive and balanced. China calls on all members to vote in favour of the amendment.

The President: Members of the Council have before them a proposed amendment, contained in document S/2024/323 and submitted by China and the Russian Federation, to the text of the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/302.

Rule 36 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure states, inter alia, the following:

“when an amendment adds to or deletes from the text of a motion or draft resolution, that amendment shall be voted on first.”

Accordingly, I intend to put the proposed amendment to the vote first.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Ecuador, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone

Against:

France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Switzerland

The President: The draft amendment received 7 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 1 abstention. The proposed amendment was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

The representative of Japan has asked for the floor.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Japan and the United States sought to develop a draft resolution that could be adopted unanimously. For that reason, we focused on a narrow topic, namely, preventing the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. Over the past weeks, Japan and the United States have made considerable compromises in the name of reaching consensus. Therefore, it was unfortunate that Russia and China put forward an amendment that sought to divide us, an amendment with language that eight Council members already did not vote in favour of during last year’s First Committee session.

Let me be clear: we are committed to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. We have included in our draft resolution many paragraphs that focus on preventing an arms race in outer space and have emphasized the need for further measures to that end. All Council members know our position on the proposal by Russia and China for a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament: it is not verifiable. It would fail to cover threats, such as Russia’s destructive test of an anti-satellite missile from the ground in 2021, and it is inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, which permits the use of force in self-defence, where authorized by the Security Council.

As our Russian and Chinese colleagues have said, the Security Council should not seek to get ahead of ongoing discussions in the General Assembly or the Conference on Disarmament but rather seek to complement and support them. For that reason, Japan and the United States voted against this amendment.

The President: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/302. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China

The President: The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I just returned from a trip to Japan, where I had the honour of visiting Nagasaki, the last place to ever experience the atomic bomb. It was a reminder of our profound responsibility to prevent the scourge of war and ensure that no place experiences the horror of nuclear weaponry ever again.

Unfortunately, today Russia abandoned that responsibility. Of course, this is not the first time that Russia has undermined the global non-proliferation regime. Over the past few years, Russia has irresponsibly invoked dangerous nuclear rhetoric and walked away from several of its arms control obligations. It has remained unwilling to engage in substantive discussions around arms control or risk reduction. And it has defended and even enabled dangerous proliferators.

Now Russia has vetoed a straightforward draft resolution that affirms a legally binding obligation under the Outer Space Treaty: that we should not be

putting weapons of mass destruction into orbit. And with its abstention from this vote — despite our multiple attempts to forge consensus — China has shown that it would rather defend Russia as its junior partner than safeguard the global non-proliferation regime.

President Putin himself has said publicly that Russia has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space. And so today's veto raises the question — why? Why, if they are following the rules, would they not support a draft resolution that reaffirms them? What could they possibly be hiding? It is baffling, and it is a shame.

This is not the outcome the United States wanted. And given the vote count, it is not the outcome the rest of the Council wanted either. But let me be clear: in no way does this vote undermine the obligations that Russia, or any other State party, continues to have under the Outer Space Treaty. And in no way does it mark the end of our shared effort to promote the safe, secure, stable and sustainable exploration and use of outer space.

For our part, the United States will continue to model transparency, accountability and cooperation. We will continue to comply with existing arms control obligations and engage constructively in new ones. And we will continue to show up to this table, and to the negotiating table, in good faith and pursue bilateral arms control discussions with Russia right now, without preconditions.

Today's vote marks a real missed opportunity to rebuild much-needed trust in existing arms control obligations. We may be disappointed, but we remain undeterred.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Japan is disappointed by the failure of the Council to adopt draft resolution S/2024/302. We deeply regret the decision of the Russian Federation to use the veto to block the adoption of this historic draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

Sixty-five countries co-sponsored today's draft resolution. Regrettably, one permanent member decided to silence the critical message we wanted to send to the present and future people of the world: outer space must remain a domain of peace, free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. For us — and for 65 countries all together — it is hard to understand why the Council cannot be united on such a simple but significant commitment.

Japan, with our co-penholder, the United States, worked tirelessly to deliver a consensus among the Council members in a constructive and flexible manner. We incorporated comments suggested by the Council members as much as possible, particularly those proposed by two permanent members. Despite such efforts and five weeks of intense consultations, Russia prevented the result we and 64 other United Nations States Members wanted to achieve.

Adopting the draft resolution would have been a positive and practical contribution to the promotion of the peaceful use and exploration of outer space. If adopted, we could have demonstrated our unity in reaffirming the principle of no placement of any weapons of mass destruction in outer space and in opposing the development of such capabilities.

Let me be clear: maintaining the peaceful nature of outer space is greatly relevant to the work of the Security Council. With a single detonation of a nuclear weapon in outer space, a large number of satellites and other critical infrastructure in outer space would be taken down. The consequences would be catastrophic and would not be limited to outer space. The repercussions would also affect people's lives and sustainable development in every region on Earth.

Despite the result today, preventing the placement of any nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space must remain our priority and should be pursued by all Member States, including those that blocked today's draft resolution.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): First, allow me to extend our gratitude to Japan and to the United States for their work on this important draft resolution (S/2024/302).

The United Kingdom voted against the proposed amendment (S/2024/323) because the draft resolution is rightly focused on upholding the Outer Space Treaty — something the whole international community should agree on — and not on what further measures may be needed to prevent an arms race in outer space. Anyway, the amendment offered only one perspective on that debate, a debate that is conducted elsewhere, not in the Council.

The United Kingdom believes that the best way to prevent an arms race in outer space is to elaborate norms, rules and principles of responsible space behaviours, which could be composed of an appropriate mix of

legally binding and non-legally binding measures. The United Kingdom voted in favour of the draft resolution, and co-sponsored it, because we believe that the Security Council should send a clear message on the importance of upholding the Outer Space Treaty for international peace and security.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the erosion of the global international security architecture. The Outer Space Treaty is part of that architecture, in particular its article IV, which prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons in Earth orbit. It is vital that States' space activities remain in compliance with the Outer Space Treaty and do not nudge competition into conflict, including nuclear conflict, or drive arms races, or further undermine global security norms.

It remains the primary responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States to avoid actions that increase the risk of nuclear conflict. In that regard, the draft resolution rightly recalls the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States issued on 3 January 2022 on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races. It remains the United Kingdom's view that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion.

To put it simply, there should be no nuclear weapons stationed in space. And that is something every Council member should agree on. It is therefore profoundly concerning that Russia chose to veto such a draft resolution, which would have upheld existing international law and sought to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): We commend Japan and the United States, the lead sponsors of this initiative, for their hard work to improve the text of the draft resolution (S/2024/302). However, our ultimate concern is whether this initiative will truly and definitely contribute to the shared goal of the global South of preventing an arms race and weaponization of outer space.

The draft text rightly references key documents such as the Space 2030 Agenda and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We appreciate its emphasis on international law and the role of the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating multilateral agreements. Algeria believes that this effort should complement existing initiatives and pave the way for a legally binding treaty on preventing a comprehensive arms race in outer space.

We believe that the Russian proposed amendment (S/2024/323) strengthens the text by advocating a broader approach that goes beyond just weapons of mass destruction. The threat of an arms race in space and its dire consequences for global peace and security cannot be ignored. That is why Algeria voted in favour of both the amendment and the draft resolution as a whole.

All nations must take responsibility and avoid actions that jeopardize our shared goal of keeping space weapon free. Transparency, trust-building and cooperation are crucial, especially among countries with major space capabilities.

Outer space belongs to all humankind and should therefore be explored and used collaboratively for the benefit of all, regardless of development level. While existing forums play a role in promoting the peaceful use of space, they cannot replace a robust international legal framework. A legally binding treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space is essential. The Conference on Disarmament, the dedicated body for disarmament negotiations, must begin work on an international instrument for space-related issues, without delay.

Algeria reiterates its commitment to preventing an arms race in space. We voted in favour of the draft resolution and the amendment as a step towards strengthening the legal regime governing outer space activities. We urge all nations to work together to prevent this grave threat to international peace and security and build a peaceful future for all.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/302, submitted by Japan and the United States. It also voted in favour of proposed amendment S/2024/323, submitted by China and the Russian Federation.

Ecuador values and defends the exclusively peaceful use of outer space and opposes its anarchization and, especially, its militarization, which includes the placement of any type of weaponry in space. On several occasions and in various forums, Ecuador has expressed its clear position that we should refrain not only from militarizing outer space, but also from politicizing it.

I therefore respectfully call for a frank and transparent dialogue on this matter in order to curb the possibility of an arms race in outer space and to prevent it from becoming another zone of confrontation. I reaffirm my country's full conviction that it is urgent to move forward in the negotiation of the legally binding instruments needed to preserve the peaceful nature of outer space.

In conclusion, I once again salute the initiative and effort of the drafters and regret that the Council was unable to adopt this draft resolution, which enjoyed the majority support of its members, due to the unjustified use of the veto.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Ensuring the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space contributes to our security and prosperity. It is in the common interest of all States. Any threat in this sensitive field could have major consequences for international peace and security. Preserving space so as to enable future generations to take full advantage of the opportunities it offers is therefore the responsibility not only of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the bodies designated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, but also of the Council. For those reasons, Switzerland voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/302.

We have long considered different approaches to space security, and Switzerland has always insisted that they are complementary. Switzerland remains committed to its position on the prohibition of the placement of weapons, including conventional weapons, in space and supports the development of a legally binding instrument to that effect. This draft resolution is therefore a step in the right direction. My delegation appreciates the transparency and inclusiveness shown by Japan and the United States during the negotiations and the fact that many of our considerations were taken into account. The flexibility they showed and the compromises they made motivated Switzerland to support the proposal, as submitted by the co-penholders.

We regret that the draft resolution could not be adopted owing to the use of the veto by a permanent member, as it is appropriate for the Council to address the issue of space security. Given the tense international context, the draft resolution contained important elements. In particular, the reaffirmation of existing obligations, the assertion that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought and the proscription of the development of systems specifically designed to be placed in space represented important confidence-building measures. Despite today's veto, Switzerland stresses that the relevant provisions of the Outer Space Treaty continue to be binding, and we call on all States that have not yet done so, to accede to it.

It is essential to guarantee stability and security in outer space. Switzerland remains ready to address all challenges in the appropriate forums, including the Council.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/302 because we believe that it is both timely and necessary.

With the advent of a new space era, we have become increasingly dependent on space assets, and any action that hinders the peaceful use of outer space can have a far-reaching impact. In particular, a nuclear detonation in space would have a devastating, irreversible impact and could deny everyone's right to the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space.

We therefore welcome this draft resolution, which reaffirms our existing obligations under the Outer Space Treaty, and we call on Member States that have not yet done so to join this important Treaty. At the same time, we understand that there is a genuine necessity to further develop rules, norms and principles in the space domain in order to address all space threats. We believe that this point is well elaborated in operative paragraph 3, in a balanced manner, and we do not see the need to include an additional paragraph, as proposed by China and Russia.

We regret that, once again, a crucial and timely draft resolution was not adopted due to the veto cast by a permanent Council member. The security landscape is becoming increasingly complex due to the challenges in new domains, such as outer space and cyberspace, and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. The draft resolution could have been a meaningful step for the Council to address those new trends and their implications in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security. The Republic of Korea believes that such efforts should continue and stands ready to work with other Council members in that endeavour.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): We thank the co-sponsors — the United States and Japan — for their efforts in leading this process. We deeply regret the use of the veto by the Russian Federation. This is a missed opportunity to reinforce global security by preventing the potential weaponization of outer space.

Slovenia engaged in good faith in the negotiations on the draft resolution (S/2024/302), with the aim of ensuring a safe and secure space environment and the

peaceful use of outer space. We voted in favour of the draft resolution because it emphasizes the clear role of the United Nations and underscores the importance of international space law — namely, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty — as the cornerstone of the international legal regime governing outer space activities in the common interests of humankind. In other words, this draft resolution embodies effective multilateralism on Earth and in outer space.

The peaceful use and exploration of outer space extend beyond scientific endeavours. They represent the pinnacle of humankind's aspirations and imagination. More and more, our lives depend on the use of space-based technology, whether it be using satellites for navigation, forecasting weather, monitoring biodiversity, tracking deforestation, managing natural resources, mitigating climate change or keeping in touch with friends and family online. Considering the benefits it brings and will hopefully continue to bring to society, it is vital that it remain the province of all humankind and is preserved for peaceful purposes. We particularly stress the importance of the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for us today and for future generations for the benefit of all humankind.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): Guyana voted in favour of the draft resolution presented by the United States and Japan (S/2024/302). We thank the co-penholders for their efforts on this important text and the transparency with which their consultations were conducted. We also supported the draft amendment proposed by the Russian Federation and China (S/2024/323), consistent with our position on General Assembly resolution 78/238. In our view, both texts sought to promote the peaceful use of outer space and to prevent the placement of weapons there, in line with international law, including the Outer Space Treaty and the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as outlined in the Charter. Guyana recognizes that the placement of weapons in outer space could have adverse impacts on the entire planet and therefore supported the proposals submitted today. We are of the view that the draft resolution that was just vetoed, with the amendment presented by China and the Russian Federation, could have contributed to averting such a situation. We also believe that the draft proposals could have complemented the ongoing processes within other United Nations forums.

Guyana underscores that outer space is the common heritage of humankind and should be used for the benefit of all humankind. This domain should

therefore be used strictly for peaceful purposes with no negative consequences. To that end, we reiterate the importance of nuclear weapon States upholding their international obligations and committing to not placing nuclear weapons in outer space. As we move forward in our consideration of this topic, Guyana is committed to supporting efforts that guarantee the right of all countries to benefit equitably from the peaceful use of outer space.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): We thank the United States and Japan for the immense work invested in drafting the draft resolution (S/2024/302) and in negotiations thereof.

Sierra Leone voted in favour of the draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in outer space because we believe in the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Outer Space Treaty in maintaining a peaceful and secure environment in outer space. Sierra Leone recognizes the severe consequences of using WMDs in outer space, which could have detrimental effects on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and hinder progress towards sustainable development on Earth. We therefore urge all States to prioritize the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for the benefit of all humankind. It is in that vein that Sierra Leone further urges all Member States to conduct their outer space activities in compliance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, emphasizing the importance of maintaining international peace and security through cooperation and understanding.

We also voted in favour of draft amendment S/2024/323, because Sierra Leone supports the call for further measures, including political commitments and legally binding instruments, to prevent an arms race in, and the militarization of, outer space and further emphasizes the need for effective verification mechanisms. In ensuring that we maintain a practice of consistency, our vote for the draft amendment is reflective of our vote in the General Assembly for resolution 78/238, components of which formed amendments to the draft resolution.

We conclude by stating that it is our sincere hope that the members of the Security Council can come together to find a common ground on the issue of non-proliferation of weapons in outer space.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Unfortunately, the Security Council has today failed to adopt a balanced decision in favour of

preserving space exclusively for peaceful purposes. That was the aim of the draft amendment proposed by Russia and China (S/2024/323), which was not adopted.

It is telling that neither during today's meeting nor earlier did the sponsors of the draft resolution (S/2024/302) answer the question as to what exactly they find wrong about our proposal to add a call to refrain from placing any weapons in space whatsoever. In other words, to repeat the metaphor I used earlier, why do they need a roof when there are no walls? What is the real reason that prompted them to submit to the Council such a strange draft resolution? This remains a mystery to many colleagues. Let us answer that question.

When reading out her prepared statement, the Permanent Representative of the United States essentially gave away the reason, directly confirming that the only reason why Washington introduced this draft resolution was to vilify the Russian Federation. If the United States is really such a champion of using outer space for peaceful purposes, why did it vote against our draft amendment calling for a ban on the deployment of any weapons there, not just weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)? Its silence on this issue speaks louder than any words. And it is certainly not for the United States to lecture other States about the dangers of using nuclear weapons.

The American Ambassador asked us "why?". Here is our answer. We want a ban on the placement of weapons of any kind in space, not just WMDs, but our American colleagues do not want that. I will ask them the same question in return: why? Our American colleague told us about her trip to Japan, including her visit to Nagasaki, and about the horrific consequences of the nuclear bombing there. May I ask her if she could enlighten us as to who carried out that nuclear bombing — the only one in human history? Or will our colleague from Japan tell us? Japan has never in my memory named the State that bombed it, as if the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki actually came from outer space, out of nowhere.

The Permanent Representative of the United States herself just said that President Putin has repeatedly confirmed that the Russian Federation has no plans to place WMDs in outer space. She also said that the failure to adopt this draft resolution does not affect Russia's existing obligations under the 1967 Outer Space Treaty not to deploy WMDs in space. Can Ambassador

Thomas-Greenfield therefore explain why the United States and Japan submitted this draft resolution in the first place, if it has no impact. Should we now introduce Security Council draft resolutions on every statement made by her President?

A lot of things become clear if we recall that the United States and its allies announced some time ago plans that allow for placing weapons, including strike combat systems, in outer space, the use or threat of force in outer space, from outer space against outer space, as well as the use of space warfare. That is explicitly mentioned in a number of Western States' space strategies, which are readily available in the public domain.

In the past, the United States has actively opposed any initiatives on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A vivid example of that is the fact that the United States has for many years now been blocking the Russian-Chinese proposal on a draft treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space, which was drafted all the way back in 2008.

Meanwhile, as the relevant experts know well, for many years the Russian Federation has pursued a completely different and constructive approach, promoting initiatives aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space in the relevant forums, namely, the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Russian Federation has been promoting initiatives geared towards preventing an arms race in outer space.

For the record, I would like to state once again that we are prepared to immediately conclude an international legally binding agreement that would contain a comprehensive ban on the placement in outer space of weapons of any kind, not only weapons of mass destruction, which are already prohibited by the Outer Space Treaty. We are also in favour of banning the use of force or the threat of the use of force in outer space, from outer space or against outer space. The problem is that our Western partners will not agree to that because they are engaged in the active military exploration of outer space. Let us not allow them to pull the wool over our eyes today, because they are not going to give up on the militarization of outer space.

The draft resolution that the United States delegation proposed today without taking into account the Russian-Chinese proposal is nothing more than a

propagandistic, politicized product that has nothing to do with preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. In doing so, Washington is clumsily trying to deflect criticism and shift blame. Moreover, it is also a convenient way to divert attention from Washington's recent shameful veto of Palestine's bid become a full Member of the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). That veto prevented us from redressing the years-old historical injustice against the Palestinian people.

It is important not to lose sight of another extremely dangerous and harmful element of the American draft resolution. It is a clear attempt to use the Security Council to introduce new restrictions that have not been previously envisaged anywhere, including in the Outer Space Treaty, and it raises major legal questions. The Security Council is not the place to do that. Discussions on outer space security and decisions taken on the matter should be comprehensive, involve all Members of the United Nations and focus on eliminating the threat of an arms race and of armed conflicts in outer space. Otherwise, this is nothing but a blatant attempt to impose the opinion of Security Council members on the rest of the United Nations membership. That is for the notice of those who claim that the Security Council is taking prerogatives away from the General Assembly.

The Russian Federation remains duty-bound to the obligations it undertook under international law and outer space. We will not play along with anyone's aggressive plans or give the green light to politicized initiatives. If the Western members of the Security Council, who have just been pounding their chests talking about their commitment to keeping outer space peaceful, are really ready to reaffirm that commitment, not in words but in deeds, we are prepared to give them another chance. To that end, we intend to submit an alternative draft resolution to the Security Council in the near future and to begin negotiations on it. We hope that all Security Council members will ensure that common sense and interest in preserving outer space as a peaceful environment prevail over attempts to politicize an issue of such importance for planet Earth as a whole.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The first artificial satellite was launched by humankind 67 years ago, marking the start of a long journey in the exploration and use of outer space. Today outer space has become a global commons where the interests of all countries are intertwined with a common stake. Ensuring that outer space is used for peaceful purposes,

preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space and preventing outer space from turning into a new battlefield have become the strong call and shared consensus of the international community.

Over the past decades, the international community has made unremitting efforts to realize those goals by formulating such international legal instruments as the Outer Space Treaty, adopting a number of General Assembly resolutions on outer space security and conducting extensive technical discussions under the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group on Outer Space Security, among others.

During the relevant deliberative processes, it has been generally recognized that current security threats to outer space include both the possible placement of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and of other types of weapons in outer space. Also, a certain country has defined outer space as a theatre of war, accelerating its buildup of military forces in outer space and creating military alliances in outer space. In the context of all those threats, only by loudly and clearly opposing an arms race in outer space and by promoting the negotiation and conclusion of a new legally binding instrument on arms control in outer space can we then effectively sustain the security of outer space. That is the universal call of the vast majority of Member States, especially developing countries.

As Council members work together to advance outer space security governance, efforts should be made to demonstrate goodwill, enhance mutual trust and promote cooperation instead of suspecting, criticizing and blaming each other or stoking confrontation. The main sponsors of the draft resolution (S/2024/302) should value and take on board reasonable suggestions made by other Council members so as to facilitate a consensus on the draft resolution. Rushing the Council into taking action when the parties clearly remain divided will lead only to a divided Council, undermine the Council's authority and compromise the mutual trust and cooperation among the parties on outer space security.

In order to make the draft text more complete, comprehensive and balanced, China, together with Russia, submitted a draft amendment (S/2024/323)

to the text. Regrettably, the draft amendment was not adopted. The draft resolution that was just voted on is incomplete and unbalanced and does not reflect to the fullest extent the common interests and the shared call of the 193 Member States on the issue of outer space security. Therefore, China had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

Just now, the representative of the United States made a groundless accusation against China. We firmly oppose such an attack. I would like to emphasize that, if the United States and Japan are truly committed to advancing the Council's constructive deliberations on outer space security, they should focus squarely on the risks of outer space being weaponized and on the potential of an arms race in outer space, and they should unequivocally stand for the prohibition of the placement of all types of weapons, including nuclear weapons, in outer space. The United States should stop its development and deployment of offensive weapons in outer space.

Outer space is not the private property of a few countries, but the common asset of all humankind. It is not an arena for countries to fight each other, but a new frontier for mutually beneficial cooperation. The international community must pursue the vision of common comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; pursue cooperation in outer space on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, openness and inclusivity; and ensure that the right of all countries to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space is fully guaranteed, with a view to building a community with a shared future for humankind in the field of outer space. At the same time, continued efforts should be made to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, to start without delay negotiations on an international legal instrument on arms control in outer space and to ensure that outer space is a peaceful space that can be used for the benefit of all Member States and all humankind. In that regard, major space technology countries should play a leading and exemplary role.

Let me reiterate that China has always been committed to the peaceful use of outer space and has been cooperating extensively with the international

community. China will continue to work hand in hand with other countries to promote the peaceful uses of outer space for the sake of global economic development and social progress, thereby making greater contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for humankind.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malta.

I start by thanking the United States and Japan for this initiative. We appreciate their skilful leadership and their tireless efforts to accommodate the positions of all Council members. Unfortunately, those efforts faced yet another veto by a permanent member of this Council. The Council missed a timely opportunity to adopt its first draft resolution on outer space (S/2024/302). As space capabilities continue to increase, it is the duty of the Council to address these threats to international peace and security.

The draft resolution represented an important step in our efforts to maintain international peace and security. With it, the Council could have affirmed its commitment to ensuring that outer space remains a peaceful domain, for the benefit of all humankind.

We also stress that the draft resolution did not prejudice, in any way, current discussions on the topic in the General Assembly, including in the First Committee, as well as in the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, Malta reaffirms its principled position against all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, not only those deployed in outer space. Those weapons threaten our existence and should be eliminated altogether.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.