ENMUNC VI
Japan
General Assembly 4: Special Political and Decolonization

Topic 1: Exploitation of Outer Space

Throughout history, Japan has seen eras of both significant expansion and extreme isolationism. The question of space exploitation, though certainly a new frontier for humanity, is not, at heart, a new question. Space offers a variety of tangible resources and strategic opportunities, like rare Earth metals and satellite surveillance and positioning. Organizations that have the ability, such as the United States government with GPS or Japan with Asteroid Explorer Hayabusa2, have already begun to tap into this treasure trove (Gilbert, 2021). However, Japan knows that demand for resources and conflict go hand in hand (Luzin, 2022). The weaponization of space is a significant problem to which the U.N. must find a solution. The United States and Russia, two of the world's largest space powers, have 123 and 102 military satellites in orbit, respectively. This committee's responsibility is to prevent harmful space conflict through a clear framework governing it, similar to the laws of war on Earth.

Japan recognizes the importance of space and the many benefits continued exploration will offer to all of humanity. The Basic Space Law, enacted in 2008, emphasizes the importance of "space development and use… carried out to improve the lives of the citizenry" (Basic Space Law). Japan also acknowledges that space, like Earth, should be available to all of humanity, and passed the Space Resources Act in 2021 to guarantee ownership of space resources to anyone who legally obtains them, a boon for private industry. This pro-private space exploration stance will soon make ispace, a Japanese company, the first company to conduct an off-world space resources deal when it sells lunar regolith to NASA (*ispace*, 2022). Similarly, Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa recently purchased and completed a 12-day trip to the ISS (Morris and Isachenkov, 2021). Although this trip was expensive, continued technological development will decrease costs, eventually allowing space travel to be available to everyone. While Japan supports space development, its pacifist constitution necessitates that the nation oppose any military development. Japan sincerely believes that the weaponization of space poses a threat not just to itself, but to all of humanity, and this belief has informed Japanese voting in U.N decisions regarding the matter.

Going forward, this committee must create a clear framework concerning the utilization of space. Recognizing the powerful potential of off-world resources, committee members should encourage private and public investment in space through tax incentives and a freer flow of information, to name a few things. At the same time, as an institution promoting international cooperation, the U.N. must severely curtail the current ongoing weaponization of space. This could be achieved by discouraging the trade and transfer of information outlined above with countries that violate an adopted treaty. Most importantly, any measures taken should recognize and prioritize the fact that space is not for any individual person or country but for all of humanity.

Topic 2: Space Tourism

The development of spacefaring technology has engendered a new wave of space tourism. Both private companies like Virgin Galactic and Space X and governmental entities such as the Russian government have begun to open space to civilians. This exclusive opportunity, however, is only available to a select few, as the price is quite high. Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa is believed to have paid upwards of $80 million for a trip to the International Space station. As space tourism grows, its legality and safety have also become more scrutinized. The Outer Space Treaty, the main governing document about space at the moment, does not address the practice of space tourism, or private companies for that matter, very extensively. It is the job of this committee to create sensible and logical regulations concerning space tourism going forward.

Japan has long supported the peaceful development of space to better the lives of national and international populaces. In this context, tourism represents the next logical step in the development and commercialization of space. However, like all development, space tourism must be conducted safely and fairly. Japanese Basic Space Law outlines "improving the lives of the citizenry (Basic Space Law article 3) as one of the main purposes of space development. Japan has launched multiple satellites and rockets with this in mind: the goal of advancing humanity through space technology. Safety is a key concern throughout this process, with multiple redundancies and safety checks built into every launch. Japan, though pro-private industry, believes that private industry should be held to the same safety standards as government projects. As this research continues, more advanced satellites like Hayabusa2 are redefining what is possible in space exploration ("Asteroid Explorer Hayabusa2"). While a civilian paying for a flight to space would have been unheard of 20 years ago, it is now becoming commonplace.

Going forward, this committee must create a clear set of rules and regulations governing space tourism. These should encourage further research and development to make Space Tourism, a great advance itself, available to the wider public. All resolutions should also recognize the importance of safety and transparency in Space Tourism. Just as a sick, elderly man is advised not to hike Mount Everest, so should space tourists be informed of the potential hazards and risks of their trip. Free sharing of information would greatly assist in this process. Space tourism should not be tied to military or national security interests. Instead, companies and governments should share the best ways to make touring space as safe, available, and transparent a process as possible. Competition can only be expected in a competitive industry, but Space Shuttle Challenger presents a warning as to what happens when competition is put above safety. The creation of a framework to govern space tourism must be conscious of the many different interests involved and work to tie these interests together into a clear, cohesive resolution.

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