Special Political and Decolonization Committee

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Co-Chairs

L. Douglas Wilder Middle School Model United Nations Conference

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

Letter from the Chairs

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the Wilder Model United Nations Conference. You are participating in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, co-chaired by Mu Zhen Yong and Helga Aberg-Quinn.

Mu Zhen is an 8th grader in the GYSA program at L. Douglas Wilder Middle School, and has been a chair for Wilder Model United Nations for a year. She is an active member of the National Junior Honor Society, National Junior Art Honor Society, and debate club of her school. Mu Zhen also attends Central Virginia Chinese School, and enjoys badminton, piano, and art as hobbies.

Helga is a 7th grader in the GYSA program at L. Douglas Wilder Middle School, and this is her first year as a chair for Wilder Model United Nations. She is also a member of the National Junior Honor Society, as well as an active member of a non-profit organization that isn't affiliated with school called the Henrico Humane Society, and a member of a rock climbing team at the Triangle Rock Club.

In this committee, we will be focusing on the Apollo Missions and lunar infrastructure. We encourage you to research and collect background information pertaining to the topics at hand as well as the individual you are assigned as; please ensure that this information is accurate and has no personal biases or opinions. Your background information may also be used in writing your position paper, which will help you in understanding your role and our topics; submitting one is optional, but mandatory to be considered for an award. Position papers must be cited with MLA 9 formatting, or else your paper will be flagged for plagiarism. Alongside your position paper, chairs will also judge your contribution to the overall debate, and to receive an award delegates must show exceptional skills in both areas.

If any questions or concerns arise, please email wildermodelun@gmail.com to contact chairs. We are looking forward to having you as a delegate on our committee, and hope that your preparation goes well!

Your Chairs,

Helga Aberg-Quinn and Mu Zhen Yong

WMUN I

Wilder Model UN Conference

Topic I: Lessons of the Apollo for Future Missions
Topic II: Collaborating for a Permanent Lunar Base

Committee Overview:

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, known as SPECPOL, is the fourth committee in the General Assembly of the United Nations, established in 1993. SPECPOL was created from the merging of the previous Special Political Committee and the Decolonization Committee, in 1990, during the "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism". SPECPOL focuses on urgent decolonization and political matters, including helping countries gain independence, peacekeeping operations, and international maintenance.

Topic 1: Lessons of the Apollo for Future Missions

Overview

The Apollo missions, which altered the history of space exploration, ended on December 19, 1972. The astronomical amount of money required to send the astronauts to space was far too great to pursue, and the missions were discontinued. However, the missions made a lasting impact on the world, and showed the potential for future space exploration. Delegates will analyze the political impacts of the Missions, the environmental effects of the lunar landers and infrastructure, and discuss guidelines for historical preservation

of lunar artifacts, and future missions to space.

This committee takes place in the 1970s, after the Apollo missions ended. Originally, they were meant to fulfill national interests relating to space, but eventually it devolved into a race to land the first human on the Moon between the world's two greatest superpowers at the time, the Soviet Union and the United States. However, the cost for space exploration grew to be too much to handle, and the Apollo missions were discontinued in 1972. As a result of the many political impacts left by the Apollo missions, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs created 21 Articles of Rules and Regulations pertaining to space exploration, known as the "Agreement Governing the Activity of the States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies".

Background

Global superpowers have a tendency to compete against each other to prove their power, and the space race was a way for the United States and Soviet Union to do so. The United States originally rose to power due to its economical and military power, and was fairly technologically advanced for its time. However, the Soviet Union quickly became a threat due to the 1917 workers' resolution, which created a planned economy that provided it with more power than before. They began to oppose each other greatly, especially in political views; the heavily capitalist United States were against the Stalinist Soviet Union. These clashing views were so incompatible that the resulting conflict lasted for over five decades, and was known as the Cold War. Tensions grew high due to the atomic arms race, however, the sudden launch of the first Sputnik satellite started the chain of events that culminated into the space race, redirecting all tensions between the Soviet Union and United States into getting to the Moon. As Sputnik 2 was launched, America was slowly slipping behind and losing its global dominance, with both satellites demonstrating the technological strength the Soviet Union had over America. Due to this and America's failure to act and push forward with the space race, the Soviet Union was widely seen as stronger and more advanced than America, with much more prestige. United States prestige was lowered even more by the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and when the Soviets launched the first human into space, Yuri Gagarin, President Kennedy, who originally wasn't concerned with space exploration, saw an opportunity and began placing priority onto funding it. Kennedy realized that by being able to place a man on the Moon before the

Soviet Union, the US would have its geopolitical standing restored. The pressure to 'win' the space race was the result of the potential to majorly reshape public opinion by demonstrating technological supremacy over the other superpower, which would have their political view proven as 'superior'.

Historical Context

Much of the conflict and distrust between the United States and the Soviets stemmed from tensions left over from World War II, where, although they fought as allies against the Axis, were still distrustful of each other. Americans were suspicious of Soviet communism and apprehensive of Russia under the rule of leader Joseph Stalin, whose firm rule transformed Russia into a global superpower at the time. Meanwhile, the Soviets disapproved of the United States' rejection of them being part of the international community, alongside America's overdue entry into the war which caused the preventable deaths of millions of Russians. Though tensions and distrust of each other grew to an overwhelming level, it never devolved into open warfare, therefore it was named the Cold War.

Political Impacts

In the race to get the first person to land on the Moon, the US annual budget at the time rose 60-fold, almost 50 billion dollars today, which is seen as an absurdly large amount to be spent on any one thing, let alone space exploration. However, despite the astronomical amount of money spent, there were beneficial impacts of the space race, and subsequently, the Apollo missions. First, the amount of money helped to fund an enormous amount of scientific advancement in the field of space exploration, where much of the progress made has laid the groundwork for more complex missions and satellites today. Specifically, the Apollo missions have been used as foundations for the Artemis missions, which began in 2017. Not only this, but despite failures from both the United States and the Soviet Union, both superpowers gained large amounts of prestige that allowed them to stay in their positions of power. The best example of this is the landing of Neil Armstrong on the Moon, as that day solidified the United States into a position of dominance, boosting the morale and pride of Americans.

Solutions offered by the United Nations

On December 5th, 1979, the General Assembly of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs adopted a resolution named the "Agreement Governing the Activity of the States on the Moon and

Other Celestial Bodies". This resolution has 21 articles, all featuring rules and regulations to ensure peaceful celestial activity. These articles include Article 4, which verifies that Moon exploration and usage will be beneficial to all countries; Article 5, which states that the United Nations and other international organizations must be properly informed of activity, alongside any indication of dangerous or organic phenomena discovered; Article 6, which discusses how all States parties are allowed to have the freedom of scientific investigation, as long as it does not interfere with the activities of other countries; Article 7, which articulates States Parties must cause minimum disruption to the Moon environment; Article 8, which states that States Parties have the freedom to land, launch, and place objects and equipment on or below the Moon's surface, along with the related Article 9, which states that States Parties may establish lunar stations; and Article 10, which discloses that all States Parties must take all necessary and available measures to ensure the health and safety of people on the Moon. Article 11 expresses that the Moon is not and cannot be claimed as any State's property, and that States Parties should establish an international regime that will govern the exploitation of natural resources found on the Moon, and if any are discovered, their existence must be informed of to the Secretary-General and other international organizations; Article 12 states that States Parties will keep full control over any equipment, facilities, and vehicles placed on the Moon, unless there is a life threatening emergency, in which States Parties are allowed to use the equipment of other States Parties; Article 13 explains that in the event of an unpremeditated landing of an object on the Moon from another State Party, States Parties must immediately inform the Secretary-General and the launching State party. These articles are some of many in the multitudes of treaties and solutions the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs has created to maintain and ensure peace in space, along with the Moon and other celestial bodies.

Guidelines for Historical Preservation of Lunar Artifacts

To preserve the historical and scientific value of lunar artifacts and sites, such as the first footprints on the Moon, NASA has issued many recommendations for future astronauts and spacecraft. The most crucial part of the recommendations is to avoid having any valuable artifacts stolen; however, due to this event being unlikely to happen, most of the risks NASA focused on

were avoiding crashes and the contamination of artifacts biologically and with lunar dust, which could be transferred from visiting spacecraft and affect lunar sites. For example, a 20 July version of these guidelines propose approaching the historical sites at a tangent to not crash into them and no-fly/buffer zones to avoid spraying rocket exhaust and dust onto the sites. Furthermore, those piloting visiting spacecraft must be cautious to avoid disturbing lunar soil with rocket plumes, which could create flying dust, by adhering to altitude and distance constraints that should prevent dust abrasion. Within 200 meters of the surface of the moon, visiting spacecraft should also maintain specific engine orientation to prevent heritage sites from being contaminated with propellant residue that could be toxic to humans and/or corrosive to Apollo hardware. To address concerns about and avoid biological and microbial contamination, visiting spacecraft should stay away from all exclusion zones along with following boundaries and restrictions. Additionally, mission documentation should follow the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) Planetary Protection Category II Guidelines, which involve having evidence and an inventory of all organic compounds carried and created as a result of the spacecraft. NASA has also proposed that ground spacecraft travelling around Apollo sites 11 and 17 stay off limits with buffer zones of 75 and 225 meters, respectively. Robert Kelso has concluded that no-fly zones with a 2-kilometer radius should prevent rocket exhaust from contaminating artifacts.

Questions to Consider:

1. **How did the Cold War, and subsequently, the space race affect countries other than the global superpowers at the time?**
2. **How can today's technology be used alongside the technology of the past to create superior equipment and satellites for future missions?**
3. **How can international collaboration between countries improve and benefit future missions?**
4. **What could be improved upon in the "Agreement Governing the Activity of the States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies", and how would the current articles affect the Apollo missions if it was still continued today?**
5. **How would the Apollo missions be different if they followed the**

current Guidelines for Historical Preservation of Lunar Artifacts?

Topic 2: Collaborating for a Permanent Lunar Base

Overview

After the missions were discontinued (due to budgetary reasons) plans were implemented to start a new space travel program. In 2017, NASA introduced The Artemis Accords. The accords set out guidelines for peaceful space travel among the signing nations. On November 16, 2022, Artemis I was successfully launched after several delays. NASA plans to launch Artemis II and III in 2025-2026. Several bases have been installed on the moon, but all have been temporary. In this topic, delegates will collaborate to consider the financial and environmental potentials for future lunar bases, the scientific benefits, and the international political cooperation required to install permanent lunar infrastructure in space.

Scientific Benefits

A permanent lunar base would offer a variety of technological and scientific benefits. This includes additional advancements in space technology. The innovation and skills needed to build and sustain a permanent lunar base can be applied to other future missions (lunar and otherwise). A primary example of this is the utilization of resources already available on the moon; establishing a permanent lunar base entails developing technologies with the ability to extract and/or utilize the resources already available on the moon. This would give us the potential to reduce the transportation of materials from Earth.

A permanent lunar base would also allow for breakthroughs and discoveries in scientific exploration. For example, the Moon's surface could hold data about the early solar system. If this data exists, it would lead to major breakthroughs and confirmation about the creation and evolution of our solar system. Permanent lunar infrastructure would also allow for new geological studies and potentially a search for microbial extraterrestrial life. In addition to this, parts of the Moon would serve as an ideal area to set up telescopes to look deeper into the universe. A lunar observatory like this would allow us to study the universe in ways that would be almost or completely impossible from Earth. Additionally, a lunar base would serve as an ideal launchpad and starting point for other

missions to other planets, especially mars and long stays on the moon could help scientists understand the long-term effects of deep space travel.

Prerequisites

There are a lot of requirements and regulations to build infrastructure for human lunar missions. NASA's current plans include aiming for a sustainable and economical approach and establishing partnerships with a private industry to plan and build infrastructure on the moon. A mixed public and private approach like this is a common practice for NASA's COTS - Commercial Orbital Transportation Services - program which has already been successful in their innovative approach for developing commercial cargo transportation services to the International Space Station (ISS). This way both NASA and industry partners were able to share cost and risk throughout the development phase which led to dramatic reduction in development and operations costs of these transportation services. In short, partnering with industry is more cost-effective and reliable

In addition to sustainability and economical factors, the infrastructure built news to include systems to "evolve" to full scale. These services include power systems or sustainable ways to generate electricity, communication and navigation systems, thermal management systems, and mobility systems. These systems should maximize the use of existing lunar resources and metals.

Technical Challenges

While there are so many benefits to lunar infrastructure, building a permanent lunar base poses many more challenges than simply sending up astronauts for a few days. Unable to carry substantial resources and rations on the rocket (due to weight and lack of space) much of what they would need to survive would have to be made out of the extra-terrestrial resources available.

One of the most important tasks would be making the air breathable. While the percentage of oxygen in lunar soil would make this fairly easy, this would still require the implementation of robots able to use heat and electricity to harvest it. NASA has recently developed and tested robot prototypes on Earth, theoretically capable of fulfilling this role.

Next on the list of importance would be drinkable water. The ideal solution to this would be finding water on the moon. Unfortunately, the moon has no liquid water, however NASA was able to confirm in 2018 that it can be found on the surface in the form of ice. Some rovers could be capable of finding, drilling, and gathering this ice. Another potential solution would be to

create water from its chemical makeup - hydrogen and oxygen. The harvested oxygen would equate to more than enough, but the hydrogen would be more difficult to source. Currently, the only option for that would be to send regular supply ships loaded with liquid hydrogen.

This water would be used for drinking, fuel, and another key survival element - food. While food and nutrition are undoubtedly important, this poses the question of whether or not plants can actually be grown on the moon. This would be extremely difficult because the moon's soil is very harsh and contains toxic metals and other compounds that would be harmful to plant growth. Fortunately, experiments with similar soil have shown promise with various techniques including fertilization with human manure to add nutrients and aid water retention. There have also been experiments with Earthworms; astronauts could bring Earthworms to the moon to help recycle organic matter and improve the structure of the soil. These worms could assist greatly in forming a sustainable lunar ecosystem.

Beyond these basic living requirements, we also need to consider power supply and permanent shelter. The ideal solution to power would be to build solar panels as they are a sustainable and limitless source of energy.

While the moon has no clouds to limit efficiency, and the lunar soil contains the vast majority of materials needed to actually build the panels, the extended lunar night makes harvesting adequate energy (charging the panels) extremely difficult.

There are solar batteries with the capacity to hold enough energy, however, they are too big to be brought from Earth, so the most practical solution is to locate and build lunar infrastructure strategically. - There are high points of the moon's poles that receive less of a lunar night. If the base was located here, we could harvest semi-permanent sunlight with the only restrictions being occasional short lunar eclipses. This would provide more than enough sunlight to be converted into other energies.

Questions to Consider:

1. **How many countries have successfully engaged in lunar exploration?**
2. **What are the major risks associated with space travel?**
3. **What effects does space travel have on international interactions?**

4. **What regulations should SPECPOL impose to ensure global cooperation?**
5. **What happens if not all countries concur with efforts for lunar infrastructure?**
6. **What are potential challenges associated with collaborating with so many countries?**
7. **What are additional challenges we may experience when making decisions about permanent lunar infrastructure?**
8. **How can we prevent countries from claiming ownership over the moon?**
9. **Who has the power to make decisions about what happens on the moon?**
10. **What are our main goals for lunar exploration?**
11. **How much international collaboration is required to achieve these goals?**

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