

Excerpt from "International Space Law and Outer Space" Speech by Sen. Thomas E. Martin

Address by United States Senator Thos. E. Martin of Iowa
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INTERNATIONAL SPACE LAW AND OUTER SPACE

I am pleased and honored to have been invited to speak before you today. The International Astronautical Federation has since its foundation in 1950 provided a valuable international forum for the review of outer space problems and for the stimulation of action in governmental and international public bodies. I hope it will continue to provide this valuable service. In view of the uncharted nature of much of the work in astronautics, the contribution of private thinking and analysis can be of immense importance to the future development of man's efforts in outer space.

The stirring era in which we live is witness to the extension of man's activity into a medium entirely new to him. In the realm of space exploration man is faced with technical and scientific demands of unparalleled difficulty. At the same time, he is given a priceless opportunity -- a chance to establish new relations with his fellow man in a new environment, relatively free from the limiting influence of precedent.

Starting with a clean slate, man should so plan his activities in outer space as to preclude the possibility of the armed conflicts and controversies which have characterized his history on this planet. He can promote a new atmosphere, based on scientific cooperation and the rule of law, which might serve as an example for his earth-bound relations with his fellow man. As Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge stated in an address to the 14th General Assembly:

"International cooperation in the exploration of outer space offers an avenue along which nations may approach mutual understanding and peace. Working together on the great challenges of explorations beyond the confines of earth can create a new perspective, in which national boundaries and national rivalries recede in importance."

Certainly we can agree that the incentives for international cooperation in outer space are many and very substantial. Tremendous expense is involved in space exploration. Geographically widespread and yet tightly coordinated observation stations are required. Coordination of operations is imperative if we are to avoid mutual interference and minimize the danger of accident and damage as traffic in outer space increases in intensity. All these factors urge the importance of international cooperation.

And there is another grim argument for cooperation: Scientific progress has inevitably made possible the use of outer space for new and more dangerous means of waging war. This fact requires that maximum cooperative efforts be made among the nations to guard against the use of outer space for aggressive purposes. Recognizing the great dangers lurking in such use, the United States over three years ago proposed a study of means to reserve outer space for peaceful purposes only. Today the United States stands prepared to enter upon such a study separately from the overall problem of disarmament. A concrete proposal in this direction has been made by the five Western powers to the Geneva Conference of the 10-Nation Committee on Disarmament. These nations have urged the banning of weapons of mass destruction in orbit or stationed in outer space.

I hope very much that outer space can be reserved as a great area for peace. It would be a tragic thing indeed if the wars and national rivalries which have too often characterized relations among the nations here on earth were to be projected into outer space.

...The hope of cooperation in outer space was put eloquently not long ago by Dr. T. Keith Glennan, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, when he said:

“Out of the efforts of the dedicated and inspired men of all nations may yet come that common understanding and mutual trust that will break the lockstep of suspicion and distrust that divides the world into separate camps today.”

Faced with the tremendous opportunities presented by outer space, we owe it to ourselves and to all posterity to rise to the occasion and meet the challenge with statesmanship and breadth of vision.