History of International Cooperation

Grade Level: 7 - 8

Time Required: 3 to 4 class periods

Countdown:
- Paper
- Pencils

Ignition:
The concept of international cooperation in space was initiated more than 30 years ago. Three basic beliefs underlie this idea:

1) Space does not belong only to the mightiest.
2) No one country or people can realize its full potential without the cooperation of others.
3) Benefits derived from the exploration of space belong to all humankind.

Ironically, the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, characterized by unprecedented technological growth in the development of machines for mass destruction, brought about scientific advances that spilled over into the development of materials, processes, and a body of aeronautical knowledge that has made real the dream of long-term space habitation. The seeds of peaceful interdependence now inherent in space research around the world were sowed in strife.

On the grounds of the United Nations stands a bronze statue with the saying “Let Us Beat Swords in Plowshares”, a gift from the Soviet Union in 1959. It symbolizes the noble human desire to put an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the welfare of all of human life.

Another significant landmark toward international cooperation was the Outer Space Treaty, the first international space treaty that was signed simultaneously in London, Moscow, and Washington, D.C. on January 27, 1967. The ultimate document governing space activities, it asserts the philosophy that space exploration should “contribute to broad international cooperation and the development of mutual understanding between States and peoples”.

Using the Outer Space Treaty and other agreements, the U.S., Russia, Japan, Canada, and the 14 member states of the European Space Agency (E.S.A.) began to develop the International Space Station (ISS). The first segment of ISS was launched from Russia in November 1998.
Liftoff:
A. Ask the students to envision that a moon colony has been recently established and that the inhabitants represent many different cultures. A vital part of colonization is to establish an International Space Treaty that will have a variety of purposes.

1. Define a “treaty” as an agreement between groups of people or nations. A treaty may be negotiated to:
   a. end wars
   b. settle boundary disputes
   c. form agreements on taxes, navigation, and fisheries
   d. set up international organizations, i.e. a Universal Postal Union
   e. deal with the extradition of criminals
   f. protect a country’s trademarks, copyrights, and patents
   g. deal with religious rights of individuals

2. Group students according to the countries or organizations that they wish to represent, i.e. United States, Canada, Japan, China, Russian, and E. S. A.

3. Ask each group to discuss general questions such as:
   a. Who will have the power to negotiate a treaty? (king, chief executive, etc.)
   b. How will the treaty be approved – by a majority vote or a unanimous vote?
   c. What will be the official language for negotiation?
   d. What might happen if a nation chooses not to sign the treaty? Will its people be banned from the moon colony?

Discuss the answers to these questions as a class.

4. Then, tell each group that it will compose a bill for the treaty. The bill, once presented to all countries, will then be approved or dismissed by vote, majority or unanimous (whichever has been previously decided.)

5. The bill should specifically address the following questions:
   a. Who will make the laws, and how will they be enforced? Will poor nations have the same rights as rich nations?
   b. How will land rights be determined? On a first come, first-serve basis?
   c. Can a nation own the mineral and water rights on the moon?
   d. Should a nation be allowed to copyright its remote sensing imagery photographs and its space experiments?
   e. Should technological advances be shared by the international community? Or copyrighted and protected?
f. Should a system of public education be developed for all nations? Or should each nation develop its own education system?
g. Should an international religion and language be selected? Or should each nation retain its own language and religions?
h. How will trading rights be established, and what type of bartering or money system will be used?

6. When each “nation” has completed its discussion, pairs of nations may choose to work together in negotiation.

7. Then, using parliamentary procedure, the “floor” should be open for the discussion of each group’s bill. After each presentation, the entire class will vote on whether to accept or dismiss the bill. The vote should be unanimous for a bill to become part of the treaty. Additional negotiation among nations may be necessary.

8. Once the bill(s) have been accepted, the treaty will then be read aloud in its entirety and given a final vote. It will then be typed up and signed by each individual nation. All students should receive a copy.

B. The “Mission to Mir” Imax film is another resource that emphasizes international cooperation. According to Michael Kernan in The Smithsonian, it is “a magnificent, stirring tribute to Russian-American cooperation at space station Mir (peace), with cosmonauts and astronauts working together and signing “Moscow Nights” together to guitar accompaniment and all of the cheering for Shannon Lucid after her record 188 days in space.

C. The National Air and Space Museum has an excellent exhibit entitled “Space Race”. On display are the following:

1. a Russian spacesuit with a small dagger for fighting off bears and wolves since the cosmonauts had decided on U.S.S.R. rural landings, not ocean landings

2. a mannequin named Ivan Ivanovich (or John Doe) sent up to test the resistance of Vostok life-support systems to the 10-G impact of landing

3. Yuri Gagarin’s ID card as Cosmonaut No. 01 and his training suit—beside John Glenn’s actual spacesuit

4. the training air lock and spacesuit that Aleksei Leonov used in preparation for the first space walk in 1965

5. a Soviet moon suit with a built-in life support backpack

6. a doll autographed by an early cosmonaut—dated the day he expected to return from space; however, his capsule accidentally depressurized and he was killed
7. our Corona satellite – a secret space camera that was declassified recently

8. a video depicting Oklahoman Thomas Stafford and Leonov reminiscing about the first joint American-Soviet spaceflight, Apollo-Suyuz, in 1975.

More Ideas …

- Research Apollo-Suyuz.
- Record ways we are presently cooperating internationally in the space program.
- Draw a picture or layout of the proposed space station.