

IV - CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the workshop, many panelists stressed that: 1) it was time to begin to examine the problems presented by the operation of multinational space stations; and 2) such an examination should proceed slowly, taking into consideration the technical demands of building large, permanently manned space structures, the political demands of multinational management, and the eventual need to establish a "backdrop" of laws and regulations necessary to protect the space worker.

Some panelists felt that INTELSAT offered a good example of how to approach the timing--though not necessarily the substance--of a multinational space station agreement. INTELSAT started slowly with interim arrangements that were essentially contractual joint ventures between the international partners and the initial manager, COMSAT. After 7 years of experience, a more definitive arrangement was negotiated and INTELSAT was given its own separate legal personality, privileges and immunities, an arbitral mechanism and so forth. Many panelists felt that it was important to ensure that early legal and administrative space station agreements contain the flexibility required to take advantage of the tremendous amount of experience the organization will gain in its first few years of operation.

Most panelists were skeptical of the need for new international treaties, but many thought that a systematic investigation of space station legal issues would reveal that creative multinational agreements or selective domestic legislation would be in order.

Finally, several panelists noted that when the first space-related cases begin to occur, the courts will look first to congressional declarations to resolve complex issues. In the absence of such congressional declarations, courts will be left to their own devices, creating law and applying--or misapplying--analogies from air law and maritime law. As one panelist noted: "if Congress has anything to say [on this subject], it had better make itself clear now."