

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

The other new item on our agenda, outer space, is similarly ready for serious consideration with fresh minds. Whether we should move straight into debate on the need for a working group is a moot point. My delegation would prefer that we first lay the basis for that step by identifying the potential areas for useful activity since we do not have a great body of existing work in this field to draw on. It is an important and a vast subject; it is a subject of considerable future potential for disarmament and it will need careful handling on our part.

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(Mr. Jayakoddy, Sri Lanka)

At our spring session this year, we examined the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Our exchanges were useful, though it was clear that two different approaches to the question were on the minds of distinguished representatives.

But the objective was the same, viz., the need to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space. If we do not try to prevent such an arms race now, it is estimated that within the next two decades, or even by the end of this decade, space weapons will end the balance of terror that has made nuclear war all but unthinkable for the last 36 years, but they will make possible a global conflict whose undamaged victor could dictate terms to a disarmed and helpless loser. This is a situation that all States would prefer to avoid.

My delegation, therefore, favours the setting up of a subsidiary body on the prevention of an arms race in outer space this year, which marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the launching of mankind's first space object -- the Soviet sputnik in October, 1957. But we hope that a consensus on the setting up of the subsidiary body and its mandate can be achieved without the time-consuming meandering process that we went through at the closing stages of the spring session. We hope that the setting up of the subsidiary body will signal the first tangible step in this Committee to prevent in outer space what mankind has not succeeded in doing up to now on earth.