

(Mr. Flores Olea, Mexico)

The negotiations to prevent the build-up of arsenals destined for outer space deserve special attention. We consider it essential and extremely urgent that preventive action should be taken by this Conference so as to avoid, from the outset, a climate of mounting uncertainty which could defeat all efforts to arrest the arms race in that region.

Resolution 38/70, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, reiterated "that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has a primary role in the negotiation of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

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(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

Agreement on agenda item 5 is possible, as we all know. All that is needed is to want it. By comparison with last April, I see at least two new reasons which should induce us to try to reach a positive conclusion to our consultations and to establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. First, there is the session of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space which is taking place in Vienna at this very time. Owing to a confusion as to competence that we consider deplorable, the question of what is termed the "militarization" of outer space appears as the first item on the agenda for that session. It must be admitted that the lack of any progress in the Conference on Disarmament, the appropriate forum for discussing matters of this kind, is obviously conducive to such regrettable dispersion of effort.

The second reason is the contents of the report to the United States Congress on United States space policy which was distributed to us on 12 April last. I am sure that all delegations found that document as instructive and interesting to read as did my own. It is a document of a global and detailed nature which tackles frankly the salient aspects of the military uses of outer space. It explains, inter alia, the factors which, in the view of the authorities in Washington, stand in the way of the identification of effective measures that could be negotiated at once. Differing opinions are, of course, possible, but they ought to be expressed with a comparable degree of precision. If a discussion of that kind took place within the framework of an ad hoc committee with a general mandate of an exploratory nature, we would be able to perform the important background work that is required. By doing so we would accomplish the first step which, at this stage, can only be the identification of the questions connected with the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A whole session would not suffice for an in-depth discussion of all the issues raised by the report I have mentioned.

The penultimate chapter of this report contains a preliminary evaluation of initiatives taken by the Soviet Union with regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. If, within the framework of an ad hoc committee, the Soviet delegation could reply to the comments made in the report, we could do the work which the distinguished representative of India eloquently requested on 26 April last.

Furthermore, some detailed views on the subject were put forward by our distinguished French colleague, Ambassador de La Gorce, on behalf of his Government at our last meeting. They deserve our full attention.