

26. In addition to sharing some of the views reflected in the first two sentences of the above paragraph, one delegation reiterated that the existing legal régime for arms control in outer space was equitable, balanced and extensive. It placed some legal restraints on virtually every type of weapon in outer space. It had been far more successful in preventing an arms race than any comparable legal régime on Earth. That delegation viewed this régime as wide-ranging and logical, not full of gaps and holes, but containing mutually reinforcing legal constraints, not ineffective but practical and workable. In its opinion, any problems associated with the existing legal régime would be inherent in any legal régime for arms control in outer space, no matter how much it was developed, elaborated or amended. A legal régime by itself was not sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space because compliance with, enforcement of and participation in that régime were needed. Apart from that, this delegation believed that many of the proposals noted or listed in CD/905 and CD/908 were founded on an inadequate appreciation or a flawed understanding of the existing legal régime. It considered that such proposals were either redundant or perhaps even prejudicial to the legal controls that were already in place. One delegation also noted that, contrary to the apprehensions noted about "current developments in space science and technology, coupled with ongoing military space programmes," great advances in data processing, sensors, microelectronics, materials, propulsion, and directed energy have opened a window to a potentially safer era, with a growing likelihood of effective, non-nuclear defences against ballistic missiles. This delegation stated that if these advances can be fully developed, the nuclear or chemically-armed ballistic missile, by far the most dangerous instrument of war to use the medium of space, would no longer be an "absolute weapon".

27. Some delegations expressed serious concern that one space Power went ahead with its strategic defence programme by having conducted a number of experiments which would lead to growing mistrust and might intensify the arms race. Some delegations noted that from the above commentary it could be concluded that no other country had any programme comparable to the strategic defence programme.

28. One delegation further stated that such a conclusion would be far from correct, as one other major space Power has also been pursuing since the 1960s its own research and experimental work into advanced technologies for strategic defence, which are precisely the same types of technologies being