

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

beam weapons, radio-frequency weapons, and kinetic energy weapons. It is these same types of technologies that are being researched in the United States strategic defence initiative programme.

The strategic defence programme of the Soviet Union has been largely overlooked in the recent public debate. Indeed, due to the closed nature of Soviet society, their strategic defence efforts have proceeded free from debates of the sort that are occurring now in the West over the utility and implications of our programme.

In addition to its large and comprehensive programme of research and development on advanced strategic defence technologies, the Soviet Union has the world's most active military space programme. The original component of this, of course, is the ballistic missile nuclear warhead, the most dangerous weapon that transits space. Intercontinental ballistic missiles carrying such warheads through space were first tested by the Soviet Union in 1957.

Today, the Soviet ballistic missile forces -- far larger than those of the United States -- are a destabilizing threat to everyone's security. In addition, it was the Soviet Union which began, in the 1960s, the development and testing of what remains today as the world's only operational antisatellite system. Similarly, the Soviet ABM system, as well as the Soviet high-energy lasers at their Sary Shagan test range, have the capability of damaging satellites in orbit.

The Soviet military use of space has grown to the point where its overall military strategy relies significantly on satellites. Soviet electronic intelligence ocean reconnaissance satellites and nuclear-powered radar ocean reconnaissance satellites are deployed to detect, locate and target naval forces of the United States and its allies. Indeed, in 1985, the Soviet Union launched approximately 100 payloads into space and most of these were for military purposes.

Considering these facts, it becomes apparent that criticisms by the Soviet Union of the United States strategic defence initiative, and in particular its space-related aspects -- have no basis. The United States is not expanding the military competition into new areas; the Soviet Union has been pursuing the same technologies for two decades. The United States is not initiating "the militarization of space"; space has been militarized for many years, primarily by Soviet systems and programmes.

There are also a number of specific allegations concerning the strategic defence initiative which require a response.

First, we have been told that potential weapon systems on which United States research is being carried out will have an offensive potential to destroy "any other target on earth". This is not the case. The United States in fact seeks a strategic régime in which both sides increasingly rely upon effective defences for their security, thereby precluding an effective offensive strategy on any nation's part.

Second, Mr. Kornienko stated that systems in the strategic defence initiative programme could be "only meaningful as part of an aggressive design". The charge that the United States harbours aggressive designs is false, and the United States strongly rejects it. We seek deep reductions in strategic offensive nuclear forces. We seek these reductions immediately. We