

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

restrictive definition -- if I may so -- of outer space weapons which appears in Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's statement of 6 August reinforces us in our view that such work could indeed be useful. This is of special importance because, as I have emphasized on other occasions, the central and essential purpose of any arms control agreement and its related verification system must be to enhance stability, and thus we should close the door on any possible areas of ambiguity or uncertainty. I hope I have succeeded in indicating some progress even on outer space over the past four years.

(Mr. Hacene, Algeria)

I would now like to make a few comments on the work of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, and to say how much we appreciate the valuable contribution of Ambassador Pugliese as the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. In the view of the Algerian delegation, consideration of the items discussed during the session allows us to draw the conclusion that the Ad hoc Committee will in the future have to undertake more substantive work in keeping with the urgency of item 5 on our agenda. It is true that the establishment of an Ad hoc Committee under this item for the third year running is a worthy achievement, but it must be admitted that the work done to date does not reflect in practice the recognized importance of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Consideration of the applicable legal régime has revealed loopholes and flaws which will have to be rectified if we really want to prevent outer space from becoming a "potential battlefield". To meet such a challenge, political good will on the part of all will be necessary, and it would be pointless in our view to place the role of our Conference in opposition to the framework of negotiations between the two main military and space Powers in order to justify the lack of appropriate negotiations on item 5 of our agenda. Specific proposals have been made under this item, and it is desirable for our Conference to give them all due attention.