

(Mr. El Reedy, Egypt)

For more than 20 years, specifically in the wake of the launching of the first space satellites, Egypt has, together with the group of non-aligned countries, been in the forefront of nations calling for the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Although my delegation believes that the best way to handle this question is to establish a legal rule or international legislation prohibiting the use of outer space for other than peaceful purposes, the logic thus being the remittance of the issue to the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in response to the preference shown by many delegations for considering the subject in the Committee on Disarmament, we have agreed to its inclusion in our agenda. We would, however, like to emphasize two points:

First, the objective of our endeavours would be to reserve outer space for peaceful uses and to safeguard against its militarization. Consequently, we have to avoid the risk of finding ourselves being dragged into an exercise that may lead to the legitimization of some military uses of outer space.

Secondly, the consideration of this item should not be at the expense of the priority items on our agenda, particularly the questions of a nuclear test ban and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

In this connection it might be useful if the secretariat, at the proper time, could prepare a compilation of the relevant background material, including the various proposals made which may be of help to us in the consideration of this question.

(Mr. Terrefe, Ethiopia)

My delegation is pleased also that under your leadership, consultations have led to a consensus on the inclusion of the item concerning outer space. In view of the great speed with which space research and technology is progressing, it is high time that we should be concerned at the growing dangers of the military use of outer space, while other United Nations bodies consider concomitantly the legal aspects and the question of the peaceful uses of outer space, for herein lies an unlimited chance for mankind to direct its universal knowledge to benefit all countries of the world in the solution of their economic and social problems, particularly in the field of communications and the exploitation of natural resources. In the Committee on Disarmament, our immediate task is to negotiate measures of preventing the nuclear arms race from being extended into outer space, for the use of satellites for early warning system against nuclear attack and other uses of outer space suggest the likelihood of space war in the future. This concern, however, should not detract the Committee from pursuing its priority items.