

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

Working Paper of a group of socialist countries

1. The world has recently come to an extremely dangerous frontier: the arms race, which has reached unprecedented dimensions, is not only intensifying but also threatening to spread to outer space. The danger that space will become the springboard for aggression and war is increasingly real. Programmes are being carried out to develop space weapons that are intended to destroy objects in space and attack targets on Earth from space. These activities, which stem from calculations on achieving military superiority, are likely to make an arms race in space irreversible and seriously destabilize the situation, and they heighten the threat of nuclear war. The onset of an arms race in outer space will undermine the prospects for arms limitation and reduction as a whole. The militarization of space, if it cannot be halted, will swallow up enormous material and intellectual resources, thereby doing great damage to the peaceful development of mankind and the solution of pressing global problems, and create insurmountable obstacles to international co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space.
2. It is necessary to prevent this fatal course of events, and not to allow space to be turned into a source of military danger. The exclusion of space from the sphere of the arms race must be a strict norm in the policy of States, and a universally recognized international obligation.
3. The socialist States consider that strike weapons of any kind - conventional, nuclear, laser, particle-beam or any other form - whether in manned or unmanned systems should not be introduced into or stationed in space. Space weapons should not be developed, tested or deployed either for anti-missile defence, or as anti-satellite systems, or for use against targets on Earth or in the air. Such systems which have already been developed should be destroyed. In other words, the socialist States propose that agreement should be reached on the prohibition and elimination of an entire class of weapons, namely, attack space systems, including space-based anti-missile systems and anti-satellite systems.