

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

To justify our fears one need only mention the astronomical sums, amounting to several thousand billion dollars each year, being spent on the manufacture, development, stockpiling or acquisition of weapons, particularly in the nuclear field. And as if existing arsenals were not sufficient to destroy our planet several times over, their proliferation, vertical and horizontal, is continuing imperturbably, together with their upgrading and refinement. Indeed, the constant progress in strategy as well as in technology has led to a new generation of nuclear weapons which are indecently called "clean", since they cause the deaths of human beings without damaging the environment. But of equal seriousness is the fact that at the beginning of this decade, the unrestrained arms race shifted into outer space, which for us is a matter of grave concern. The militarization of space increases the dangers weighing on our planet and undermines the efforts of the international community, which aspires to make outer space a res communis.

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With the conquest of outer space, which has opened up new horizons for mankind, the arms race has taken on an even more dangerous dimension. While this advance has greatly increased man's potential in the area of cartography, weather forecasts, remote sensing of natural resources and also verification of the implementation of disarmament agreements, it also offers considerable military possibilities.

Thus the great Powers have been quick to take advantage of these possibilities by using space for military purposes -- surveillance, early warning or rapid communication. However, the progress of science and technology, as well as the striving for military supremacy, quickly gave rise to more dangerous military activities in space. Thus, since the end of the 1970s we have been following with profound concern the military activities of the great Powers which are aimed at setting up an operational system capable of destroying satellites in certain orbits.

Worse -- according to scientific and political circles, these Powers are planning for the near future other military uses of space which would be even more threatening for our planet. It is no secret that new systems of anti-missile missiles are already at a very advanced state of design. These space weapons, which no longer deserve to be called weapons of the future are the product of a new space technology. Thus, space offers a further confirmation of the theory of the arms race spiral, whereby the development of space weapons prompts new refinements of anti-satellite weapons.