

President:

Mr. Aldo Pugliese

(Italy)

I would have been pleased to welcome, as early as in February, the establishment of another important subsidiary body, the one in charge of the delicate and important problem of "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". Despite great good will, my efforts have not yet led to a conclusive result on this matter. I am sure that, where I did not succeed, my successor will be able to reach more concrete results in the pursuit of a reasonable compromise solution to enable the Ad hoc Committee on outer space to resume its work as soon as possible.

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14

Mr. ANDREOTTI (Italy)

One of the final issues on which we are focusing our attention is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Space is destined for peaceful activities, and its use or exploration must be for the benefit of all countries, whatever their level of economic and scientific development. Primary responsibility for seeking effective and verifiable agreements undoubtedly lies with the two leading Powers. I believe that both of them, like all of us, are fully aware that unrestrained competition in this field would eventually prove to be a costly and unproductive enterprise. The bilateral negotiations being conducted in Geneva, although complex and sensitive, suggest that a constructive approach will be pursued. We would wish to encourage the United States of America and the Soviet Union to reach an agreement which will safeguard strategic stability and foster co-operation, in the context of rigorous respect for existing agreements.

The current debate on this subject at the Conference on Disarmament is still in a preliminary phase: recently, however, it has been possible to make a detailed examination of issues of quite considerable importance: for example, the applicable legal régimes, terminology, and identifying activities conducted in space. This gathering can play a role of prime importance with regard to this problem, while making due allowances for the fact that many and diverse political, strategic and technological requirements converge, sometimes contradictorily. However, it is a sector of activity of enormous relevance to the peaceful future of mankind, and will require increased commitment on the part of us all.