

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):

- The Soviet delegation submitted a whole set of proposals on another priority issue of our time — the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These took the form of a draft treaty on the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth, which is on the negotiating table. The Soviet draft caused considerable interest and was broadly commented upon by the delegations.

(Mr. Middleton, United Kingdom)

Similar considerations apply to the procedural debate on outer space, where although we have agreed in principle to form an ad hoc committee we are still caught up in arguments over its precise terms of reference. Once again it is the word "negotiation" which causes the difficulty; once again it is the attempt to enter into negotiations before we know what we are going to negotiate on and the attempt to resolve fundamental differences of approach within the terms of a mandate which prevents us dealing with the substance of the question. We believe that the proposals put forward by western States form a sound basis on which work might begin.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

The biggest disappointment for us has been the lack of success of the consultations relating to the mandate of a subsidiary body on the item of our agenda entitled "prevention of an arms race in outer space". The delegation of France attaches the greatest importance to this question and its consideration by our Conference. Although we still have an open-minded attitude towards the mandate in question, we are of the opinion that the formula worked out by the contact group would, together, if necessary, with an explanatory statement by the President, make it possible to do the necessary exploratory work in such a complex area; such work would, moreover, probably have taken up all the time set aside for an ad hoc committee at the current session. We deeply regret the fact that a group of delegations objected to an arrangement which would have made it possible for the work to begin.

In the first statement it made in plenary, the delegation of France said that it would be wiser at once to devote to essentially preparatory work the time we risk losing in a possibly fruitless discussion in an effort to attain a more ambitious mandate. We are sorry that we were right, but we still hope that a solution may be found during the summer session.