

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

At the same time, it is impossible to close one's eyes to the fact that a whole set of extremely difficult issues remain to be solved, the main issue being the task of making it impossible to undermine strategic stability while strategic offensive arms are being radically reduced. The key to solving this problem lies in maintaining the ABM Treaty. The instructions given by M.S. Gorbachev and R. Reagan, the President of the United States, to the Soviet and United States delegations in Geneva note the direct relationship between reductions in strategic offensive arms and the preservation of the ABM Treaty: the leaders of the USSR and of the United States instructed the delegations in Geneva to work out an agreement that would commit the parties, when conducting their research, development and, where required, testing permitted by the ABM Treaty, to observe the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972, and not to withdraw from the Treaty for a specified period of time.

At the current round of the Soviet-United States talks the Soviet side, guided by these instructions, tabled a draft "Protocol to a treaty between the USSR and the United States on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms", which is fully based on the joint Soviet-United States statement.

The Soviet Union holds a flexible position concerning the form of an agreement to observe the ABM Treaty. We have now proposed that such agreement should be recorded in the form of a protocol to the treaty on strategic offensive arms. At the same time we do not rule out the possibility of signing a protocol to the ABM Treaty on this issue. Finally, we do not object to reflecting the corresponding provisions directly in the treaty on strategic offensive arms either. However, the agreement should in any event enter into force at the same time as the treaty on strategic offensive arms, and should have the same legal status as the treaty on strategic offensive arms and the ABM Treaty.

In so doing - and I should like to stress this - we are not making abandonment of the SDI programme by the United States a precondition for a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive arms. As M.S. Gorbachev has repeatedly stressed, SDI is not on the negotiating table. The United States side has the right to carry out any programme if and in so far as it is not contrary to the ABM Treaty. But we are resolutely opposed to roundabout efforts by the United States, in a situation where the process of nuclear disarmament is taking concrete shape, to propel the arms race in other directions, especially in the direction of outer space. This would be contrary to the mutual understandings reached in Washington.

In this context we cannot fail to be concerned at the fact that, while the words of the United States side proclaim adherence to the Washington understandings, its actions appreciably depart from them, thereby blocking progress towards the resolution of the tasks entrusted to the delegations. The draft "Treaty between the USSR and the United States on certain measures to facilitate a co-operative transition to the deployment of future strategic ballistic missile defences" which it tabled at this round proposes that agreement should be reached on a transition to the deployment - I stress, deployment - of defences against ballistic missiles in space, instead of