

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

Secondly, the French Government would like the new and future anti-ballistic technology to be the subject of serious negotiation with a view to reaching agreement on verifiable limits that would come into effect before irreversible developments have occurred.

All the countries of the world have a common interest in seeing the restoration and maintenance of the strategic balance, followed by the reduction of the level of armaments and, therefore, to see the successful conclusion of the bilateral negotiations initiated between the United States and the USSR.

That interest is, of course, shared by France, too. My country confirmed last September, before the United Nations General Assembly, the conditions under which it, in its turn, would be able to participate in the efforts to reduce nuclear weapons; it emphasized the vital importance of maintaining a limit on ABM systems.

To return to the past, France paid tribute to the effort and reciprocal limitation that characterized the bilateral United States-Soviet treaty of 1972 on anti-ballistic missile systems, even though that document permits the retention, in each country, of a not inconsiderable capacity for whose modernization it provides.

Further, France, as a party to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, is very anxious that it should be observed. But, as the President of the Republic pointed out in his statement to the thirty-eighth United Nations General Assembly, that treaty provides only a partial response to the questions raised by the development of space technologies, since it does not prohibit the permanent stationing of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, France proposes that all the countries concerned, and first and foremost the United States and the USSR, should engage in a genuine multilateral dialogue with a view to the duly monitored limitation of new anti-ballistic technologies.

In view of the interaction between anti-satellite systems and ABM systems, France believes that it is the resultant whole that should be the subject of thorough examination.

It is already unrealistic even now, and it would not necessarily be desirable, to fix as the objective the complete demilitarization of space. It is, however, desirable and possible to achieve undertakings that would have the following features:

They would be limited, having as their objective the forestalling of destabilizing military developments without affecting the military activities that contribute to strategic stability and those that can be of assistance in the monitoring of disarmament agreements, account being taken of the joint nature of certain civil and military uses of space;

They would be progressive, with a view to limiting as a matter of priority those developments that would be likely to create a state of affairs that would be irreversible because it would not lend itself to subsequent verification;

Finally, they would be verifiable; all States must feel confident of respect for the application of such limitations and none must find itself in a position to