

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

As you will all recall, this proposal was made in the statement by the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, G.M. Kornienko, in our Conference, and subsequently developed in Ambassador Issraelyan's statement at our last plenary meeting. Obviously this is not a comprehensive solution to the problem. However, it would be a major step in the direction of ensuring that space remains peaceful and free of weapons. We recently heard detailed proposals on the creation of such a system in the statement of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador Wegener. It seems to us that the Conference can resolve this problem, which will be a concrete and substantial contribution to the strengthening of security.

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(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

One of the urgent disarmament issues facing us is that embodied in the fifth item on our agenda -- the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Last year this Conference established an Ad hoc Committee under this agenda item which began consideration of issues relevant to prevention of an arms race in outer space. Within the limits of its possibilities in nine substantive meetings, the Committee grappled with some of the most difficult and complex facets of arms control. It identified many of the critical issues, which, in itself, was a significant accomplishment. It also revealed important differences of opinion and position on many of these issues. At the conclusion of our work last year many of us had a greater appreciation for the challenges involved in dealing with this subject.

My delegation believes that the Outer Space Committee should now be re-established, under the same mandate, to continue its important work. An examination of the report from last year clearly shows that there is much work still to be done under this mandate. For example, we need a more broadly accepted and clearer understanding of many terms. These include the "militarization of outer space" and "peaceful uses of outer space". The effect of existing legal régimes needs to be further considered. Substantial discussion is needed of the role of satellite systems in maintaining strategic stability and of the issue of protection of satellites.

These examples by no means exhaust the areas of work that can be accomplished under the present mandate. I call upon all delegations to join to re-establish without delay the Ad hoc Committee under the same mandate as in 1985.

Recently we have listened with care to two statements in this Conference by distinguished representatives of the Soviet Union that addressed in part the question of outer space, and the related question of the United States strategic defence initiative.

The first statement was by Deputy Minister Kornienko on 20 February, and the second by Ambassador Issraelyan on 13 March. I believe that a number of arguments and points in these statements were inaccurate and misleading, and require a response from my delegation.

In dealing with the strategic defence initiative, the arguments centred on the claim that this United States research programme would disrupt and destabilize the present military balance. This programme was said to be