

(Mr. Renton, United Kingdom)

A third area where the Conference on Disarmament has an important multilateral contribution to make -- in order to complement the bilateral negotiations -- is in its work on outer space. One of the Conference's achievements last year was the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on this subject. The mandate under which it was established is far from exhausted. We therefore look forward to the re-establishment of the Committee. As a further contribution to its work, we intend to supplement the paper which we submitted last summer on the existing legal régime in outer space.

Since the subject has continued to attract so much publicity, let me also reiterate our policy towards the United States' Strategic Defence Initiative. We share wholeheartedly the objective of the bilateral US/Soviet negotiators -- the prevention of an arms race in space. At the same time, we regard the American research programme -- and I must underline that it is only a research programme -- as a prudent step in view of the Soviet activities in this field, which as we all know have been going on for years. The United States has made it clear that these activities are conducted in full compliance with all relevant international treaties, and in accordance with the four cardinal principles agreed between Mrs. Thatcher and President Reagan at Camp David in December 1984: first, that the United States and Western aim is not to achieve superiority, but to maintain balance, taking account of Soviet developments; second, that SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiation; third, that the overall aim is to enhance, and not to undermine, deterrence; fourth, that East/West negotiation should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides. It is on this same basis that we have recently concluded an agreement with the United States to participate in their research programme.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The Conference on Disarmament has got off to a quick start this year. My Government has noted with satisfaction that many questions which in previous years have given rise to prolonged procedural debates have been dealt with briskly and productively. The turn for the better in international relations has thus found a certain reflection in negotiations in this corner of Geneva as well.

The improved atmosphere augurs well for actual deliberations on the many important issues placed on the agenda of the Conference. In our view, the negotiations within this body are sufficiently advanced in order to warrant cautious but real optimism with regard to at least three subjects: chemical weapons, radiological weapons, and the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Further progress could, and should, also be achieved with respect to a comprehensive test ban, prevention of an arms race in space, security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and prevention of nuclear war.