

34. One delegation of the Western Group believed that the existing legal régime for arms control in outer space was equitable, balanced and extensive. The current regime placed some legal restraints on virtually every type of weapon in outer space and recurring predictions of an impending arms race in outer space had not been borne out. Therefore the allegations of its insufficiency were overstated. A legal régime, in and of itself, was not sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space because one needed compliance with that regime, its enforcement and participation in that regime.

35. One delegation of the same Group, while recognizing that the existing legal régime was insufficient to prohibit some potentially threatening activities and was partially based on bilateral agreements subject to different interpretations or withdrawal, affirmed that the prohibition to deploy any weapon in space would be neither realistic nor efficient: it could indeed limit some stabilizing activities and at the same time would not take account of the other threats to space activities.

C. Existing proposals and future initiatives on the prevention of an arms race in outer space

36. The Group of 21 recalled its proposal for the Ad Hoc Committee to have a negotiating mandate. The Group held the position that the Committee should focus on concrete proposals for measures with a view to conducting negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

37. Some delegations of the Western Group, while agreeing to discuss and study the proposals put forward before the Committee, considered that political conditions were not ripe for in-depth negotiations on these proposals, or were not convinced that they were suitable areas for multilateral consideration.

38. It was stressed by some delegations that although so far no armed conflict in outer space had taken place, mankind could not shut the eyes to history and to scientific and technological developments that were taking place and presume that there would not be any such incident in the future. The importance of what had been left uncovered by the Outer Space Treaty and other related measures two decades ago had grown and the shortcomings had become strikingly more evident.

39. One delegation, a member of the Group of 21, stressed that Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, contained a built-in limitation, as its scope did not extend to banning all types of weapons in outer space. It prohibited inter alia, the placing, installing or stationing of nuclear weapons and other