

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

On 15 January,

General Secretary Gorbachev presented a programme, which shows how serious his country is about translating the results of the Geneva summit into concrete action and which is fully endorsed by the German Democratic Republic. On 31 January, Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, said in an interview granted to Die Zeit, a weekly published in the Federal Republic of Germany: "We look upon this programme as a historic chance. What strikes us in particular is not only the boldness of the vision conjured up but also the fact that it is practicable if the two sides use the proper approach."

Any unbiased examination of the proposals will reveal to what lengths the Soviet Union is going to take into account other countries' ideas. This attitude deserves a constructive reply.

The programme reflects the objective relationship between nuclear disarmament and the necessity to keep space clear of weapons. This is the convincing and only acceptable alternative to a spread of the arms race to outer space. How can the champions of the Strategic Defence Initiative still uphold their claim that space must be crammed with arms in order that nuclear weapons may be eliminated, and how do they justify the concomitant pressure on international treaties?

There is no doubt about the overriding importance of steps to prevent an arms race in outer space. Should the United States space programme come to fruition, prospects for the elimination of nuclear weapons would be more than bleak. Fortunately, an increasing number of people are awakening to this fact.

The debate we had last year was useful but showed at the same time that a more systematic approach is required. We need to agree on the objective to be achieved and on the framework enabling us to conduct orderly discussions and eventually negotiations geared to a concrete task. This is what should be borne in mind in creating an appropriate committee.