

directions and growth of nuclear arsenals; undermining of existing treaties and of the prospects for arms limitation and reduction, and increase of military tension; vast unproductive expenditures; damage to the peaceful use of space and obstacles to international co-operation in the peaceful use of space.

14. Some other delegations shared the view that outer space was the common heritage of mankind and that, consequently, the exploration and use of outer space should be preserved for exclusively peaceful purposes to promote the scientific, economic and social development of all countries. They also shared the genuine concerns expressed on the part of many countries on the subject of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. They noted, however, that outer space is presently not, in fact, an area free of weapons. They stressed that the first task of the Ad Hoc Committee was to clarify ambiguities surrounding the existing legal régimes in outer space in terms of what was permitted, what was prohibited, what grey areas might exist and what gaps required attention. They pointed out that there was no agreement on the meaning of such basic terms as "peaceful purposes" or "militarization". It was noted that many activities in space, while of a military character, served a variety of functions that contributed to stability and to monitoring the implementation of disarmament agreements. In that context, these delegations mentioned the problem of the protection of satellites and pointed out that there were differing views regarding the protection already afforded by the existing legal régime, whether that protection needed to be strengthened and, if so, what scope it should be given. In their view, the consideration of proposals for additional measures to prevent an arms race in outer space presupposes that the Committee reaches a prior common understanding of what is permitted and what is prohibited.

15. With respect to the question of whether there was a threat of an arms race in outer space, one delegation noted that it believed that outer space should only be used for peaceful purposes and to that end it was engaged in bilateral negotiations. It was ready in the Ad Hoc Committee to discuss issues relating to outer space in a manner consistent with, and complementary to, the bilateral negotiations. It stressed that the Strategic Defence Initiative was only a research programme that was consistent with all international obligations of