

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

We maintain that all basic categories of weapons should be prevented from being developed and deployed: weapons hitting targets in space from the Earth, space-to-space weapons and those we are most interested in, space-to-Earth weapons. As a relatively small country, we cannot afford an effective defence against attack from above. But not only small or medium-sized countries have this problem. Even large countries with huge military potentials cannot create a reliable defence against attack coming from outer space above their territory. Thus, the permanent deployment of weapons in outer space would represent, for all countries without distinction, a permanent and highly destabilizing threat.

We recognize today the two tendencies which represent a clear and mutually connected threat in this regard: on the one hand, an effort to introduce weapons into outer space under the guise of a defensive shield and, on the other, continued efforts to develop and deploy anti-satellite weapons. Both of these activities should be prohibited, since even if only one of them is continuing, there will be enough room for developments in both. Anti-ballistic and anti-satellite systems would have many common features. The aim of both these types of system is to act against objects moving through space. From the technical point of view, both types of system have a number of elements which fulfil identical or similar functions. Anti-satellite weapons will thus have certain anti-missile capacities, and vice versa. This applies, for instance, to objects armed with sufficiently strong lasers. Such objects could be used for attacks against satellites as well as against missiles. The fast development of sensors is another field which is common to anti-satellite and anti-missile weapons. The dual-use possibilities are also apparent in the case of radar systems used for detecting and tracking missiles and artificial Earth satellites. It may safely be presumed that with the intensified development of SDI, efforts aimed at integrating military functions in one space object will necessarily lead to an increase in such dual-use elements. One might conclude that today anti-satellite and anti-missile activities and their prohibition can hardly be considered in complete separation.

In this connection, we highly appreciate the Soviet moratorium on the testing of ASAT weapons which has been in force since August 1983. A certain moderation in this regard has also been imposed on the United States Government by the United States Congress. But the United States Administration seems to be unhappy with this moderation, and recently we have been witnessing efforts to resume ASAT testing. It would be deplorable if the testing resumed and a promising period of calm at ASAT proving-grounds was brought to an end.

As the United States SDI programme advances, there is clearly an uncomfortable obstacle in its way, which is the Soviet-United States ABM Treaty of 1972. We are being offered a so-called "broad interpretation" of the Treaty, which in fact means its liquidation. Just a couple of days ago we marked the fifteenth anniversary of the conclusion of that Treaty, and it was a good opportunity to ponder its significance. Had it not been concluded 15 years ago, the development of anti-ballistic systems would have continued unabated. And it seems quite probable that by now, anti-missile weapons, able