

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

by a powerful laser beam at a distance of one kilometer. At the Nevada test site underground nuclear explosions are being carried out to develop a nuclear-powered X-ray laser. In the Maxwell Laboratory in California journalists were shown an electromagnetic gun in action.

The "Strategic Defence Initiative" is loudly advertised as a particularly "peaceful", "defensive" programme which is allegedly intended "to save mankind from nuclear weapons". This is done in order to weaken criticism of it in the international arena, to justify its multi-billion cost, and to avoid the ban on offensive space weapons.

The technical characteristics of the space strike weapons being developed under the SDI programme indicate that they are capable of hitting not only intercontinental ballistic missiles and warheads in space. With their high energy beams or high-speed strike elements, as well as their long range, these weapons can suddenly destroy military or civilian targets in practically all environments -- space, air, earth and sea.

Even if it is considered that the initial development and deployment of space strike weapons will be intended solely to destroy ballistic missiles and warheads, later, when they are modernized and made more sophisticated, they will inevitably be given the capability to hit other targets: that is the logic of weapon development. Thus, this is not a question of defensive weapons but rather of weapons of aggression, of the creation of a first strike capability. Outer space not only strengthens the strategic offensive capability but actually becomes its most important element.

There is another factor which must not be overlooked. Together with space strike weapons, in the United States intensive work is under way on the development of systems for overcoming anti-missile defences. I am referring to the development of fast cruise missiles, the development of low-flying ballistic missiles, which as a result are invulnerable to space-based beam weapons; I am referring to the further development of dummy and manoeuvrable ballistic-missile warheads, and to efforts to develop means of shortening the boost stage of missile trajectories, and so forth.

A question must be asked: why develop systems to counter ABM systems if the SDI is to lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons? Clearly, this is being done not for defence but for a nuclear strike. Obviously, the United States understands that, in response to the SDI, the Soviet Union will also take suitable measures which may also follow the lines of defensive weapons, including space-based ones. The conclusion must be that they are developing in advance nuclear first-strike means capable of overcoming an opposing ABM system.

All this must necessarily cause deep concern. The expression of this concern is to be found in the proposals of delegations belonging to all groups in the Conference to put an end to the danger which comes from space.

Many delegations have expressed views on the creation of a régime for the protection of satellites, which today play an increasingly important role, inter alia in helping to maintain strategic stability. The USSR has proposed that an international agreement should be drawn up in the Conference to ensure the immunity of artificial space objects and prohibit anti-satellite systems.