

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

inspection of space objects by an international inspectorate at the point of launch has been suggested as a contribution to prevent the deployment of weapons in space.

The Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union made serious and worthy proposals earlier this month with the object of ensuring that items launched into space are not equipped with weapons.

The proposal of your country, France, Mr. President, in 1978 for an international satellite monitoring agency has been studied intensely and remains on the table. The Canadian presentation on verification and PAXSAT and proposals by China, the German Democratic Republic and Mongolia, Japan and Argentina call for close examination and study in the Ad hoc Committee. Proposals for a comprehensive ASAT weapons ban and revisions to the 1967 outer space Treaty to remedy its shortcomings have also been put forward.

The Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. Hameed, speaking (as a member of Parliament) on article 4 of the Treaty way back in 1967, hoped that its shortcomings would not give licence for military activities in outer space, thus negating the lofty objectives of the Treaty. Concerns then expressed have been sadly borne out in the militarization of space. Last year at the CD, Mr. Hameed said of research into space weapons that, before the research of today becomes the reality of tomorrow, we must legislate effectively to keep space free of weapons. The potential of outer space for peace and development should not be blighted by the propensity of space Powers to move to a new arena to pursue an arms race.

The peaceful and equitable use of outer space needs to be promoted in order that co-operation and not confrontation, development rather than destruction impels our endeavours. At the Harare Summit, non-aligned States called for urgent negotiations in the CD to conclude agreements on all aspects of outer space and thus enhance the prospects of co-operation in its peaceful use.

In view of the highly technical nature of many of the issues involved, my delegation firmly supports suggestions for the establishment of a group of scientific/technical experts to clarify and update these issues. The inputs of a qualified group would most certainly enhance the quality of our work.