

58. An expert from another Western delegation addressed the problem of debris and military activities in space (CD/OS/WP.47, 2 August 1991) trying to assess the danger posed to artificial satellites by orbiting debris. He indicated that military activities in space constituted a large fraction of the total debris population and deployment and the testing of weapons in space would contribute to its further growth. To ensure safe space activity for all, including military operations, an international regime was called for. Some actions which could and should be taken about the debris problem were mentioned, including care about launch operations, keeping of the physical integrity of spacecraft, avoidance of deliberate fragmentation of spacecraft and rockets. It was underlined that plans for any space-based weapon system should be completely revised.

59. One expert from a delegation belonging to the Group of 21 addressed possibilities of monitoring testing of existing and potential ASAT weapons. A number of ways that satellites could be made inoperational were indicated. Among the future potential ASAT weapons mention was made of lasers, space mines, brilliant pebbles, high power microwaves, rail-guns, and neutral particle beams. It was said that during testing the characteristic parameters of weapons systems should show up. Among the various ways to monitor weapons and weapons testing photographic, heat detection, radar, electromagnetic fields detection, radiometric scattering, and probing techniques were discussed. Tagging was mentioned as one example of cooperative measures. With novel encryption techniques, very high degrees of security and authenticity could be obtained. Some of the non-dedicated ASAT weapons were said to be hypothetical in contrast to the monitoring techniques, which already had existed for some time in many cases, although an elaboration of these techniques in relation to a realization of the potential weapons concepts was claimed to be necessary.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

60. There continued to be general recognition in the Ad Hoc Committee of the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and readiness to contribute to that common objective. The work of the Committee since its establishment in 1985 has contributed to the accomplishment of this task. The Committee held a wide ranging exchange of views and heard a number of expert presentations which contributed to identifying and clarifying a number of issues and to a clearer perception of the various positions. The Committee,