

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In our opinion, verification will have a particularly important role to play in preventing an arms race in space.

We would be extremely grateful if you took a close look at the proposal for the establishment of an international verification system to make sure that outer space remains peaceful. Is not the idea of inspecting every space launch a reasonable one? There are as yet not that many space launch centres in the world, and the presence of international inspectors there would reliably guarantee that the objects placed in outer space are not weapons and are not equipped with any weapons. But we go further, and propose not merely

a presence but a permanent presence of groups of inspectors at all space launch sites. Information about each upcoming launch, including the location of the site, the type of launch vehicle, general information about the object to be launched and the time of launch would be given in advance to representatives of the inspectorate.

What doubts can there be about the sincerity of verification proposals made by a Power which is very actively involved in launching space objects?

All States engaged in space activities would be placed in an absolutely equal position, and permanent monitoring by inspectors would guarantee the reliability of verification. After all, a space launch complex is something that cannot be hidden. In this case the technology itself ensures relatively simple and effective verification. Furthermore, our proposal provides for the right to conduct an on-site inspection should suspicion arise that a launch was carried out from an undeclared launch site.

And, in the event of a total ban on space strike arms, the Soviet Union would be willing to extend inspections to storage facilities, industrial plants, laboratories, testing centres, etc.

If a State has no intention of putting weapons in space, there can be no reason for it to object to international inspections of its space activities.

Space is a common asset of all mankind. It is much more than a training ground for military technocrats who cast away traditional humanistic ideals. It is a sphere for the peaceful application of peaceful efforts. It is this vision of outer space that the Soviet Union intends to pursue most vigorously.

Reflections about space inevitably lead one to think about the distances that humanity has to travel in order to reach its cherished goals. Some of those distances have yet to be covered from beginning to end, others have been covered half of the way, and there are still others where the end of the road is already in sight.