

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

Further tasks await us in the days ahead: the resumption of consultations concerning the establishment of subsidiary bodies in relation to other items on our agenda and the definition of their terms of reference. Among those items, there is one to which the French Government attaches major importance, namely, the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The French delegation, acting on instructions from its Government, would like today to set out France's views on this matter. It has already referred on several occasions to the problems of the military use of space and last year devoted a working paper, CD/375, dated 14 April 1983, to the subject.

The French delegation has also taken note with the greatest interest of the positions and ideas expressed by other delegations. It remarks the importance and interest which the international community now attaches to this question.

I should now like to explain:

Why my Government feels it necessary to set out today, on the occasion of the resumption of our session, its over-all position on these problems;

What are its concerns in connection both with the aspects relating to the deployment of anti-satellite systems and with the prospects of the development of anti-missile defense systems.

France is worried about the new turn, whether as regards anti-missile systems or as regards anti-satellite devices; that competition for the military use of space is likely to take. Anti-missile systems and anti-satellite devices alike eventually entail serious risks of destabilization because of the scope of the efforts that the USSR or the United States have undertaken or are preparing to undertake. Such a development would naturally have direct implications for France, for her security and for that of Europe. It would also affect the balance of East-West relations and international security. It is therefore of relevance to the entire international community, if only because of its impact upon the prospects for co-operation in developing the peaceful uses of outer space to which France remains deeply attached.

International opinion is justifiably disturbed at such developments, which seem to introduce a new and dangerous dimension into the arms race. It is important to assert that they do not constitute the only possible outcome in this respect and that there is an alternative in the form of negotiations with a view to specific and verifiable results.

If we have chosen to take a stand today in order to express as clearly as possible the conclusions we have reached, it is because there is a consensus that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate multilateral forum. Such an approach naturally does not preclude direct contacts between the United States and the USSR. At the recent ministerial session of the Atlantic Alliance, on 31 May last, France,