

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Allow me at the very beginning of my statement to express my thanks to the Government of Canada for organizing an outer space workshop in Montreal in May. As a participant in that workshop, I would like to stress that it was a lively and very useful gathering which again drew attention to the necessity to prevent an arms race in outer space, to achieve relevant agreements and to ensure their effective verification. Especially as far as verification is concerned, the workshop proved that there are ways to explore how it could be done. New ideas were brought out and the exchange of views was sincere and valuable. Our thanks and appreciation go also to Ambassador Beesley of Canada, who was the master-mind of the workshop and served as leader of our deliberations there with the famous Beesley approach, his skill at getting everyone to speak his mind openly.

In fact, it is my intention to start my statement today with the problem of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Czechoslovakia's approach to the military aspects of activities in outer space proceeds from the military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which was published after the Berlin meeting of its Political Consultative Committee on 28 and 29 May 1987. This military doctrine is strictly defensive in nature. In full conformity with this defensive nature, the military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty calls simultaneously for the gradual reduction and final elimination of nuclear weapons and for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

That goal, on which there seems to be general consensus, is becoming more urgent with each passing day, more acute with each specific step towards the direct militarization of outer space. But the consensus is still not quite general, since some States continue to act in accordance with the words of former United States President L.B. Johnson "A State with clear superiority in space science and technology will have enormous superiority at the politico-military negotiations over the States without results in that field."

Realizing that outer space is now widely used for communication, navigation, observation and early warning activities, we nevertheless consider that there is one important circumstance which makes it possible to prevent outer space from being completely militarized in the true sense of the word. I mean the fact that to date, 30 years after the first man-made satellite was launched into outer space, no weapons have been placed in orbit. No matter whether it is a result of the existing treaties concerning outer space, or an effect of the insufficient stage of development of the relevant military technology, this state of affairs is highly favourable and worth preserving.