

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

treaty designed to prevent, in a comprehensive manner, the arms race in space. (h) The instrument or instruments that will be agreed will naturally have to provide for the necessary verification procedures and machinery to guarantee strict observance of and proper compliance with its provisions.

I should now like to refer to some ideas and views expressed during the discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space which we do not wish to pass over in silence.

During the discussions on the legal instruments relating to the item, we heard the view expressed that the existing legal order is more than adequate to take care of current and future challenges raised by arms control in outer space. According to that opinion, there is no need to negotiate new agreements in this field and what is required is greater participation in the existing treaties and greater compliance with the existing legal régime. I think that the reasoning set forth above is sufficient to demonstrate that our delegation does not share this view.

Yet another view expressed in the Committee is that the United Nations Charter and, more specifically, its Article 51, enshrining the principle of self-defence, authorizes the use of space weapons for defensive purposes. This line of reasoning combined with the broad interpretation that is attempted of a certain bilateral treaty, would seem designed to seek support in the United Nations Charter for building up a legal justification for the possession of defensive systems based on the use of space weapons.

The meaning and scope of Article 51 of the Charter are perfectly clear. Self-defence is conceived as a recourse, as a reaction to armed aggression. Self-defence is accepted as a means to repel aggression. To try and justify the development of defensive space weapons on the grounds that the Charter authorizes the use of these weapons for the purposes of self-defence is somewhat exaggerated, to say the least.

Another view expressed during the work of the Ad Hoc Committee is that as bilateral negotiations are currently proceeding between the two main space Powers, the work of the Conference should be confined to negotiating agreement on confidence-building measures in connection with existing agreements. I think that it is not superfluous to stress the idea, now generally accepted, that bilateral and multilateral negotiations are complementary and can in no way restrict, interfere with or hinder one another. As I said above, we believe that nothing prevents the Conference, at the same time as it makes progress on the substance of item 5, consisting in preventing an arms race in space weapons in all its manifestations, from also encouraging the adoption of measures likely to contribute to creating a favourable climate for the achievement of its main objectives. We do not believe, however, that the role of the Conference can be confined, as has been suggested, to dictating a space "highway code" or designing signs and signals designed to regulate traffic in space.

In conclusion, we wish to express our hope that during its 1987 session the Conference on Disarmament will without delay tackle its substantive task on agenda item 5 and at the outset re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee to carry forward work on this important issue. In this connection, it is worth