

(Mr. Dubey, India)

Finally, the basic motives which will lead the super-Powers or other technologically advanced nations to develop the new weapon systems and the attitude that the possession of these systems would foster, will be antithetical to the objective of the establishment of a new international economic or political order. The whole attitude behind such an arms race is that of gaining absolute power and dominance irrespective of the price that is to be paid for it. Such an attitude militates against the spirit of co-operation for equity, justice and fair play. This will change the very character of the North-South dialogue and other global negotiations.

Considering the colossal resource implications of these weapon systems, their competitive developments might very well shatter the very foundations of the world economy. No type of weapons and no field of their application will be as resources-consuming as the development and deployment of weapons in outer space. The estimates for the development of a complete new ABM system by one super-Power vary from 120 to 500 billion dollars. The current world economic problems will be greatly multiplied and aggravated if the massive resources required for the development of the new space weapon systems are to be mobilized. Moreover, the diversion of skilled manpower and material resources involved in the process would have a crippling effect on activities in the social and economic sectors. This may very well result in a setback for the recovery process, a continued stagnation of the economies of the advanced countries, or at best their just limping forward during the remaining part of this century. The impact of these developments on the already beleaguered economies of developing countries would indeed be devastating. Such a bleak economic prospect may frustrate the very purpose — gaining a position of absolute dominance and hegemony — for the attainment of which these weapons are being developed.

In an article in "Le Monde" of 27 March 1984, the French journalist Michel Tatu has quoted Mr. Keyworth, Scientific Adviser to the White House and a supporter of the new ABM system, as having said: "It is difficult to have stability under conditions of parity". From there to say that the programme for developing ABM system will permit the establishment of a superiority is but a small step. On the other hand, when an exhortation for developing the new weapons system was given at the highest level by the United States Government early last year, the response of the USSR, again at the highest level, was: "All attempts at achieving military superiority over the USSR are futile. The Soviet Union will never allow them to succeed". The net result is going to be, as in the case of the nuclear-arms race, neither superiority nor parity, but a new level of escalation of the arms race, both in outer space and on Earth, with all the grave implications which I have tried to outline.

A key question before this Conference is: Are these weapons verifiable, and if not, is it feasible to ban them? The expert opinion on whether the control or elimination of these weapon systems is verifiable or not is by no means unanimous. For example, the National Council of the Federation of American Scientists has stated in its November 1983 report that "further deployment and testing of USSR's ASAT system will be easily verifiable. If there is a verification problem, it is with the far more sophisticated United States system".