

(Mr. Teja, India)

thereby precipitating unrestrained competition and, in the process, unravelling the entire web of bilateral and multilateral arrangements, increasing the likelihood of a nuclear war, not to speak of the enormous resources deployed in this area.

The debate between offensive and defensive weapons is an old and unresolved one. I would not like to enter into a discussion of the technical possibilities and/or limitations of the ballistic missile defense systems currently being researched. It would be sufficient to note that extending the arms race into outer space will not lead us from mutually assured destruction to mutually assured survival; the only logical means to achieve that is nuclear disarmament.

The non-aligned and neutral countries have been sceptical of such theories and exposed the dangers of basing doctrines of security on the so-called logic of nuclear deterrence. We have consistently taken the position that the development of space-based weapons and arms race in outer space must be prevented. The Six-Nation Initiative has placed particular emphasis on this issue. The Delhi Declaration calls for the prohibition of the development, testing, production, deployment and use of all space weapons. The Harare Declaration adopted at the eighth non-aligned summit calls upon "the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations urgently to conclude an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent the extension of arms race in all its aspects into outer space and thus enhance the prospects of co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space." In particular, the leaders of the non-aligned countries stressed the urgency of "halting the development of anti-satellite weapons, the dismantling of the existing systems, the prohibition of the introduction of new weapon systems into outer space in order to ensure that the existing treaties safeguarding the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems are fully honoured, strengthened and extended as necessary in the light of recent technological advances". It is clear that, once the fragile web of existing arms control arrangements begins to be unravelled and these treaties are violated, it will become progressively more difficult to undertake any constructive disarmament negotiations.

The reasoning that there does not exist a specific agreement prohibiting the introduction of a ballistic defence missile system is, in our view, no justification; the fact remains that there does exist a corpus of international law, adequate and coherent, though not comprehensive, which, if interpreted in accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties, cannot only prevent an arms race in outer space but also indicate the areas which require strengthening in the form of additional legal instruments to provide for a comprehensive legally-binding structure. At present, the law in relation to arms relations in outer space consists of treaty provisions. These treaties are both bilateral and multilateral, the most significant among them being the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and the bilateral ABM Treaty of 1972. The two have to be viewed against the backdrop of other agreements. Until recently there has been uniform compliance in keeping with the ultimate objective but, of late, differences of interpretation have arisen. These differences can be reconciled if we acknowledge that impartial interpretation is based upon compliance with treaty obligations in good faith.