

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

My delegation sees merit in the link which the Soviet disarmament programme establishes between substantial reductions of offensive nuclear weapons and a commitment not to develop, test or deploy space-based weapons. The traditional strategic doctrine of nuclear deterrence is based on offence. If it is now going to be based on defence or on a mix of offence and defence, the results will be highly destabilizing. An operational and effective ballistic-missile defence system could make possible a nuclear first strike by a side possessing a defensive screen which could then be used to protect the attacker from the feeble retaliation of its adversary. The super-Power confronted with a comprehensive ballistic-missile defence would, in all likelihood, be driven into multiplying its own strategic offensive weapons with a view to acquiring the capacity to overwhelm the defences of its opponent and thereby ensure the credibility of its strategic deterrence. A concurrent option for it would be to erect a similar defensive screen. It is, in the circumstances, not difficult to conclude that an offence-defence mix would in fact take the arms race, in both offensive and defensive weapons, to higher and more dangerous levels, thus further jeopardizing the chances of arriving at arms limitation agreements. Comprehensive ballistic-missile defences, whether ground- or space-based, would equally undercut the basic rationale of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which places reliance for strategic stability on offensive weapons and discards the defence option as destabilizing.

CD/PV.337

28

(The President)

The 337th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. In connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies, delegations will recall that during our consultations we recognized that, simply with a view to facilitating our consultations, we could view the required subsidiary bodies as falling into two groups.

The first would be in relation to the agenda items on which proposals had been made but on which further consultations would be required. The second would relate to agenda items on which the Conference had taken decisions or made recommendations with regard to the conduct of its work in subsidiary bodies in 1986. I would now propose to discuss with the Conference this first group of agenda items and then, thereafter, to seek decisions from the Conference on the second group of items. This procedure reflects the consultations which have been held and our assessment of how we can best achieve progress in our work.

First, the agenda items on which further intensive consultations are required: item 1, Nuclear test ban; item 2, Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; item 3, Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space; item 6, Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and item 7, New types of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons. In respect to each of those agenda items, the Conference has been