

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

The Yugoslav delegation has repeatedly pointed out that the prevention of an arms race in outer space has acquired particular urgency. Today we are even more confirmed in our conviction that urgent steps are needed to prevent the process of militarization of outer space from assuming irreversible proportions. The contribution that could be made by the Conference in the consideration of this question through an ad hoc committee, which should be set up as early as possible, is both timely and indispensable. The first task, however, should be to discontinue immediately any existing plans and programmes to militarize outer space. Instead of carrying on discussion on who might or might not be in possession of sophisticated weapons systems in outer space, it is indispensable for the respective Governments to announce publicly and as soon as possible their political decisions not to develop such systems and to assume, as a first step, the obligation not to use the existing ones, if any, under any conditions. A second urgent step immediately following the above decision would be the negotiation and adoption of a verifiable agreement between the Governments concerned on the dismantling or removal of such systems. No protracted negotiations are necessary to achieve the foregoing because what is at stake are the political decisions of Governments to put an immediate stop to the new arms race in outer space, with its unforeseeable consequences for humanity. After this indispensable initial step, the Conference, as an appropriate forum, could undertake the preparation of adequate instruments.