

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The question of preventing an arms race in outer space is one in which the relationship between bilateral negotiations between the two Great Powers and our work within this Conference is most sharply focused. Australia wants to see agreements concluded which will ensure that there is no arms race in space. We acknowledge the particular interest and responsibility of the two Great Powers in this context, but we are certain that the global nature of the problem involved and the need for all States to be engaged in this great objective means, assuredly, that the Conference on Disarmament has a role to play.

If the Conference does not become actively engaged in the issue of preventing an arms race in space, the prospect of viable agreements being reached will be diminished. This in turn may effect the possibility of bilateral agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union being arrived at.

My delegation will work positively with others in seeking to establish a subsidiary body of the Conference, with a relevant programme of work, which will engage the multilateral community in fostering agreements to ensure that there is no arms confrontation, no arms race in space. We must take care in this work to ensure that, while it proceeds, stability in the strategic balance is maintained. We have no doubt that if that balance were to be disturbed, the possibility of reaching the agreements that we all want with regard to outer space, would be greatly threatened; and, specifically, it will be important for us to recognize in our work on space the important contribution which reconnaissance, early warning and communications satellites make to strategic stability.