

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany):

While the Committee on Disarmament is an autonomous international forum, the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly has, of course, an important bearing upon the work of this session. Apart from other relevant results the General Assembly, in one important new field, namely, measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, has given this Committee a new and significant assignment which my delegation is looking forward to debating at an early point as a follow-up to resolution 36/97 C, of which my country was a sponsor.

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(Mr. Okawa, Japan)

In accordance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly last year, this year the Committee on Disarmament is also to consider further measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. My Government has a deep interest in this question and my delegation hopes to be able to make a positive contribution to our discussions on this item.

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(Mr. Rostow, United States)

At the last session of the General Assembly, the question of controlling arms in outer space was the subject of a lively debate which resulted in the adoption of two resolutions, both of which put the problem on the agenda of this Committee. The United States believes that this was an appropriate step. This is a difficult, complex issue that cannot be separated from broader arms control issues. Because of the magnitude of the problems involved, we must not expect immediate progress in this area. The problem is one that must be approached with extreme care. The ramifications are legion; so are the pitfalls. Too quick a plunge without adequate prior reflection could be fatal to our objective of achieving a stable environment in outer space. At this stage, the United States is prepared to discuss the issue in an informal and general way at informal meetings of the Committee where various points of view and proposals could be thoroughly vetted before any further steps are taken.