

(Mr. Dubey, India)

We do not believe that the space weapons would be only defensive, just as we do not believe that the existing nuclear weapons are weapons of deterrence. Just as we do not find any difference between the nuclear deterrent and a nuclear-war-fighting ability, similarly we fail to see how the so-called strategic defence is going to be any different from the present offensive strategy based on the massive accumulation of nuclear arsenals. Just as the illusion of the nuclear deterrence has thus far led to the escalation of nuclear-weapon stockpiles, the pursuit of new space-weapon systems will also result in a new phase of the arms race both in space and on Earth. It is bad enough for mankind to have been brought to the precipice of a nuclear holocaust on account of the mad pursuit of the chimera of deterrence. To combine this with the quest for a strategic defence makes an already complicated situation infinitely more complex, if not intractable. We oppose the new space-weapon system because it is based on a security doctrine which we do not subscribe to and which we regard as the principal factor responsible for the nuclear arms race. We oppose these weapons on the same ground as we oppose the use of nuclear weapons as an instrument of warfare. There are already enough nuclear weapons on earth to destroy it many times over. Let us try to reduce them instead of adding to them in pursuit of such dangerous and dubious objectives as the bolstering of deterrence or achieving parity or superiority.

It should, therefore, be no surprise to anyone if non-aligned and neutral countries do not see great relevance in the debate about the workability of the "star wars" plan. We would expressly wish that the Conference on Disarmament avoid this trap. Our objective assessment is -- and for coming to such an objective assessment no research seems necessary -- that all attempts to render nations defensible from nuclear attacks by building a new weapons system are bound to fail and that such an attempt will only succeed in accelerating the arms race in offensive nuclear weapons. The problem is not whether this or that weapon is technologically feasible, but rather the clear technological inevitability of countermeasures. The implications of the new chain of action-reaction which the "star wars" plan will set in motion are exceedingly grave not only for the countries whose protection is being promised but also for the developing world, which will remain outside the pale of this protection of dubious feasibility or validity.

The advocates of the new weapons system have claimed that it would provide an incentive for concluding an arms control agreement between the super-Powers. To expect the new weapons system to achieve arms control presupposes a degree of understanding between the super-Powers which is, alas, a rare commodity today. If there is such an understanding at all, then why should they go in at all for acquiring the new ABM system and why should they not instead agree to a mutual reduction of the existing nuclear arsenals? The most likely scenario, unfortunately, is that the present mutual distrust will continue. As a matter of fact, the very decision to develop a new ABM system is directly related to the prevailing distrust. The "star wars" plan itself has the clear effect of eroding confidence. There is hardly any prospect for an agreement on arms control or disarmament in a "star wars" environment. In my statement last year I spoke about how the strategic defence option would lead to the total or ultimate arms race, thereby making disarmament impossible. The validity of this argument is