

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

Many of those questions were answered in principle in the statement by the USSR Minister for Foreign Affairs, E.A. Shevardnadze, on 6 August. Today, the Soviet delegation would like to make some further clarifications.

The Soviet Union is proposing that a start should be made on establishing a verification system right away, without waiting for the conclusion of the corresponding agreement on space, so that the system can be operational as soon as possible. The principal purpose of such verification would be to determine that objects launched into space were not weapons and were not equipped with weapons of any kind. The concrete list of the systems and devices that the verification bodies should not allow to be launched into space would have to be agreed upon in the course of negotiations. The intention is that the verification system could be refined if an international agreement or agreements are drawn up.

We are convinced that on-site inspection immediately before launch is the simplest and most effective way of making sure that objects launched into space are not equipped with weapons of any kind. The distinguished Ambassador of Argentina, Mr. Cámpora, also talked about this point in his statement on 21 July. Such inspection might begin not long before the object to be launched into space is installed on the carrier rocket or other launch vehicle. However, should the future agreement provide for a complete ban on space strike weapons, the Soviet Union would, as Minister Shevardnadze stated, be "willing to extend inspections to storage facilities, industrial plants, laboratories, testing centres, etc." The verification system we propose would provide for groups of inspectors to be present permanently at all sites for the launching of space objects with a view to verifying all such objects irrespective of their means of launching. In addition, representatives of the secretariat would be given in good time information on each upcoming launch, including the site, the type of launch vehicle, general information about the object to be launched and the time of the launch. In cases where launches were infrequent, use could be made of inspections on the basis of prior notifications of the launches, instead of permanently stationing inspectors at the launch sites. Should an undeclared launch be suspected, the inspectorate would have the right to request the relevant information from specially designated observatories, a list of which would be compiled by the time the verification system became operational, and also to make, if necessary, a special on-site inspection if the launch could have been made from an undeclared launching site.

What is meant here is, of course, the verification of the non-stationing in space of weapons of any kind, and not the verification of launches of ballistic missiles unconnected with the placing of any devices in an orbit for an artificial Earth satellite or on a flight path towards other celestial bodies.

Although we view an international inspectorate as the principal element of a possible verification system, this does not preclude the possibility of establishing other structures, for example, means of tracking space objects, within the framework of the inspectorate.