

I would like to be understood correctly. We oppose the spread of the arms race into outer space so strongly not because we cannot respond to these plans on the part of Washington. If we must, we shall do everything, as more than once in the past, to protect our safety and the security of our allies and friends.

However, we must not deceive ourselves: the militarization of outer space would put an end to the permanent Soviet-American agreement on the limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems, as well as many other international agreements in force at the moment. The militarization of outer space would not only signify in fact the end of the process of limiting and reducing nuclear weapons but would trigger off an uncontrolled arms race in all its aspects.

Question: Many American officials have recently stated that the new talks will be difficult and will not lead to rapid agreements. Do you share this point of view? What in your opinion may be the most serious obstacle to a successful outcome for these negotiations?

Answer: Yes, we are aware that statements of this kind have been made in the United States by, among others, officials participating in preparations for the negotiations. These negotiations have not yet begun, and already there is talk of insurmountable difficulties, the public is being prepared in advance for years of fruitless discussions and there are calls not to be "hypnotized" by Geneva but to carry on rapidly expanding nuclear arsenals and developing space programmes. There may also be some talk about the possibility of reaching some agreement, but only of course with regard to individual aspects of nuclear weapons of advantage to the United States, with the question of outer space to be postponed indefinitely.

I would not like to give the impression, however, that we in the Soviet Union think that the coming negotiations will be easy. We look at things realistically and we can see all the difficulties that exist. And these difficulties are not inconsiderable.

However, they can be overcome. For this to happen, both sides must demonstrate good will, a readiness to reach reasonable compromises and strict respect for the principle of equality and equal security.

And, of course, no steps must be taken that hinder constructive negotiations or run counter to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space and halting the arms race on Earth.

We must think along different lines, namely about how to create a favourable atmosphere for negotiations. There is a real possibility that this can be achieved.

Negotiations, and the attainment of our common objective, namely the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons, would surely be facilitated if the United States followed the example of the Soviet Union and undertook not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Freezing nuclear arsenals and totally prohibiting all nuclear weapons tests would put a powerful brake on the nuclear arms race and thus also help the negotiations.