

(Mr. Lidgard, Sweden)

However, outer space is a common province of mankind and its use or abuse is therefore a matter that concerns all countries. Even if the Superpowers have a clear technological lead, an increasing number of other countries will gradually be in a position to make use of outer space. It is also for this reason natural that the prohibition of an arms race in this domain should become the subject of multilateral negotiations.

It should be noted in this connection that satellites can make a very useful contribution in the disarmament field by providing the means for non-intrusive verification and surveillance. It is a well-known fact that surveillance by satellites has been tacitly accepted as a means of verification in the SALT context. Similar ideas are the basis for the timely and valuable French initiative on the establishment of an international satellite monitoring agency. This initiative is all the more valuable and forward-looking in that it envisages a multilateral body which would play a crucial role in international verification, since it is unlikely that the verification techniques which are available to a small fraction of the countries of the world would achieve universal acceptance.

Our immediate concern, however, is, in accordance with the wording of item 7 of our agenda, how an arms race in outer space should be prevented. For a number of reasons, it is extremely difficult to define at the outset in exact terms the scope of limitations and prohibitions one should aim at in order to achieve an effective prohibition that would prevent undesirable developments without hampering legitimate activities in outer space. One problem is that some space systems have both military and civilian applications. Another is that some military systems may primarily have stabilizing effects and others may have destabilizing effects.

A fundamental question will be to consider whether efforts should concentrate on banning or limiting various weapons systems in space or on banning or restricting certain activities or actions which would constitute interference with or an attack against space objects. Perhaps a combination of both approaches is called for.

It seems appropriate initially to determine the extent to which existing provisions in treaties such as the 1963 Outer Space Treaty and the 1972 ABM Treaty and its subsequent Protocol need to be completed in order to cover existing and expected developments in outer space warfare.

As a matter of principle, it must be agreed at an early stage whether a prohibition should cover all military satellites or concentrate on those space systems which are primarily and increasingly integral parts of terrestrial warfare systems.

Another matter of principal importance is the extent to which it would be possible and desirable to limit research on and the development, testing and production of military space systems.

A third issue which must be dealt with initially is whether one should aim at a comprehensive convention or apply a step-by-step approach. If the latter alternative is chosen, it would seem appropriate to establish a list of priorities according to which the most threatening developments would be subject to negotiations first. It is, for example, quite conceivable that the problem of anti-satellite warfare should be addressed at a very early stage. This question also comprises complicated problems of definition, as so pertinently illustrated by the distinguished representative of Italy last Tuesday.