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separated from general progress on our planet. The use of outer space in connection with communications, meteorology, navigation, the study of the earth's natural resources and for other purposes is of the greatest value to mankind.

Unfortunately it has to be admitted that outer space is becoming not merely an area for the peaceful efforts of different countries through its exploration and use, but also the arena of an ever-growing military confrontation.

Reflecting the concern of the world community in connection with the danger which the militarization of outer space represents for the whole of mankind, the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session adopted a resolution calling for the conclusion of an appropriate international treaty to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space and requesting the Committee on Disarmament to initiate negotiations with a view to agreement on the text of such treaty.

The outer space problem occupies a special place in the spectrum of disarmament issues. What is most important here is the prevention of a new and even more dangerous spiralling of the arms race in another sphere of vital interest to the whole of mankind. In this connection the implementation of the numerous projects which have appeared in recent years for the creation of a whole series of space weapons designed to carry out strikes on targets in outer space, in the atmosphere and on the surface of the earth would be especially dangerous. Among them the most threatening are the projects the implementation of which might upset the strategic balance that exists in the world and thus increase the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war. Foremost of these are the plans for the deployment in outer space of anti-missile systems, based, in particular, on the use of the latest scientific and technical advances in the field of laser and accelerating technology. In the opinion of an authoritative committee of the American Senate, the deployment of laser and so-called "particle-beam" weapons in outer space will provide "the unique potential for changing the strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union".

No less dangerous are the plans for the creation of multiple-use manned spacecraft, capable also of carrying out purely military tasks such as the placing in orbit of reconnaissance, communication, navigation and other satellites for military purposes, and also the testing of new types of outer space weapons and the inspection and destruction of satellites.

It would be a dangerous error, distinguished colleagues, to suppose that if weapons make their appearance in outer space, then the latter will be the sole firing ground and "battlefield", in the spirit of science fiction.

The essentially "earth" character of the outer space armaments under development is evident. This would still further increase the danger of a nuclear conflict, with all its frightful consequences for the whole of mankind, particularly as military space programmes are accompanied by the promulgation of doctrines and concepts proclaiming the admissibility and acceptability of nuclear war. the permissibility of the use of nuclear weapons.

There is another aspect to this matter. It is difficult to imagine how much it would cost to create even a small potential for the conduct of military operations in the area of space close to the earth. According to the estimates of experts, the cost of launching a weapons system into orbit is several times greater than the cost of deploying it on the earth's surface. And all this is taking place when, over a considerable part of our planet, people lack the barest essentials for a normal existence.