

(Mr. Dubey, India)

consequence because of our belief that nuclear deterrence provides no stability at all and that, on the other hand, much to the contrary, by virtue of being the principal justification of the nuclear-arms race, it has already created a situation of extreme instability. The use of the word "stability" in the current inherently unstable situation is a cruel joke. Can one really think of security or stability in the presence of the massive and ever-mounting accumulation of nuclear weapons?

There is also a concern about the development of these new weapon systems resulting in a decoupling of the security of the alliance partners and rendering impotent and obsolete the nuclear deterrence systems of the nuclear-weapon Powers among these nations. It is also feared that no ABM protection will be able to save Europe — either Eastern or Western countries — from the devastations of a nuclear war with low flying Cruise missiles, short-range missiles, tactical nuclear weapons dropped from aircraft or used as artillery munition. In response to these concerns, assurances have been given in recent weeks that the new weapons system will be so designed as to deal not only with intercontinental missiles, but also with tactical missiles and other nuclear or conventional missiles which might be used in the European theatre.

There are, however, more serious implications of the development of these weapons which are less talked about. If the present trend is not reversed and the development of these weapons is not banned, by far the gravest consequence will be "total armament", culminating in a "total" nuclear holocaust. There is no justification for the claim that the possession of ABM system by the two super-Powers will make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. These weapon systems will make the world more dangerous than any weapon has hitherto done.

For it is just not true that these weapons are merely defensive. The fact is that they can neither remain merely defensive nor fully defend. In this context, the use of the term "Star Wars" in relation to the development of beam weapons is dangerously misleading. This term erroneously underlines the exotic nature of these weapons and seeks to convey a sense of remoteness about the impact of these weapons. The fact is that what happens in outer space is intimately connected with our fate on Earth. The use of the new ABM weapon system would not trigger a Stellar War, light years away from our planet, but a war on this very good Earth. In fact, even with the present-day technology, it would be only a matter of hours before a war in outer space would turn into a holocaust on Earth.

These so-called defensive weapons will, at the same time, be offensive, or weapons of first strike. This is clear from the fact that laser and particle beams can not only intercept and destroy missiles in flight, but also have the potentiality of destroying them in their silos. There is absolutely no guarantee that these dual-purpose weapons will remain only defensive.

Moreover, these weapon systems will open the floodgates of unprecedented and potentially uncontrollable arms race both in the outer space and on Earth. The development and deployment of an ABM system by one super-Power would naturally be sought to be matched by the other super-Power. Even the other