

(Mr. Dubey, India)

field can be regarded as polemical or an attempt to mislead anyone. On the contrary, we wish that all States would join in this effort, for we believe that the interest of all States will be served through the implementation of the recommendation of the General Assembly as contained in resolution 39/59.

In this context, we would like to make it absolutely clear that, as far as the arms race in outer space is concerned, the overriding question for us is not whether we are taking sides politically with one or the other military alliance. Neither in our fervent support for the negotiation of new agreements, nor in our strong opposition to the on-going plans for the introduction of new space-weapon systems are we guided by any consideration other than that of preventing the introduction of an entirely new dimension into the nuclear arms race. As our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, said in a television interview in June: "When we criticize 'star wars' and the SDI, it is equal for everyone, it is not just for the USA. We criticize it if the Europeans are doing it or if the Soviet Union is doing it or if anybody else is doing it". To turn the issue of the prevention of the arms race into outer space, which is a disarmament issue, into an issue of East-West politics, is nothing but an attempt to silence the critics of these weapons systems and to divert attention from the main issue.

In the entire debate on "star wars" which has gone on in the developed countries for the past two-three years, there is hardly any reference to the concerns of the non-aligned and developing countries. Both the protagonists and opponents of this weapons system have debated the issue essentially from the point of view of the security interest of the East and the West and East-West conflict. This is, of course, characteristic of the basic world-view of most of the countries of the North according to which the concerns and interests of the nations of the South are regarded as inconsequential and hence not worthy of being taken into account in the formulation of their major policy decisions. This is particularly so when it involves the development of new weapon systems, be that nuclear weapons or outer-space weapons. These weapons have been developed in utter disregard of the overwhelming body of world public opinion and derive from an obsession with the security interest of the nuclear-weapon States and their allies to the exclusion of, and, indeed, at the cost of the security and other interests of the majority of mankind.

We are aware of the set of shifting -- and sometimes even contradictory -- objectives advanced by the advocates of the strategic defence to be pursued under the "star wars" plan. These have included complete protection of population; the protection of nuclear weapons only; giving up nuclear deterrence, which is now being admitted as being based on an error, and making nuclear weapons impotent; bolstering deterrence by providing it with a defensive arm; and using the outer-space weapons as a lever for getting concessions in the present talks between the super-Powers. For us, irrespective of the objectives to be pursued, the consequences of the development and deployment of space weapons are fraught with grave dangers. The question is not whether the space weapons would enable the super-Powers or their allies to liberate themselves once and for all from the shackles of deterrence or to further strengthen deterrence. The question is what the arms race in outer space is going to do to the on-going nuclear arms race, to the imminent threat of nuclear war and to the independence and sovereignty of the non-aligned States.