

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

The Conference on Disarmament's work was also carried forward during 1986 on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Useful consideration of relevant issues, begun last year, did continue. But because of protracted delays in reaching agreement on a mandate, and then on a programme of work consistent with that mandate, the limited time available meant that this work did not get very far. The United States will carefully review the results of the Committee's work prior to next year's session. However, our initial evaluation suggests that the mandate under which the Committee is operating is far from being exhausted.

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(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

In response to the calls of an important and influential part of the world community of States among which particular importance attaches to the Mexico Declaration, the Soviet Union took an extremely important and crucial decision to extend its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing until 1 January 1987. In accordance with its instructions, the Soviet delegation would today like to acquaint the members of the Conference with Mr. Gorbachev's reply, dated 23 August, to the message from the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania.

Mr. Gorbachev's reply deals, in addition to the problem of ending nuclear tests with another very important question raised at Ixtapa -- the arms race in space.

"It is clear from the Mexico Declaration adopted by you", the Soviet leader writes, "that you and we have the same approach to the serious consequences which would ensue if outer space were to become a new arena for the arms race. Like you, we are convinced that space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, in the interests of all mankind. This is the basis for our recent initiative calling for the development of international co-operation in averting an arms race in space and promoting its peaceful use. At the Soviet-United States talks on nuclear and space weapons we have tabled specific proposals aimed at ensuring that outer space does not become an arena of military rivalry".

At the end of his reply, Mr. Gorbachev states:

"You also deal in the Mexico Declaration with the question of another Soviet-United States summit. The Soviet Union is in favour of such a meeting. However, this new meeting should promote the normalization of relations between the USSR and the United States, improvement of the international situation and more rapid progress in the arms reduction talks. We would be prepared at such a meeting, for example, to sign an agreement banning nuclear tests. In brief, a meeting of the Soviet and United States leaders should be genuinely meaningful. This was the thrust of the understanding reached by the leaders of the two countries in Geneva.

"I should like to express my conviction that our joint efforts to curb the arms race and halt nuclear-weapon tests will eventually be translated into concrete measures that will lead to the attainment of that important goal."