

(Mr. Kerroum, Algeria)

Our hopes are reassured by the assertion contained in the Joint Statement issued after the recent Geneva Summit in which the Major Powers declare that "they will not seek to achieve military superiority". The declaration seems to us to be of fundamental importance and scope if it really reflects the heart-felt intention and the genuine disposition of the two Major Powers. To give up the notion of military superiority necessarily means establishing a modicum of trust. It is the absence of this modicum of trust, and the real or assumed intentions mutually attributed to each other by the two parties as a result, which have fuelled the arms race by making particularly precarious and unstable a balance which could be destroyed at any moment. According to this logic, it is inevitable that any agreement of any kind can only be a temporary measure, a breathing-space inevitably followed by the resumption of the arms race.

On the contrary, the establishment of a modicum of trust rests on the stability of a balance at gradually but steadily lower levels, as the concrete expression of the cessation and reversal of the arms race.

The consequences which may be drawn from the fact that the achievement of military superiority has been renounced are obvious.

First of all, the idea of the militarization of space would no longer have any sense since it is at odds with a process of arms reduction in anticipating a more sophisticated and rapid development of new measures and countermeasures in the military sphere. It is therefore high time for our Conference to resume consideration of this issue and to undertake substantive work with a view to reaching an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space and set the seal on its continued existence as the common heritage of mankind.

This is unquestionably the international community's desire, once more embodied in resolution 40/87 which was adopted unopposed at the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Secondly, a preliminary condition to the cessation and reversal of the arms race is that a stop should be put to the constantly increasing sophistication of nuclear weapons and consequently to the nuclear testing which is the main means to this end. For more than a quarter of a century the international community has perseveringly pursued the objective of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The renunciation of the search for military superiority places this objective within our grasp. The Soviet moratorium on nuclear tests is an additional encouragement to overcoming the problem of verification and the procedural obstacles and to seizing the opportunity thus offered to respond to the expectation of the nations and make a rapid start on specific negotiations for the elaboration of a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test-ban treaty.