

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

possibility of their use. Consequently the implied non-use prohibitions in the Outer Space Treaty or for that matter the general constraints outlined in the United Nations Charter are incapable of preventing the unleashing of an arms race in outer space. We regret that the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space was not able this year to systematically identify the specific measures necessary to prevent such an arms race while research and development of space weapons continues apace. Through the perverse application of the consensus rule the Committee has not even been able to arrive at a consensus finding on the factual situation concerning the development of space weapons.

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(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

Today I should like to devote my statement to one of the high priority issues on our Conference's agenda, namely, the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to express a number of general comments thereon.

From the time of the practical research and exploration of outer space in the 1950s, the international community has devoted unwavering attention to the task of keeping it peaceful and free from weapons. It is thanks to this that over the past few decades a number of important measures, designed to prevent an arms race in outer space have been adopted.

However, today these measures have turned out to be inadequate to prevent the "star wars" science fiction from becoming reality in the not-too-distant future. I am referring to the implementation by the United States of a large-scale programme to militarize outer space, to the development of space strike weapons designed to neutralize the nuclear capability of the USSR as a deterrent factor.

In the nuclear space age, any attempt to change the existing level of the balance of nuclear capability of the opposing sides is fraught with unpredictable danger. Everybody must feel equally safe, and the acquisition of any unilateral advantage by anyone cannot be allowed.

This principle of equality and equal security, as a basis for efforts to limit and halt the arms race, is enshrined in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which says: "the adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage". This principle was reflected in the Soviet-American Joint Statement published as a result of the meeting between the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the United States President, Ronald Reagan, in November last year. The parties agreed that nuclear war should never be unleashed for it could not be won, that it is important to do everything to prevent war between the USSR and the United States, whether nuclear or conventional, and that they would not seek to achieve military superiority.