

Mr. CLARKE (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, it is both an honour and a responsibility to appear before you today, to discuss military activities in the last and greatest arena of human affairs. Although this meeting is concerned with the prevention of an arms race in outer space, prevention is only one aspect of the problem. As the mathematicians would say, it is necessary but not sufficient. I shall also discuss the positive uses of space technology for strengthening international security.

Before doing so, may I very briefly give my qualifications for addressing you. I became a member of the British Interplanetary Society in 1934, and was later its Chairman. In 1951 I presided over the first London meeting of the International Astronautical Federation and I have known most of the leading figures in the field. Only two months ago, I had the privilege of being hosted at "Star Village" by my friend Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov and his colleagues. I have written more than 30 books on space, and this month spoke at UNISPACE '82 as a member of the Sri Lanka delegation.

Back in 1945, as a Royal Air Force officer, I wrote the paper that outlined the principles of satellite communications. A few months later, my essay "The Rocket and the Future of Warfare" won first prize in a competition set by the Royal Air Force Quarterly. It has been a strange experience reading that paper again after almost 40 years, and I would like to quote the lines of Shelley with which the essay began:

"Cease! Drain not to its dregs the urn of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!"

Nevertheless, "bitter prophecy" is indeed what we are concerned with today. So first, I must request you — if you have not already done so — to read Jonathan Schell's book The Fate of the Earth, which is the most convincing account yet given of the realities of nuclear warfare. It should be required reading for every statesman.

And yet Carl Sagan has summed up the implications of this entire book in a single chilling sentence: "World War Two once a minute, for the length of a lazy summer afternoon."

One other reference: I hope that you can arrange to see the BBC's recent HORIZON science programme, "The Race to Ruin", which showed the first test of laser weapons on airborne targets and interviewed both American and Russian scientists on the possibilities of war in space.

This month at UNISPACE '82, there was some confusion as to precisely what is meant by the "militarization of space". There are very few of man's artefacts which cannot be equally well used for peaceful or warlike purposes; what matters is the intention. It is impossible to define a class of devices and say that "These must not be developed, because they can be employed offensively".