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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE — FINAL RECORDS (PV)

1986



PV

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT DIVISION OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA, CANADA

MARCH 1987

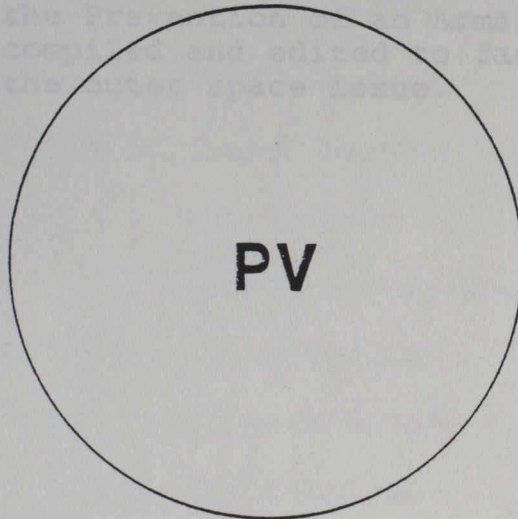
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PREFACE

This volume is a compilation of final records (PVs) of the Conference on Disarmament during its 1986 sessions relating to the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It has been compiled and edited to facilitate discussions and research on the outer space issue.



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ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT DIVISION OF
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OTTAWA, CANADA

MARCH 1987

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(The President)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is another urgent and complex issue and one that is on the agenda both of this Conference and the United States-USSR negotiations on nuclear and space arms. There is a compelling need and ample scope for this area to be a fruitful example of complementary work in the two forums. This Conference should establish an appropriate committee to identify and address the dimensions of the outer space issue that will maximize its contribution to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

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(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The resolution in question, resolution 40/87, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" is, with reason, somewhat lengthy. In the preamble, it reaffirms the wish of all States that the exploration and use of outer space should be for peaceful purposes, that they "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries" and that they "shall be the province of all mankind". It also reaffirms the provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, particularly those of articles III and IV, and those of paragraph 80 of the 1978 Final Document, in which it was stated that "in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit" of the Treaty I have just mentioned.

The General Assembly has also expressed its grave concern "at the danger posed to all mankind by an arms race in outer space and in particular by the impending threat of exacerbating the current state of insecurity by developments that could further undermine international peace and security" and create obstacles to "the peaceful uses of outer space".

As to the operative part of the resolution, it would seem useful fundamentally to emphasize the following:

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The call to all States, in particular those with major space capabilities "to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and to take immediate measures to prevent an arms race in outer space in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding".

The exhortation, addressed to the United States and the Soviet Union, urging them "seriously to pursue their bilateral negotiations in a constructive spirit aimed at reaching an early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space, and to advise the Conference on Disarmament regularly of the progress of their bilateral sessions so as to facilitate its work".

Thirdly, the call to all States, especially those with major space capabilities, "to refrain in their activities relating to outer space, from actions contrary to the observance of the relevant existing treaties or to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space".

Lastly, I have intentionally left the two quotations which I am now going to recall, from paragraphs 6 and 9 of the resolution, to conclude my series of quotations, since both refer expressly to the Conference on Disarmament.

In paragraph 6, the General Assembly reiterated "that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

In paragraph 9, the General Assembly unequivocally requested the Conference "to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its session of 1986, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

As this statement is becoming somewhat lengthy, I shall leave until later my concern, which I hope to be able to express, regarding a number of other items to which my delegation attributes particular significance, such as the prohibition of chemical weapons, on which the work of the Ad Hoc Committee has been so ably directed by the distinguished representative of Poland, Ambassador Turbanski, and now has fairly encouraging prospects of achieving the desired conventions; the comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, on which we venture to hope that the Conference can give a positive response at the request of the General Assembly by submitting a complete draft for the Programme at its next session; the World Disarmament Campaign for which Mexico had the privilege of taking the initiative in 1980; the nuclear weapons freeze which the General Assembly has been recommending periodically so as to ensure that nuclear-weapon stockpiles do not continue to grow while disarmament negotiations are going ahead, and the nuclear winter, regarding which the General Assembly, rightly alarmed by the data contained in the report by the Secretary-General, has asked the latter to make a study on the climatic effects and potential physical effects of nuclear war, including its socio-economic consequences.

For the moment, I should simply like to emphasize that the number of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, a number which, as I have already said, is the highest ever recorded in the annals of the Organization, would be entirely worthless if

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Member States made no effort to implement them. Among them are several like the four I have considered here, whose implementation is anxiously awaited by all the peoples of the Earth and a start could at least be made on them, should it still be necessary to make distinctions in this respect, by applying what the six Heads of State or Government stressed most particularly in the New Delhi Declaration when they said that "two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a comprehensive test ban treaty".

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(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Mankind has entered the year of 1986, which was proclaimed the International Year of Peace by a decision of the United Nations. We see now favourable possibilities for overcoming the confrontational trends that have built up in world politics in recent years, for beginning to clear the ways to the curtailment of the arms race -- and first of all, the nuclear arms race -- on Earth and to the prevention of the appearance of weapons in outer space.

It goes without saying that the reduction and subsequent elimination of nuclear weapons are possible only in the event of the solution of the question of the prevention of the arms race in outer space, which rightfully occupies one of the central places in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As M.S. Gorbachev stressed the other day, "The Soviet Union has been and remains an irreconcilable opponent, as a matter of principle, of the 'star wars' project. And that is not because the project is American. We in Moscow

regard this matter in the following way. It is impossible to create a universal space defence; it is, at best, an illusion and that from the technical, economic and political viewpoints. Any 'space shield' can, however, very easily be turned into a 'space sword'. And he who holds that sword may fail to resist the temptation to use it. That is the crux of the matter, that is the origin of our position, which is dictated by the interests of maintaining peace and by nothing else".

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

It is to be hoped that the positive spirit of the First Committee will be strengthened in the Conference on Disarmament. The General Assembly urged the Conference to begin negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and to conclude the elaboration of the comprehensive programme of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament was also requested to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of preventing an arms race in outer space, and to accelerate its negotiations on a multilateral convention prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Furthermore, the Conference was requested to continue its negotiations on the subject of radiological weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament should now, without delay, agree on appropriate mandates so that the actual work can start. The Conference must live up to the expectations and demands of the international community.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

Sweden therefore proposes that negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty start immediately. We feel that the establishment of an international verification system including on-site inspections should be initiated at an early stage in the negotiations. The co-operative measures worked out by the Group of Scientific Experts could serve as a basis for that, and monitoring be started by using existing facilities around the globe. These facilities could be rapidly improved using modern technology and methods. In this way, the entry into force of a future treaty will not be delayed for technical verification reasons.

Sweden was gratified that last year the Conference on Disarmament managed, although late in the session, to establish a Committee to deal with the agenda item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space." We expect the Committee to continue and intensify this important work and to seek concrete ways to prevent an arms race in outer space. We urge all members of the Conference to work together in a constructive manner to ensure that substantive work can take place at an early stage. The procrastination that left the Committee with only nine substantive sessions last year must be avoided.

At their meeting on 8 January 1985, Foreign Ministers Shultz and Gromyko agreed "to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on Earth". This was confirmed by the leaders of the two main nuclear Powers in their Geneva meeting in November last year. We take this as a firm commitment by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev to prevent an arms race in space.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

It is, however, obvious that meaningful agreements on the prevention of an arms race in space cannot be reached only on a bilateral level. An ASAT ban not adhered to by all States with a future ASAT capacity would make many important satellites potential objects of attacks. It would also leave the satellites of the Soviet Union and the United States themselves vulnerable to attacks by ASAT weapons of a third State. A multilateral approach to ASAT weapons would thus be in the interest also of the two major space Powers.

It is important to elaborate a legally binding international instrument or instruments prohibiting ASAT weapons and ASAT warfare. Because all States are directly or indirectly involved, the Conference on Disarmament must immediately consider in what way it can take action to this effect.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States now in fact observe a moratorium on ASAT testing. This is a most welcome development, which should facilitate the negotiations of a multilateral comprehensive ban on ASAT systems.

Much attention has been given to the question of ballistic missile defences. The Swedish Government does not believe that security can be achieved through such defences. BMD systems in outer space -- if technically feasible -- might be vulnerable to attack and could be overcome by an increase in the number of nuclear weapons. It is difficult to see how destabilization and an increase in the risk of nuclear war could be avoided in the process to establish technically advanced BMD systems. The arguments that led to the conclusion of the ABM Treaty are still valid. This Treaty remains one of the most important achievements in the field of arms limitation. It is essential that the ABM Treaty be maintained, that its provisions be strictly observed and that measures be taken to prevent its erosion.

The possible development of ballistic missile defence systems is a concern not only for the Soviet Union and the United States. Because of its implications we, the non-nuclear weapon States, like all other possible victims of nuclear war, have the right to expect from the bilateral negotiations concrete measures which will decrease the risk of nuclear war, enhance stability and, thus, the security of all of us.

Let me, in this context, underline that there are also multilateral treaties which contain obligations of relevance to the question of advanced BMD systems. Even if this insufficient, multilateral legal framework does not explicitly prohibit weapons in orbit around the Earth -- or on Earth, in the atmosphere, at sea or below -- Sweden thinks that their development, testing and deployment would run counter to the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty. Its article I states that the use of outer space "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries". Article III states that the Parties to the Treaty shall use outer space "in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding". It is indeed difficult to reconcile these intentions with activities aimed at developing weapons for use in space.

One of the technologies considered for space-based BMD systems is the X-ray laser. X-ray lasers require pumping by very intense radiation which, in practice, has to come from a nuclear explosion. The testing of X-ray lasers in outer space, if involving nuclear explosions, would be a breach of the prohibition of such explosions in article I of the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Already the placing of such X-ray technology in orbit around the Earth would be a violation of article IV of the Outer Space Treaty.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

This year has been proclaimed as the International Year of Peace. This proclamation should be a serious challenge to peoples and Governments to make all possible efforts for peace and disarmament.

There could not be a better occasion than this International Year of Peace,

To start negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty,

To begin the reduction of nuclear arsenals,

To prevent an arms race in outer space,

To finalize the chemical weapons Convention,

To bring the Stockholm Conference to a successful conclusion.

(Mr. Lechuga, Cuba)

There is blithe talk of fantastic investments to design space weapons when the world is deep in one of the most tragic economic crises for many a year, when the external debt of numerous countries is a noose that is strangling their opportunities to better themselves for many years to come, an external debt that even now cannot be paid off because, in the present situation, the economic capacity to do so is missing. And it is in precisely these circumstances that, with unparalleled wastefulness, funds are being allocated for such truly luxury projects, apart from what they signify in terms of aggravating international tensions, destabilizing the existing precarious balance and, consequently, making the achievement of peace more remote.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Outer space still might seem to some of us a distant and remote sphere. But it becomes more and more obvious that what happens there, especially from the military point of view, is going to concern all of us very closely, and probably very soon. In a couple of weeks it will be already three years since the day when one major country proclaimed one form of the militarization of outer space as its official doctrine. From then on, year by year, huge financial resources and the skill of thousands of technicians were dedicated to that programme. As the years go by, more and more will be poured into this enterprise until one day it may become an unstoppable self-supporting machinery. Let us hope that this day will not come sooner than the negotiations on the non-militarization of outer space are given a fair chance. Otherwise it is inconceivable that, with the progressive militarization of outer space, any significant results in the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament can be achieved.

My country has sent a cosmonaut into outer space and in close co-operation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries participates actively in the peaceful exploration of outer space. We, certainly, do not consider ourselves a space power, but even as a small earthly country we would feel directly threatened by the eventual introduction into orbit of attack space weapons. Already now we have to face an immense threat to our territory from a multitude of sources, including modern missiles with nuclear warheads stationed just a couple of kilometres from our border. If an additional source of threat were to be introduced, this time from space, with practically no chances for defence, an explanation that these weapons should allegedly play a defensive role would hardly dispel our worries. And this potential threat is steadily gaining more and more specific shape. Nuclear-weapon testing in Nevada continues intensively, aimed at the perfectioning of X-ray lasers to be placed in outer space. Declarations on the non-nuclear nature of the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative thus seem rather misplaced and one should not be surprised if they are soon forgotten completely. At the same time, militarized space is not going to replace the old dangers but merely add to them. Just last week, Defense Secretary Weinberger stated that the SDI now shares the "highest priority" among Pentagon programmes, equal in status to the five-year campaign to modernize nuclear missiles.

In view of these developments, Czechoslovakia welcomes what the recent Soviet proposal has to say on outer space. It is suggesting a completely different approach which would not bring a threat to all countries, and in the long run also to the initiator of the arms race in space, but on the contrary it would definitely close outer space for military confrontation and would also create favourable conditions for nuclear disarmament. In the statement by M. Gorbachev, introducing the new Soviet initiative, the following question is put: "Instead of wasting next 10-15 years by developing new extremely dangerous weapons in space, allegedly designed to make nuclear arms useless would it not be more sensible to start eliminating those arms and finally bring them down to zero?". Apparently, no political leader would openly question this simple truth. Nor, let us hope, will it finally be denied through the actions of any country.

The Conference on Disarmament should contribute to multilateral efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. We therefore support early resumption of the activity of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. As to its mandate, we made it clear last year that we want a committee empowered to negotiate specific measures ensuring prevention of an arms race in outer space. After last year's useful exploratory work we are even more convinced that time has come to move forward and to speak specifically on what new measures could ensure that outer space remains free of the arms race. General Assembly resolution 40/87 calls for nothing less than that.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

As we began our deliberations here a year ago, there was a note of cautious expectation in the air. The Governments of the USSR and the United States of America had only recently agreed to resume negotiations on the central arms control and disarmament issues of our time. Moreover, in taking this step, which entailed considerable statesmanship on each side, the two Governments set themselves agreed negotiating objectives which are impressive in their scope and comprehensiveness, namely: "The prevention of an arms race in space and its termination on Earth, the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms, and the strengthening of strategic stability." They stated as an ultimate goal "the complete elimination of nuclear weapons." We, and the watching world, saw a glimmer of hope.

Now, little more than a year later, that flame of hope not only remains alive, but burns a little brighter. Negotiators for the two Governments completed three rounds of negotiations in Geneva during 1985. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev met in Geneva in November and issued an important Joint Statement, affirming inter alia the intent to accelerate the work of their negotiations. The fourth round of negotiations is already underway.

Another important item on our agenda is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a subject on which there is widespread and legitimate public anxiety. Last year, an important step forward was taken when we were able to agree on a mandate for an Ad hoc Committee on this item. I pointed out at the time that it was a realistic mandate which takes into account and both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral negotiations already then under way between the United States and the USSR, but does not undermine or undercut or prejudge or in any way interfere with those negotiations. At the same time, I expressed the hope that the mandate would not expire at the end of 1985 bearing in mind the wishes of some delegations who would like something more and something better. The view I then expressed continues to be the view of the Canadian Government. The mandate has enabled us to make a beginning, but it has no means been exhausted. It was attained only with great difficulty, skill and perseverance. Any attempt to negotiate it or renegotiate it could almost certainly involve further lengthy discussion at the expense of substantive deliberation, with little prospect of agreement on a new mandate. Moreover, the political and negotiating context in which the mandate was agreed has not appreciably changed. Indeed, to the extent that the United States and the USSR are seriously coming to grips with the negotiating objectives they have set for themselves, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our need to ensure that our deliberations are complementary to, and not disruptive of, those negotiations is enhanced. Finally, I would note that, due to regrettable procedural delays, our substantive discussions on this item last year were seriously curtailed and as some delegations have pointed out, we were able to have only nine meetings. Nevertheless, those discussions, in the Canadian judgement, got off to a reasonably good start. They were substantive. They were for the most part objective. They went some way toward elucidating the complexities and intricacies -- technical, legal and political and we have heard of some of them today -- involved in this process. However, they remain incomplete. The importance and difficulty of the subject demand that we discharge our last year's mandate with determination and dispatch before we embark on a new one. The reputation of this Conference would not be enhanced by procedural wrangles on this item. As was the case last year when we submitted a broad survey on the existing international legal régime in outer space, the Canadian delegation intends to make concrete contributions to substantive discussions. In the process, we will be making available to all delegations, through the Secretariat, a compendium of the 1985 Conference on Disarmament documentation on the subject.

(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

The determination of the Warsaw Treaty States to engage on this road found a renewed expression in their Declaration adopted at the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia on 24 October 1985 and circulated as an official document (CD/645) of the Conference on Disarmament. The States Members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization stated in this Declaration that "the principal objective of their foreign policy has been, and still is, the elimination of the threat of nuclear war, the lowering of the level of military confrontation and the evolution of international relations in the spirit of peaceful co-existence and détente". They pointed to the urgent need for the adoption of practical measures to halt the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, and to proceed to disarmament. The States participating in the Meeting further reiterated that "there is no type of weapon that they are unwilling to limit, reduce or withdraw from their arsenals and destroy forever under an agreement with the other States, while abiding by the principle of equality and equal security". Without entering into details, my delegation wishes to point out that the Sofia Declaration reflects also the position of principle of the Warsaw Treaty Organization on matters that are the subject of work by the CD.

This Declaration reaffirmed the commitment of the member States to a complete and general ban on nuclear-weapon tests, as well as their support for the USSR unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions, and called upon the United States to join it; expressed their determination to remove the danger of nuclear war, to put an end to the arms race on Earth, and prevent it in space by reaching agreement to ban all space strike weapons; pointed out that "in present-day conditions, the objective of a total ban on and elimination of chemical weapons, including their particularly dangerous binary version, acquires ever greater importance and urgency"; and further reaffirmed their conviction that "the States which do not possess or have nuclear arms on their territory are fully entitled to solid international legal guarantees that such weapons will not be used against them".

To prevent an arms race in outer space today means to overcome the largest and most dangerous obstacle in the way of a radical reduction of the nuclear arsenals, to achieving real nuclear disarmament. The proposals contained in the new Soviet programme for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000 have made the idea behind the plans to build anti-missile defence systems not only obsolete, but also completely useless. It is our considered view that the position of each State on the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space constitutes, at this stage, a litmus test for the sincerity of its yearning to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The Bulgarian delegation believes that the Conference should, without delay, set up an ad hoc committee on item 5 of its agenda. The mandate of that committee should be based on the provisions of United Nations General Assembly resolution 40/87, which was adopted as a whole with no dissenting vote.

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

My delegation sees merit in the link which the Soviet disarmament programme establishes between substantial reductions of offensive nuclear weapons and a commitment not to develop, test or deploy space-based weapons. The traditional strategic doctrine of nuclear deterrence is based on offence. If it is now going to be based on defence or on a mix of offence and defence, the results will be highly destabilizing. An operational and effective ballistic-missile defence system could make possible a nuclear first strike by a side possessing a defensive screen which could then be used to protect the attacker from the feeble retaliation of its adversary. The super-Power confronted with a comprehensive ballistic-missile defence would, in all likelihood, be driven into multiplying its own strategic offensive weapons with a view to acquiring the capacity to overwhelm the defences of its opponent and thereby ensure the credibility of its strategic deterrence. A concurrent option for it would be to erect a similar defensive screen. It is, in the circumstances, not difficult to conclude that an offence-defence mix would in fact take the arms race, in both offensive and defensive weapons, to higher and more dangerous levels, thus further jeopardizing the chances of arriving at arms limitation agreements. Comprehensive ballistic-missile defences, whether ground- or space-based, would equally undercut the basic rationale of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which places reliance for strategic stability on offensive weapons and discards the defence option as destabilizing.

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(The President)

The 337th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. In connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies, delegations will recall that during our consultations we recognized that, simply with a view to facilitating our consultations, we could view the required subsidiary bodies as falling into two groups.

The first would be in relation to the agenda items on which proposals had been made but on which further consultations would be required. The second would relate to agenda items on which the Conference had taken decisions or made recommendations with regard to the conduct of its work in subsidiary bodies in 1986. I would now propose to discuss with the Conference this first group of agenda items and then, thereafter, to seek decisions from the Conference on the second group of items. This procedure reflects the consultations which have been held and our assessment of how we can best achieve progress in our work.

First, the agenda items on which further intensive consultations are required: item 1, Nuclear test ban; item 2, Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; item 3, Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space; item 6, Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and item 7, New types of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons. In respect to each of those agenda items, the Conference has been

(The President)

acquainted in informal session, with the relevant documentation which remains before it and with the terms of relevant decisions or conclusions by the Conference as contained in the report of the Conference to the General Assembly in 1985. These are the agenda items on which further intensive consultations are clearly indicated and required so that we will be in a position to establish appropriate subsidiary bodies on them, as allowed for in the rules of procedure of the Conference. I believe it is the wish of the Conference that the President should proceed immediately to conduct such intensive consultations and I would propose to do so, beginning tomorrow. Is there any comment on this proposal?

I see none. It is so decided.

It was so decided.

CD/PV.338

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(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

With regard to agenda item 5, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, my delegation has returned to the Conference prepared to continue the detailed examination of the issues as provided for in the mandate upon which we reached agreement last March. We are convinced that a great deal of work remains to be accomplished under this mandate, and that it would be helpful to reach early agreement to resume the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. It was unfortunate that last year, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Alfarargi of Egypt, work began too late to accomplish more than a fraction of the tasks established for the Ad Hoc Committee. The United States delegation intends to play a very active role in the continuation of this work. At the appropriate time, we plan again to have a legal specialist available to provide expert views on the coverage and appropriateness of existing agreements. We are aware of the interest among many delegations in carrying forward the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space and we see no reason for delay.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to take note of recent plenary statements that have expressed concern over new developments in the area of strategic defences. It is argued that strategic defences would destabilize the strategic balance. But the objective of the United States research programme, designated the strategic defence initiative, is in fact the opposite: it is to determine whether a defence against ballistic missile attack is feasible and would lead to an increase in stability. Moreover, the United States cannot ignore the relentless development and deployment of both offensive and defensive strategic forces by the Soviet Union, at levels that greatly exceed those of the United States. Indeed, it is precisely those Soviet activities that today are jeopardizing strategic stability. By investigating the potential for effective defence against ballistic missiles, the United States has therefore also undertaken a prudent and necessary response to these activities of the Soviet Union.

But the United States has gone further. We have proposed in the bilateral defence and space negotiations a reciprocal programme of open laboratories in strategic defence research. Under that programme, experts of the Soviet Union would be permitted to see firsthand that the strategic defence initiative does not involve offensive weapons. American experts would visit comparable Soviet facilities in their programme for strategic defence. And if research indicates the feasibility of defence against nuclear missiles, the United States would sit down together with its allies and the Soviet Union to see how we could replace all strategic ballistic missiles with such a defence, which threatens no one.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

On 15 January,

General Secretary Gorbachev presented a programme, which shows how serious his country is about translating the results of the Geneva summit into concrete action and which is fully endorsed by the German Democratic Republic. On 31 January, Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, said in an interview granted to Die Zeit, a weekly published in the Federal Republic of Germany: "We look upon this programme as a historic chance. What strikes us in particular is not only the boldness of the vision conjured up but also the fact that it is practicable if the two sides use the proper approach."

Any unbiased examination of the proposals will reveal to what lengths the Soviet Union is going to take into account other countries' ideas. This attitude deserves a constructive reply.

The programme reflects the objective relationship between nuclear disarmament and the necessity to keep space clear of weapons. This is the convincing and only acceptable alternative to a spread of the arms race to outer space. How can the champions of the Strategic Defence Initiative still uphold their claim that space must be crammed with arms in order that nuclear weapons may be eliminated, and how do they justify the concomitant pressure on international treaties?

There is no doubt about the overriding importance of steps to prevent an arms race in outer space. Should the United States space programme come to fruition, prospects for the elimination of nuclear weapons would be more than bleak. Fortunately, an increasing number of people are awakening to this fact.

The debate we had last year was useful but showed at the same time that a more systematic approach is required. We need to agree on the objective to be achieved and on the framework enabling us to conduct orderly discussions and eventually negotiations geared to a concrete task. This is what should be borne in mind in creating an appropriate committee.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

The "Geneva spirit" and the realization of the goals of the agreements reached are fully embodied in the statement by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, of 15 January 1986.

The Mongolian People's Republic warmly welcomes and supports the set of new proposals made in that statement: for the step-by-step total elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 under an agreement for the prohibition of the development, testing and deployment of space offensive weapons, on the extension of the moratorium to all nuclear explosions, on the elimination this century of chemical weapons, on the setting into motion of all the existing system of negotiations and ensuring results from the entire disarmament machinery. Reliable verification during all stages of implementation of the programme is envisaged. The implementation of these large-scale initiatives and other disarmament measures proposed by the Soviet Union and the socialist countries would save mankind from the threat of war for all time.

It is quite natural for Mongolia, as a socialist State situated in Asia, to wish to make its contribution to improving the situation in this vast continent.

As is well known, it has proposed that a convention be concluded on mutual non-aggression and mutual non-use of force in relations between the States of Asia and the Pacific. This proposal is an integral part of the broad view of general Asian security, which could include the five principles of peaceful coexistence worked out by the Asian States ("Pancha Shila"), the Bandung ten principles, as well as the various proposals made by Asian countries.

The formula for general Asian security could, it would seem, include the following specific steps and measures: in particular, the renunciation by all nuclear-weapon Powers, following the example of the USSR and the People's Republic of China, of the first use of nuclear weapons; the non-use of nuclear weapons against countries and areas of this part of the world which observe non-nuclear status; the adoption by non-nuclear-weapon States of the three non-nuclear principles -- not to possess, not to manufacture, and not to introduce any such weapons on their territory; that those States of Asia which have not yet done so should become Parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, including in Asia and the Pacific region; a freeze on the level of military activity in the Asian and Pacific regions; the refusal of States of Asia and the Pacific to take part in plans for the militarization of space; the

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

refusal to create new blocs in the region or to expand the existing one, and the elimination of foreign military bases in the territories of countries of Asia and the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

At its fortieth session, the General Assembly clearly declared that outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become an arena for an arms race. In resolution 40/87 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which was adopted by an absolute majority of United Nations Member States, it once again requested the Conference on Disarmament to undertake negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Unfortunately, so far the Conference has not managed to comply with this instruction from the General Assembly. There is a major obstacle to the solution of the issue of the non-militarization of space, namely, the United States' Star Wars programme. The supporters of the so-called Strategic Defence Initiative persist in trying to convince people that it will render nuclear weapons "unnecessary and obsolete". But common sense suggests that if the goal is really the elimination of nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, then what is required is to engage seriously and thoroughly in disarmament and not to embark on the creation and deployment of expensive strike systems in space. We consider that currently in the light of the Soviet Union's new historic initiative aimed at the step-by-step reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of this century, this opportunity should not be neglected for the sake of dubious ideas concerning the supplanting of nuclear weapons by so-called space defence systems.

Consequently Mongolia, like the majority of other States in the world, considers it important and essential for the USSR and the United States to agree, as the Soviet Union proposes, on a mutual renunciation of the

development, testing and deployment of space offensive weapons. This would be a major step towards carrying into practice the well-known agreements reached in the Soviet Union-United States joint declarations of 8 January and 21 November 1985.

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

The developments in the bilateral area as I have so far touched upon are extremely important and have a favourable influence on the general atmosphere of disarmament. It is opportune, therefore, to recall at this time the interrelationship between such a bilateral approach and that of a multilateral nature, and consider means to make best use of our forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations, namely the Conference on Disarmament. The successful outcome of the NPT review as well as the developments of the bilateral United States-USSR negotiations are providing a favourable atmosphere for the continuation of efforts at this Conference. Additional efforts and renewed approaches are called of us in dealing with the questions of the nuclear test ban, a ban on chemical weapons, prevention of an arms race in outer space and other items on our agenda.

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

Last year, the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space for the first time, and considerations of a general and substantive nature were made on the question. We feel that much useful work in identifying problems related to present activities in outer space was accomplished. However, the discussions were far from conclusive, and we consider it important that they should be further developed.

Outer space is also an important topic at the United States-Soviet Union bilateral talks, and it would be unrealistic to proceed with multilateral discussions without paying due attention to the developments at the bilateral level. Further, we need to define more clearly what we mean when we talk of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. For one thing, definitions and roles of various space objects have become very complicated. This fact, taken together with the reality that the information available for our work is extremely limited, requires us to ask the United States and the Soviet Union to keep the Conference on Disarmament appropriately informed as to the state of the bilateral negotiations and the problems that they are facing, so that we shall be able to give full consideration to those areas which could be suitable for a multilateral approach and take action early in this session to agree on specific questions to be discussed. In drawing up a programme of work for this year, we believe it necessary to reflect on the discussions which took place last year. Further, we think that the documents and papers presented by the representatives of Canada and the United Kingdom and by the secretariat all provide useful material for advancing our work.

As a result of efforts by many countries, we were able to reach agreement on a single resolution on outer space at the General Assembly last year. My country strongly hopes that the spirit of co-operation shown there will make possible the early establishment of an ad hoc committee on this subject and that we will be able to commence substantive work on questions to be taken up at our multilateral forum.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

Prevention of an arms race in outer space is an item to which France attaches particular importance. The 1985 session was the occasion of the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee which, unfortunately, was able to conduct substantive work for only a few weeks. However, thanks to the skilful chairmanship of the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Al-Farargy, the Committee was able in that brief period of time to hold a highly interesting preliminary debate, which should lead us to re-establish this ad hoc committee this year as soon as possible.

The mandate adopted last year is far from exhausted. In my opinion a similar mandate should be adopted immediately, so that the Committee can continue the exchanges of viewpoint begun last year, on the legal régime of space and its omissions, the technical aspects of the question, and various

(Mr. Jessel, France)

specific proposals. In this way, by the end of this session, we should have a clear idea of what can be undertaken and accomplished by our Conference.

The French delegation, for its part, is prepared to participate fully in the Ad Hoc Committee's discussions. My country's interest in space is not recent. It has expressed this interest on numerous occasions, and made various proposals all aimed at achieving a use of space consistent with the general interest, security and peace. As far back as 1978, we had suggested the establishment of an international satellite monitoring agency, which could provide the international community with an essential element for verification of disarmament agreements and for crisis management.

In June 1984, in this very forum, we formulated a set of proposals and presented a memorandum, based on the following considerations. Because of their long-standing military presence in outer space, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics obviously have a particular responsibility with regard to seeking verifiable agreements for the limitation of military uses of space. However, this does not mean that the international space régime should be the result of bilateral negotiations alone. The Conference on Disarmament must therefore consider the different problems which arise, in particular, because of their possible implications for other countries.

It was in this spirit that France proposed, in 1984, that the international community should set itself a twofold objective, in addition to any possible results in the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations. This twofold objective should be the following:

- (1) To limit what can still be limited, and in particular to guarantee the safety of high orbits.
- (2) To consolidate and complete the existing legal régime, in particular with regard to immunity of satellites of other States and the confidence-building measures which could be implemented for space objects in general.

We have been discussing nuclear weapons for a long time and under different guises.

(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

Considering that the elimination of the threat of nuclear war is disarmament's foremost priority, Romania resolutely supports the engagement of effective negotiations to end the nuclear-arms race and the implementation of specific disarmament measures designed to halt the development of nuclear weapons and to gradually reduce and ultimately eliminate them. This goal implies a particularly urgent need to ban all tests of nuclear weapons as an effective means of preventing their modernization. At least during the Soviet-American negotiations, a ban on the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons and on the militarization of outer space would be particularly beneficial. At the same time, since both parties have agreed on the principle of a substantial reduction, of about 50 per cent in nuclear arms, the freezing and reduction of military budgets should already begin this year.

(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space also constitutes a priority aim of the Conference negotiations. In that respect, it is imperative to swiftly re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and to begin specific negotiations on that question with a view to ending all militarization of space and ensuring the use of space for exclusively peaceful ends in the interest of all nations. One specific measure which should be adopted in this respect is the establishment within the United Nations of a special body to monitor the use for peaceful ends of outer space, which belongs to all mankind, as well as to promote widespread international co-operation in this field.

(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

The second issue I wish to speak on is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is also a priority item on our agenda. Since the importance and urgency of the issue have already been addressed on many occasions both inside and outside the United Nations and Conference on Disarmament forums, I do not intend to go over them again. As a reflection of our historical experience, there is a saying in China -- and it is said that a similar saying is also popular in Japan -- which goes: "There is a

(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

shield for every sword, and a sword for every shield." What has happened in the past year further proves that it is impossible to eliminate weapons by developing a new type of weaponry, or to terminate the arms race by starting a new one. Development of space weapons can only further aggravate and escalate the arms race, bringing greater instability to our world. The efforts to stop an arms race in outer space have reached a crucial juncture when something must be done. Otherwise there will be no end of trouble for the future.

China has always held that outer space ought to be exclusively used for peaceful purposes, and the development of space technology should serve the benefit of all mankind. At the spring part of the last session the Chinese delegation submitted a working paper (CD/579) on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We proposed that at the present stage the "de-weaponization of outer space" be made the primary objective in our efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. At the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Wu Xueqian, further proposed: "The United States and the Soviet Union should immediately stop the arms race in all its forms in the outer space. All countries with a space capability should refrain from developing, testing or deploying outer space weaponry. An international agreement on the complete prohibition and destruction of outer space weaponry should be concluded as soon as possible." We are prepared to work together with other delegations to look into all other relevant proposals.

We are pleased to see that after several years' efforts an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was finally established last summer and did some initial work. With an overwhelming majority in favour, and none against, the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (40/87). Proceeding on the basis that has been laid down, we ought to establish an ad hoc committee this year at the earliest date to conduct substantive negotiations. In our view, an agreement on the mandate could be reached given a spirit of compromise and co-operation by all sides.

(Mr. Alfarargy, Egypt)

Although the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the NPT and the resolutions of the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly reflected once again international quasi-unanimity on the necessity to reach a treaty on a nuclear-test ban, to halt the nuclear-arms race, to achieve nuclear disarmament, to prevent nuclear war, and to prevent an arms race in outer space, and although those instruments urged the Conference on Disarmament to carry out its negotiating task in these fields, we still see a few States refusing this course of action adamantly. These States try to invoke irrelevant arguments and justifications to delay the implementation of such recommendations and resolutions by the Conference on Disarmament. We must face such a trend with determination. We must demonstrate the required political will to advance the work in the Conference.

(Mr. Alfarargy, Egypt)

Since mankind succeeded in reaching outer space, international efforts have tried to establish appropriate international treaties and measures to secure the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and to keep it aloof from militarization and the arms race. Although it was possible to achieve a number of treaties for that purpose -- such as the Partial Test Ban of 1963, and the Treaty on Outer Space of 1967 -- these remained, as a whole, insufficient to establish the integrated international legal system we are striving to achieve. The Final Document drew attention to such gaps when it called for taking further measures and for appropriate international negotiations to be held in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty on Outer Space, in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. The successive resolutions of the General Assembly, the last of which was 40/87, reaffirmed this notion when they stressed the primary role the Conference on Disarmament should play in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This subject has acquired increasing importance with the declaration by the United States of its Strategic Defence Initiative, which is based on establishing a defensive anti-ballistic missiles system in outer space.

It is an initiative considered by the majority of States as a serious escalation of the arms race, and an introduction of completely new dimensions to such a race, with all the ominous political, economic and military implications.

At its last session, the Conference succeeded in establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. It is true that only a limited number of meetings was held to consider substantive aspects, but it was sufficient to show the gaps in the existing conventions and the necessity of remedial action. That is why we hope the Ad Hoc Committee will start its work at the beginning of the current session to fill those gaps through the objective consideration of the subject in a way commensurate with the seriousness of the situation we are facing and the dangers surrounding all of us, whether we are space or non-space States.

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

By common consent the prevention of an arms race in outer space has become an urgent issue so as to ensure that another part of our Universe is not embroiled in the arms race we have been witnessing and is instead used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Sri Lanka delegation has been actively associated in the discussion of this item and we were glad once again to be associated with the delegation of Egypt in co-sponsoring resolution 40/87 which received an overwhelming vote of 151 votes for with none opposing as the only resolution on the subject in the General Assembly. Last year despite similar success at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly we delayed action here in the Conference until March when through the commendable efforts of Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela as President, we achieved agreement on a mandate in order to establish an Ad Hoc Committee. The Report of the Conference for 1986 concluded that our work had contributed to clarifying the complexity of a number of problems leading to a better understanding of positions. It also urged that substantive work on the agenda item should be continued in the 1986 session. "Substantive work" implies progress and not repetition. Resolution 40/87 in operative paragraph 9 contains clear and unambiguous guidance for our work in an Ad Hoc committee this year and the fact that 151 nations supported this must weigh with those who plead for realism. My delegation will speak at greater length on this item later in our session. At this point our main focus of attention is the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate for substantive work to be concluded.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

It is also our opinion that item 5, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, is at an extremely interesting stage. We believe that the ad hoc committee on this item can be re-established at an early date to continue analysing a vital field in relations between States. Drawing up the rules to prevent the militarization of outer space represents a new task which should necessarily begin with a description of the military activities which should be prohibited in order for outer space to be used for exclusively peaceful purposes.

We welcome the beginning of bilateral negotiations on this subject. but from our point of view a restricted circle cannot be a substitute for the multilateral treatment of an item which affects the security interests of all States.

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

The horrendous dangers which the accumulation and refinement of nuclear weapons pose to human survival are now well known to everyone. Reputable scientists from both sides of the ideological divide have given us vivid descriptions of the intensity of destruction and human suffering which a major nuclear war would entail for the entire planet. The most favourable post-nuclear-war scenario is too disastrous to contemplate! And yet the view that nuclear weapons guarantee peace is still strongly held in some quarters. Those who hold this view also claim that the major military Powers are not likely to use the weapon against each other. The Nigerian delegation finds these arguments totally contradictory and unconvincing. In fact, we believe that it is because the major military Powers can conceive the use of nuclear weapons to gain national advantage, that they strive ever so hard to achieve military superiority over their rivals.

This research for superiority has taken the nuclear arms race to outer space and has further complicated disarmament negotiations and reduced the chances of significant nuclear disarmament measures. During the last few years, we have all heard the arguments for and against the deployment of weapons in outer space. The Nigerian delegation remains unconvinced that the decisive weapons superiority over rivals which some States have sought unsuccessfully on Earth for centuries will now be permanently had in outer space. There is every reason to believe that the vision of any such superiority in a high-tech age can only be illusive. If the protagonists of nuclear deterrence and the theories justifying the unbridled arms race are right, why, one might ask, would any State with the necessary resources deny itself that security guarantee?

Extending the nuclear-arms race to outer space is, in our view, too dangerous and too costly to be condoned. The several hundred billion dollars which the world spends on arms at present will be further increased as more and more countries intensify their development of space weapons or defensive systems. This will only lead to greater insecurity and misery for mankind and should therefore be stopped through negotiations. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space will be set up early to seriously consider this matter.

Nothing we have said in this statement is intended to diminish the importance of space technology. Indeed, while the Nigerian delegation deplores any attempt to use outer space for military purposes, we warmly congratulate all States which have advanced and are continuing to advance the frontiers of human knowledge through space probes.

(Mr. Afande, Kenya)

The realm of outer space and the rules to apply to its peaceful uses is another important item on our agenda in which there is a widespread legitimate public anxiety. In the preamble to the Outer Space Treaty, the international community has proclaimed mankind's common interest in the progressive research and uses of space for peaceful purposes. Today, however, it has become apparent that there is an overriding necessity to arrest the process of militarization of outer space from assuming irreversible proportions. The adoption of steps effectively to block all possible channels for the militarization of outer space and progress towards the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons would serve as the starting point for solving the task of preventing nuclear war. It is, therefore, regrettable that the consideration of this matter by the Conference has met with apparently insurmountable difficulties, especially in reaching an understanding over the framework of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on the item. This impasse only postpones any chance of reaching acceptable and binding legal instruments that would ensure that outer space is preserved as the common heritage of mankind and not another arena of military competition. The international community is legitimately interested in preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. Consequently, I trust that the Conference will be able, in its deliberations, to contribute to the achievement of mutual understanding and agreement. My delegation is of the view that consideration of this subject, like that of nuclear war and nuclear testing, illustrates very clearly the close linkage between bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations at the present time. Everything should be done to ensure that the approaches in one, strengthens the prospects of progress in the other. The statement which has been made so often in the Conference that an arms race in outer space will end on Earth is not a hypothetical phenomenon but a statement of fact. No country, organization or individual is competent to announce the winner of the race -- in a game which has neither rules nor a designated point as its end.

CD/PV.341

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(Mr. Kornienko, USSR)

Mr. President, may I, at the outset, carry out the instructions of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M.S. Gorbachev, and read his message addressed to the Conference.

"Message from the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, to the Conference on Disarmament

"I extend greetings to the representatives of States who have gathered for a regular session of the Conference on Disarmament.

"The Soviet Union takes a most responsible approach to its participation in the Conference on Disarmament, because it understands that disarmament is the main avenue towards establishing new and equitable international arrangements and building a safe world. It is precisely disarmament which, by releasing enormous material and intellectual resources, would permit their use for constructive purposes, for achieving economic development and prosperity.

(Mr. Kornienko, USSR)

Mankind has come to a watershed in its history, when it has to choose which road to follow: either it will overcome the inertia of the past, when security was regarded above all in terms of a position of strength and of military and technological solutions, or it will remain hostage to a race in nuclear, chemical and, in future, other equally awesome weapons.

This choice between what is prompted by reason and what would lead to catastrophe can only be made by all States together, regardless of their social system or their level of economic development.

This should be a courageous and responsible choice, and it depends to no small degree upon the States represented at the Conference on Disarmament if it is to be so. Now it is no longer enough to devise palliative solutions that would slow down the arms race in some areas only to allow it to surge ahead at double speed in others.

In other words, the time has come for us jointly to take major strides towards ridding our planet of nuclear and other weapons so that security for each of us will also mean security for all.

Guided by these considerations, at the start of this year the Soviet Union has put forward a comprehensive plan whose central element is a step-by-step programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We propose that the sword of Damocles which has been hanging over the peoples since the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should be definitively and irrevocably removed by the end of this century.

It is only fair that the first crucial step should be made by the Soviet Union and the United States, which possess the largest nuclear capabilities, with the other nuclear Powers following suit.

"We are deeply convinced that there is only one direct way of ridding mankind of the nuclear threat -- to eliminate nuclear weapons themselves. Objectively, it is a fact that the development and deployment of 'Star Wars' weaponry would inevitably spur on the arms race in every area. This is why it is necessary that from the very outset an effective international ban should be imposed on space strike arms."

In the interests of undiminished security for all and, moreover, of the inadmissibility of military superiority of one side, our proposed programme also includes, as an integral component a ban on the development, testing and deployment of space strike arms. Without such a ban it would be absolutely pointless to hope for a possibility of eliminating nuclear arms.

This is not at all the kind of artificial "linkage" that arbitrarily makes the solution of an issue depend on the solution of a second issue that

(Mr. Kornienko, USSR)

has nothing to do with the first. No, in this case there is an intrinsic interrelationship between the two questions which, objectively speaking, cannot be uncoupled.

Assertions about the defensive and hence allegedly innocuous nature of the space weapon system now being developed can deceive only those who are either ignorant or eager to be deceived.

First, the weapon systems now being developed under the United States SDI programme undoubtedly also possess an offensive potential. For instance, a weapon capable of destroying from outer space a missile in the boost stage is certainly capable of destroying any other target on Earth.

Second, even if one disregards for a moment -- which one should not -- the potential capabilities of those systems in clearly offensive operations, still the construction of a so-called space shield is only meaningful as part of an aggressive design. While not being capable of neutralizing a first nuclear-missile strike, in other words, being unable to perform a truly defensive mission, such a shield would at the same time afford protection from a retaliatory strike after the side that had built the shield had dealt a first nuclear-missile strike -- in other words, committed aggression.

Indeed, it was not by chance that the USSR and the United States concluded in 1972 the Treaty prohibiting the deployment of a large-scale ABM system, despite the fact that the Treaty deals with genuinely defensive weapon systems, which cannot be used for striking the territory of the other side. By doing that, the leaders of the two countries showed that they were wise enough to abandon the simplistic notion that defensive weapons are always a blessing. Nowadays, the notion of "defensive weapons" is not at all synonymous with the notion of "defensive doctrine".

Nor is it by chance that under the 1972 Treaty the two sides undertook "not to develop, test or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based".

It is sometimes argued that the SDI programme does not yet involve the development of space weapons but includes only scientific research intended to find out whether such weapon systems can be developed.

But, in the first place, this again is not true. Whereas, at the outset, in 1983 when the SDI programme was proclaimed, its objective was indeed so formulated for the sake of camouflage, later, in an official publication issued by the White House on 3 January 1985, with reference to the work already done, the aim of the programme was stated as being not to find out whether it was possible to develop a space-based ABM system but to determine how this could be accomplished. The Pentagon's documents submitted to the Congress qualify the SDI efforts as belonging to the category of "advanced development". So much for the stage of "finding out"!

Secondly, even to formulate the objective of developing a space-based ABM system, regardless of the stage of its practical implementation, is in direct contradiction with the spirit and letter of the 1972 ABM Treaty. That this is so can be seen from the following hypothetical situation. Suppose a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition and Destruction of Bacteriological Weapons, which, by the way, was also signed in 1972, suddenly

(Mr. Kornienko, USSR)

announced a national programme to develop such weapons; would anyone dare to say that was a legitimate step and that it was not contrary to the Convention? And yet this is in fact what is happening in the case of the SDI in relation to the ABM Treaty.

In an attempt to create confusion in this perfectly clear matter, references are sometimes made to one of the agreed statements annexed to the ABM Treaty which, allegedly, allows the development of ABM systems based on physical principles other than those limited by the Treaty. Now, since the SDI programme involves the development of such basically new ABM systems as lasers, directed energy beams and so on, it is argued that this would not be contrary to the Treaty.

It is time that one of the statements annexed to the Treaty indeed does not rule out the possibility of the emergence of "ABM systems based on other physical principles". The point is, however, that such a possibility is permitted only in regard to the limited ABM areas authorized by the Treaty and only to fixed land-based systems. The text of the statement does not allow for any other interpretation. We are not alone in saying this. It is also the view of prominent American lawyers, including those who were directly involved in the preparation of the ABM Treaty.

Furthermore, a report submitted to the United States Congress by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency already under the present Administration, I repeat, already under the present Administration, states in no uncertain terms that "the ABM Treaty prohibition on development, testing and deployment of space-based ABM systems, or components for such systems, applies to directed-energy technology (or any other technology) used for this purpose".

I repeat, all this is stated in an official document of a United States Government agency. What is going on, then? The answer is quite simple: the report in question was sent to the United States Congress six weeks before President Reagan announced the SDI programme in March 1983. It was after that that Washington began its strenuous efforts to pass a pig for a carp.

Finally, when all conceivable and inconceivable arguments would seem to have been exhausted, the question of verification is dragged out by the opponents of disarmament, as always happens in such cases. It is alleged, that, anyway, scientific research cannot be banned because it does not lend itself to verification, and, generally, human thought cannot be stopped.

Indeed, human thought cannot be stopped. But no one is proposing that, ourselves least of all. Of course, basic scientific research can and should be conducted: not for the purposes of destruction, however, but in pursuit of constructive goals.

Without basic research in the nuclear field, carried out by many scientists in many countries over many years, there would be no nuclear weapons, but neither would there be nuclear power plants, nor the numerous other benefits that the peaceful atom has given mankind.

The same is true of basic space research: its results can be used either to develop weapons for waging "Star Wars", or else they can and should be used to benefit mankind, to achieve what we call "Star Peace", or in other words wide-ranging international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

(Mr. Kornienko, USSR)

Banning research deliberately aimed at the development of space strike arms and effectively verifying such a ban is quite possible. A common will is all that would be required. Opening the laboratories concerned for verification would be enough, and the Soviet Union is ready for that. For instance, if someone ventured to violate the ban on the development of space strike arms the fact would inevitably become known, since to prevent such research from reaching a dead end, tests outside the laboratory would be needed, which cannot be carried out in secret.

While on the question of the objective interrelationship between the questions of strategic nuclear arms and space strike weapons, I wish to stress, at the same time, that the Soviet nuclear disarmament programme is structured in such a way -- and this is yet another of its distinctive features -- that the nature of the interrelationship between its various components is different, with regard to some of them no solutions are possible without simultaneously resolving other issues, but in other cases certain measures can also be implemented independently.

In other words, our programme does not in any way rule out the possibility of discussing and finding generally acceptable solutions to a number of important problems outside its framework as well.

For instance, the Soviet Union's previously expressed readiness to reach agreement, without a direct linkage to space and strategic arms, on reducing Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles in the European zone also remains valid today as far as the option to cut down these missiles to zero is concerned, which is also included in our programme.

In this context it is envisaged that both the United States and the Soviet Union would actually destroy those missiles rather than redeploy them in other areas, or transfer them to any other country, just as they cannot transfer their strategic missiles. We have not heard any reasonable arguments against this. The same is true of the proposal that along with the destruction of all Soviet and American medium-range missiles in the European zone, any further build-up of the relevant British and French nuclear arms should be stopped.

The problem of preventing an arms race in outer space, which is on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, certainly remains important in its own right. It is our firm belief that the Conference should continue to work on that problem, and the more active and effective that work is the better. It will facilitate rather than impede the solution in the Soviet-American negotiations of the problem of banning space strike arms in its interrelationship with the question of reducing and eliminating strategic nuclear arms.

A major step in that direction could be taken, in our view, by working out at the Conference an international agreement on ensuring the immunity of artificial earth satellites and on banning the development, testing and deployment of anti-satellite systems as well as eliminating those systems that already exist.

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

At the outset of the spring session of the Conference a year ago there was a common feeling of a new favourable development. The agreement reached by the ministers of foreign affairs of the USSR and the United States to start negotiations on nuclear and space arms in their interrelationship, which was generally viewed as a harbinger of improvement of the international political climate, thus creating hopes for more fruitful work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Since then a further improvement of the international atmosphere took place. The bilateral talks in Geneva became reality. The Third Review Conference of the NPT brought about an encouraging result and the auspicious Soviet-American summit meeting was held in Geneva. Our hopes were growing. Unfortunately, only hopes since, in principle, no real progress in disarmament was achieved, especially in areas of highest priority i.e. nuclear and space weapons. With regard to the Conference on Disarmament it would have been understandable to some extent if we were negotiating, but failed in reaching results. But this was not the case. We all know the deplorable truth -- we were not negotiating on these very issues because some delegations were not ready for it and made impossible the establishment of appropriate working bodies.

My delegation expects that such a situation will not be repeated this year and that we shall be able to start business-like dialogue and negotiations on various aspects of nuclear disarmament and on preventing an arms race in outer space as well as on other issues on our agenda. We base this expectation on a generally expressed opinion, including in this chamber, which we fully share, that the present political climate is more beneficial to disarmament efforts. More specifically I would point out new significant prerequisites which should be helpful and stimulating to the Conference's work. I have in mind the Soviet-American Joint Statement that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought", that the Soviet Union and the United States "will not seek to achieve military superiority" and other commitments which came out from the summit and which so often have been quoted in this hall. The Soviet-American Joint Statement has to be viewed as a political decision of highest importance, but it will bring the desired effects only if followed by practical steps.

(Mr. Renton, United Kingdom)

A third area where the Conference on Disarmament has an important multilateral contribution to make -- in order to complement the bilateral negotiations -- is in its work on outer space. One of the Conference's achievements last year was the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on this subject. The mandate under which it was established is far from exhausted. We therefore look forward to the re-establishment of the Committee. As a further contribution to its work, we intend to supplement the paper which we submitted last summer on the existing legal régime in outer space.

Since the subject has continued to attract so much publicity, let me also reiterate our policy towards the United States' Strategic Defence Initiative. We share wholeheartedly the objective of the bilateral US/Soviet negotiators -- the prevention of an arms race in space. At the same time, we regard the American research programme -- and I must underline that it is only a research programme -- as a prudent step in view of the Soviet activities in this field, which as we all know have been going on for years. The United States has made it clear that these activities are conducted in full compliance with all relevant international treaties, and in accordance with the four cardinal principles agreed between Mrs. Thatcher and President Reagan at Camp David in December 1984: first, that the United States and Western aim is not to achieve superiority, but to maintain balance, taking account of Soviet developments; second, that SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiation; third, that the overall aim is to enhance, and not to undermine, deterrence; fourth, that East/West negotiation should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides. It is on this same basis that we have recently concluded an agreement with the United States to participate in their research programme.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The Conference on Disarmament has got off to a quick start this year. My Government has noted with satisfaction that many questions which in previous years have given rise to prolonged procedural debates have been dealt with briskly and productively. The turn for the better in international relations has thus found a certain reflection in negotiations in this corner of Geneva as well.

The improved atmosphere augurs well for actual deliberations on the many important issues placed on the agenda of the Conference. In our view, the negotiations within this body are sufficiently advanced in order to warrant cautious but real optimism with regard to at least three subjects: chemical weapons, radiological weapons, and the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Further progress could, and should, also be achieved with respect to a comprehensive test ban, prevention of an arms race in space, security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and prevention of nuclear war.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is on the agenda of this Conference for the fifth year. Last year the Conference was able to start substantive, although rather preliminary, consideration of this question. We hope that conditions have matured enough to permit a fuller examination this year.

Finland sees resolution 40/87, adopted by near-consensus in the General Assembly, as incorporating the basic considerations that should apply to the use of outer space by all States. Existing international treaties with relevance to space activities must be upheld and rigorously enforced. International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be actively promoted.

The use of outer space for such military functions as early warning and verification is a fact. Satellite communications for these purposes serve to enhance strategic stability. While the use of satellites for these as well as purely civilian purposes continues to increase rapidly, there is no comprehensive legal framework covering, and indeed protecting, their use. A thorough consideration of this problem should receive high priority in the context of bilateral as well as multilateral talks on arms control in space. Resumption of bilateral United States-Soviet talks or multilateral negotiations within this Conference on banning anti-satellite weapons would be a most welcome development in this regard.

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

As we approach the work of the Conference for the 1986 session it is useful to take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly at its fortieth session. The overall thrust of the 66 resolutions adopted at the fortieth session was once again in favour of urgent and speedy action by the Conference on Disarmament in regard to the first three items of its agenda and the item on prevention of an arms race in outer space. Not to pay heed to these recommendations will only further erode the credibility of this organization. My delegation is fully aware of the complexity of the problems involved in tackling in a multilateral forum the question of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects but we are convinced that there is no other way to resolve them except by discussing them in a systematic manner and by negotiating our differences. We have accordingly been alarmed at being told at the early stages in the work of the Conference this year that the central issue of nuclear disarmament falls outside our purview.

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

I wish to place special emphasis in my statement today on two issues regarded as vital in the Six Nation Initiative. These relate to a comprehensive test ban and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

My Government remains completely unconvinced by arguments relating to the possibility of defence against nuclear weapons. In the pursuit of their respective military doctrines the super-Powers have developed various means to deliver nuclear weapons. However, the means of delivery are not synonymous with the weapons themselves. We believe that it is not only not feasible to erect foolproof defence against the delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons but that it is also technologically impossible to thus immunize nations or populations against the use of nuclear weapons. So long as these weapons remain they can inevitably be delivered by some means or the other and no defence will remain impregnable. The pursuit of defensive technology is itself riddled with so many problems and contradictions that there is no guarantee of the so-called "defensive transition" ever materializing. The fundamental reality of the nuclear age is that the mutual vulnerability of populations to nuclear attack is a direct consequence of the characteristics of nuclear weapons. The veneration of deterrence is the existential consequence of the presence of nuclear weapons. It is but a symptom of the nuclear threat and the best way, logically, to do away with the symptom of the nuclear threat is to eliminate the basic malady, i.e. nuclear weapons themselves. The arguments about transcending deterrence through erection of space-based defence are accordingly unconvincing.

To aggravate the situation there have been recent disturbing reports about strategic defence arrangements being supplemented by the development of appropriate offensive capability. In any case it is generally acknowledged that systems ostensibly of a defensive nature planned to render nuclear weapons obsolete automatically acquire an offensive first-strike capability against targets in space and on land. What is facing us is a frightening combination of a new offensive and defensive arms race on Earth and in space, the inevitability of which is based on space arms being developed by one side, resulting in automatic retaliatory action by the other.

(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.

(Mr. Frøysnes, Norway)

Further measures should be taken to prevent an arms race in outer space. The decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space in 1985 was, therefore, a welcome initiative.

Norway followed closely the Committee's deliberations in 1985, when it began an examination of issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In our view it is of great importance that further concrete work be done on this issue also in 1986. The deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue represent an important supplement to the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on space arms. In the view of my Government, the work to prevent an arms race in outer space should continue along both a bilateral and a multilateral path. We believe further multilateral measures to prevent an arms race in outer space will be necessary.

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(Mr. Clerckx, Belgium)

With regard to outer space, Belgium is in favour of continuing the work begun last year under the excellent chairmanship of the Ambassador of Egypt, Mr. Alfarargi. We believe that a detailed examination of the subjects dealt with and a continued exchange of views would enable us to identify the areas which might be the subject of negotiation.

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(The President)

At yesterday's final session, of informal Presidential consultations, on the Conference's agenda items for the month of February, I said that I would present to the Conference today, a summary report of the outcome of those consultations.

During this opening month of our 1986 session the Conference established ad hoc committees on items 4 (chemical weapons) and 8 (comprehensive programme for disarmament) in accordance with the recommendations contained in the 1985 Report of the Conference on Disarmament. Work is now underway in both of those Committees. The Conference requested that the President carry out intensive informal consultations on all other agenda items.

Accordingly I carried out, during the month of February, intensive informal consultations individually with delegations, with Group and Subject Co-ordinators, and on an open-ended basis with all members of the Conference on items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 of our agenda.

(The President)

On item 5 of the agenda, "prevention of an arms race in outer space", the great importance which all groups attach to this item was very clear. One group expressed the view that the 1985 mandate was by no means exhausted and could and should form the basis for continued work in 1986. Another group expressed its wish that an ad hoc committee be established on this item with a mandate which took into account General Assembly resolution 40/87. Another group said that it would prefer a negotiating mandate. During consultations on this item the President was asked to provide a non-paper for a draft mandate, drawing on the 1985 mandate and the relevant paragraph (paragraph 9) in General Assembly resolution 40/87. This paper was produced and is dated 21 February and is entitled "President's non-paper: Item 5". It was examined by all groups.

One group stated that despite the fact that it would have preferred a full negotiating mandate, it was prepared to start work on the basis of the President's non-paper. A group reiterated its view that no change to the 1985 mandate was required, and that work could proceed on last year's mandate. Another group reiterated its position that work in 1986 on the basis of the 1985 mandate would not be acceptable. It would, however, be prepared to continue to consult on this item, including on the basis of the President's non-paper. It requested that this view be conveyed to next month's President and that further work proceed to advance this issue. A fourth group stated that it continued to be flexible on the mandate, although it would prefer that it reflect paragraph 9 of resolution 40/87. It would be prepared to consider any other reasonable suggestion.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

Mr. President, the purpose of my statement today is to underline the urgency of an early resumption of our substantive work on agenda item 5, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to offer a number of perspectives, that, in the view of my delegation, ought to be taken into account in the Conference's work on outer space.

Let us recall, as a starting point, that the Conference itself, in adopting the conclusions of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space in its 1985 Annual Report, has solemnly undertaken to resume its activities on agenda item 5 at the earliest possible time. In that report it is acknowledged that the relevant Committee had had a wide-ranging discussion that contributed to clarifying the complexity of a number of problems and to a better understanding of positions. But the Committee also recognized the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and agreed that, consequently, all efforts should be made to assure that substantive work on the agenda item be continued at the 1986 session of the Conference.

The urgency of such work is further heightened by the fact that the bilateral negotiations between the two Major Powers on nuclear and space matters are now in full swing. We in this Conference all agree that the elaboration of further international legislation in outer space, including measures for the prevention of a future arms race in that environment, cannot be entrusted to these bilateral negotiators alone. More and more States -- many of them represented in this Conference -- are themselves outer-space Powers or participate in important programmes for the exploration and utilization of outer space; all States would be threatened by a military misuse of the outer space potential.

It is widely agreed that in view of the dynamic technological developments many aspects of a future outer space legal order inevitably necessitate comprehensive regulation by the international community as such. Global security issues need global solutions. The domain of outer space is one of those where by the very nature of the subject matter only global regulation can provide durable solutions, and where it would be futile for the bilateral partners to substitute themselves for the world community at large.

Yet, the existing outer space legal régime is manifestly incomplete. International law, as it relates to outer space, is a relatively young discipline, and its accomplishments so far do not enable it to limit, or channel, armament in outer space in a manner conducive to the maintenance of

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

strategic stability, or to prevent the abusive military utilization of outer space. This is due to the ambiguity or insufficient detail of existing legal norms; the unclear or controversial definition of central legal concepts; and the inherent ambivalence of technology which may be used for various purposes, military or non-military, stabilizing or destabilizing, thus complicating the lawyer's quest for an improved legal order in outer space. There are also grave omissions in the present outer space legal régime: both the role of satellites and the overriding need for their protection are insufficiently covered by current prescription. However, there is no controversy that satellites with verification, observation, communication and command functions are vital components of strategic stability and that, correspondingly, it would be counterproductive to prohibit all military activities in outer space, instead of only those that imperil the foundations of deterrence -- in other words, the possibilities for the successful prevention of war -- or might heighten the danger of conflict.

Up to this time the international community has not succeeded in identifying and analysing fully these weak spots of the outer space legal régime and in evaluating them in context. By the same token it has so far been impossible to define guiding concepts in an operative manner and to work out the necessary remedial or supplementary prescription.

This situation indicates the dimensions of our task. In the view of my delegation, it also underlines our obligation, taking stock of the incipient result of last year's work of the Conference, to achieve the necessary clarifications of the present body of law, to identify further regulatory needs, and to evolve the contours of a future, more complete outer space legal régime.

I view last year's mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space as entirely sufficient to continue along the lines of last year's work and to take additional aspects of this work in hand. But whatever the precise formulations of the mandate on which we will agree -- and, I hope, agree soon -- our task would then appear to be triple: firstly, the clarification of specific important ambiguities of the current outer space legal régime; secondly, the implementation of paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the identification of "further measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space", completing the existing international legislation; thirdly, as precise a delineation as is possible between the regulatory tasks to be entrusted to multilateral fora, and those tasks that are intrinsically linked with the bilateral nuclear relationship of the two Major Powers, and must therefore, in the first place, be considered by them.

To this latter task there is a dynamic dimension in that the multilateral negotiating needs could very well change, or grow, commensurately with the progress of bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space matters.

In considering now these three tasks, I would like to share with delegations a number of perspectives that are, in reality, a further amplification of a statement by my delegation on 4 July last year.

Let me first dwell upon the obvious ambiguities and definitional deficits of the existing treaty and customary international law, as it relates to outer space.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

At the present time there are about 10 bilateral and multilateral treaties which, in their entirety or partially, deal with the military uses -- or abuses -- of outer space.

One basic norm needs to be highlighted at the outset. The Outer Space Treaty of 26 January 1967 extends the validity of the Charter of the United Nations, including its interdiction of the threat or use of force, and the principle of the peaceful settlement of conflicts also to the new environment of outer space. However, one important definitional element is missing here. So far, the international community has not succeeded in delineating, with every necessary precision, air space which is subject to national sovereignty, and outer space which is open for utilization by all States; and it is at present unclear whether the limit between the two would be at the 100 kilometres or 111 kilometres mark -- or perhaps elsewhere. More important: the general acknowledgement of the validity of the Charter has so far not been effective enough to eliminate the use of threat or force and military abuse from outer space. The mere fact that several components of outer space armaments, and especially ASAT capabilities, have already in the past been made the subject of specific treaty negotiations shows that there is an additional regulatory need in terms of concretizing the provisions of the Charter, as it applies to outer space.

The Outer Space Treaty has undertaken to ban a whole category of weapons -- weapons of mass destruction -- from outer space and to declare part of the cosmos -- the celestial bodies -- as weapon-free zones. However, these norms are manifestly incomplete since they do not contain any concrete definition for some of the central concepts contained in the Treaty. Apart from the concept of outer space itself, a definition of weapons of mass destruction -- for the purposes of the Treaty -- or of peaceful use has not been undertaken. I am only recalling past queries of my own delegation -- but which other delegations have also raised -- when reminding delegates that the Outer Space Treaty and the Moon Treaty do not prohibit all military activities per se, and that most military means of which one could think in this context are of an ambivalent nature. This demonstrates that the Conference should address, in terms of clarifying the existing outer space legal régime, the following issues:

Which forms of the utilization of outer space are compatible with the principle of peaceful uses of outer space in conformity with Article 3 of the Outer Space Treaty?

What is the extent of the protection which satellites of a clearly stabilizing nature enjoy against premeditated destruction or impingement on their functions?

In what category of cases would the general protective effect of Article 2, paragraphs 4 and 51 of the United Nations Charter be sufficient, and in what other category of cases would more specific regulation be necessary, given current and future technological developments?

To what extent could or should the provisions of Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Outer Space Treaty, by virtue of which the stationing of nuclear and other mass-destruction weapons in full orbit is prohibited, also be extended to other destructive means or their components?

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

Even if the existing treaties and rules of general international law are subjected to extensive interpretation, including appropriate analogies, no clear information can be obtained on the precise scope of actual prohibition. That, of course, also means that, objectively speaking, nobody can complain about the given degree of militarization of outer space, since it is unclear which forms of the utilization of outer space have been legitimized by the existing treaties and their underlying intentions and which ones are incompatible with current prescription.

In view of the almost unimaginable dynamics of outer space technology and its military uses, such ambiguities, lacunae and contradictions in the outer space legal régime can hardly surprise anybody. The general prohibition of the threat or use of force in the Outer Space Treaty was codified at a time when force against outer space objects could at best be imagined or should I say, at worst, be imagined, as a direct application of military means -- by way of collision, or conventional or nuclear explosion. Today, the vulnerability of outer space objects has become infinitely greater, and the threats have become multiple, involving new and partly exotic technologies

Let me provide an example for a new possible threat scenario. If a laser beam of limited brightness -- and definitely sublethal intensity -- is fired from aboard a United States space shuttle or a Soviet space station, or even from the ground via an advanced directed energy weapon, and hits a satellite, the very sensitive cooling aggregates for the electronic circuits could be overheated and the satellite be incapacitated without any external trace of application of force. It would appear difficult to qualify such "warming up" of the satellite surface by a few centigrades as use of force under international law, although the ultimate effect would be the same as that of premeditated destruction by killer satellites or other destructive means, just as lasers or other advanced directed-energy weapons -- for instance particle-beam weapons -- are not unequivocally prohibited by international law. But there is no doubt that in principle they would be technologically capable of generating an all-altitude and instantaneous kill capacity against satellites. It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union has been working on such weapon systems for a considerable period, and the United States as of more recent date.

There are several other means of electronic warfare that are able of incapacitating satellites without any physical application of force, but with the same effect. One could cite the method of jamming (the overloading of a receptor device by excessive signals) spoofing (the feeding-in of misleading or deceptive electronic signals), dazzling (the blinding of satellites for a limited time) or the spoofing in the above-mentioned sense, of optical sensors.

There is no doubt that the instruments of international law in the field of renunciation of the use or threat of force must be adapted to meet these new technological possibilities. This specific regulatory need must be looked at under today's enhanced requirements of strategic stability and the ambivalence of most technological means which may be conceived as defensive, but may also be applicable to offensive use. It would obviously be unrealistic to deal with these new challenges by simply turning back the wheel of history by a quarter of a century. The complete elimination of these innumerable technological possibilities by the simple fiat of prohibition in international law does not appear as a feasible possibility, and other means of harnessing them with legal instruments must equally be considered. The wide array of new technologies that have an inherent antisatellite potential

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illustrates an important, indeed central, problem of the search for a modern outer space legal order: while the prohibition of other weapons by way of a comprehensive agreement is, and remains, highly desirable, the proliferation of weapon systems that are not initially directed against satellites -- for instance ICBM and ABM weapons -- and of other outer space systems -- space shuttles, platforms, space stations -- that have inherent ASAT capabilities, not to speak of the possibility that satellites could be destroyed inadvertently by collision with other space objects, make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to solve the problem of an adequate protection of satellites merely or essentially by norms that would prohibit all relevant or even specific weapons configurations; and one arrives at this view even before the formidable problems of verification are taken into account.

Yet the problem cannot be left unattended in view of the essential stabilizing function of satellites and their contribution to the enhancement of modern civilian life on Earth, especially given the extreme vulnerability of satellites.

Under the existing legal system there is no basis for the view that the premeditated development of space-based ASAT weapons, or their components, or even their stationing would already, by itself, constitute a violation of law, especially a violation of the Outer Space Treaty. There are no explicit norms to support such a conclusion. If they did exist, there would have been no reason for the United States and the Soviet Union to have concluded specific agreements on non-interference with national technical means in the SALT context; nor would there have been any reason for the initiation of specific ASAT negotiations, nor for the repeated appeals by the Outer Space Committee of the United Nations to the space Powers to resume negotiations to this effect. All these regulatory efforts would have been superfluous, if in the perception of States involved the United Nations Charter and the Outer Space Treaty would by themselves prohibit ASAT weapons or their utilization.

The inference is clear: if we must assume that the existing outer space legal régime does not offer sufficient protection of satellites and if, on the other hand, the multitude of weapons systems or other outer space bodies that could directly or indirectly be given an ASAT function could not, -- or not sufficiently -- be tackled with prohibitory norms alone, then, in the spirit of the Final Document, one must look for "further measures". In this perspective it would appear logical that the solution to the problem lies not in the search for additional prohibitive norms -- ultimately unsuitable to deal with current and emerging threats -- but in the search for a special protection régime for satellites, designed to compensate for their vulnerability. This protection régime could conceivably consist in a combination of agreed restrictions on hardware -- predominantly to be negotiated in a bilateral format -- and the legal immunization of satellites -- predominantly under multilateral auspices.

The idea of a multilateral protection régime for outer space objects is not a new one. Introduced before this Conference originally by France in Working Paper CD/375 of 14 April 1983, the idea has been taken up and supplemented by several other delegations, including my own and the delegations of Australia and the United Kingdom; in addition, the concept of "rules of the road" for outer space has for some time been a subject of internal debate within the United States.

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A multilaterally negotiated protection régime for satellites would have two dimensions: the legal immunization of satellites on the one hand, and agreements on flanking confidence-building measures, possibly contained in a "rules of the road" agreement, on the other.

There is some precedent in the bilateral treaty relationship between the two Major Powers. The ABM Treaty, and the treaties on SALT I and SALT II provide immunity for the satellites designed to verify these agreements (one might compare for instance article 50, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the SALT II agreement). There are other satellites which enjoy immunity, -- those designed to maintain communications links under the Nuclear Accidents Agreements of 1971, the subsequent Protocol on the Prevention of Nuclear War of 1973, and the Hot Line agreement in its various versions. However, these treaties are all of a bilateral nature, and satellites of other nations are not protected in the same manner. Again, it is clear that the use or threat of force against satellites of third countries would constitute a violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, with the exception of course of Article 51 in the case of an armed attack. This would particularly be true in the case of satellites of third countries that would be manifestly for peaceful uses; but even here the question is unclear what constitutes an armed attack in outer space.

Beyond these cases the status of satellites with limited military functions is unclear. Such military functions could also be of a dual nature. Satellites that are deployed to verify arms-control duties could at the same time be used for the reconnaissance of sensitive military information; early warning satellites possess the same ambivalence. It would be difficult to say a priori in which function a satellite would be "immune" and in which function an impingement on its operability could be qualified as a legitimate act in the exercise of the right of self-defence. This definitional calamity might call for different approaches to the closing of these particular existing legal loopholes.

One might, for instance, consider making a distinction in functional respects by giving priority to the stabilizing function; a distinction could also be made according to geographical criteria, for instance by protecting satellites according to their deployment area, altitude of orbit or geostationary position, or within "space sanctuaries".

Another set of criteria might be qualitative: the immunity of certain satellites that would be indispensable from a strategic viewpoint could extend to the immediate environment of such a satellite, an environment to be controlled by special sensor satellites, capable of sounding the alarm in case of attack. However, the option of general immunity for all satellites, limited at most to objects with a particular identification or above a certain deployment altitude should be examined in the first place. Such a comprehensive protection régime should also include the immunization of related ground facilities.

There is no doubt that the effectiveness of any protection régime of this nature would presuppose the improvement of the registration requirement for space objects. A broadening of the obligation to register space objects and to identify their functions is, however, a delicate subject and should be approached with care. It might, however, be worth exploring the possibility of bestowing upon registered objects, by international agreement, a special

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protected environment, a "keep-out zone". This might enhance the actual possibility of protecting satellites -- for instance against space mines -- in a considerable measure.

An international treaty that would provide for the protection of space objects would require a number of flanking measures, the observance of which would be in the interest of all concerned and exercise a considerable confidence-building effect. Such flanking measures are particularly conditioned by the "over-population" of outer space and the resulting risks of unintended collisions of satellites with space debris and other objects that are not fully traceable or with space objects which break out of programmed orbits.

Such flanking agreements could comprise the mutual contractual renunciation of interference measures, the observance of minimum distances between space objects -- especially important for the avoidance of interference with transmitting frequencies -- the limitation of approach velocities of space objects, and the establishment of consultation mechanisms in case of accidents and other unexplained events.

A new code of "rules of the road" for outer space could contribute in large measure to attenuating the effects of unintended escalation and to limiting the risks arising from misunderstandings in crisis situations. Additional rules that could be comprised in such a code might include: restrictions on very low altitude overflight by manned or unmanned spacecraft; new stringent requirements for advanced notice of launch activities; specific rules for agreed, and possibly defended, keep-out zones; grant or restriction of the right of inspection; limitation on high velocity fly-bys or trailing of foreign satellites; and established means by which to obtain timely information and consult concerning ambiguous or threatening activities.

In order to reduce uncertainty regarding the purpose of certain satellites and the tension likely to result from an unauthorized close approach, it might be useful to establish specific rules regarding inspection, high-velocity fly-by and trailing -- rules required by the increasing deployment density of space objects. Such agreements might allow close approach and inspection under certain circumstances (i.e. prior consent), or they might otherwise ban high-velocity fly-by and trailing -- either of which could be a prelude to satellite attack. There already exists a world-wide network of facilities designed to trace all satellites in their orbital course, and enabling States to be aware, in a comprehensive manner, of all activities in space. Satellites have aboard a multitude of sensors designed to report about their operability and any possible disturbances. If minimum distances would be agreed upon, these communication facilities would provide a prior warning mechanism, if ever the minimum distances are violated, so that satellites, should they already possess such sophisticated capabilities, could evade the approaching object. These possibilities would be particularly useful in the case of space tests or the deployment of any space-based weapon systems that are not directly directed against satellites.

The two main areas in which my delegation thus sees a fruitful field for the identification of "further measures", namely, a legal protection régime for satellites, and the further development of "rules of the road" in space,

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are therefore of a supplementary and mutually reinforcing nature, both designed to preserve the essential stabilizing function of satellites, and to minimize the occasions for conflict and misunderstanding.

I would finally like to approach an institutional issue. For good reasons it has been suggested that the protection of satellites would be exclusively a legal matter within the competence of the Legal Sub-Committee of the United Nations' Outer Space Committee. My delegation attributes a high priority to the Legal Sub-Committee and its work and we wish that this important body should continue its valuable activity. The problems on which I have touched would, however, only very partially lie in the Sub-Committee's competence. The Sub-Committee should certainly consider the protective aspects of civilian activities, -- for instance, collateral damage that might emanate from civilian satellites themselves, the reliability of indicated orbital data, the risks of re-entry and crash, and the consequences of such accidents in international and private international law. As regards the military relevance of the protection of satellites -- specifically in their military and stabilizing role -- there does not exist any alternative to the consideration of the subject matter in the Conference on Disarmament. However, the precise delineation between the competencies of these two bodies could only be made definite at a later stage when the identification of specific regulatory needs for the completion of the outer space legal régime has progressed and the military significance of each individual measure been sufficiently ascertained.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

Turning now to item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space, this is a question on which we have not yet advanced our work nearly as far as we have in the chemical weapons negotiations, namely the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have already made known our views in our statement of 4 February that we should reach agreement quickly on the renewal of last year's mandate. I do not propose to reiterate our views on that issue. I wish merely to announce that the Canadian delegation has given to the secretariat, for distribution to all delegations, a compendium of the 1985 documentation of the Conference on Disarmament on this subject. It is our view that an analysis of that documentation will make clear not only that we have already done considerable useful work in the Conference in elucidating the complexities raised by that question, but that considerable work remains to be done in analysing the legal régime and identifying any existing lacunae. Delegations need to address the issues embodied in the compendium. If some delegations disagree with some aspects of the Canadian or British working papers on the legal régime tabled during our last session, then let us hear from them, preferably in the form of working papers. This only underlines the importance as we see it of earliest possible agreement on a renewed mandate so we can devote our full efforts to concrete, substantive work. In the meantime, all of us should be preparing for such work.

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

The re-establishment of the dialogue between the two biggest Powers -- which bear special responsibility for international peace and security -- has received a positive world-wide response. We are interpreting their position that "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and that neither side will "seek to achieve military superiority" as agreed norms of behaviour in the nuclear age which are of far-reaching importance. Their decision to accelerate their bilateral negotiations in regard to nuclear weapons is also viewed as a promising sign. We welcomed the fact that the proposals of both sides have become more specific, innovative and comprehensive. Yugoslavia considers important the initiative by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and the proposal to eliminate in three phases by the year 2000 all nuclear weapons on Earth and to renounce the spreading of the arms race into outer space, through appropriate verification measures -- proposals which also contain positions advocated by non-aligned countries for quite some time. No matter how important the dialogue may seem between the two super-Powers -- which bear the greatest responsibility for the maintenance of peace and upon which the survival of mankind depends -- the question of peace and security cannot be their sole province, as the problems relating to the security of all cannot be reduced to the security problems of a small number of countries. In the negotiations aimed at cessation of the arms race, arms reduction and disarmament, the two negotiating parties should bear constantly in mind that not only their national interests but also the vital interests of all peoples of the world are of stake. Therefore, their responsibility is not only towards their own countries, but also towards the international community at large. Consequently, they should keep the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as the Conference on Disarmament duly informed of their negotiations. These bilateral negotiations should not in any way diminish the urgent need to initiate or accelerate multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on all items, among which at present, in our view, the items on a nuclear-test ban, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on chemical weapons are of top priority. Both bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament have a role to play and should therefore facilitate, rather than hinder, each other.

The question of preventing an arms race in outer space is also a Conference priority. The Ad Hoc Committee on this item, established at the end of the 1985 session, was unable, in our opinion, to carry out the agreed programme of work. It is necessary, therefore, that it should start its work as soon as possible. The efforts of the Conference and of the Ad Hoc Committee must, at this stage, and as soon as possible, focus on finding the areas of agreement on how to prevent arms race in outer space. This should be done by taking into account the proposals submitted to the Conference by various delegations in the course of last year and this year. All countries -- no matter whether they have already stepped into outer space or not -- are vitally interested in using outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes and should prevent its further militarization. This is one more reason for the Conference to take an active part in the negotiating process leading to the adoption of urgent measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

The Romanian delegation, like many other delegations, emphasized the urgent need for our Conference to consider in depth the agenda item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". The Conference on Disarmament has been requested by the General Assembly to intensify its consideration of the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects taking into account all relevant proposals including those presented in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space at its 1985 session and at the fortieth session of the General Assembly. The Conference has been called upon to undertake negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Romanian delegation believes that questions concerning outer space should be approached on the basis of the recognized principle of the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Consequently, the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind. Therefore, the fundamental objective of our efforts should be to stop any use of outer space for military purposes. Effective measures should be taken to prevent all actions to expand the arms race in outer space, and to ensure the complete demilitarization of outer space.

As emphasized in Working Paper CD/545 tabled by our delegation last year, "Romania considers it necessary for the United Nations to shoulder the responsibility for the conclusion of an international treaty on outer space. One possibility which could be envisaged would be the convening of a world conference and, possibly, the creation of a special agency for the defence of outer space". It should be noted that the existing bodies of the United Nations system are not able to ensure access by all States and, in particular, by the developing countries, to peaceful space technology. This highlights the particular importance of establishing a specialized United Nations agency for outer space with the two-fold task of ensuring the widest possible access by all States to space technology and undertaking various control and surveillance operations that are currently being carried out exclusively by the space Powers. Such a body would have to reconcile a wide variety of political, legal, military, economic and commercial requirements and would contribute to the promotion of broad international co-operation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space.

The proposal for the establishment of such an agency is more topical than ever today when all peoples are gravely concerned at the danger posed to all mankind by an arms race in outer space and in particular by the threat of exacerbating the current state of insecurity by developments that could further undermine international peace and security, retard the achievement of general and complete disarmament, and risk creating obstacles to the development of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Therefore we strongly support the acceleration of the informal consultations to ensure the re-establishment and beginning of actual work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The urgent task of today is to create a comprehensive system of international security, and it is very important for the cause of peace, it is in the interest of all mankind, to find ways to achieve closer and more productive international co-operation in order to build such a system. In the opinion of the Soviet Union, the basis of such a system in the military sphere seems to be as follows: first, renunciation by the nuclear Powers of war -- both nuclear and conventional -- against each other or against third countries; second, prevention of an arms race in outer space, cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests and the total elimination of such weapons, a ban on and the destruction of chemical weapons, the renunciation of other means of mass annihilation; third, a strictly controlled lowering of the levels of military capabilities of countries to the limits of reasonable adequacy;

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fourth, disbandment of military alliances and, as a stage towards this, renunciation of their enlargement and of the formation of new ones, and fifth, the balanced and commensurate reduction of military budgets.

It was stated from the rostrum of the Congress that the Soviet Union is and will be acting on the world scene seriously and openly, actively and honestly. We intend to strive persistently and actively for the elimination of nuclear weapons, for a radical cutback in the arms race, for the building of international security that is dependable and equal for all States.

I have referred only to that part of the basic elements of international security proposed by the USSR which has a direct bearing on the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Now, Mr. President, permit me to dwell on item 5 of the agenda of our forum.

At present, item 5 of the agenda of the Conference, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", is acquiring ever-increasing significance. The technology of the development and production of space strike weapons is advancing and accelerating in certain places at a truly cosmic pace.

According to a statement by the Director of the SDI Programme, James Abrahamson, research on the Strategic Defense Initiative is moving from technology development to "major experiments". In addition, it was stated that the United States is also working on technology to counter possible Soviet counter-steps to the SDI. This is evidence that the United States, despite the soothing statements about the SDI programme being "research", intends to advance that programme far beyond the limits of research. Thus, the implementation of the "star wars" plans may very soon become irreversible.

We have no intention of dwelling in detail on the dangers connected with the deployment of space strike weapons. We have repeatedly set forth our viewpoint on that subject. Let us consider only one aspect: how would the Strategic Defense Initiative influence stability?

The analysis carried out in the Soviet Union and in other countries of any versions of deployment of strike weapons in outer space, or of any versions of deployment by one or by both sides of large-scale ABM systems, indicates that such actions would result in the disruption of the military equilibrium, in a sharp destabilization of the strategic situation and in the increased risk of nuclear war.

The deployment by one side of an ABM system in space practically means that it acquires an additional offensive potential (military superiority) equal to the number of the other side's strategic missiles that the ABM system is capable of neutralizing. The side that has created the ABM system for its territory acquires the capability of countering the retaliatory nuclear strike of the other side or, which is one and the same thing, the capability of a first nuclear missile strike with impunity. A situation arises when one of the sides acquires full strategic superiority and a powerful incentive to try to achieve its political aims by means of nuclear war.

In other words, the SDI, in creating the illusion of an impenetrable space shield, inevitably entails a shift towards a "first-strike" state of

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mind. All this leads not only to the disruption of the military balance but also to the loss of the capacity for nuclear deterrence, which destroys the foundation of strategic stability. In these conditions, of course, we cannot speak of eliminating nuclear weapons, or of their reduction. Quite the reverse, the sides would have to increase offensive nuclear weapons, and that would result in an unrestrained arms race. Incidentally, new discoveries made under the programme for the development of space strike weapons could also be applied for the development of new types of conventional weapons for ground forces, for the air force and for the navy.

This destabilization would also take place if the development and deployment of unlimited ABM systems is carried out by both sides. The difference in the scope of scientific and technological groundwork, in geographic conditions and in economic capabilities would result also in differences in the pace of deployment of ABM systems by the sides. Consequently, only one of the sides would acquire initially the capability to counter a retaliatory nuclear strike. The situation which has been described earlier would occur.

Acute destabilization, however, would already be observed in the course of the deployment of a large-scale ABM system. At a certain stage of such deployment, the defensive ABM system would grow into a qualitatively new offensive strategic system capable of destroying satellites, aircraft, air command posts, stores and other ground targets. In this connection, the possibility arises of sharply increasing the effectiveness of a first nuclear strike by the integrated use of offensive arms on Earth and space strike weapons. Does that correspond to strengthening stability?

Even in hypothetical conditions of an absolutely simultaneous deployment by the sides of an initially limited, and then comprehensive ABM system, strategic stability would be undermined. In that case, both sides acquire the capability to make a first surprise strike against the space ABM means of the other side, to put them out of operation using their own strike space weapons, i.e. to eliminate the "shield" while simultaneously dealing a nuclear first strike, but now with impunity.

In other words, with the availability of a "space shield" the side which was the first to attack would be the winner. Nothing remains of strategic stability.

Furthermore, in the case of the implementation of the "star wars" plans a completely new factor appears which would be conducive to an accidental beginning of a nuclear war, a factor previously unknown in history. That factor is connected with the need to use fast and extremely complicated automatic equipment in space strike systems, as well as with the necessity of transferring the decision-making function concerning the initiation of hostilities to automatic machines, to computers.

A space ABM system cannot function in the traditional scheme. The time that elapses between the appearance of the missiles in the atmosphere and their destruction must not exceed 100 to 300 seconds. It is necessary during this period to detect and identify targets and distribute them among interceptors, perform targeting operations and destroy the missiles. Naturally, in these conditions there is no time for submitting reports to the leadership or even for checking the operation of the computers. It is the

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

automatic systems, the computers, that would take decisions and start the war. The political leadership would already be unable to play any role in the process.

It is also understandable that only automatic devices are able to respond quickly enough to other automatic devices. What then would happen if the other side also created the necessary automated systems? The fate of mankind would be placed in the hands of automatic machines.

Automatic devices make mistakes, even the most dependable computers sometimes fail. The more complicated the technological systems are, the more probable are errors and unforeseen situations that might result in a catastrophe. The super-complex automatic weapon systems developed and deployed in outer space would have to work in conditions of constant combat alert for decades and never make an error. That is not realistic. Besides, is it possible to predict the reaction of space strike systems to the launching of peaceful delivery missiles? Wouldn't automatic devices activate space weapons in response to an accidental deviation of such missiles from their trajectories or to the accidental explosion in outer space of a space vehicle similar to that of Challenger?

One should not exclude the possibility of a situation in which the creation of a "space shield" by one side would force the other side to create something similar as well. In that case two extremely complex systems would be opposed to each other. By the rules of the technological improvement of this kind of systems, in order to exclude possible technological mistakes joint large-scale tests would need to be carried out. That would be logical in any peaceful international project. It is absurd, however, in this case. The United States would not give an ABM system to the Soviet Union to enable the USSR to adapt its own measures of response to it, and vice versa. Thus, two mutually unco-ordinated and opposed automated systems would still further increase the probability of a catastrophe.

On several occasions already the American early warning services have sounded a false alarm after mistaking flocks of wild geese or something else for Soviet bombers. In each case, however, people have had enough time and wisdom to see the mistake. In the case of the SDI, there would not be time for that, and computers -- even the "smartest" ones -- don't have wisdom.

In the most thorough analysis of the SDI it is impossible to find even some individual features of the project that strengthen strategic stability. The SDI holds out no other promise for the future than the intensification of the arms race, increased tension, and an atmosphere of intense fear and distrust in relations among States. To put it briefly, strategic stability would be replaced by strategic chaos; old dangers would not disappear, they would only increase many times over and be supplemented by new dangers.

Artificial earth satellites are of great importance for the activities of mankind, for its progress and prosperity. They are used particularly extensively in communications, navigation and meteorology. Profitable and dependable commercial satellite communication systems for transmitting information for all kinds of purposes have been established. Satellite navigation systems have been utilized. No less than 50 countries already now receive information directly from meteorological satellites.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The data obtained by geodetic satellites are important for mapping natural resources, for the increased accuracy of trajectory measurements, and for the study of our planet. The pictures taken from outer space have demonstrated extensive possibilities for the observation and control of natural resources and for using them wisely, as well as for the solution of environmental protection problems. Rescue satellites that transmit signals from ships and aircraft in distress to ground stations are operating in outer space.

Satellites contribute to the cause of safeguarding peace on Earth. The artificial earth satellites intended for missile-attack warnings, for observation and control, for communications and for other purposes contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of strategic stability. They have special importance in that respect.

In addition to the already established areas of the peaceful use of outer space, new areas will evidently be developed. The successful solution of the tasks that lie ahead in the further development of outer space, and the creation of favourable conditions for international co-operation in that area, are possible when the door is tightly closed to prevent space strike weapons from entering that sphere, and when there is a guaranteed ban on the use of force against manned and unmanned space vehicles. An example of the fruitful co-operation among many countries in the peaceful use of outer space and not for the sake of "star wars" is the successful project for the study of the Haley's comet. An exciting picture of the comet obtained at the Institute for Space Research in Moscow was observed by eminent astronomers from many countries of the world. The Soviet Vega spacecraft carried instruments manufactured not only in the USSR but also in Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Czechoslovakia. The scientific programme of the project is co-ordinated with the studies of Haley's comet carried out by the European Space Agency, the United States and Japan.

In 1983 the Soviet Union proposed that a treaty should be concluded on the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the Earth, and submitted a draft of such a treaty (CD/476). It was proposed specifically to prohibit all space strike weapons, including anti-satellite systems. However, for well-known reasons the work of the Conference on the text of such an agreement has not been initiated until now.

Bearing in mind the situation that now exists, the lack of readiness of certain countries to solve the problem of the prevention of the arms race in outer space as a whole, the Soviet Union now proposes that partial measures be taken to strengthen confidence among States in the area of space activities. Specifically, it proposes the conclusion of an international agreement to ensure the immunity of space objects.

Under such an agreement, States could agree not to use force or the threat of force against space objects, including the obligation not to damage or change the trajectory of flight of space objects of other States. It would also be important to envisage in it the commitment not to develop, not to test and not to deploy new anti-satellite systems and to eliminate the already existing ones. In the course of negotiations it would, naturally, be necessary to work out the forms of verification of the implementation of the provisions of such an agreement, the necessary definitions and other elements of an understanding.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

We are convinced that an agreement on a multilateral basis banning the use of force against satellites corresponds to the interests of all countries -- those that launch satellites into orbits, as well as those using the services of satellites. In submitting the proposal concerning such an agreement the USSR is taking into consideration the positions of many States members of the Conference which at this and previous sessions have advocated the establishment of a régime for the protection of satellites and the banning of anti-satellite weapons. They include Sweden, France, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sri Lanka, India and others. An international legal guarantee of the inviolability of satellites would be a factor strengthening strategic stability.

It is quite obvious also that such an agreement on a multilateral basis would be an important contribution by the Conference on Disarmament to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and would contribute to progress at the bilateral Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons as well. It would seem that in the circumstances, when there are no weapons in outer space, negotiations aimed at the elaboration of a text of such an agreement should not face insurmountable difficulties and they can be conducted so as to produce positive results in a relatively short period of time.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M.S. Gorbachev, said at the 27th Congress of the CPSU: "It is imperative, before it is too late, to find a realistic solution guaranteeing that the arms race does not spread to outer space. The 'star wars' programme cannot be allowed to become a stimulus for a further arms race or a road-block to radical disarmament." The proposal to conclude an agreement on the immunity of earth satellites, and on the prohibition and elimination of anti-satellite systems, is further evidence to the effect that the Soviet Union is actively seeking constructive solutions which would lead in practice to the prevention of the arms race in outer space and to its cessation on Earth.

An agreement to ensure the immunity of space objects would not, understandably, solve the problem of the prevention of the arms race in outer space in all its dimensions. However, it would be an important step in the direction of the complete prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the Earth. That would be a step from "star wars" to "star peace".

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(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

Space science and technology have launched man into the conquest of space. A few countries with greater capabilities are in the vanguard of that conquest, while the vast majority of countries are taking part to a different and lesser degree. The international community has obtained limited results in its

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

attempts to regulate the activities of States in outer space. The most resounding achievement was the adoption of the 1967 Treaty. Other international instruments of a multilateral and bilateral nature were also adopted, but there is no need to mention them because they are well known to us all.

The beginnings of international co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space both within the United Nations and in a bilateral framework has given rise to a variety of agreements leading to the use of satellites of great importance for communications, weather forecasting, geographical and natural resource surveying, among other things. In short, today no one can imagine a world without the benefits derived from the exploration and peaceful use of outer space.

At the same time, however, space science and technology have aroused man's imagination to create instruments of war. This is where the Conference on Disarmament is faced with its specific responsibility, and it has therefore included item 5 in its agenda, whose purpose is to prevent an arms race in outer space.

World public opinion already knows that the space powers have steadily militarized outer space. However, the international community must certainly be interested in also knowing whether the militarization of outer space has reached the point of no return. This is a question which we raise in the Conference on Disarmament. It is a question which will receive a definitive answer in the near future, since later the situation will become irrevocable if the policy of the space Powers continues along current lines. When the point of no return is reached, outer space will be militarized once and for all, and then here, in the Conference on Disarmament, we shall have to alter the title of agenda item 5 which refers to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and change it to refer to cessation of the arms race in outer space and space disarmament.

We believe, most unfortunately, that we are not far from having to make such a change in our agenda, which would mean changing our objective of "preventing" for that of "halting" an arms race in outer space. When that time comes, and everything suggests that we are heading for it, it will be a moment of tragic symbolism for the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

This Conference is continually aware that the space Powers have set out to militarize outer space. This is an obvious conclusion inasmuch as our work on this item has been watered down in general discussions and it is impossible to attain the necessary consensus to set up competent subsidiary bodies to study and negotiate agreements to prevent the militarization of space.

The six heads of State, including President Alfonsín of my own country, have drawn attention to this in their Joint Message addressed to President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev on 28 February last, in which they said: "We are concerned, however, that no concrete measures have as yet been agreed which would help to prevent an arms race in space...".

At a time when disturbing trends in space armaments may be observed and events in that environment are rapidly transforming the destiny of mankind, the Conference on Disarmament must rapidly resume the substantive

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

consideration of this item. We are convinced that as time passes without effective solutions in this sphere, diplomatic efforts will be overtaken by irreversible military realities.

The first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, clearly perceived the dangers inherent in the continuing militarization of outer space and the spread of the arms race to that environment. However, seven years had to lapse before the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body could establish, last year, the corresponding ad hoc committee with a timid mandate and for a brief period.

My delegation believes that it is urgently necessary for this Conference to continue its efforts on this issue, even if they are far from satisfying our aspirations and concerns. We have more than once expressed our satisfaction at the start of bilateral negotiations between the two main space Powers. At the same time, we have pointed out that these negotiations should not take place at the expense of the multilateral approach to the problem. We share the unanimous view point expressed in this Conference about the desirable complementarity between the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the multilateral negotiations for which the Conference on Disarmament is responsible. However, as we have pointed out previously, the complementarity between these two frameworks cannot exist if there is no communication between them. It would therefore be useful for us to be periodically informed about the course of the bilateral negotiations, as stated in General Assembly resolution 40/87. A report by the other space Powers giving details of the various military activities they are undertaking would also be something which would contribute to a better understanding of this problem in Conference.

Military activity in space must be classified and described because otherwise it will not be possible to prohibit it. To this end it is necessary to exchange information and give wide-ranging detailed reports on what that military activity consists of, what space object with military uses are, and what space weapons are.

Paragraph 51 of the Ad Hoc Committee's Report last year says that it would be most beneficial for experts to take part in view of the complexity of the item. We support this idea.

More than two decades ago the United States and the Soviet Union began testing anti-satellite systems. The reasons for the continued interest in such systems are obvious in view of the essential functions carried out by satellites in those Powers' military forces. Thus, we should recall that the technology of anti-satellite systems is connected with the development of anti-ballistic missile systems. The existence of such systems, besides provoking countermeasures to eliminate them, intensifies the development of nuclear weapon systems. This issue, which so far has only been taken up at the bilateral level, has serious implications for the entire international community.

The weapon systems to which I have just referred, and others which may be developed, will certainly trigger off an unprecedented and potentially uncontrollable arms race both in space and on Earth. This process, which has critical effects for the security of the two military alliances, also endangers the survival of the world as a whole because of its potential for unleashing a nuclear war. The multilateral approach is therefore necessary so that the security interests of all States are taken into account.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

In a period of constant evolution and change in research and development relating to new weapons and weapon systems, the possibilities of innovation are unlimited. Clearly, no type of weapon and no field of application will require as much investment as the development and deployment of space weapons. The fact that these economic and technological efforts cannot be used in a spirit of solidarity to overcome the backwardness of a vast proportion of mankind is to be deplored.

Outer space has been militarized for more than 25 years. As the latest SIPRI yearbook states, since 1958 2,219 satellites which carry out real or potential military functions have been launched into space. This represents at least 75 per cent of all satellites in space. The high percentage of satellites with military uses highlights the fact that the super-Powers' space activities are integrated with their weapon systems on Earth and their strategies and doctrines associated with the use of nuclear weapons. It is also not out of place to recall that some nuclear weapon States have used satellites to support military operations against developing countries. Serious events of this kind highlight the interest of all countries, space-Powers and others, in achieving the rapid demilitarization of outer space. The circumstances should be borne in mind when considering a legal régime for the protection and use of satellites.

Together with the vast majority of countries making up the international community, Argentina has always maintained that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and that consequently it should be preserved for exclusively peaceful uses in order to promote the development of all nations and international co-operation.

Space, a new dimension in human enterprise, makes all peoples of the Earth profoundly aware of man's common destiny. More clearly than ever our planet is, in the universal city of the Cosmos, the sole home of all men whatever country they may inhabit. Consequently the use of outer space cannot be based on criteria linked with military doctrines which reflect the specific national security perceptions of the nuclear-weapon space Powers. Criteria of this kind foster the process of action and reaction which perpetuates the arms race between them. This is a problem which must be approached from a broader standpoint fully reflecting the concerns and interests of all States on Earth.

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

My statement today will be devoted to item 5 of our agenda: prevention of an arms race in outer space, a subject to which my Government, as is well known, has long attached special importance. In this connection I would like to recall that Italy was one of the first countries to work for a multilateral dialogue in the field of arms control in space. My Government did not confine itself to acceding to international instruments in this field but also in 1978 took the initiative at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament of proposing new measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, a proposal which was reflected in paragraph 80 of the Final Document.

Great attention is indeed devoted to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space both at the political level and in the wider context of public opinion. We believe that this is rightly so, because arms control issues related to space have a very significant bearing on international stability and, therefore, on international peace and security.

We therefore witnessed with a feeling of satisfaction and confidence the launching in 1985, after several years' efforts, of the activities of an Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Even if it occurred quite late in the session, only allowing nine meetings on substantive problems, the discussions have been most useful. A carefully balanced programme of work has in fact allowed a first exchange of views, under the enlightened chairmanship of Ambassador Alfarargy of Egypt, on the general aspects of the military use of space, the relevant legal régime and the proposals made so far to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee, although brief and thus somewhat superficial, showed the great complexity of the issue to be discussed, as lucidly described by the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Dhanapala, in his remarkable statement of 30 July 1985. This same discussion has nevertheless opened the way for consideration in greater depth of the more significant problems relating to the prevention of an arms race in space. The analysis of proposals has only just begun; these proposals in many cases call for a further elaboration by their authors. But what seems particularly important in this context is a consideration of the question of effective verification mechanisms. The in-depth study of the problems, concepts, existing agreements and proposals should therefore be pursued, as it has proved useful and promising. The work-programme adopted last year gives us the widest chance to proceed in this direction. The assistance of experts might also be valuable for the consideration of a subject which, in its novelty, needs a thorough examination of almost all its aspects in order to achieve concrete progress at the multilateral level.

Under these auspices, the Ad Hoc Committee can make an important contribution in the field of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, thus responding to the attention with which this question is now deeply perceived.

For our part, we think that an in-depth consideration of many important aspects of this issue is possible -- and indeed necessary -- in this forum.

The General Assembly of the United Nations itself, in its resolution 40/87 of 12 December 1985 (paragraphs 4 and 6) seems to have implicitly drawn a distinction between certain issues that should be dealt

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multilaterally and other ones that should instead be the subject of bilateral negotiations. This distinction is particularly important as it signals the determination of the General Assembly to facilitate as far as possible the bilateral talks of Geneva.

I should like to recall, in this regard, that the Soviet-American agreement of 8 January provided for the opening of negotiations on space and nuclear arms with all these questions to be considered and solved in their interrelationship. The transfer of negotiations on those issues from the bilateral forum to another forum could seriously undermine the very basis of the Geneva talks thus also creating obstacles to the nuclear disarmament process.

The Italian Government wholeheartedly supports the goal proclaimed both by the United States Administration and by the Government of the USSR of a world free of nuclear, offensive weapons. It seems to us that these proclamations strengthen the prospects of general and complete disarmament which should be implemented in a context of stability and peace and which should include a peaceful use of space to the benefit of all mankind.

The Conference on Disarmament has a primary role to play and immense work to accomplish for the achievement of such goals and, in particular, it will have a wide range of activities to perform in dealing with questions concerning space. The more so since technological progress and scientific research constitute a reality which is in constant evolution and has a tremendous bearing on the problems of disarmament and security. Our main task in Geneva should especially be aimed at working out co-operative approaches and at conducting a timely consideration of the many aspects involved, so as to lay the ground for a clearer understanding and for a gradual solution of difficulties. We think that given the time which lies ahead before research programmes currently under way yield concrete results we shall have the chance to accomplish very useful work, if we do not indulge in procedural wranglings.

The Conference still has to decide whether to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee and to confirm its previous mandate. The purpose of the remarks which follow is to assess some work which still remains to be done under such a mandate and to provide some conceptual guidelines for a discussion of issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the Ad Hoc Committee, also in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/87 of 12 December 1985.

The Conference on Disarmament exercises its responsibilities in an independent way in accordance with paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, resolution 40/87, in spite of reservations expressed by a number of countries on paragraphs 5 and 9, contains a number of elements which are relevant to the definition of a conceptual approach to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and which therefore deserves to be carefully examined.

Paragraph 1 of resolution 40/87 reads: "Recalls the obligation of all States to refrain from the threat or use of force in their space activities". The text of this paragraph is related to the discussions which were held last year, in the Ad Hoc Committee, whose programme of work included, as mentioned above, consideration of existing agreements relevant to the prevention of an

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arms race in outer space. However, neither the General Assembly nor the Ad Hoc Committee have investigated in depth central problems such as the relationship between the commitment made by United Nations Members under Article 2 of the Charter and the right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter, nor the way in which these interrelated commitments and rights may be applicable to the specific field of space activities. On a more general plan, the Ad Hoc Committee has failed so far to assess to what extent and under what conditions existing commitments or obligations which are general in scope can be dealt with so as to concretely contribute to the purpose of preventing an arms race in outer space. Similarly, useful work could be done in assessing compliance with existing obligations concerning space and other related activities. In fact paragraph 1 of resolution 40/87, in its broad formulation, opens a whole range of problems on which the Conference on Disarmament should fully investigate.

Paragraph 2 of resolution 40/87 touches upon a subject which was only marginally debated within the Ad Hoc Committee in 1985, although it is crucial to a correct consideration of the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The text correctly focuses on the peaceful purposes which must govern the use of space. Its impact should nevertheless also be considered from a wider angle. In fact, paragraph 2 links the use of outer space for peaceful purposes to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Moreover, resolution 40/87 expressly refers in its preambular part to Article III of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of State in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies under which States Parties to the Treaty have undertaken "to carry on activities in the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding". In the debates which took place in 1985 within the Ad Hoc Committee, while some misgivings were expressed on the role of observation satellites on the ground of their alleged capability to intrude into the sphere of national sovereignty, the importance of the role of such satellites in ensuring compliance with disarmament agreements was widely recognized, together with the stabilizing effect of this specific form of military use of space. These debates, as well as the text of paragraph 2 of resolution 40/87, provide a basis for defining the angle from which the problem of the military use of space and its implications for consideration of the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space should also be examined. If space is to be used for peaceful purposes only, the basic criterion to judge whether space activities are compatible with this purpose is not so much their military or civilian nature, but rather their capability to enhance stability and thus contribute to the goal of maintaining international peace and security.

Both the debates which took place in 1985 within the Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the deliberations adopted on this matter by the General Assembly at its fortieth session provide a clear picture of the complexity of the issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space which still need to be appropriately investigated. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the Conference shows that these issues have just been touched upon in the brief span of existence of the Committee and that plenty of work remains to be done to establish a consensual basis for the future work of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

At its 1985 session the Conference on Disarmament established an Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space under a mandate which offered plenty of opportunities for in-depth discussion of the most important issues related with that question. This mandate was agreed by the Conference bearing in mind the text of the relevant paragraph of resolution 39/59 of 12 December 1984 which was identical to the text of paragraph 9 of resolution 40/87.

The Ad Hoc Committee did not have the time during the 1985 session of the Conference to go beyond a preliminary discussion of the issues it had been requested to consider. That mandate has enabled us to make a beginning, but it has by no means been exhausted. This continues to be the view of the Italian Government. In 1985 the mandate was attained only with great difficulty, skill and perseverance. Attempts to re-negotiate it would probably involve further lengthy discussion at the expense of substantive deliberation. Moreover, the political and negotiating context in which the mandate was agreed has not appreciably changed. Indeed, while the United States and the USSR are seriously coming to grips with the negotiating objectives they have set for themselves, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we need to ensure that our deliberations although primarily responding to the interests of peace and progress, and ultimately to those of mankind, are complementary to, and not disruptive of, those negotiations.

The Italian delegation considers it therefore reasonable for the Conference on Disarmament at its current session to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee under its previous mandate, leaving it to the Committee to formulate concrete suggestions on its future activities on the basis of the progress achieved in its consideration of issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

The Conference is now halfway through the first part of its 1986 session, but it must be said that so far it has not succeeded in making tangible progress on the most pressing priority issues on its agenda. These are primarily the question of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and other items. The international community's attention is focused on these paramount problems.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

Another of the major issues whose resolution brooks no delay is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The threat of such a race exists, it is a real one, connected with the United States' desire to create space strike weapons which would form a large-scale anti-ballistic missile shield.

Many delegations at this Conference have pointed out the destabilizing and dangerous nature of the American "Strategic Defence Initiative". This is something which should be mentioned over and over again. Many politicians, scientists and military specialists emphasise that the creation of space strike weapons would be an insurmountable obstacle to achieving agreement on the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons. This stems quite obviously from the link between defensive and offensive strategic weapons. There can be no rules in a space arms race. Any measure, any stage in the race will inevitably be followed by countermeasures from the other side, and the arsenals of both offensive and defensive arms will swell.

The inclusion in the structure of the strategic forces of one or of both sides of one more qualitatively new component, such as a large-scale ABM system with space-based components, confuses the entire system of evaluating the strategic balance and creates further difficulties for calculating the power relations of the partners in the negotiations. In addition, most likely, as already occurred in the case of strategic offensive weapons, developments in this sphere, (by the two leading nuclear Powers will take different paths, which will further increase the assymetry in the strategic forces of the two sides, and makes it all the more difficult to compare them. This assymetry will prove even greater if one takes into account the potential means of countering the space-based elements of an anti-missile system, as well as of the systems which may in turn be developed to counter those means. And this leads to the familiar circle: weapons -- counter-weapons -- counter-counter-weapons and so forth ad infinitum.

The SDI advocates assert that it is really only a research programme. However, the scale of the activity and the specific programmes and facts indicate precisely the contrary. For example, it was announced that at the White Sands test site in the United States a stage of a Titan rocket was hit

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by a powerful laser beam at a distance of one kilometer. At the Nevada test site underground nuclear explosions are being carried out to develop a nuclear-powered X-ray laser. In the Maxwell Laboratory in California journalists were shown an electromagnetic gun in action.

The "Strategic Defence Initiative" is loudly advertised as a particularly "peaceful", "defensive" programme which is allegedly intended "to save mankind from nuclear weapons". This is done in order to weaken criticism of it in the international arena, to justify its multi-billion cost, and to avoid the ban on offensive space weapons.

The technical characteristics of the space strike weapons being developed under the SDI programme indicate that they are capable of hitting not only intercontinental ballistic missiles and warheads in space. With their high energy beams or high-speed strike elements, as well as their long range, these weapons can suddenly destroy military or civilian targets in practically all environments -- space, air, earth and sea.

Even if it is considered that the initial development and deployment of space strike weapons will be intended solely to destroy ballistic missiles and warheads, later, when they are modernized and made more sophisticated, they will inevitably be given the capability to hit other targets: that is the logic of weapon development. Thus, this is not a question of defensive weapons but rather of weapons of aggression, of the creation of a first strike capability. Outer space not only strengthens the strategic offensive capability but actually becomes its most important element.

There is another factor which must not be overlooked. Together with space strike weapons, in the United States intensive work is under way on the development of systems for overcoming anti-missile defences. I am referring to the development of fast cruise missiles, the development of low-flying ballistic missiles, which as a result are invulnerable to space-based beam weapons; I am referring to the further development of dummy and manoeuvrable ballistic-missile warheads, and to efforts to develop means of shortening the boost stage of missile trajectories, and so forth.

A question must be asked: why develop systems to counter ABM systems if the SDI is to lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons? Clearly, this is being done not for defence but for a nuclear strike. Obviously, the United States understands that, in response to the SDI, the Soviet Union will also take suitable measures which may also follow the lines of defensive weapons, including space-based ones. The conclusion must be that they are developing in advance nuclear first-strike means capable of overcoming an opposing ABM system.

All this must necessarily cause deep concern. The expression of this concern is to be found in the proposals of delegations belonging to all groups in the Conference to put an end to the danger which comes from space.

Many delegations have expressed views on the creation of a régime for the protection of satellites, which today play an increasingly important role, inter alia in helping to maintain strategic stability. The USSR has proposed that an international agreement should be drawn up in the Conference to ensure the immunity of artificial space objects and prohibit anti-satellite systems.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

As you will all recall, this proposal was made in the statement by the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, G.M. Kornienko, in our Conference, and subsequently developed in Ambassador Issraelyan's statement at our last plenary meeting. Obviously this is not a comprehensive solution to the problem. However, it would be a major step in the direction of ensuring that space remains peaceful and free of weapons. We recently heard detailed proposals on the creation of such a system in the statement of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador Wegener. It seems to us that the Conference can resolve this problem, which will be a concrete and substantial contribution to the strengthening of security.

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(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

One of the urgent disarmament issues facing us is that embodied in the fifth item on our agenda -- the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Last year this Conference established an Ad hoc Committee under this agenda item which began consideration of issues relevant to prevention of an arms race in outer space. Within the limits of its possibilities in nine substantive meetings, the Committee grappled with some of the most difficult and complex facets of arms control. It identified many of the critical issues, which, in itself, was a significant accomplishment. It also revealed important differences of opinion and position on many of these issues. At the conclusion of our work last year many of us had a greater appreciation for the challenges involved in dealing with this subject.

My delegation believes that the Outer Space Committee should now be re-established, under the same mandate, to continue its important work. An examination of the report from last year clearly shows that there is much work still to be done under this mandate. For example, we need a more broadly accepted and clearer understanding of many terms. These include the "militarization of outer space" and "peaceful uses of outer space". The effect of existing legal régimes needs to be further considered. Substantial discussion is needed of the role of satellite systems in maintaining strategic stability and of the issue of protection of satellites.

These examples by no means exhaust the areas of work that can be accomplished under the present mandate. I call upon all delegations to join to re-establish without delay the Ad hoc Committee under the same mandate as in 1985.

Recently we have listened with care to two statements in this Conference by distinguished representatives of the Soviet Union that addressed in part the question of outer space, and the related question of the United States strategic defence initiative.

The first statement was by Deputy Minister Kornienko on 20 February, and the second by Ambassador Issraelyan on 13 March. I believe that a number of arguments and points in these statements were inaccurate and misleading, and require a response from my delegation.

In dealing with the strategic defence initiative, the arguments centred on the claim that this United States research programme would disrupt and destabilize the present military balance. This programme was said to be

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contributing to a transition to a so-called "first-strike psychology" and it was claimed that the strategic defence initiative would result in the replacement of strategic stability with strategic chaos.

At the same time, one might conclude from the Soviet statements that their activities in the area of strategic forces development -- activities that have been in progress for many years -- do not raise significant concerns to the United States about the viability of strategic stability. Such a conclusion would of course be incorrect. In fact, only the Soviet Union today possesses a force of intercontinental ballistic missiles with a combination of yield and accuracy sufficient to attack and destroy hardened military facilities that are key elements of nuclear deterrence. The United States does not have a comparable hard-target offensive capability. Only the Soviet Union has mobile missiles with multiple warheads of intercontinental range. And only the Soviet Union has a fully tested and deployed anti-satellite system.

Moreover, since 1979 the Soviet Union has deployed at least three new types of intercontinental ballistic missiles, eight improved versions of existing ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and long-range cruise missiles. Eight thousand strategic warheads have been added to the nuclear forces of the Soviet Union since 1969, when the SALT I negotiations began, 4,000 of which have been added since 1979 when the SALT II treaty was signed.

It is therefore difficult to understand the concern which we have heard expressed, when these developments have continued without pause, and when in the strategic arms reduction talks the United States still awaits a response from the Soviet Union to its proposals, proposals designed not to destabilize but to strengthen strategic stability.

One might further conclude from the statements of the Soviet Union that it has no programmes comparable to the United States strategic defence initiative. This conclusion, too, would be incorrect.

I addressed a number of these matters last year in my statement of 19 March. I regret the necessity to return to them, but it is important to try again to set at least part of the record straight. First, the Soviet Union is heavily involved in strategic defence, with programmes that go well beyond research. In fact, over the last two decades, the Soviet Union has spent roughly as much on strategic defence as it has on its offensive nuclear forces. As one example of this very large effort, the Soviet Union has deployed around Moscow the world's only operational anti-ballistic missile system. The United States is concerned that, in the aggregate, Soviet ABM-related activities could provide the basis for deployment of an ABM defence of their national territory, a deployment which would violate the ABM treaty.

The Soviet Union also has an in-depth national air defence force, an extensive political leadership survival programme, and nationwide civil defence forces and programmes. Soviet strategic defence programmes, moreover, are not restricted to the more traditional approaches. Since the 1960s the USSR has also been pursuing research on advanced technologies for strategic defence. These technologies include those for high-energy lasers, particle

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beam weapons, radio-frequency weapons, and kinetic energy weapons. It is these same types of technologies that are being researched in the United States strategic defence initiative programme.

The strategic defence programme of the Soviet Union has been largely overlooked in the recent public debate. Indeed, due to the closed nature of Soviet society, their strategic defence efforts have proceeded free from debates of the sort that are occurring now in the West over the utility and implications of our programme.

In addition to its large and comprehensive programme of research and development on advanced strategic defence technologies, the Soviet Union has the world's most active military space programme. The original component of this, of course, is the ballistic missile nuclear warhead, the most dangerous weapon that transits space. Intercontinental ballistic missiles carrying such warheads through space were first tested by the Soviet Union in 1957.

Today, the Soviet ballistic missile forces -- far larger than those of the United States -- are a destabilizing threat to everyone's security. In addition, it was the Soviet Union which began, in the 1960s, the development and testing of what remains today as the world's only operational antisatellite system. Similarly, the Soviet ABM system, as well as the Soviet high-energy lasers at their Sary Shagan test range, have the capability of damaging satellites in orbit.

The Soviet military use of space has grown to the point where its overall military strategy relies significantly on satellites. Soviet electronic intelligence ocean reconnaissance satellites and nuclear-powered radar ocean reconnaissance satellites are deployed to detect, locate and target naval forces of the United States and its allies. Indeed, in 1985, the Soviet Union launched approximately 100 payloads into space and most of these were for military purposes.

Considering these facts, it becomes apparent that criticisms by the Soviet Union of the United States strategic defence initiative, and in particular its space-related aspects -- have no basis. The United States is not expanding the military competition into new areas; the Soviet Union has been pursuing the same technologies for two decades. The United States is not initiating "the militarization of space"; space has been militarized for many years, primarily by Soviet systems and programmes.

There are also a number of specific allegations concerning the strategic defence initiative which require a response.

First, we have been told that potential weapon systems on which United States research is being carried out will have an offensive potential to destroy "any other target on earth". This is not the case. The United States in fact seeks a strategic régime in which both sides increasingly rely upon effective defences for their security, thereby precluding an effective offensive strategy on any nation's part.

Second, Mr. Kornienko stated that systems in the strategic defence initiative programme could be "only meaningful as part of an aggressive design". The charge that the United States harbours aggressive designs is false, and the United States strongly rejects it. We seek deep reductions in strategic offensive nuclear forces. We seek these reductions immediately. We

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seek them independent of whether effective defences prove feasible or not. If the United States sought defensive systems to "supplement" an offensive strategy, it would not make sense for us to seek the reduction of strategic offensive nuclear forces. Nor would the United States seek a jointly managed transition with the Soviet Union to a strategic régime where the security of both sides, indeed the whole world, would be underwritten by those defences which could frustrate the offensive designs of any aggressor.

Finally, Mr. Kornienki alluded to allegations that the strategic defence initiative is inconsistent with the ABM Treaty. There is no basis to these allegations. Let me discuss them briefly.

First, it was alleged by the Soviet Union that the United States proposed only a scientific research programme, but that this was disproved by United States Department of Defence documents indicating that certain "advanced development" efforts will be conducted. There is no contradiction here; the programme will include a variety of activities allowed by the ABM Treaty -- and that Treaty allows not only research, but also development, testing and even deployment, subject to limitations.

Second, it was alleged that the objective of the strategic defence initiative was to deploy a space-based ABM system, and that this objective was inconsistent with the ABM Treaty. That, too, is an incorrect statement. The objective of the strategic defence initiative includes determining whether effective defences are feasible in a number of basing modes, and whether they will meet a variety of stringent criteria. Such an exploration is legal under the ABM Treaty; as I have already noted the Soviet Union is pursuing the same kind of research in this area.

The legitimacy of such research was, in fact, emphasized by the Soviet Union soon after the Treaty was signed, when the Soviet Defence Minister informed the Supreme Soviet that "research and experimental work aimed at resolving the problem of defending the country against nuclear missile attack" was not limited by the ABM Treaty.

Indeed, any assertion that the strategic defence initiative programme is inconsistent with the ABM Treaty is unfounded; as President Reagan has directed, the programme is being conducted well within the Treaty's bounds. All activities are continuously and scrupulously reviewed to ensure their legality under the Treaty.

A third allegation we have heard concerning the legality of SDI under the ABM Treaty is that the United States has attempted "to create confusion" by making false reference to an agreed statement to the Treaty which deals with ABM systems "based on other physical principles" than those systems limited by the Treaty.

In the United States view, its interpretation of the Treaty -- that the parties did not agree to ban the development and testing of systems based on other physical principles -- is fully justified. Nevertheless, as President Reagan has directed, the United States is following an even more restrictive course than required by the Treaty.

From the facts that I have outlined, we can only conclude that the statements by the Soviet Union were designed to pressure the United States to adopt unilateral restraints on its strategic defence programmes. This would

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leave the Soviet Union with a virtual monopoly in advanced strategic defence efforts that could be dangerous for the strategic stability. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have recognized for many years that offence and defence are inescapably interrelated, and that it is deterrence, involving both offensive and defensive efforts, that is essential to keeping the peace. Unilateral restraint by the United States in the defence area could, therefore, undermine our deterrent capability.

The United States believes that there are considerable opportunities for equitable, and I stress the word equitable, trade-offs. For example, we are proposing that the Soviet Union join us in an "open laboratories" arrangement under which both sides would provide information on each other's strategic defence research programmes and provide reciprocal opportunities for visiting associated research facilities and laboratories.

What is lacking in the Soviet arguments is a willingness to take into account Western interests and not just their own. Greater progress would be possible in the bilateral nuclear and space talks if that position were to change.

Mr. President, I note the remarks in the Soviet statement of 13 March concerning a possible proposal for negotiating in this Conference partial measures such as a new agreement intended to ensure the immunity of space objects. We have previously heard such ideas proposed by the Soviet Union, if in somewhat different form. Once again, my delegation would ask how States understand their obligations to refrain from the use of force under the Charter of the United Nations and the Outer Space Treaty. Do they take full account of the need for arms control proposals to be clearly defined, significant, equitable and verifiable? Moreover, do they share our view of the continuing imperative to distinguish clearly between the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and arms limitation efforts? The 1985 mandate of the Conference's Outer Space Committee provides, of course, for the consideration of existing and future proposals. The Soviet Union also has the opportunity to contribute constructively in the bilateral defence and space negotiations, aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and we urge them to do so now.

In my remarks today, I have addressed only a few of the topics which fall under agenda item 5. My delegation hopes that the Conference will re-establish its Ad hoc Committee under this agenda item and with its 1985 mandate in order that further in-depth consideration of these and other issues can be continued.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

We have heard today the statement by the American delegation on agenda item 5 and the Soviet delegation would like to make some comments on the content of that statement.

First of all, the statement by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Lowitz, painted a frightening and also needless to say, distorted picture of the Soviet military strategic programme and Soviet space programmes. Obviously, this distortion of the facts was intended to frighten the delegations at the Conference. He said that our programmes are a threat to everyone. If we considered it necessary to reply, we could of course do so, but I do not think that it is necessary. The Soviet military programmes are defensive, and the peaceful nature of our space programmes is wellknown and was once again emphasized very recently by the Vega experiments and projects which have aroused the admiration of the whole world. But I should like to ask the following question: are these statements about the "threatening" nature of Soviet programmes sincere? Do their authors themselves believe what they say? I think not. They themselves do not believe them. If the Soviet programmes really represented such a threat to the security of the United States of America and all the States of the world, then obviously elementary logic would require that proposals should be advanced to prohibit those Soviet programmes. And how can any programmes, including Soviet ones, be prohibited? Through negotiations, of course, bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Delegations in the Conference on Disarmament are familiar with the position of the United States of America on a prohibition of offensive space weapons in the bilateral Soviet-American talks, in particular through the comments of the head of the Soviet delegation to the talks on nuclear and space weapons at a meeting with many representatives to the Conference. To put it briefly, it is a negative position which denies the need to ban space weapons. But we are all more familiar with the position of the United States on this question here in this multilateral forum. If the United States was sincere and wished to prohibit the Soviet so-called military strategic systems which "create a threat" in space, then obviously they would be the first to propose the start of multilateral negotiations on this issue in the Conference, with the participation of all those whom the Soviet Union is "threatening", to use Ambassador Lowitz's words. But the United States is not proposing this. If the United States was sincere and actually feared the Soviet space programme, then here in the Conference they would put forward specific proposals both to limit this type of programme and to prevent an arms race in space. I ask you, Mr. President, and through you all the delegations: when has anyone seen specific proposals by the United States here in the Conference which would enable the Conference to begin negotiations for the prevention of this "frightening Soviet threat"? There have never been such proposals, the

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

United States has never submitted any such proposals. Finally, if the United States was sincere and actually feared the Soviet space programmes, then they would have supported the specific proposals of other States which have been submitted here in the Conference, with a view to restricting military activities in space. Many States have made such proposals, including States which are close military and political allies of the United States. Specific proposals have been made by France and by neutral Sweden (including at this session of the Conference on Disarmament); proposals on this issue have been made by other States, and finally, the Soviet Union has made well-known proposals. We are, to put it bluntly, astonished that the United States delegation has rushed to reject our new proposal without even having been interested in the details. Why is there this discrepancy between the United States alleged fear and its refusal to ban or prevent the development of space weapons? Why? I ask. The answer is very simple. Because the United States wishes to carry the arms race into outer space, because it is trying to achieve military superiority, because it wants to obtain the right and possibility to carry out a nuclear first strike with impunity, and everything the United States delegation has said only serves to convince us that the United States does not want to prohibit space attack weapons, does not want to hold negotiations on the prohibition or prevention of an arms race in space.

The distinguished representative of the United States rightly said that the Conference must deal with the question of the prevention of an arms race in space, and therefore should establish or re-establish a subsidiary body with a restricted, exploratory, non-negotiating mandate on item 5. But one would think that if the United States wanted to safeguard itself against the "threat", why is it not prepared to hold specific negotiations on this issue? We are told "We need a more broadly accepted and clearer understanding of many terms. These include the 'militarization of outer space' and 'peaceful uses of outer space'."

Each of us should ask himself these questions, and compare the "fears" depicted by the United States with its actual position. For the United States, evidently, we should engage in a protracted and sterile process of definition of terms such as "the militarization of space" and "the peaceful uses of outer space" rather than find ways of preventing an arms race in that environment.

(Mr. Lowitz, USA)

I sense by the vigour of the response of the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union that my remarks have touched a somewhat sensitive cord. It seems to me that the distinguished representative has in his response attempted to divert your attention from the heart of my statement. It seems he would like you to ignore the threat posed by Soviet offensive strategic forces, especially ICBMs and the mutual commitment to a 50 per cent reduction in those forces. I respectfully commend him to a more careful reading, at a more leisurely time, of the full statement.

(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

Premier Zhao stressed that China opposes the arms race and will never take part in such a race. He announced that China had not conducted nuclear tests in the atmosphere for many years and would no longer conduct atmospheric nuclear tests in the future.

In his speech, Premier Zhao also outlined the Chinese Government's basic position and views on disarmament, which are summarized into the following nine points.

One. The nuclear-arms race constitutes a grave threat to world peace and security. The ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament should be the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Two. The United States and the Soviet Union, which possess the largest nuclear arsenals, should take the lead in halting the test, production and deployment of all types of nuclear weapons and drastically reduce all types of

(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

nuclear weapons they have deployed anywhere inside and outside their countries and destroy them on the spot. This will make it possible to create favourable conditions for the convocation of a broadly representative international conference on nuclear disarmament with the participation of all the nuclear-weapon States to discuss measures for further nuclear disarmament and the thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Three. In order to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war, all nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons in any circumstances and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. On this basis, an international convention should be concluded with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States, ensuring the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

Four. There should be a simultaneous and balanced reduction and on-the-spot destruction of the medium-range nuclear missiles deployed in Europe and Asia by the Soviet Union and the United States.

Five. Along with nuclear arms reduction there should be a drastic reduction of conventional arms. The conventional arms of all countries should be used only for self-defence, and not to threaten the security of other countries.

Six. Outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind. No country should develop, test or deploy space weapons in any form. An international agreement on the complete prohibition of space weapons should be concluded through negotiations as soon as possible.

Seven. An international convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons should be concluded at any early date. Pending this, all countries capable of manufacturing chemical weapons should pledge never to use chemical weapons and to stop the testing, production, transfer and deployment of such weapons.

Eight. To effect the implementation of arms reduction, it is essential for disarmament agreements to provide for the necessary and effective measures of verification.

Nine. As the question of disarmament concerns the security of all countries, it should not be monopolized by a few Big Powers. The disarmament agreement between them must not jeopardize the interests of other countries. All countries, big or small, militarily strong or weak, should enjoy equal rights to participate in the discussions and settlement of problems related to disarmament.

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

Today, I wish to devote my statement to a few aspects connected with item 5 of our agenda -- Prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is an item which my Government considers to be of major importance not only to the major Powers that are actively engaged in space activities but also to the entire community of nations irrespective of size or geographical location, degree of development or political creed. This is an item most extensively debated in all political environments, yet an item which, for various specific reasons, has not been allotted its proper place within this single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is no doubt a task which par excellence should be tackled simultaneously in bilateral as well as multilateral frameworks. Consequently, its solution must be looked for and found in parallel fashion on both levels. An eventual "sudden spurt" by any one of the two fora should not cause any alarm in that dual "race", since the temporary advantage of one would only incite the other to redouble its efforts.

Hungary, as is well known, is not a space Power. Our participation in collective programmes for the exploration and utilization of outer space is only made possible through the friendly assistance of an actual outer-space Power. Due to the character of those programmes, and also to our own intentions, our participation in outer space activities is strictly peaceful in its nature. Let me recall that the Hungarian cosmonaut during his flight in space had, as one of his main tasks, to carry out experiments with an instrument of Hungarian design to measure and record man's productive capabilities in space.

I have found it necessary to mention all this in order to emphasize that my remarks are not made with the authority of an outer space expert, but as a result of a sober and practical-minded examination of the events of the last few weeks.

The tragic incident of the space shuttle Challenger has moved us all and given rise to meditation and reflection. We are, of course, fully aware that all research activities incur some risks, incidents may not be excluded, and

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occasionally human lives may have to be the price. Nevertheless, that news deeply disturbed us. We have not the slightest intention to exploit that sad event in a speculative manner, but we simply cannot help reflecting upon it and drawing certain conclusions.

The space shuttle has come to exemplify technology at its most ingenious. It represents the most advanced technology available. It incorporates the work of millions of the most highly skilled people in the United States and elsewhere, who contributed to its design, construction and operation. The optimal time of its launching was carefully calculated several months in advance, and its launching was personally attended by the top echelon in United States space research and application. Yet, in spite of all those genuinely impressive credentials, the tragic incident did occur.

Let us now try to stretch our imagination, and envision the realization of the dream called the Strategic Defence Initiative, which calls for not one but hundreds and hundreds of similar and even more complex systems working in full co-ordination and without a single failure at any moment and under any circumstances. Let us imagine such a system where the launching of the countless number of its components might take place not at the optimally calculated time and not under the personal supervision of legions of scientists and engineers. Who could foretell now how many components of that system would repeat the path and fate of the space shuttle Challenger? The same fate, but with the major difference that they would fall not in the ocean but most probably on populated territories, and not necessarily on the target territory. And besides, those falling objects would not be space cabins with innocent people inside.

In science and technology unexpected results, radical progress and unforeseen novelties are, of course, not unimaginable. However, it must be clearly seen that in the fields of research where the elements and building-blocks of SDI are to be developed, unsurmountable obstacles seem to be looming. Objects some 100 metres in length and weighing thousands of tons would have to be launched into orbit on the basis of scientific knowledge available now or in the near future whereas, even on the basis of the most optimal forecasts, such plans would have no credibility in less than half a century. Or take the problem of having a source for the immense bursts of energy to be stationed in space, or the problem of the so-called "miracle computers" required to command and control all the component parts of the system -- without ever having had any real-life tests. Theoretical, computer-simulated tests will never be able to reproduce all the eventualities that life can produce.

All this only serves to illustrate the dangers, to which the United States Administration is about to expose the world with the steps to be taken towards the realization of its Strategic Defence Initiative.

But for a moment, let us suppose that a fully automatic SDI system is realizable. What guarantees are there for its fail-safe, error-free operation? In the period from 1981 to 1985, more than 100 missile attacks against the United States were flashed on United States military computer screens. Fortunately, there was enough time in those cases to check on the alerts and determine that they were caused by computer errors. Occasionally it might take as much as 30 minutes to find out that a signal was false. But at least there existed that margin of time to prevent buttons from being pressed. Now that possibility is a thing of the past. As a consequence of

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

the present deployment of armament systems the maximum time available to ascertain false signals has already shrunk to 6-10 minutes. In the case of the envisaged SDI, that safety margin would further shrink to seconds. And no mention has yet been made of the following: the space shuttle's launch sequence required some 10,000 lines of computer programming. The "Star Wars" software programme would likely run into tens of millions of lines. And it is hardly imaginable that a programme of several tens of millions of lines could be prepared without any error here or there, which might cause unpredictable "ricochets" in the execution.

However, it is not only the moment of execution that is pregnant with dangers. The transition period, in which the United States envisages a combination of offence and defence, could last 10, 20 or 30 years. In the opinion of many specialists, this period would be far more dangerous and unstable than anything we have lived through so far. It is only natural that the United States, unless it gives up its plan, will force the Soviet Union to develop a similar or counter programme. In either case, the whole period of development, as it is full of extremely complex and uncertain details, would be characterized by temporary advantages on the part of one or the other, in one field or another. Since we cannot expect even a minimum of confidence in a period of a new arms race that is forced upon the Soviet Union, any temporary advantage of one party would be considered by the other party as a direct threat to its security. The permanently changing destabilization would, therefore, become the rule. And that is the real and, unfortunately, the imminent danger.

What are the consequences to be drawn from the tragic incident of Challenger with respect to the Strategic Defence Initiative?

First, what is to be learned from the space shuttle disaster is that the entire human race is cramped in a spaceship, and the decision-making time for correcting mistakes has been cut to seconds.

Second, the tragedy should remind the world that despite the most systematic precautions, accidents are possible when dealing with high technology.

Third, the space shuttle Challenger reminds us once again that we are at the mercy of machines, of an arms race still not under control, at risk in a matter of seconds.

The great question is simple: Where is the point of no return? But the answer is difficult. Nevertheless, it must be found, accurately and without much further delay. When I say "point of no return", I do not mean something to be defined in time. I do not believe it could or should be defined that way. The only practicable definition lies in the process itself. The question, therefore, is whether the process has already reached the point of no return. In my view the line of division is to be found between prevention and cessation. The process, I believe, is reversible as long as prevention is still feasible. The history of disarmament and arms limitation talks provides us with examples for the differences of difficulty between those two phases. One should only recall the obstacles in the way of actual arms reduction and disarmament measures, or remember how many years there have been talks about the withdrawal of some 11,500 and 6,500 soldiers respectively, with a "safety margin" of around 1 million men behind each party.

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

Prevention, consequently, is not only less difficult, it is also safer for the world while negotiations are in progress. If they are. But the almost unanimous opinion is that negotiations must be started without delay to prevent an arms race in outer space. The necessary ingredients are at hand or could be created without any difficulty.

On the one hand, the Conference has before it a draft treaty that was submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union already in 1983 concerning the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the Earth. More recently, another important proposal was made also by the Soviet Union, aimed at concluding an international agreement to ensure the immunity of space objects.

On the other hand, the negotiating forum has still to be created. The Ad Hoc Committee which the Conference succeeded in establishing last year carried out the important task of reviewing the present situation in respect of outer space in general, the threats against its peaceful utilization and the need to prevent those threats. The task is clear: the Ad Hoc Committee must be re-established for the purpose of starting substantive negotiations in line with United Nations General Assembly resolution 40/87. My delegation has made clear its position on a number of questions during the work of the Committee last year, and intends to continue to be actively engaged in constructive negotiations also this year. We appeal, therefore, to you, Mr. President, to intensify the consultations aimed at reaching agreement on the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee so that work can start before the end of this month.

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(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

The Bulgarian delegation, like the overwhelming majority of delegations in this chamber, attaches great importance to the prevention of an arms race in Outer Space.

It is obvious that a crucial dilemma confronts the international community today. Either it will prevent the spread of the arms race into space, or it will have to face many grave consequences fraught with enormous risks for peace and life on Earth. It is the imperative of logic and commonsense to avoid adding a new and extremely dangerous dimension to the vicious competition with ever more sophisticated means of self-destruction.

The task of preventing an arms race in outer space is intrinsically linked to the objectives of nuclear disarmament. The two issues are not independent ones. In terms of strategic security these problems are like the two sides of the same coin. Defensive systems and offensive nuclear weapons have always been considered as related components of the strategic equation. Building up strategic defence by one side is naturally construed by the other

(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

side as an attempt to achieve strategic superiority. The additional offensive potential acquired with the deployment of an ABM missile system, for instance, could logically be equated with the number of strategic missiles to be neutralized by such a system. The need to restore the balance would ultimately result in increasing the number of nuclear weapons in the strategic arsenals and/or in contemplating various other counter-measures.

The conclusion of the 1972 ABM Treaty was a clear recognition of the mutual understanding by the Soviet Union and the United States of the complex nature of strategic security. The 1972 ABM Treaty opened up the road leading to the conclusion of the Agreements under the SALT process.

Today, the world stands at the threshold of an unprecedented expansion of the arms race in all fields, the nuclear one in particular. If the weaponization of outer space is not prevented, this threshold will be crossed. The pursuit of space-based defences will certainly breach the 1972 ABM Treaty and lead to an unrestrained competition both in offensive and defensive weapons on Earth and in space. Under the present circumstances, preventing the extension of the arms race to outer space means, in practical terms, removing the obstacle to deep reductions of the nuclear arsenals. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that those who are unwilling to address seriously the problem posed by the growing possibility of space weaponization do not actually wish to stop the arms race on Earth, the nuclear-arms race in particular.

General Secretary M. Gorbachev stated at the Twenty-seventh Congress of the CPSU: "It is imperative, before it is too late, to find a realistic solution guaranteeing that the arms race does not spread to outer space. The 'Star Wars' programme cannot be permitted to be used as a stimulus for a further arms race or as a road-block to radical disarmament". We share the philosophy of this statement.

The Soviet programme for a step-by-step process of nuclear disarmament, as set out in General-Secretary Gorbachev's statement of 15 January, aims at the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. It provides a good basis for the achievement of the objectives jointly agreed upon by the Soviet Union and the United States at the Geneva Summit. Doing away with all nuclear weapons over a period of 15 years is the best that the world could hope for. This is a balanced and comprehensive programme which takes into account the major concerns expressed by the other States. The mutual renunciation of the development, testing and deployment of space attack weapons, which would prevent an arms race in outer space, is an indispensable component of the first stage of this programme.

The USSR is offering a programme aimed at ensuring peaceful skies and a non-nuclear world in 15 years. As for the United States, it is more than difficult for us to see how its commitment to "prevent an arms race in outer space", and "terminate it on Earth", could possibly be reconciled with its programmes to develop, test and introduce space weapons.

Press reports are giving fresh evidence that the so-called SDI research is entering into a more advanced stage. It is alarming that United States research is moving from technology development into major experiments and thus coming closer to the point of testing and eventual deployment.

(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

It has been stated many times in this chamber that such a course is an extremely dangerous one. My delegation believes that it is worth emphasizing again and again that the slogan of rendering nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" by creating a leakproof defence is both an illusion and a smokescreen. The complex space technology now being developed will not become flawless in the near future. The hope of building a "perfect defence system" seems as unrealistic as the old dreams of creating a perpetual-motion machine. At the same time it cannot and should not be overlooked, or underestimated, that the forging of a 40 per cent or 50 per cent effective space shield, something which cannot be ruled out, will be tantamount to achieving strategic superiority. Consequently, the temptation to use the nuclear sword first will increase at a rate that does not lend itself to any estimates. As a matter of fact, one cannot but wonder how the objectives and the real direction of the SDI programme could be reconciled with the commitment in the Joint Soviet-United States Statement that "neither side will seek to achieve military superiority" and with the recognition in the same document that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

Even if we assume as a hypothesis that no one will ever use first nuclear weapons deliberately, it does not mean at all that the deployment of space strike weapons would strengthen international stability. On the contrary: regardless of the political will of those who possess space strike weapons, the danger of a nuclear holocaust would increase enormously. All countries, all peoples will, perhaps, gradually but surely become hostages of wisdomless automated systems. And only minutes will be needed for the hostages of technology to become the victims of technology by accident. For computers will take irreversible decisions; they will make the choice between life and death on Earth. Purely and simply, it is nonsense to try to draw the line between nuclear annihilation on purpose and nuclear annihilation by accident.

In our view, Adele Simmons rightly pointed out in the International Herald Tribune on 10 February, "If the United States continues to gamble its children's future on an arms race that knows no bounds and on a space-based weapons system that invites global instability, then we are likely to face a fireball similar to the one that engulfed the crew of the Challenger, except that it will be replicated across the globe and may well consume the globe".

The task of preventing an arms race in outer space is a complex one. My delegation shares the opinion that a great deal of effort, both multilateral and bilateral, is needed to identify areas of consent and, subsequently, to elaborate agreements to sever all possible channels for an arms race in outer space.

In our view, bilateral negotiations and multilateral ones are not alternatives that exclude each other, especially with regard to item 5 of our agenda. My delegation believes that they could and should run parallel, complementing and reinforcing each other.

It seems to us that the deliberations held up to now have outlined some areas where the Conference on Disarmament could play an instrumental role with a view to elaborating an agreement or agreements for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In the course of our past work, delegations from different quarters of the Conference have argued that there was need to establish a régime for the protection of satellites and the banning of anti-satellite weapons. Taking

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into consideration the positions of many States members of the Conference, the delegation of the USSR proposed to the Conference to work out partial measures which would strengthen confidence among States in the field of space activities. My delegation supports the USSR proposal for the elaboration and conclusion of an international agreement to ensure the immunity of space objects. We believe that a multilateral agreement banning the use of force against satellites would be in the best interests of all States -- those that launch satellites into orbit and those using the services of satellites. The basic elements of such a multilateral legal instrument could be: an obligation for States not to use force or the threat of force against space objects; a commitment by States not to develop, not to test and not to deploy new anti-satellite systems and to eliminate the existing ones; and appropriate forms of control of, and compliance with, the provisions of such an agreement.

In its resolution 40/87 the General Assembly of the United Nations requested the Conference on Disarmament "to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1986 Session, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space". Taking into account the objections of some delegations, a constructive proposal has been advanced, namely, to establish an Ad Hoc Committee with the mandate to examine, through substantive and general consideration, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a view to identifying areas of agreement for subsequent conclusion of an agreement or agreements.

It seems to us that this approach is not incompatible with the opinion of some delegations that last year's mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on item 5 was not exhausted, and that there is a need to continue the substantive consideration of all issues. In our submission, the wording "with a view to identifying areas of agreement ..." does not and cannot preclude the Ad Hoc Committee from continuing the work commenced last year. It merely sets an objective which is quite normal, and, indeed, necessary for any meaningful work to be done.

The first part of the 1986 session of the Conference on Disarmament is now closer to its end than to its beginning. My delegation deems it necessary to express its deep concern that consensus has not yet been reached in the Conference for establishing and ad hoc committee on item 5. It may seem somewhat strange, but nevertheless it is worth recalling the view expressed by the United States delegation last Thursday, namely, that "one of the urgent disarmament issues facing us is that embodied in the fifth item of our agenda -- the prevention of an arms race in outer space". The Bulgarian delegation believes that it is high time for some delegations to translate words into deeds.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The Conference needs to work more expeditiously to formulate measures against an arms race in outer space. The time left to find solutions is dwindling away.

On several previous occasions my delegation has presented its views on the military, political and economic consequences which the militarization of outer space would have. What we are receiving daily in terms of news and false information has corroborated our view that the implementation of the Star Wars programme would entail an extremely dangerous destabilization of the entire international security pattern. The risk of a nuclear inferno would increase sharply. The life and destruction of mankind would be entrusted to computers making split-second decisions. Ambassador Meiszter elaborated on that aspect in his statement last Tuesday. International security can be ensured for all time by eliminating all the weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000. The champions of SDI, in turn, are trying to impose upon the peoples of this world a future of permanent nuclear terror.

The so-called defensive systems are designed to function as elements of a nuclear first-strike capability. This is an indisputable fact. At the same time, the use of certain components in offensive strikes from outer space against terrestrial targets becomes a possibility. What is still officially denied here in the Conference is being shouted from the housetops in Washington.

Development, testing and deployment in space of attack weapons is synonymous with triggering an all-out arms race of unprecedented dimensions. Such an action would represent a virtually insuperable obstacle to any arms limitation and disarmament effort. "Arms mania" would swallow up huge resources and prevent the resolution of burning economic and social problems everywhere, most of all in developing countries, with the big corporations and banks affiliated to the military-industrial complex pocketing stupendous profits.

One does not have to indulge for years in the art of establishing definitions to comprehend that the deployment of attack weapons in outer space is not only the direct opposite of the precept to use space for peaceful purposes and mutually beneficial co-operation, but also a gross violation of valid international treaties. This fact should be acknowledged notably by the United States and those who have even signed agreements in which they undertake the obligation to support the Star Wars programme.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The agreement to terminate the arms race on Earth and prevent it from being carried into space, as reaffirmed at the Geneva Summit, must be translated into reality. The question as to what measures are needed to rule out an arms race in outer space has been answered already. The most comprehensive and best solution would be a treaty prohibiting the use of force in outer space, and from space against the Earth, as first proposed by the Soviet Union in 1983.

Certain States are obviously not yet prepared for that. This is why my delegation supports the idea of a gradual approach. It welcomes Ambassador Issraelyan's proposal of 13 March 1986 that the Conference should work out an accord to ensure the immunity of space objects, including the obligation not to develop, test and deploy anti-satellite weapons and to eliminate existing ones. Every effort should be made in order to reach a quick understanding on that matter and to set up an appropriate committee.

My delegation wishes to underline that we need to formulate concrete objectives, since abstract and endless discussions about definitions and technical terms used in existing international instruments are bound to distract our attention from our actual job. It is certainly not the discovery of loopholes in treaties that is at issue but the identification of what should be done in a practical way to prevent an arms race in outer space. From this perspective, it appears to be a matter of course that present treaties may play a role in discussions and negotiations. It would definitely be no disadvantage if a number of existing rules were reaffirmed in an agreement on the immunity of space objects whose wording would have to be worked out. Many examples from international law could be cited in support of this opinion.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic is well aware that success presupposes the solution of many specific issues. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that we do something about it now, without any further delay.

(The President)

Throughout the month of March our Conference has been able to continue its work without major obstacles in three of the five areas it had set itself: chemical weapons, radiological weapons and the comprehensive programme of disarmament. This must be a matter of satisfaction. In particular, the negotiations on the complete elimination of chemical weapons

(The President)

are of capital importance and we wish to inform the Conference with satisfaction that work in this field is progressing in an encouraging manner and without obstacles and with, as it seems in the month of March, a general desire to reach a successful conclusion.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the essential or primary aspect, the one which Governments and public opinion regard as the raison d'être of our Conference and the goal it has set itself, namely nuclear weapons, and, along with the passing of the years and the advances in technology, the additional concern to mankind, namely the militarization of space, have not so far been dealt with by the Conference at all, despite all the efforts made. This is something which must be regretted. In the course of the consultations and the efforts he has made, the President has been able to measure the degree to which the Conference is deadlocked on this subject. It is quite clear that the Conference is now deeply divided on the conception and the very nature of its work, of what it can and should obtain at present in these areas which are both vital for the strategies and security of States and fatal if they are not properly mastered. Our Conference's mission is to undertake as rapidly as possible negotiations, in particular to eliminate the nuclear arms race, to stop nuclear testing, to prevent nuclear war, to achieve nuclear disarmament and to prevent an arms race in space.

A number of States quite legitimately consider that the circumstances are not ripe at present to begin or even to envisage for the time being such negotiations, however legitimate they in their turn may be. Consequently, there are countries which refuse to accept any measure or any decision whatsoever -- even one relating simply to infrastructure, such as the setting-up of a working body -- which might in any way reflect a trend that cannot be reconciled with this basic conviction. This state of affairs has proved irreducible and unsurmountable. The Conference must at present recognize this state of affairs and draw the consequences unless it wishes to be drawn into a Byzantine sterility concerning the subsidiary bodies to be set up, their mandates, their guidelines and work programmes, at the expense of its fundamental work.

The obvious facts have to be faced that now, if we wish to work usefully, carry out something specific on the paramount issues of nuclear disarmament and outer space, we must try to find the common denominator, and at present that can only be the lowest one possible: in other words, something which in no way prejudices the beliefs and positions of any side. It is a choice that must be made.

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

In the course of the general debates in our Conference, the Romanian delegation has had occasion to speak about the international situation as a whole, about the problems of disarmament, more particularly nuclear disarmament, prevention of the arms race in outer space, general disarmament, including the field of conventional weapons and military forces. Further to the very clear instructions from our Government, our delegation called for maximum use of the auspicious signs at the beginning of this year's session, with a view to embarking on effective negotiations to discontinue the nuclear arms race and securing progress towards concrete measures of disarmament. At the beginning of the session we expressed our conviction that discontinuance, at least during the period of the Soviet-American negotiations, of the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons, and of any action to militarize outer space, would be particularly beneficial.

Regrettably, we are compelled to note that, during the first few months of 1986, which has been proclaimed as the International Year of Peace, some worsening of international tension and serious events have taken place involving acts of force and the threat of force, events that are of serious concern to the international community. The arms race continues, as does the stockpiling of new nuclear and conventional weapons. A nuclear test recently took place in the United States. Should such tests continue, the Soviet Union, too, will resume nuclear testing.

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

My theme today is item 5 of our agenda -- the prevention of an arms race in outer space -- a subject in which my delegation has displayed a consistent interest. Our Conference remains without an ad hoc committee on this item while the bilateral United States-USSR talks have also made no progress on this issue, according to the information available to us and the public statements that have been made. This collective diplomatic failure to act on an issue of crucial importance in the field of disarmament requires some analysis. First, within the Conference, two months have elapsed since we began this session and no ad hoc committee has been established on item 5 because of our inability to agree on a mandate. For some this has probably been a convenient camouflage for a reluctance to take other decisions when an ad hoc committee is established. Last year the Ad Hoc Committee held 20 meetings in a preliminary probing of the subject before substantive work

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

could begin this year. One group has insisted that last year's mandate has not been exhausted and that therefore we must continue with it. The Group of 21 has held out patiently for a change in the mandate more in tune with the recommendation contained in the 1985 Report of the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly resolution 40/87. In doing so we have demonstrated a willingness to compromise and to accommodate other points of view and have submitted a series of proposals in the negotiations conducted by the Presidents for the months of February and March. A proposal by the President for the month of February was acceptable to the Group of 21 but rejected by another group. More proposals are with you, Mr. President, as you commence the delicate task of seeking common ground to resume work on this important issue.

In response to these many proposals made by the Group of 21 not one single counter-proposal has been made even as a gesture reciprocating our earnest desire to seek a compromise. All we have had is an obdurate repetition that we must retain last year's mandate. This casts doubt on the existence of a political will to continue serious work on this issue in this multilateral negotiating forum. Already disturbing references are being made to the importance of effective verification mechanisms even before we have embarked on substantive work. Despite this my delegation will continue its efforts to seek a compromise which will enable us to continue to examine issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space while at the same time identifying areas of agreement that can be of value to the Conference when we finally approach the task, as we must, of negotiating a treaty or treaties to ban weapons in outer space. That final objective will not be achieved by an interminable examination of issues. If this body confined itself merely to the examination of issues relevant to disarmament we would replace the Tower of Babel as the symbol of confused confabulation. Our discussions here must not only be graduated but must also have a sense of direction towards finding where we can agree either through a natural convergence of views or through conscious compromise in the larger global interest.

This discussion of the purpose of our work here seven years after the establishment of the Committee or Conference on Disarmament seems incongruous. There are some who need to be convinced of the purpose of the Conference notwithstanding the transparency of paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Subsidiary bodies are established under the rules of procedure "for the effective performance" of the functions of the Conference so as to permit more sharply focused substantive and structured discussion on the various agenda items in the course of negotiations. It is true that such discussions are of mutual benefit to delegations to acquire a better understanding of the subject-matter from the expertise that is exchanged. But we are not here solely as an expanded and expensive adult education exercise. If that were so we would qualify for the economy measures that the vigilant eye of the Secretary-General seeks in order to avert the financial crisis confronting the United Nations system. No, we are here as a negotiating body and the entire gamut of our activity here including the adoption of our agenda, happily a quick process now, the plenary debates and the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committees is all part of this process of negotiation. It is inevitable that we should make more progress in some areas than in others.

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

Mandates are not sacrosanct. It has been said here that we make something of a fetish of mandates and indeed my delegation has supported proposals for simplifying mandates most recently made by the Yugoslav delegation. However mandates and work programmes give shape and direction to our work and provide guidance to the Chairmen of Ad Hoc Committees to ensure that discussions are not irrelevant or deliberately digressive.

It is with this in mind that we have proposed suggestions for a mandate that would nudge us all towards finding areas of agreement on this contentious issue rather than examine issues from our respective national viewpoints. We have already seen how a broad mandate can be used to engage in polemics and mutual recrimination. We do not want a repetition of that. A well-drafted mandate and a sound programme of work will strengthen the hand of the Chairman and those in the Conference who want to see substantive work done and not spend their time listening to a litany of Treaty violations. My delegation is ready, however, as an earnest of our sincere desire to commence work, to set up an ad hoc committee on item 5 with a simplified mandate under paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

My delegation outlined the possible scope for work in an ad hoc committee on this item as far back as in April 1983 and this needs no reiteration. It was a comprehensive one which, inter alia, included confidence-building measures through greater international co-operation. Last year, we elaborated further on this drawing from other contributions made in this Conference on further measures that an ad hoc committee should undertake to prevent an arms race in outer space. Simultaneously we stressed the need to have clear definitional descriptions of the terms we use to describe various aspects in outer space activities in order to arrive at common understandings which are of paramount importance and a necessary prerequisite in the negotiating process to arrive at agreement or agreements on this item. The speakers who addressed this item before me in this Conference have lucidly explained the immense complexities that face us in resolving and identifying issues. Many delegations have stressed the need for identification of areas of agreements to arrive at further measures to stem an arms race in outer space. My delegation shares this view that the time is ripe for us to embark upon this identification exercise in order not to lose sight of our ultimate objective. In our work towards this goal in an ad hoc committee my delegation would favour a three-tiered approach which would primarily facilitate this identification process geared towards possible agreements.

Firstly, current ongoing activities relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space should be thoroughly examined. Primary emphasis should be on identification of permissible activities and activities to be banned and to find suitable definitions and descriptions. In this context, it may be useful to address various outer space activities that have military implications and their relation to strategic stability or instability. It is also possible to delineate in a broader sense the present systems in outer space as -- (a) support and surveillance systems and (b) weapons systems. The "open laboratories" offer of the United States delegation could be implemented in an ad hoc committee of the Conference with information provided by all delegations on the kinds of weapon systems that could be envisaged for the future with a view to designing a legal régime to ban them effectively. The

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

useful statement of Ambassador Wegener on 6 March provided a glimpse of the military uses of outer space technology and other means of electronic warfare in space. It is the kind of contribution other delegations can make in an ad hoc committee adding to the body of knowledge on the subject. Thereafter we could concentrate on the legitimacy and the usefulness of these two different systems with a view to arriving at precise definitional descriptions of what is meant by each of these systems.

Secondly, simultaneous examination of current international agreements and understandings aimed at limiting military activities to prevent an arms race in outer space should take place. This must necessarily follow the examination of ongoing activities so as to evaluate how effective the existing legal régime is in banning activities that we agree constitute an arms race in outer space. Clarification of existing ambiguities in international law can only be productive in relation to an agreed basis as to which activities are permitted and which are not. Last year's exercise of analysing relevant existing treaties and agreements with a view to identifying lacunae should be continued with utmost vigour. The approach explained in the first tier is mutually complementary to the latter and useful to arrive at precise formulations and understandings. Thus, the ad hoc committee could identify emerging issues of treaty law interpretation in relation to definitions and descriptions regarding weapons in space. Therefore, this effort is obviously interlinked to the first approach and should be undertaken in that perspective. Drawing from results and deliberations on the above areas in this second tier the ad hoc committee could concentrate on identifying the legal aspects related to preventing the weaponization of space. Although elaboration of a legal régime at this juncture seems to be ambitious, if the political will to resolve the issues confronting us does exist, it need not be difficult to identify the main elements necessary in this legal régime.

Thirdly, independent of the first two approaches which are necessarily designed as an examination process to identify issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, all existing proposals and future initiatives could be examined. This exercise is also organically linked with other work in the ad hoc committee since these proposals and initiatives follow as a logical corollary. In this context there could be "further measures" as referred to by a delegation in this Conference a few weeks ago that could usefully be taken in the immediate future without prejudice to the examination process that may have a long gestation period. In particular, I refer to various proposals that were advanced in this Conference and elsewhere in relation to preventing an arms race in outer space. These measures, some of which are essentially short-term oriented, although not comprehensive could nevertheless provide some impetus towards preventing an arms race as necessary confidence-building measures. Some of them have been spelt out such as, agreement on "rules of the road" for outer space, high orbital ASAT ban, etc. Moreover, elaboration of an international régime of verification to be realized through an International Satellite Monitoring Agency could be a useful instrument to stem the arms race in outer space in addition to having the capacity to enhance strategic stability with due consideration and without prejudice to the aspirations of the third world countries. Furthermore, as an immediate urgent measure my delegation reiterates its support for the establishment of an expert group, outside the framework of an

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

ad hoc committee, which could provide both expertise and guidance in preventing the weaponization of outer space. This proposal has been supported by many other delegations in this Conference.

While we are here engaged in removing the obstacles placed in our way to begin work on preventing an arm race in outer space the argument has sometimes been advanced that this complex matter should be left to those who have a space capability as if the rest of us should be content to be mere spectators. It has even been said that the Conference must not get in the way of the bilateral negotiations, as if this body was an inconvenient road-block. The United States-USSR Summit of November last year pledged solemnly to accelerate and intensify the bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space arms. It is clear that on space there has been no progress while inconclusive debates go on. Ambassador Paul Nitze reportedly told a symposium in Washington on 13 March that round four of the Geneva nuclear and space arms talks had not shown any "tangible progress". The dispute on what constitutes "research" and the conflicting interpretations of the ABM Treaty go on making it even more important that the multilateral forum, which includes other nations with space capabilities, should be activated on this issue.

It is not enough that we set up an ad hoc committee. We must work purposefully in it. The agenda for action is extensive. General Assembly resolution 40/87 called upon "all States especially those with major space capabilities to refrain in their activities relating to outer space from actions contrary to the observance of the relevant existing treaties or to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space". It is essential that this call should be heeded if we are not to have an arms race begin in space while we are still engaged bilaterally and multilaterally in efforts to halt it. This call in a General Assembly resolution supported by 151 Member States and not opposed by any Member State is a reflection, as similar resolutions are, of customary law or at least indicative of the direction in which that law is evolving according to the opinion of experts in international law.

Despite this we know that work on ballistic missile defence systems is going on allegedly on both sides. Their permissibility under the bilateral ABM Treaty is arguable. Whether the work is in the realm of fundamental research or basic research is not of importance. We have seen reports that technical feasibility has been demonstrated and that major experiments are now planned, attracting a multinational scramble for the financial spoils involved. It is the stage of testing and development that transforms the fantasies of some scientists into the horror of a new weapons system in a new arena. That stage also places us irreversibly in an arms race in space. The experts have stated unequivocally that a technical consensus exists that neither the United States nor the USSR can be defended by a multi-layered space-based or space-operated system against nuclear weapons without some nuclear weapons assisted by space mines landing and destroying their targets. The arguments of my delegation against space-based defence systems were set out in our statements of 5 March and 30 July last year and do not require repetition. I would however like to draw the attention of the Conference to a study of the United States Senate released on 30 March which reportedly warns that space-based defence could face countermeasures from the other side 10 times more daunting than projected. The study concludes that such systems are not feasible, pointing out, for example, the vulnerability of space-based

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

battle stations that have to be launched and serviced at great cost. Thus a space weapon system will only become part of a first-strike capability forcing the other side to a "launch on warning" policy heightening the risk of nuclear war by accident. The El Dorado of a nuclear-weapon-free world through an impregnable shield has now faded away. Leaders of some nuclear-weapon States are dismissing the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world as a "pie in the sky" in strange contrast to earlier statements that nuclear weapons would be rendered impotent and obsolete.

While this research goes on we have now to safeguard existing satellites from ASAT systems. This can be done by banning ASAT systems or by limiting the destructive potential of such systems through various forms of counteraction. The latter is both expensive and uncertain and consequently we must work for an ASAT ban. A draft treaty has been submitted and remains open for discussion and negotiation. If it is not acceptable in its present form we could propose improvements to ban anti-satellite weapons and their testing from space. With one ASAT system in place and another being tested for operation by 1987 we are at an opportune moment to impose this ban. The verification of this ban on the testing and deployment of ASAT systems is feasible at present.

Many delegations have dwelt usefully and at length on the existing international legal régime relevant to preventing an arms race in outer space. We have found this valuable. However, their value would be enhanced if this analysis were to be undertaken after we have identified the activities we seek to ban and the weapon systems we want to outlaw. We have also heard a novel interpretation of General Assembly resolution 40/87 as having drawn a distinction between issues to be dealt with multilaterally and those which should be the subject of bilateral negotiations. My delegation, as one of the co-sponsors of resolution 40/87, can claim some acquaintance with the drafting of this resolution. Its import is quite clear. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations in this aspect of disarmament, as in all aspects, are complementary. There was no division of labour set out implying that we in the Conference on Disarmament should not trespass into an area reserved for the bilaterals and a careful reading of operative paragraphs 4 and 6 of the resolution proves this. In fact, operative paragraph 6 states unequivocally that the Conference "as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in all its aspects in outer space". My delegation therefore finds this interpretation both artificial and tendentious. It is all the more untenable when we know that no progress has been made in the space area of the bilateral talks. Another red herring in our plenary debates was the attempt to extend Article 51 of the Charter to certain space activities on the grounds that it will enhance stability and maintain international peace and security. The extension of this argument is perhaps intended to cover BMD systems in view of the elaborate claims made for such systems. The accepted view in international law is that Article 51 of the Charter can only be invoked in cases of armed attack. We consider this and the elastic interpretation of operative paragraph 2 of resolution 40/87 as examples that prove the need to have the ad hoc committee agree on a definition of what constitutes "peaceful activities in space". In the view of my delegation, any device, whether ground-based or space-based, in Earth orbit or in any trajectory beyond Earth

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

orbit, designed physically to damage or interfere with a space object or to attack ground or airborne targets from space is a space weapon which should be banned. While the examination of international law is certainly relevant it is pertinent to remind ourselves that the military uses of space have gone on in spite of existing law precisely because our common security is disregarded in the ongoing arms race. We look forward with interest to the completion of the UNIDIR study on disarmament problems related to outer space and the consequences of extending the arms race into outer space. We are confident that the study will enrich our understanding of the issues and help our work in the Conference.

It is useful to look at the recent history of disarmament. Until the 1960s it was the safe assumption of the super-Powers that they alone possessed nuclear weapons. With that assumption destroyed, diplomatic efforts resulted in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which even if it did not attract universal participation did create a norm that proliferation of nuclear weapons, whether horizontally or vertically, was wrong and unsafe for humankind. Today the overwhelming space capability lies with two countries. However, the civilian space programmes of many countries, including third world countries, are forging ahead and their conversion to military use is easier than imagined. Space activities, like nuclear fission, have dual uses inherent in them. More countries are acquiring satellite launching capabilities and space programmes have the potential of military application. Countries with advanced technology could even gain control of space weaponry obviating the need to acquire nuclear weapons directly. These developments apart from the emergence of weapons to pierce BMD systems may take much less time than is envisaged at present. Consequently the urgent need for agreements to prevent an arms race in space must take place now and not after the two super-Powers have weaponized space. It will be too late then to prevent the proliferation of space weapons. We urge, therefore, the setting up of an ad hoc committee here on a mandate to enable us to make progress in preventing an arms race in outer space. We also call on the United States and the USSR to address the question purposefully and positively when the new round of their nuclear and space arms talks commences on 8 May. Outer space must be maintained as a weapon-free zone and a zone of peace.

(Mr. Jaroszek, Poland)

Any honest assessment of the world situation as it obtains today cannot but strike a note of deep concern over the continuing tensions and dangers. The growing momentum of the arms race, in the nuclear field in the first place, remains an awesome reality. Poland and her socialist allies face it on their doorstep, seeing more and more intermediate-range nuclear missiles deployed practically every day in the Western part of the European continent, this being but one facet of the multi-pronged arms programme relentlessly pursued by the NATO alliance, headed by its leading Power. The policy of strength and open interference in the affairs of other States cannot be taken lightly either, contributing, as it does, to a further growth of the risk of a global nuclear conflagration. A factor which nowadays makes this risk look particularly imminent, and indeed calls for alarm, is the plan, already actively pursued by its proponents, to introduce weapons into outer space and thus turn it into another domain of nuclear-arms race.

As it will be recalled, in his statement at the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Head of the Polish delegation, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, drew the attention of the international community precisely to that issue when he asked the anguished question: "Are we going to be the last generation that ensures the continuity of life on Earth? This is not a rhetorical question. Forty years ago, mankind entered the nuclear era. Today, it is being confronted with the threat of transfer of the arms race into outer space. Where this path will end is something that no one is in a position to know".

The preponderant view of the world's scientists and public opinion is that instead of remaining a province of challenging, peaceful pursuits, equally accessible and beneficial to all States, outer space would become just another dimension of possible future confrontation, a "star wars" battlefield, should the arms race ever find its way into the Earth's orbit.

There is no doubt in our mind that this, indeed, would be the case and vital interests of all nations would be put in great jeopardy if certain States resolved to go ahead with strategic defence concepts in another vain attempt at gaining military superiority. Such a development could not but call for countermeasures, setting off a process in which the prospects of ever curbing the nuclear arms race would be, instead, replaced by its unrestrained qualitative and quantitative intensification which would inevitably make nuclear conflagration loom greater and more imminent.

Motivated by this grave concern over the dangerous implications of outer space becoming yet another arena of the arms race, and seeking to obtain objective scientific evidence in that regard, General Jaruzelski set forth before the General Assembly an initiative for a study to be prepared by eminent experts of different nationalities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, of the diverse consequences of the militarization of outer space. It is the expectation of my Government that the initiative, in

(Mr. Jaroszek, Poland)

accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/87, on the prevention of arms race in outer space, will be properly reflected in a study undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on disarmament problems relating to outer space and the consequences of extending the arms race into outer space.

The study -- as we see it -- should be designed to identify and examine in considerable detail the diverse political, military-strategic, economic and social consequences of an arms race in outer space. Public opinion at large ought to be made aware of the dramatic impact of the introduction of a major weapons system into space on virtually every facet of life down on the Earth.

I have no doubt that the UNIDIR study, once completed, will also help prepare the ground for more productive and informed efforts of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space -- one of the high-priority items of its agenda.

With regard to the problem of disarmament, the major importance of the USSR programme of 15 January 1986 was emphasized, and full support for it, as well as the strong will to spare no efforts for its implementation, were expressed. The Committee has reaffirmed the position of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty that the elimination, within a specific time-frame, of weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and chemical, together with a ban on space-based strike weapons and appropriate cuts of conventional arms and armed forces should be carried out with due regard to equality, equal security and balance at the lowest possible level of military force. An appeal has been addressed to nuclear Powers members of NATO to demonstrate realism and responsibility so as to enable the reaching of agreements on the radical reduction and subsequent elimination of nuclear weapons together with the prevention of the arms race in outer space.

Addressing specifically the question of preventing the extension of the arms race into outer space, the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty stressed most emphatically that a peaceful régime governing outer space constitutes the indispensable premise for substantive reductions of nuclear potentials and their total elimination.

Putting a definite ban on the extension of the arms race into outer space and preserving it for mankind's peaceful use is now becoming the task of utmost urgency and importance. It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament, too, will be able to make a meaningful contribution towards the fulfilment of this task.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

We should ask ourselves the question whether 1986, proclaimed International Year of Peace by the United Nations, must be added to the list of the years in which the Conference failed to make any progress whatsoever in coming to grips with the nuclear-arms race, the most dangerous development of our times.

The dilemma is that the forced passivity of the Conference contrasts sharply with the feverish pace of the arms race. Humanity is nearing the point where events may get out of control. There is a real threat of the arms race becoming irreversible because of the following.

First, the extension of the arms race into outer space with its resultant nuclear first-strike option would destabilize the entire strategic situation and turn space into a new source of mortal danger to mankind. Reducing nuclear weapons would become extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Second, the intensification of the arms race, and the production and deployment of new nuclear-weapon systems, such as the MX, Pershing-2 and cruise missiles, dramatically increase the risk of a nuclear inferno. To continue and to accelerate the arms race runs counter to the objective to secure a military balance at progressively lower levels.

Third, the nuclear arms race is assuming more and more qualitative dimensions, as evidenced by the development of nuclear neutron weapons, EMP weapons, and X-ray lasers operating on the basis of nuclear explosions. Thus, additional stumbling blocks are placed on the road to international accords limiting and reducing nuclear weapons. New nuclear-weapon systems featuring increased mobility and miniaturization, as well as carriers and means of delivery capable of handling both conventional and nuclear warheads, render agreement on effective verification measures a lot more difficult.

It is the principal task of this Conference to stop these developments. The Soviet proposal of 15 January 1986, aimed at halting the arms race in the nuclear field, preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space and eliminating all nuclear weapons on a step-by-step basis throughout the world, shows how a solution can be found. Most governments and delegations to this Conference have responded favourably to it. The goal to free the globe of the nuclear scourge within the next 15 years can be attained if that plan is translated into practical steps without delay.

In a speech on 21 March 1986, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China advanced interesting ideas and suggestions on nuclear disarmament. Also, there are the well-known proposals of the non-aligned countries and the initiative launched by the six signatories of the Delhi Declaration.

Given the role the Conference has to play, it just cannot be sufficient to dismiss these important proposals and ideas with general remarks. Rather, an in-depth discussion and actions are needed.

My delegation has listened with particular attention to the comments on the role and tasks of the Conference on Disarmament in the nuclear field. In fact, virtually all of them boil down to the statement that multilateral and bilateral fora are not mutually exclusive but must complement and stimulate each other.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

In line with the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, my country, aware of the global dimension of the problem, regards the Conference on Disarmament as an appropriate framework for multilateral negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and on nuclear disarmament, all the more so since the five nuclear-weapon Powers are represented here.

In view of the urgent need to reach positive results, the socialist countries have repeated their suggestion, contained in document CD/523, that a committee should be set up so that we may begin to work out practical measures for the cessation of the nuclear arms race and for nuclear disarmament, including a nuclear disarmament programme. This approach conforms to all relevant documents adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

To achieve early progress, the delegations of the socialist countries are also prepared to support the mandate of the Group of 21, contained in document CD/526.

It is in this context that the German Democratic Republic calls on all the nations concerned to reconsider their positions and engage in a productive discussion of agenda item 2. In doing so, they would demonstrate their will to conduct relevant negotiations and uphold their own commitment enshrined in the Final Declaration adopted at the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which says: "The Conference urges the Conference on Disarmament, as appropriate, to proceed to early multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in pursuance of paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament".

My delegation will continue to join all efforts to form a subsidiary body for this purpose. In the meantime, however, the Conference should play a more active role in coping with the most important tasks assigned to it. That is why my delegation advocates starting an in-depth discussion of nuclear disarmament issues, i.e., an across-the-board exchange of views on all the subjects related to the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. There should not be any taboos. My delegation could, for example, very well imagine the Conference reviewing the following aspects: the relationship between reductions in different kinds of nuclear weapons and a general cessation of the nuclear arms race, the interdependence of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the interaction of global, bilateral and regional measures, and of the various negotiating fora, the connection between nuclear and conventional disarmament, and verification.

(The President)

I have also been conducting consultations in connection with the draft mandate for an ad hoc committee to be established under agenda item 5 entitled, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". As a result of those consultations and in discharging my responsibilities as President of the Conference, I am submitting for your consideration a proposed mandate which I believe commands general acceptance in the Conference. The text of my proposal is contained in a working paper being circulated now, CD/WP.230. In circulating this proposal I consider that the round of consultations that I held in connection with item 5 of the agenda is now concluded. I do hope that the Conference will be in a position to take a decision on the draft mandate that I am submitting today, next week.

CD/PV.358

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(Mr. Narayanan, India)

More recently in 1984 a Six-Nation Appeal by India, Argentina, Greece, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania was launched for an all-embracing halt to testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems to be immediately followed by substantial reductions in nuclear forces. In January 1985 the leaders of the Six Nations met in New Delhi at the invitation of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and declared that "Two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of arms race in outer space and a comprehensive test ban treaty." Determined to push forward their efforts in arresting the nuclear arms race the six leaders again made an appeal in October 1985 calling for a moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons for a 12-month period beginning January 1986 and offered their services for monitoring such a moratorium. The six leaders have continued their efforts to appeal to the United States and the Soviet Union at the highest level and to world public opinion in general to bring about a suspension of nuclear tests at least until the period up to the next summit of the two Great Powers. Following up on this initiative the Foreign Ministers of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-aligned Countries who met in New Delhi this April issued a call for nuclear disarmament. "For almost 40 years", said the Political Declaration of the Conference, "the survival of mankind has been held hostage to the perceived security interests of a few nuclear-weapon States, in particular the super-Powers, and their allies. To rely on nuclear leverage is to accept a perpetual community of fear that contradicts the United Nations Charter. Belief in the maintenance of world peace through nuclear deterrence is the most dangerous fallacy that exists. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence lies at the root of the continuing escalation in the quantity and quality of nuclear weapons and has in fact led to greater insecurity and instability in international relations than before."

One central objective to which my country has attached the highest importance on a par with that of nuclear disarmament is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As far as we know, space has been fortunately free

(Mr. Narayanan, India)

of nuclear weapons so far, but the collective wisdom and actions of all nations is needed now to ensure that space always remains free of weapons of any kind. Indeed this was the spirit in which the General Assembly of the United Nations commended for adoption the Outer Space Treaty by acclamation on 19 December 1966. I wish to recall also that on 22 September 1960 President Eisenhower proposed to the General Assembly of the United Nations that the principle underlined in the Antarctica Treaty of 1959 should be applied to outer space and celestial bodies. What is that principle? It is that in the interest of mankind Antarctica should continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and should not become the scene or object of international discord. The principle concern of nations in the 1960s was nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In prohibiting such weapons from space in the Outer Space Treaty it was not intended to imply that other and new types of weapons might be deployed in space. That would have been contrary to the Antarctica principle. In fact if there had been any thought then of locating in space weapons that fall outside the category of "weapons of mass destruction", the legal ban would certainly have been extended to cover them also explicitly. The fact that it was not done cannot now be regarded as justifying the deployment in space of other and even more dangerous weapons.

However, research is being conducted for the development of space weapons based on lasers and particle beams. There are also reports of the development of weapons for destroying satellites in orbit. These developments are a source of grave concern to us and other non-aligned countries which have no defence against them and which use satellites in space for a variety of peaceful purposes related to our well-being and development. Anti-satellite weapons and space-based weapons would have the capability to destroy not only satellites in orbit but also objects on land, sea and in the air and they would become a new source of threat to all nations. The development of such weapons by one nation would be bound to provoke another that feels threatened by them to take counter-measures and there would then follow an extension of the arms race to outer space. The nuclear peril and the risk of war that we are now facing would be considerably enhanced by anti-satellite and space-based weapons.

Some have made the preposterous claim that certain weapons have the special virtue of being exclusively "defensive". International law makes no distinction between defensive and offensive weapons and there is no "defensive" weapon that cannot be and has not been used for offensive purposes. We have also been told that a space defence shield could possibly be developed which would render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" as if by establishing some sort of a vast Maginot Line in space. This seems to be a grand and dangerous illusion. In any case there is a far less expensive and indeed less risky way of achieving the same goal, that is, through nuclear disarmament.

The Six Nations have called for "the prohibition of the development, testing, production, deployment and use of all space weapons. An arms race in space would be enormously costly, and have grave destabilizing effects. It would also endanger a number of arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Mr. Narayanan, India)

"It is our view that the Conference on Disarmament should embark on multilateral negotiations for the purpose of (a) banning space weapons of all kinds including anti-satellite weapons and destroying existing systems and (b) providing for immunity of satellites from any forms of interference with their normal functioning. We attach the highest importance and priority to securing these two objectives for the sake of world peace and humanity's survival.

There is the question of verification of compliance with agreements banning weapons in outer space. For this purpose there must be a readiness to accept full transparency in the development of national space programmes so that clandestine weapons development can be prevented. This would mean that agreement must be sought to ensure that technologies and systems that are developed will not evade international control and surveillance. We have at the same time to ensure that existing arms control agreements relating to outer space are strictly observed. The crucial instrument in this context is the ABM Treaty. Compliance with this Treaty may appear to be the exclusive concern of the two Governments which are parties to it. It is, however, obvious that the violations of the restraint imposed by this Treaty are of a direct concern to all Government and nations. Similarly existing restraints and ceilings on offensive nuclear weapons should be strictly observed to rule out the possibility of a runaway offensive arms race being triggered off by the development of space weapons. This complex of issues is of direct concern to the Conference on Disarmament. The negotiation of agreements calculated to prevent an arms race in outer space is a central responsibility of this Conference as has been repeatedly established by the United Nations General Assembly. We cannot, therefore, subscribe to the position that any substantive work on outer space by this Conference would necessarily prejudice bilateral negotiations on the subject. It is the responsibility of this Conference to commence substantive negotiations to avert an arms race in outer space before it is too late to take such preventive action.

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

I propose to address item 5 of our agenda, Prevention of an arms race in outer space in my intervention this morning.

It is evident that the impending weaponization of outer space is a direct consequence of the strategic relationship between the super-Powers. It derives from the classic military concept of dominating the high ground. However, as the illusive quest for security through military superiority has amply demonstrated, in the nuclear age it does not ensure or enhance the security of either side. It merely pushes the parameters of military competition further, as in this instance to outer space. We, therefore, find it difficult to believe that weapons for use in space would appreciably improve the security environment of either super-Power and its allies. In spite of the technological advances made in the sphere of armaments there is no such thing as the ultimate weapon.

My delegation views with great concern the evolution of new weapons systems to be used or deployed in outer space, such as anti-satellite weaponry and ballistic missile defences. The application of these new technologies to conventional weapon systems poses additional hazards for international security. Lasers, particle beams and computer guidance systems, to mention only a few, have already been earmarked for such uses. The evolution of an entirely new generation of weapons, accompanied by their diffusion within the two military alliances, will only amplify the existing military asymmetries between them and the non-aligned, and neutral countries.

With the weaponization of outer space, the prevailing exclusive and inequitable use of this zone by the space-Powers will be further entrenched to the detriment of the non-aligned, neutral and developing States. The ability

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

of nations to equally share vital information gathered through satellite surveillance and reconnaissance activities would be compromised, while access to even non-controversial data or the orderly functioning of commercial telecommunication facilities, could be seriously jeopardized.

At the same time, the presence of space weapons in uncontrolled numbers may deliberately or accidentally undermine permissible activities in this zone, increasing the risks of accidental or pre-emptive military exchanges. Indeed, in the remote environment of space, the constraints on the use of force would be less stringent than they are on Earth.

Another immediate consequence of an arms race in outer space would be the collapse of the international legal régime relating to this zone. As it exists today, space law is already under grave strain from its inherent weaknesses and ambiguities, not to mention the lacunae created by developments in space technology. However, it must be realized that the existing code of conduct in space, in spite of its limitations is an invaluable and perhaps irreplaceable corpus of international legislation. Accordingly, our efforts should be to strengthen and consolidate these juridical norms through multilateral negotiations instead of further undermining their fragile structure.

We must endeavour to amplify and improve contemporary space law in keeping with existing and anticipated requirements. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 for instance, deals quite inadequately with the problem of preventing the militarization of outer space. It applies this criterion only to the Moon and other celestial bodies, whereas the objective of preventing an arms race in this sphere, in the real sense, implies that the whole of outer space should be declared as a demilitarized zone to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. At the same time, the only limitations on military activities established by the Outer Space Treaty relate to weapons of mass destruction, thereby leaving considerable room for other military uses of this zone. In this context it would be useful to differentiate clearly between activities that are consistent with peaceful uses of outer space and contribute towards strategic stability, as opposed to those activities that are destabilizing and oriented towards military objectives. Further, key concepts and terms such as "weapons of mass destruction" and "peaceful purposes" remain imprecise, thereby permitting selective interpretations. It is therefore necessary to clarify whether weapons of mass destruction are to be defined only in their traditionally accepted sense of being nuclear, biological and radiological weapons, despite the fact that current space weapons technology has developed or is aimed at developing systems that could be used as crucial components of weapons of mass destruction. Similarly, it is necessary to identify whether "peaceful purposes" implies non-military actions in outer space, since certain space objects, while of a "non-aggressive" character, may have a decidedly military function. We must also be aware of the impact of new technologies on space law. As Ambassador Wegener indicated in his very informative statement of 6 March, such technologies may easily be adapted for military purposes although being ostensibly developed for peaceful uses.

(Mr. Ahman, Pakistan)

The compelling need to preserve and improve international space law has been underscored in recent years by dangerous developments that threaten to erode existing legal instruments, such as the Outer Space and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaties. With the advent of missile defences, either through the avenue of research or in the guise of ASAT testing, these treaties would not only become redundant, but more importantly, strategic stability may be compromised, since other arms control and disarmament agreements, built on the ABM Treaty, may not survive the latter's demise. In our view measures to avert such a catastrophe should not be limited to banning ballistic missile defences, but should cover the entire range of ambiguous and multi-purpose technologies related to such systems, including ASAT weapons, anti-tactical ballistic missiles, early warning/space tracking radars and surface to air missiles geared for use in an ABM mode. It is clear that any realistic effort towards this end would require credible and dependable verification measures. Equally important, commitments to the peaceful uses of outer space must be ensured by practical steps towards this objective. The international community and especially the super-Powers must realize that concerted action is necessary to control the spiral of space weapons technology before it gathers a momentum of its own and becomes irreversible.

The delegation of Pakistan is gratified to note that the Governments of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have reaffirmed their commitment to abide by their obligations under the ABM Treaty, in addition to their adherence to other instruments of the legal régime in outer space. We are also encouraged by the fact that both countries are involved in bilateral negotiations which relate in part to preventing the militarization of outer space. However, it needs to be emphasized that this issue is not the exclusive preserve of the two major Powers or of those countries that possess the capabilities to utilize outer space. As I have already stated, the non-aligned, neutral and developing countries also have a major interest in the peaceful uses of this zone. Accordingly, the space Powers must be the first to demonstrate that they have the political vision not only to prevent the militarization of outer space but also to redress the damage already done and that the pursuit of their own interests in this sphere cannot take precedence over the interests of the international community.

Towards this end, co-operation in the relevant multilateral forums must be redoubled on an equitable basis. For its part, the Conference should be enabled to make its positive contribution in formulating agreement or agreements as appropriate to prevent an arms race in outer space. The major space-Powers could provide a significant impetus towards this end by sharing information regarding their current and prospective activities in space. They could also address presently critical issues such as current and future uses of this zone, and their understanding of and adherence to relevant treaty obligations. Primarily, the Conference should be informed of their respective interpretation of the permissible limits of research in ABM systems or their components, allowed under their bilateral Treaty. This may enable the Conference to evolve a more objective and impartial interpretation of the limits of research permitted by the ABM Treaty.

(Mr. Ahman, Pakistan)

In the foregoing comments I have attempted to identify what we believe are crucial aspects of the debate on agenda item 5. On the basis of these considerations I would like to submit certain proposals which we hope would contribute towards the ultimate objective of preventing an arms race in outer space. I may mention here that we perceive these suggestions as being complementary to and in consonance with the spirit of the draft proposals relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space that are already before the international community.

First, the Conference on Disarmament should commence early negotiations on a comprehensive international convention to prohibit a conventional or nuclear-arms race in outer space and promote multilateral co-operation in the peaceful uses of this zone. To facilitate this aim, an international space agency should be established with a mandate to promote peaceful uses of space as well as to provide the international community with a capability to verify disarmament agreements independently of the two super-Powers in a manner that would overcome the credibility gap that characterizes the existing national technical means of verification. Such a multilateral mechanism would also overcome the existing inability of most countries to protect their interests in outer space and would guard against violations of international treaties to the satisfaction of the world community. In this context, we recognize the relevance of the proposals submitted by France for the creation of an international space agency.

Second, immediate efforts should be undertaken to contain ASAT weaponry initially through such interim measures as a moratorium on their development, testing and deployment, as well as a commitment by the space-Powers on the non-first use of these weapons. These interim measures could also be strengthened by proposals such as the recent Soviet suggestion to establish the immunity of space objects. These incremental measures should be consciously geared towards the elaboration of a comprehensive treaty prohibiting anti-satellite weapons.

Third, to prevent the erosion of the international legal régime in outer space the Conference should, as a first step, call upon the United States and the USSR to confirm their commitments to abide by the ABM Treaty, in particular article 5 under which they have undertaken not to develop, test or deploy ABM systems or components of such systems that are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based. In the same context the Conference should undertake efforts towards evolving an objective and impartial interpretation of the ambiguous aspects of the ABM Treaty, in particular of such activities as "research" and the use of "other physical principles". Such an exercise could contribute towards identifying a common interpretation of these concepts.

Fourth, as an interim measure and until the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space, the Conference should adopt an international instrument to supplement the ABM Treaty with a view to ensuring that the self-restraint accepted by the two super-Powers in the ABM Treaty, for preventing the further escalation of the arms race in the interests of the entire international community, is not negated by acts of omission or

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

commission by either or both super-Powers. Such an instrument should be composed of the following five principles: it should (a) recognize and reconfirm the importance of the United States-USSR ABM Treaty in preventing the escalation of an arms race, especially in outer space; (b) note the commitment of the two Powers to continue to abide strictly by the provisions of this Treaty; (c) provide a clear interpretation of the research activities permissible under the ABM Treaty not only for the two parties but also for other technologically advanced States; (d) include a commitment by other technologically advanced States not to take their own research beyond the limits accepted by the United States and the USSR; and (e) include a mechanism to provide for the redress of such activities that are contrary to the limitations contained in the ABM Treaty.

The delegation of Pakistan fully recognizes that the aforementioned measures cannot replace a comprehensive treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space which should be the ultimate objective of our activities in this Conference. We hope, however, that in the present circumstances and pending the attainment of an international environment conducive to the conclusion of such a treaty, these suggestions would be helpful in imparting a positive impulse towards our final goal.

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20-21

(U Tin Tun, Burma)

Agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" is a question of great interest and growing concern to the international community. We are now in a situation where the arms race on Earth is on the verge of spreading to the realm of outer space, which would further exacerbate the already grave danger to the peace and security of mankind, posed by the ongoing arms race on Earth. Outer space is the common heritage and the province of all mankind and the exploration and use of outer space should be preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. The aspiration of the major Powers "to prevent an arms race in space and terminate it on Earth" contained in their Joint Statement is shared by us all. We should therefore spare no effort to take all necessary steps to prevent an arms race in outer space without any further delay.

In the view of my delegation, the question of ASAT weapons deserves our close attention. Agreement on non-first-use of ASAT weapons and the total ban on such weapons would certainly constitute a significant and substantial confidence-building measure and an important step towards the comprehensive ban on space weapon systems.

Mr. Kerroum, Algeria)

It is true that the history of the efforts made for decades by all parties to promote disarmament is marked by a long succession of hopes and disappointments. However, on each occasion, the hope has lasted long enough to bolster the convictions and efforts of all. This time, the hopes aroused by the Geneva summit will have faded even before the present session of our Conference has come to an end.

The disappointment is particularly keenly felt because our deliberations began, just over two months ago, with an optimism which, while admittedly cautious, was shared and displayed by all.

My delegation found justification for such optimism in the content of the joint declaration published following the Geneva summit and, more specifically, in the dual affirmation of the abandonment of the effort to achieve military superiority and the impossibility of either waging or winning a nuclear war. As my delegation has already had occasion to point out, this double affirmation, in so far as it reflects genuine intentions and in so far as it is translated into reality, should quickly have a positive and decisive influence on two items on our agenda, namely, the total ban of nuclear tests and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The good intentions declared at the Geneva summit should have brought significant progress on these two items and, in any event, should have promoted the establishment of the two ad hoc negotiating committees.

You know, Mr. President, what became of them. The ad hoc committee on the nuclear test ban was not set up. The ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space may be established, but with a mandate that gives grounds for believing that, basically, the deadlock is virtually the same for both items. These two deadlocks can be explained on the same grounds since, in the final analysis, there is a close and direct link between the two items. Nuclear tests are now justified as much by the need to ensure the reliability of existing weapons as by the research and development of new types of weapons directly related to the possible use of outer space for military purposes.

My delegation is well aware that the comprehensive nuclear test ban and the prevention of the arms race in outer space raise difficult and complex questions, but at the same time represent an aspiration of the whole international community. It is not a denial or an underestimation of this complexity and difficulty, but rather a response to this aspiration to stress the possibility and desirability of overcoming problems by redoubling our efforts and, in particular, by showing the complete and continuous availability for discussion and negotiation which this forum requires -- this forum which is, need it be recalled on every occasion, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating organ. It is to this end that Algeria, like the other members of the Group of 21, has shown genuine flexibility regarding the mandates of the two ad hoc committees in question.

Our concern would have been less acute if the international environment was beginning to show signs of a relaxation of tension or at least if there were some indications that the spirit of dialogue was finally beginning to

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prevail. This is by no means the case, quite the contrary, as shown by the armed attack recently perpetrated by the United States against Libya.

It would have been neither uncalled for nor inappropriate to expand on all the principles called into question by that action. Suffice it to recall that, in the event, a cardinal principle was sacrificed, the very principle which is stressed repeatedly in the final document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, the equal right to security for all. And there is nothing more legitimate than to expect those best equipped to ensure their own security to take full account of that right in respect of smaller and less powerful States.

In addition to the violation of the Charter of the United Nations, in addition the neglect, by a major Power and permanent member of the Security Council, of its special responsibility with regard to the maintenance of peace and security, proof has now been furnished that preference is given, to use an evocative image, to the rule of force rather than to the rule of law and that the desire for confrontation has thus taken precedence over the spirit of dialogue.

That is the source of our disappointment. We were expecting the first beginnings of a reversal of the arms race, but it is the beginnings of a resumption of the arms race that we are now witnessing.

This does not augur well for the work of our Conference. Confrontation can lead only to an acceleration of the arms race. Without dialogue, there can be no genuine movement towards disarmament.

There is nothing more revealing in this regard than a comparison of the optimism of three months ago, when the accent seemed to be on dialogue, and the disillusionment of today, when the trend seems to be towards confrontation.

Nevertheless, we must, despite everything, pursue our efforts to promote disarmament here and elsewhere, for a reason which is as compelling as it is simple, a reason which has consistently proved itself in this forum, namely, that it is not necessary to hope in order to act.

Mr. Rychlak, Poland)

The spring part of the 1986 session of the Conference on Disarmament is nearing its closure, regrettably with no satisfactory results. The most dispiriting, in the opinion of the Polish delegation, is lack of progress on issues of highest priority and urgency. I have in mind especially nuclear-test ban and prevention of an arms race in outer space, both of them -- regarded by public opinion and, in fact, by the majority of delegations as the most vital.

(Mr. Rychlak, Poland)

Now, Mr. President, let me turn to another topic on our agenda, the problem of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This salient disarmament issue gains in urgency with every passing day, as one of the great military and technological Powers carried out intensive research and development efforts to bring about powerful outer space weapons systems.

There have been many words uttered on the subject, most of them critical as to the possible outcome of the programme undertaken by the United States. It seems, however, that we have still not explored all the complex aspects of the anticipated outer-space arms race, triggered by the realization of the United States plans. Even more ominous is a danger that public opinion has still not really woken up to the nature and the magnitude of all possible consequences ensuing from the intensified militarization of outer space.

When discussing these possible consequences we rightly stress first of all the military ones, as they bear directly on mankind's security. We repeatedly underline the dangers of destabilization of strategic relations between the great nuclear Powers, as well as the inadvertent speeding up of the general arms race, encompassing all categories of weapons, and the jeopardizing of the future of all forms of disarmament negotiations. This category of possible negative consequences of the outer-space arms race is seen clearly by the majority of us here. Today, Mr. President, let me comment on some other consequences, perhaps less tangible and obvious nevertheless of an equally fundamental nature.

The first step of our civilization into the exploration of outer space, marked by the launching of man-made objects and, later on, of the first man into Earth orbit and on the moon, have been seen by all as a triumph of the

(Mr. Rychlak, Poland)

human brain over nature, as a new era in the steady progress of science, technology and -- it was hoped -- of our mentality.

One of many great hopes associated with the ascent of man into outer space was that this new dimension of human endeavour would be a unifying element for the international community, torn apart by so many conflicts on Earth. In the exploration of the limitless outer space there are no national boundaries and the selfish interests were yet not defined, opening a chance to arrange for a common, peaceful utilization of the new environment. The recognition of this chance was visible in a vast number of public utterances coming from all corners of the world. Among them, one of more solemn seemed the United States National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, which stated inter alia that "... activities in space should be devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind ...". The same idea was later embodied in the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 which recognizes "... the common interest of all mankind in the progress of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes ..." and that "... the exploration and use of outer space should be carried on for the benefit of all peoples irrespective of the degree of their economic or scientific development ...".

Apart from those general political and ethical guidelines, it may be observed that the conquest of outer space has been motivated by a desire to expand the scientific understanding of the environment, by considerations of national prestige deriving from the fact of being in the forefront of technological capability to explore outer space, by the quest for economic gain from the exploration of outer space, and, last but not least, by military considerations. Such military developments as long-range missiles were pivotal in the initial stage of outer space exploration. Nevertheless, at that stage, the non-military motives and the budgets for civilian space programmes were the leading factors. Progress in the exploration of outer space added momentum to the creation of the rudiments of an international space legal system and to the establishment of international organizations and institutions responsible for the promotion and regulation of the international co-operation in space.

The process of development of a positive international legal and organizational infrastructure is, however, far from its conclusion and the rapid proliferation of space technology raises a great number of new and complex problems which the international community will have to tackle. One could mention in this regard, for example, the problem of dissemination of data from the remote-sensing of the Earth's surface, the problem of radio and television broadcasting by satellite systems, the problem of utilization of the geostationary orbit, the problem of possible conflicts of law, which will inevitably grow along with a tendency to commercialize the exploration of outer space. The chances for the peaceful solution of these problems depend ultimately on the international climate, on the spirit of co-operation, mutual confidence, willingness to compromise and on goodwill. Nothing should be done which spoils these chances.

And what we observe now is an ominous reversal of the United States policy vis-à-vis outer space. The Presidential Directives of 1982 and 1983

(Mr. Rychlak, Poland)

indicate a path which contradicts the early United States stand. There are more financial resources put into military than to civilian sectors (from 1982 on), new military projects of grave consequences have been undertaken, there is a visible decrease in the United States involvement in international scientific projects (as, for example, in the lack of American participation in the efforts connected with Halley's comet), and a decision was taken to commercialize United States space ventures.

The major programmes oriented at the military utilization of outer space, beyond that of enhancing the effectiveness of the presently existing military systems on Earth, indicate a frame of mind which seems incompatible with the principles set up at the early stages of space exploration. As it becomes evident from the plans disclosed so far, space is to become a focal point of the national defence system of one of the major nuclear Powers. With such a critical policy shift, it is the military considerations which are going to overshadow all other motives for space exploration. It seems inevitable that -- as a result -- the civilian space research and space activity budgets will shrink, unable to compete with the military requirements. With the remaining space Powers following suit either for reasons of security or out of alliance obligations, the global prospects of civilian scientific exploration of outer space will diminish. Scientific, peaceful international co-operation, irrespective of its global geopolitical ramifications, is bound to slow down.

All this endangers the present legal régime for outer space which is based solely on formal, contractual arrangements, leading purposefully to the creation of body of law beneficial to all members of the international community. If the existing treaty régime, weak as it is, is permitted to be weakened further by not being responsive to new needs and new requirements posed by the developments in space technology, then all hopes for further peaceful exploration of outer space are close to nil.

By way of concluding my remarks, I would like to stress the willingness of the Polish delegation to start practical work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The first part of this year's session has been definitely lost. We should not allow this to be repeated.

(The President)

Distinguished delegates, as I announced this morning, the first business in our afternoon meeting will be the election of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on item 5 "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". It is my understanding that the candidacy of the representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Bayart, meets with general agreement of the Conference. It is so decided.

It was so decided.

I congratulate Ambassador Bayart on his election and express my best wishes for the fruitful work of the Committee. I shall consult with Ambassador Bayart about when the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee could take place and make a corresponding announcement at the end of this meeting. Also, as announced before, I shall open the floor to those delegations who want to address the question of the mandate and the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

(Mr. Alfarargi, Egypt)

I have requested the floor, in my capacity as Co-ordinator of the Group of 21, to make the following statement on agenda item 5 on behalf of the Group.

With reference to the resolution adopted today by the Conference concerning the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and the approval of its mandate, as contained in document CD/WP.230, the Group of 21 wishes to make the following statement:

The Group of 21 reaffirms its view that the mandate originally put forward, as contained in document CD.329/Rev.2 of 20 July 1984, is the most suitable mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 5 since it faithfully reflects the successive resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations in this connection, the most recent being resolution 40/87, adopted by a majority of 151 votes in favour with no votes against and 2 abstentions, in which the Conference on Disarmament is requested to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1986 session and to grant it an adequate mandate to conduct negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty or treaties, as necessary, for the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Group of 21 appreciates the fact that an exploratory stage is required for a limited period in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in order to prepare for the holding of negotiations. On that basis, the Group of 21 agreed to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee for the 1985 session and now agrees to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee for the 1986 session so that the exploratory stage can be continued. By adopting that position, the Group of 21 is merely manifesting a greater degree of flexibility due to the importance that it attaches to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee and the resumption of its work.

Taking into consideration the work that the Ad Hoc Committee undertook during the 1985 session, the Group of 21 believes that the Committee will be able, through diligent and constructive work, to conclude the exploratory stage and complete its mandate by the end of the 1986 session in such a way as to enable the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad hoc Committee in 1987 for the purpose of conducting negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty or treaties, as appropriate, for the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

That was the text of the statement of the Group of 21. I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the delegation of Egypt and in my capacity as co-ordinator of the Group of 21, to warmly congratulate Ambassador Bayart, the representative of Mongolia, on his chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space and to stress our willingness to co-operate with him in a manner conducive to the successful discharge of his functions.

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

Let me say, on behalf of the Western group, that we consider this mandate a realistic one. It is a mandate which we agree upon and which does permit us to conduct concrete work. It refers realistically to the continuation of an examination, which was unfortunately last year quite preliminary, and to the identification of issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It also refers to the consideration of existing proposals, future initiatives as well as to the developments which have taken place since the establishment of last year's Ad Hoc Committee.

This mandate does seem to us to represent a basis for a substantive work that will take into consideration the expectations of each country represented here. If this Conference is to play a positive role in moving forward on the sensitive and important issue of outer space, we have now a sound basis to do so.

May I now refer to the speech of Ambassador Alfarargy, whom we very much esteem for his effective work in last year's Committee. We note the wish of some delegations, as indicated by the speech of Mr. Alfarargy, on behalf of the Group of 21, to proceed expeditiously. The delegations for which I am speaking believe that it is necessary at this stage to devote our full energies to fulfilling the mandate we have now agreed upon, and not to prejudge in any way any further decisions we may take in the future.

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(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Mr. President, we also wish to thank you for your efforts which have led to the adoption of the mandate of the subsidiary body on agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". The position of the Soviet Union and of the socialist countries with regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and on the mandate for the corresponding subsidiary body, has been set out repeatedly. We have been, are and will be supporters of businesslike negotiations with a view to the conclusion of an agreement or agreements for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have agreed to the mandate on the understanding that all our efforts in the Conference will be directed at the prevention of the development of space strike weapons, the prevention of the use of force in space and from space against earth.

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(The President)

I thank the representative of the Soviet Union for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me both in his present statement and in the statement he made this morning. Is there any other delegation that wishes to take the floor on this subject? If that is not the case, I propose that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space should hold its first meeting tomorrow at 3.30 p.m., in this room.

It was so decided.

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

In its first statement in the plenary meeting of the Conference, our delegation stressed that it had come to the session with a strong mandate to act and to sustain the efforts directed towards making our work more constructive and effective.

The session opened in a climate of hope, even optimism, that was determined, in large measure, by the declaration of the summit meeting in Geneva last November, and especially the decision to step up negotiations with a view to arriving at agreements on the vital problems of nuclear-weapon reductions and on other issues that also appear on the agenda of our Conference.

However, in circumstances and for reasons concerning which our delegation has already had occasion to give its views, we are compelled to conclude that the results achieved, in any case, fall short of our expectations.

It has not proved possible to set up an effective working body on a nuclear test ban. With regard to agenda item 2, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, a decision to convene informal meetings has been taken thanks to your efforts, but this manner of dealing with so important a subject is considered by the majority of delegations, including our own, to be unsatisfactory, not to say, superficial. The situation regarding agenda items 3 and 6, namely the prevention of nuclear war and arrangements for non-nuclear-weapon countries continues to be unsatisfactory. We needed the whole of this first part of the 1986 session to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Its mandate, although a little more developed, is still incomplete, because it is not concerned with negotiations, as it were, for tangible agreements. If we simply consider the statement made by the delegation of Pakistan at the previous meeting, we see that the number of issues to be negotiated is considerable.

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

The hopes raised at the beginning of the 1986 session that we are entering a period of more efficient negotiations -- after the two Great Powers have provided assurances at the highest level about their willingness to embark upon negotiations -- have not yet become a reality. Stagnation is, regretfully, still the main feature of the Conference's work.

The work of the Conference should be measured by the results in negotiations on individual agenda items. Even a brief overview of these will show that there was no progress, or very little, in the efforts made in the course of this year and in previous years to get off the ground on such priority issues as nuclear test ban, cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, prevention of nuclear war and prevention of an arms race in outer space. In its statement at the beginning of our 1986 session, my delegation expressed its views on all these important items of the Conference agenda.

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(The President)

During the month of April, I have devoted particular attention to organizational issues dealing with item 5, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. I am pleased that the Conference was able to agree on a mandate for a subsidiary body on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as on the choice of its Chairman, Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia. It is my personal conviction that this Conference has an essential role to play in this field, and that its primary task at this stage should be the determination of specific areas for the negotiation of individual agreements. By proceeding on the lines of its work in 1986, the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space may bring us closer to the achievement of a legal framework that will ensure the utilization of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of mankind as a whole. At a time when the established structures of relations among nations on Earth are being increasingly put in jeopardy, we would do well to ponder on the pressing need to prevent the armaments race and military rivalry from gaining free access to the space above us.

(The President)

The Republic of Bulgaria has been a member of the Conference on Disarmament since 1962 when the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee began its work. Bulgaria has signed and ratified all the international agreements on disarmament which have been drafted and agreed by the Conference on Disarmament. The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria has always attached and still attaches great importance to the conference as the only forum for multilateral negotiations that opens up possibilities for States large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, developed and developing, to make their contribution to the efforts to resolve the major problems of our time: the prevention of nuclear catastrophe, the curbing and cessation of the arms race and disarmament. Confirmation of this unchanging position on the part of Bulgaria is the decision by the President of the State Council of Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov, to address a message to the Conference on the occasion of the opening of the second part of its session for 1986. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to read you the content of this message to the Conference on Disarmament.

"...For many years now they have continued to push forward the senseless arms race and pile up weapons of mass destruction. Lately, they have also set about implementing their extremely dangerous plans to turn outer space into a new springboard to kindle a nuclear war. They endeavour, unscrupulous in their means, to force their will upon other peoples and, from a position of strength, to impose their domination in the world. This political course is in drastic contradiction with the efforts to solve the problem fundamental to all peoples -- the preservation of their independence and strengthening of peace and security. The comprehensive system of international security proposed by the USSR is devoted precisely to this noble goal.

" We all welcomed the Geneva summit meeting last November and the resumption of the Soviet-American dialogue at the highest level. The new "spirit of Geneva" should, however, be developed and enriched with a real content. This means that not just the Soviet Union but the other side too should demonstrate its political will and readiness for concrete steps. For, nowadays, security is exclusively a political problem. It is only through the achievement of a new political thinking and in political means and dialogue that the way out can be found today, a way capable of guaranteeing the future of human civilization....

" The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament includes all major issues on whose solution the success of this great human endeavour depends. The problem of nuclear disarmament and space weapons in all its various aspects cannot be solved through the efforts of the leading nuclear States only, although their special responsibility in this respect is commonly acknowledged. The cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests and the reaching of a prohibition on them is now regarded, justifiably, as a top-priority task. To proceed with any postponement to negotiations on this key issue is to meet the expectations of all the peoples of the world. The Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions declared nearly a year ago, on the anniversary of the tragic atomic bombing of Hiroshima is conducive to arriving at a common solution.

" Mankind expects that effective agreements be reached on curbing and terminating the arms race on Earth and on preventing it in outer space. People want to live in a non-nuclear world, under peaceful skies. We would like to see the work of the Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which has progressed considerably over past years, successfully concluded soon. Nowadays, the lofty idea of safeguarding peace, indeed of preserving the Earth, is a test case for political responsibility and statesmanlike wisdom. The peoples of the world link their expectations and yearnings with the highly responsible work of this single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations."

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

As far as space weapons are concerned, the two sides established on 8 January 1985 that questions concerning space and nuclear arms, both strategic and intermediate-range, must be considered and resolved in their interrelationship. This is a central element of the Geneva negotiations. Every opportunity leading towards a co-operative solution to this decisive question must be taken advantage of.

The Federal Government has repeatedly expressed its view that deep cuts in offensive weapons would have an impact on the need for, and quantity of, defensive systems.

As to the other topics on the agenda, many of them are closely connected to the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, notably those concerning arms control in outer space and a comprehensive test ban. In both cases it will be a question of using the opportunities for constructive steps deriving from bilateral and multilateral negotiations being conducted parallel to one another.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the efforts to take stock of existing agreements on outer space and to identify problems and possibilities for multilateral action, with regard to preventing an arms race in space. It strongly endorses its commitment to a comprehensive and verifiable test ban to take effect as soon as possible. It will continue to make a practical contribution where it possesses particular expertise, that is to say, in the seismological monitoring of nuclear explosions.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

A second main issue in international disarmament policy today is to prevent an arms race in outer space. It is dealt with bilaterally in Geneva, where both parties have formally committed themselves to negotiate with the aim of preventing such an arms race.

After a delay, which in the opinion of my Government was hardly necessary, the Conference has also during this year's session been able to agree on a mandate for an Ad hoc Committee to deal with this item. As the consequences of a space arms race would affect all States, it must now be assured that substantive work is undertaken at the multilateral level. This should be done in the appropriate negotiating body, that is the Conference on Disarmament.

The existing body of international law in this field is in many respects insufficient. An important first task for us could be to identify which additional measures need to be taken. Our objective should be to negotiate an international treaty banning space weapons, including weapons directed against targets in space. Such a ban should cover the development, testing and deployment of anti-satellite weapons on Earth, in the atmosphere and in outer space. It must include the destruction of existing anti-satellite systems.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Today we have at our disposal all the necessary negotiating tables. On these negotiating tables, we have an abundance of comprehensive and technically well elaborated proposals. What is needed now is nothing more than the political will to settle outstanding differences. Or to express it in a different way: what is to be gained by everyone from negotiated disarmament by far exceeds the possible short-term advantages of non-agreements.

The world expects all States to demonstrate such a political will and to make a realistic assessment of what can and has to be achieved by us, as politicians and disarmament negotiators. The world indeed expects negotiations to be pursued and to produce results.

It expects bilateral negotiations in Geneva: to radically reduce United States and Soviet nuclear arsenals; to set in motion a process leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapons; and to prevent an arms race in space.

It expects regional negotiations in Vienna and Stockholm: to adopt concrete and practical measures to build confidence and security in Europe; to produce substantial limitations of military forces and activities in Europe; and to help make Europe an example of regional co-operation and disarmament.

It expects the Conference on Disarmament: to negotiate a verifiable treaty prohibiting all nuclear testing; to ban all chemical weapons from the face of the Earth; and to demonstrate, through action on all items on its agenda, that global disarmament negotiations can provide solutions to global security problems.

No one at this table can be unaware of such expectations. We can choose to meet them, we can choose to ignore them. But we can never escape our responsibility -- to the world, to the future. There is a time to assume our responsibility. There is a time to act and to negotiate. There is a time to agree. The time is now.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The unprecedented arms race on Earth, fuelled by Washington and its NATO allies, and the intention of the United States to extend it into outer space, make it imperative for mankind to mobilize all its forces to prevent a catastrophe. The bilateral and multilateral negotiations on arms limitations and disarmament now in progress should move full speed ahead. This fully applies to the Conference on Disarmament as well, this unique multilateral negotiating body.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union reaffirmed unequivocally the basic and unchanged Soviet position concerning the non-militarization of outer space. The Soviet Union firmly favours renunciation of the development, testing and deployment of space weapons. And this is not because the United States could obtain strategic superiority by implementing the SDI. In the world of today it is virtually impossible to upset strategic parity. There is an antidote to any poison. A chain armour suit afforded protection from a sword, but not from a bullet. The walls of an ancient castle afforded protection from a shower of arrows, but not from the fire of siege artillery. An appropriate response will also be found against space strike weapons. Moreover, as Mikhail Gorbachev has noted, the Soviet response to the development of Star Wars weapons by the United States will be effective and less costly and would require less time. But this would not be our choice. The Soviet Union quite categorically opposes extending the arms race into outer space, and not out of fear but guided by a sense of responsibility, since it realizes the dangerous consequences that such an arms race might entail.

The task of preventing an arms race in outer space is becoming the corner-stone of contemporary relations among States and there is no doubt that such a representative forum as the Conference on Disarmament cannot stand aloof from the international community's efforts to keep space peaceful. It is the Soviet delegation's firm belief that the Conference should continue seeking a solution to this question, and the more vigorously and effectively, the better.

Seeking to contribute in word and deed to reaching this goal, the Soviet Union has proposed that the Conference should prepare and conclude an international agreement ensuring the immunity of artificial Earth satellites and banning the development, testing and deployment of anti-satellite systems as well as eliminating the existing systems. In proposing such an agreement, the Soviet Union took into consideration the positions of many member States namely, Sweden, France, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sri Lanka, India and others, which favour, as before, the establishment of a satellite protection régime and the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons.

The ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Bayart of the Mongolian People's Republic, established by the Conference last April, should start without delay examining the proposals submitted to the Conference.

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

The first part of our 1986 session also set the stage for substantive work in the Committee re-established under item 5 of our agenda, prevention of an arms race in outer space. As the Ad hoc Committee resumes its consideration of the issues it is mandated to examine, it is important to recognize that this will be no small task. The question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as our initial exploration last year showed, is a complex matter. Last year's work was useful. But it was only a beginning. It is clear that much remains to be accomplished under the terms of the Committee's mandate, and my delegation will work hard to ensure the Committee's progress during the coming weeks.

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(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

The first part of this year's session began in an encouraging climate of optimism which was inspired by the holding a few months previously of the first summit meeting in six years between the leaders of the two main world Powers. Practically all those who spoke during the first part of the session referred to the summit as an outstanding event that should pave the way for new prospects in East-West relations. Indeed, the Geneva summit gave the impression that it was the starting point for a new dialogue which should lead to specific measures to improve the world climate, and for a process that would produce tangible results in disarmament. That optimism has gradually given way to disappointment, because the declared intent of bringing about a relaxation of international tension has not been followed up; nor have we seen the fulfilment of the pledge made by the two protagonists of the Geneva summit to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on Earth.

Quite frankly, we did not really harbour any false hopes from that meeting, whose sole direct result was to bring about, albeit for a short time, a relaxation of the international climate which was, at that time, extremely ominous and disquieting. But even those modest results of the summit meeting were of very short duration, and the "spirit of Geneva" seems to be giving way once again to the tensions fuelled by the fundamental differences that separate the two Great Powers. Similarly, the only other achievement of the November summit, namely the prospect of a second meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, now seems to be in jeopardy as a result of the new signs of confrontation that have occurred since then. We are therefore, beginning our work now, unlike the first part of our session, in an atmosphere where uncertainty, not to say pessimism prevails.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

I do not think it is necessary to set forth the reasons why we are against any initiative whose purpose is to make outer space a new dimension for the arms race. At this stage in the discussion which is taking place with regard to the Strategic Defence Initiative, perhaps it is more appropriate to confine ourselves to saying that we are not convinced by any of the arguments that have been put forward to justify it nor by the replies that have been given to the criticisms made against it. A system of strategic defence is not going to make nuclear weapons obsolete. On the contrary it will only help to accelerate their vertical proliferation in both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and most probably it will also start an acceleration of the conventional arms race. To this we should add that we consider it insane to devote to this programme the enormous amounts of money that are planned to this end when on Earth we still have more urgent problems of hunger, poverty, health and education to solve particularly in the Third World.

My delegation attaches enormous importance to the work that is to be undertaken shortly by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. We would like in this connection to express our congratulations to Ambassador de Souza e Silva of Brazil for having managed to achieve a consensus with regard to the mandate for re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee which will have the responsibility of carrying out the substantive work of the Conference on this subject. As you may recall, I was President of the Conference last March when we had the satisfaction of attaining this same goal, and therefore I am well aware of the difficult and delicate task that has been crowned with success for Ambassador de Souza e Silva. We therefore attach the utmost importance to the decision taken by the Conference under his Presidency, thanks to his patient and careful work of persuasion. We also wish to congratulate the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on this important topic, Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, on his appointment and offer him our full support and co-operation. Until now, the Conference has assigned the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. In our opinion the prevention of an arms race in outer space should begin to receive as much attention and be given the same priority as nuclear disarmament.

To conclude, we wish to appeal to the two Powers that today have in their hands the capacity to extend the arms race into space to display the necessary political will to achieve concrete results rapidly by agreeing on an international instrument that will strengthen the fundamental principle that space should only be used for peaceful purposes and at the same time prevent the arms race now taking place on this planet from spreading to the heavens.

(The President)

As a result of our deliberations at the informal meeting, we should now take up for decision requests by non-members to participate in the work of the ad hoc committee re-established under agenda item 5 entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". The Conference has received requests from Norway, Finland, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, New Zealand, Denmark, Spain and Austria. In accordance with established practice, we shall take up those requests one by one in the order in which they have been received by the secretariat. I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.231 1/ relating to the request received from Norway. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.232 2/ relating to the request received from Finland. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.233 3/ relating to the request received from Portugal. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.234 4/ relating to the request received from Greece. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.235 5/ relating to the request received from Turkey. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.236 6/ relating to the request received from New Zealand. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts that the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.237 7/ relating to the request received from Denmark. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.238 8/ relating to the request received from Spain. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.239 9/ relating to the request received from Austria. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

(The President)

Notes

1/ "In response to the request of Norway (CD/655) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Norway to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

2/ "In response to the request of Finland (CD/656) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Finland to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

3/ "In response to the request of Portugal (CD/657) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Portugal to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

4/ "In response to the request of Greece (CD/658) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Greece to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

5/ "In response to the request of Turkey (CD/659) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Turkey to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

6/ "In response to the request of New Zealand (CD/660) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of New Zealand to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

7/ "In response to the request of Denmark (CD/662) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Denmark to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

8/ "In response to the request of Spain (CD/665) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Spain to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

9/ "In response to the request of Austria (CD/669) and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of the rules of procedure, the Conference decides for the present to invite the representative of Austria to participate during 1986 in the subsidiary body established under item 5 of its agenda."

v
(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

In the creation of strike space weapons, in the involvement of further States in this programme of "star wars", we see a great threat to the process of disarmament. The so-called Strategic Defence Initiative or its European offshoot can result only in general destabilization, insecurity and incalculability of risks. We therefore most resolutely advocate the adoption of such a realistic disarmament programme, in which the complete elimination of nuclear weapons would be organically combined with measures for the non-militarization of the outer space. That is a programme the basic outlines of which were proposed by the Soviet Union on 15 January of this year.

As a first tangible step towards reducing the danger of space armaments, we support the elaboration of an agreement on the immunity of space objects and the prohibition of anti-satellite systems and on their elimination.

We associate ourselves with the plan for the creation of a solid material, political and organizational foundation for "star peace" in the spirit of the three-stage programme of joint steps proposed by the Soviet Union on 12 June 1986.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Contrary to its unambiguous language, the statement at the Geneva summit that the arms race must be terminated on Earth and prevented in outer space is construed as a licence to step up the SDI programme. In addition, more and more mines are being laid against the ABM Treaty.

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

Mr. President, last week Budapest, the capital of the Hungarian People's Republic had the honour to act as host for a meeting of the highest representatives of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance.

It is only natural that they devoted special attention to the same questions which also figure on the agenda of our Conference, and are considered to be questions of the highest priority, namely: the halting of the arms race on Earth, and the prevention of its extension to outer space. Singled out from among those questions are the ones which they considered to be vitally important, where progress may be relatively easy to achieve -- given the necessary political will on all sides.

In the Communiqué issued last week in Budapest, the Political Consultative Committee expressed serious concern at the tense situation which "has emerged as a consequence of the intensifying arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, in connection with the steps of the United States and NATO". It is stated that "the world has arrived at a stage of its development where reluctance to address the fundamental questions of our age is tantamount to jeopardizing the fate of the whole of civilization".

As a logical consequence of this evaluation of the situation, the representatives of the Warsaw Treaty member States underscored once again that "the fundamental task of our age is to safeguard peace, to halt the arms race, and to proceed to concrete disarmament measures, especially in the nuclear field".

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

It is only natural that the Conference, whose paramount task is to work out arrangements concerning the prevention of nuclear war and disarmament, should pay close attention to the Soviet-United States negotiations which are going on in this same city. There is no doubt that the overall situation in the field of arms reduction and disarmament as a whole is closely linked to the progress of these negotiations. It is advisable that these negotiations be conducted confidentially and that is what we for our part are doing. But the political substance of the matter must be clear, particularly because the other side, before giving a response to our most recent proposals, decided to present the world with its own interpretation of the Soviet initiatives.

We are far from satisfied with the situation, when the implementation of the agreed mandate for negotiation to seek agreement preventing an arms race in space and to end it on Earth has not budged. Firmly pursuing our line of a practical search for a mutually acceptable agreement, we have recently proposed realistic compromise solutions, though initially of a partial nature. Their substance is as follows.

We have proposed that we should reach agreement on non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for at least 15 years, and in order to strengthen the régime of this Treaty to agree on where the line between permitted and prohibited activities lies. Furthermore, the Soviet side has never intended and does not intend to place any restrictions on basic research. We are simply suggesting that it should not be permitted to proceed beyond threshold laboratory research, a threshold already reached by the United States. Naturally, our proposal to ban space strike weapons right now has not been removed from the agenda.

Agreement on issues concerning not extending the arms race into outer space would open the way for radical reductions of strategic nuclear weapons. Our line here is equally active and is aimed at overcoming the difficulties which have arisen at the negotiations. We are in favour of a radical, fifty-per-cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons. At the same time we have proposed, as an intermediate measure, that we agree to limit ICBMs, SLEMs, heavy bombers and submarines with long range cruise missiles to equal levels. Each side would limit the number of its nuclear charges to 8,000. This would really be a major reduction. In that case, medium-range weapons capable of reaching each other's territory would not be counted.

The Conference on Disarmament has great possibilities for practical action to prevent the arms race from reaching outer space. We cannot allow the Conference to sit idle and wait for results to be reached at neighbouring negotiations. What, in effect, prevents the starting of work on an agreement or agreements to exclude space from the sphere of the arms race, as called for by the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution voted for by 151 States? Not only are there no contra-indications, but indeed there is every possible reason for it, particularly as all nuclear-weapon States and States with a space potential are represented here at the Conference.

Recently, the Soviet Union introduced in the United Nations a fundamentally new important proposal. The substance of this proposal is simple: to make space the theatre of Star Peace and not Star Wars. This proposal contains a number of practical considerations about how to organize international co-operation for preventing an arms race in space and for its peaceful exploration. We hope that these proposals will be given the necessary attention by participants in the Conference.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

It is disquieting that the arms race between the two major nuclear Powers is extending into outer space, ushering in a new and more dangerous stage in their rivalry for military superiority. In order that outer space be used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind, we hold that no country should develop, test or deploy space weapons in any form. We are of the view that the prevention of arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament are both important and urgent issues, which, though inter-related, could be addressed separately, as progress made on one issue could promote that on the other. We hope that the Soviet Union and the United States will, setting store by the interest of world peace, reach agreement on their solution through negotiations rather than further complicating the issues.

CD/PV.365

12-13

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

At the end of last month, in Ulan Bator, the 19th Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party concluded its work. Much of what was said at the Congress by Party and Government leaders of our country is directly related to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the questions of the prevention of nuclear war and nuclear disarmament which we are considering.

It was particularly stressed at the Congress that today there is no more important task than the elimination of the threat of nuclear war, the curbing and cessation of the arms race, and the restoration and the strengthening of the process of détente. The question of preventing war, of the survival of mankind itself and the preservation of civilization, has never been so acute. In circumstances where the world has reached a watershed it is imperative that all States, great and small, should actively join in the common search for ways and means of preserving peace and general security without nuclear weapons.

There is no State, there is no political leader, it was stressed at the Congress, which could stand aloof from this noble cause, because the problem of ending the arms race, of eliminating the threat of war, of ensuring reliable security, is something which affects the interests of each individual country and all States in the world jointly.

The Congress gave a very favourable reception to the peace initiatives of the socialist countries, which are aimed at ending nuclear tests, bringing about nuclear disarmament and preventing an arms race in outer space, the planning and elimination of chemical weapons, and the adoption of other disarmament measures. It was also pointed out that the new Soviet programme of nuclear disarmament contained in the statement of Mikhail Gorbachev of 15 January of this year places the problem of freeing mankind from the nuclear threat by the year 2000 and of ensuring equal security for all on a practical footing.

(The President)

Allow me now to make a short concluding statement as President, since this is the last plenary meeting I shall be presiding over.

With regard to items 4 (Chemical Weapons), 7 (Radiological Weapons) and 8 (Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament), the respective subsidiary bodies resumed their work without any delay. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space adopted its programme of work and started its activities.

CD/PV.366

7

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, even after too long a delay and with a mandate that remains limited, as well as the beginning of its work according to an agreed programme, are positive elements. However, we must make sustained efforts to make rapid progress in the definition of the areas and arrangements to be covered by future specific negotiations. In this connection, we consider that the Conference on Disarmament faces a great responsibility, namely, the particularly urgent need for effective measures and arrangements to bring about the cessation of all actions aimed at the use of outer space for military purposes, and the need to draw up a real code of conduct for States in the exploration and use of space for exclusively peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

In the statement that I made during the general debate, when referring to agenda item 5, I said that I did not think it was useful at that time to set forth the reasons why my country opposed any initiatives which, under the pretext of creating a defence system against strategic weapons, would mean shifting the arms race that we are witnessing on Earth to outer space. Although now that we are dealing more specifically with agenda item 5, I continue to believe that it would serve no useful purpose to repeat the numerous and well-founded arguments that have been adduced to prove that an initiative of this type would not help to make nuclear weapons obsolete: quite to the contrary, it would only intensify the vertical proliferation of these weapons and speed up the conventional arms race. These arguments have been expressed and defended by persons who have knowledge and expertise on the subject that I do not have. Just a few weeks ago, two eminent United States scientists from the Laurence Livermore National Laboratory, which is precisely where they are designing and testing lasers and advanced nuclear weapons in a research programme related to the Strategic Defence Initiative, said that the deployment of a strategic defensive system would certainly give rise to an intensification of the arms race because the rival Power would produce more nuclear warheads and new types of weapons to penetrate that defence. They added that the response to the defensive system would certainly consist in more powerful nuclear weapons. Moreover, I believe that the manifesto signed recently by over 6,000 United States scientists and scholars, including 15 Noble Peace Prize winners, from more than 20 leading United States universities, arguing that the Strategic Defence Initiative would strengthen the arms race and would never lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, renders superfluous any explanation that I could give about the reasons why my Government doubts the effectiveness of a strategic defensive system. I believe, on the other hand, that our contribution to this debate could be more useful if we were to make an effort to offer observations and comments on some of the specific issues that arise with regard to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is the item that the Conference on Disarmament has before it at this point in time.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

I would like to begin by saying that in our view the multilateral legal instruments already in force that govern the use of outer space, and which enshrine the principle that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, whatever their level of economic and scientific development, and that such exploration and utilization is for the whole of mankind, is a sound starting point for embarking on the construction of a legal structure designed to prevent an arms race in outer space.

In the efforts that we make to attain this objective, it is essential to strengthen and guarantee the fundamental principle on which all the existing treaties are based: namely, that space should only be used for purposes that will benefit mankind as a whole, that is to say, for peaceful purposes. Recognition of this principle therefore rules out the use of space for non-peaceful purposes. The 1967 Treaty took an additional step in the right direction when it expressly prohibited the stationing of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in space. This Treaty nevertheless stopped short and left a considerable gap in not prohibiting the deployment in space of other types of weapons.

It has been said that this silence of the 1967 Treaty concerning other types of weapons means that the latter are legitimate. I do not believe that this assertion is correct. In our view the authors of that Treaty wanted to prevent the stationing in space of the weapons they considered most dangerous. In fact, because they were trying to cover the most dangerous weapons, they confined themselves to provisions governing the weapons that were least likely to be used in space. None of the nuclear Powers would have any interest at all in deploying nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction in space because those weapons could turn against the Power that put them there. Moreover, and perhaps because of the time when the Treaty was concluded -- barely 10 years after space exploration has begun, when space science was taking its first steps -- perhaps it could not be conceived that a country could have any interest in developing a defensive system against strategic weapons, or that it would be capable of devoting to such a project the immense financial resources that would be required. This is, then a gap which has been left in the field of space law, and which will necessarily have to be filled.

In beginning the substantive consideration of agenda item 5, it is necessary to determine its scope. This means that we have to specify what is meant by "preventing an arms race in outer space".

An obvious fact that might perhaps serve as a starting point for defining the scope of item 5 is that approximately 75 per cent of the objects in outer space today serve military purposes. Another point which must be taken into account along the same lines is that many of these objects, perhaps all of them, at the same time as they are carrying out a military function are also carrying out tasks that help to preserve peace, and also render useful services for civilian, or at least non-military, activities.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

The most obvious example of the dual use of space objects was given by the unfortunate accident at Chernobyl, an accident which has been the subject of many remarks by various speakers on various items of our agenda. The impressive pictures that we saw on our television screens, in which we saw the stricken plant at different times, with different temperature readings, and therefore with extremely valuable information on the seriousness of the accident came without any doubt from one of the monitoring satellites which provide information of a military character with the same precision and detail.

Nor can we forget, when dealing with this subject, that the greatest impetus space technology has received has come from its use for military purposes. Moreover, practically all space objects that have been produced for exclusively civilian use can, if necessary, also play a military role. The converse is also true: any of the space objects designed to carry out military purposes could also be used for civilian, peaceful purposes.

When we speak of presenting an arms race in outer space, then, it is not a question of "demilitarizing" space. The work that the Conference on Disarmament is called upon to fulfil cannot be aimed at "demilitarizing" space, a task which could be practically impossible and perhaps undesirable because it would mean trying to remove space objects that perform military functions and yet also have roles that are beneficial for mankind.

We share the view of other member States of the Conference, including the People's Republic of China, that what we must pursue under item 5 of our agenda is rather the "deweaponizing" of space. In other words, we must ensure that space is not used as an environment for the stationing of weapons or as the scene for shifting and continuing the competition in armaments taking place on Earth.

The foregoing delimitation of the scope of item 5 makes it necessary to establish what the arms are that must be banned from space. And they are, in fact, all types of weapons, be they nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction, whose stationing in space has already been banned by the Treaty, as well as conventional weapons, weapons based on new technologies and any other type of weapon. Therefore, what we are seeking is a general and comprehensive prohibition on the stationing of weapons in space. But for this purpose perhaps a more precise definition of what we mean by weapons is called for. Dictionaries and encyclopedias define weapons as instruments that can be used to attack or to defend oneself. This definition does not help us, because it can cover anything, from a fist to a stone or a knife, up to the most powerful and sophisticated weapons. The most appropriate approach in our view is the one that has been used by the Soviet Union in the various proposals that it has submitted on this subject. The Soviet Union has been using the English words "space strike weapons" which I believe could be translated into Spanish as "armas espaciales de ataque". This concept has the advantage that it leaves out of the scope of the subject those space objects which have a military nature or character but do not carry out attack functions against other space objects or against objectives located on the Earth's surface.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

In beginning the consideration of item 5, the Conference on Disarmament, and more specifically the Ad Hoc Committee set up for the purpose, should have, in our view, as one of its first tasks to seek to specify these two notions to which I have referred in this statement: firstly, what the scope of the item is; and secondly, what we are trying to achieve in this area. For the purposes of our work, in the Conference, it might also be useful to establish a definition of what these space strike weapons are, and I am sure that for this purpose the delegation of the Soviet Union could give us its opinion on what it means by these type of weapons.

I hope that the comments I have ventured to make on this subject will be of some use to the Conference, and will help to stimulate our work, on an objective basis, which will enable us to examine specific aspects of this subject so that we can make gradual progress in the substantive consideration of the question of the prevention of arms race in outer space.

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(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

Without being alarmist, we have just expressed the concern we feel in the face of the dialectics of the arms race on Earth and the absence of real political will to put an end to it. However, we must point out that the nuclear threat exists not only on Earth but also in space. Indeed, the arms race which has spread to outer space has become a source of great concern for all the international community. This dangerous process began by entrusting military surveillance, early-warning and spying missions to satellites in space. According to a certain school of thought, which we certainly do not

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

support, these activities entrusted to so-called civilian space devices are not strictly speaking weapons. However, as the exploration of space speeds up, the advances in space technology have enabled sophisticated offensive weapons to be developed and deployed in outer space. These new weapons, which in the recent past were part of futuristic scenarios, are designed to destroy from space not only devices which are also in space but also targets on Earth or on the high seas. The danger resulting from the competition between the Great Powers shifting into outer space is an evident and daily reality.

The most alarming point is that this competition, instead of disappearing, seems to be spurred on by the military rivalry of the two Great Powers. Is there not already talk of the testing of new weapons -- the so-called "death-ray" lasers, as well as particle-beam weapons which will be more sophisticated than the current ASAT systems when they become operational in the next few years? The escalation in military competition in space has been rendered possible thanks to arduous research conducted by the two great world Powers. This research requires enormous resources, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars and the work of thousands of scientists, at a time when the world is facing very serious challenges. Instead of being channelled towards the peaceful use of outer space for the common good of all mankind, as stipulated by one of the principles of the United Nations Treaty of 27 January 1967 governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, which some call the Charter of Space Law, this research has given a new dynamism to the spiralling arms race and has enabled its initiators to acquire anti-satellite weapons which confirm beyond any doubt that outer space is indeed militarized, despite the international conventions and the many resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

On the threshold of the 21st century these weapons, which yesterday were still confined to the realm of science fiction, are today ready to operate above our heads, and they are the forerunners of tomorrow's space weapons. This is why quite legitimately we wish to sound a warning note so that the survival of mankind in a world of peace, security and détente may be taken into consideration above any other factor. Our planet may well become hostage as a result of the increase in space weapon systems which a simple computer error may trigger off, causing the irreparable to occur. We are convinced that there is no weapon more sophisticated than dialogue and negotiation. The history of military competition between the two Great Powers since World War Two is edifying on this subject. The military superiority of one State over another has never been permanent. It has been rapidly reversed in favour of the other party. The vicious circle of the arms race has shown to what extent the possession of a whole range of weapons or systems of weapons has never had a deterrent effect, but rather has had the effect of inciting the adversary to acquire a weapon or weapon system which is even more powerful. This is the reason why we firmly believe in the virtues of negotiation, without which our world and our civilization are inexorably headed for suicide.

In order to avoid such a cataclysm, negotiation has today become an imperative need. The Powers responsible for this arms race in outer space bear particular responsibility in this negotiating process. In this connection, the international community expects them to display a sincere

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

political will to bring the negotiations they are now conducting in Geneva to a successful outcome. Bilateral negotiations must be supplemented by a broader forum. Our conference is undeniably that forum which gathers together all countries which now have or in the near future may have space activities. This is why the responsibility devolving upon the Conference on Disarmament in this area is no less great than that borne by the two Great Powers. In discharging its own functions, this body must first and foremost identify, then clarify, and finally correct the ambiguities that surround the current legal régime governing outer space. There is no need to recall that the international instruments in force, initially designed to protect space from the military threat, through their vagueness, the general nature of their terms and the modesty of their scope, have given rise to so many differences in their interpretation that they have not so much governed the activities of States in space as opened up gaps through which the militarization of space has slipped. Moreover, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, in the implementation of its mandate the Conference bears the responsibility to tackle a second objective, one which is already set in resolution 40/87 of the United Nations General Assembly adopted by an overwhelming majority of member States with no opposition, namely, the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space.

In this connection, lessons should be drawn from our experience with the body of international law currently applicable to activities in outer space. In other words, the future agreement or agreements must be characterized by rigour in their conception and precision in their wording, as well as far-sightedness in their scope. International space law is still in an embryonic state and is continuously developing. The technological breakthrough in space should go hand in hand with a constantly updated codification with respect to all space activities in order to avoid any lag between the two processes and stop up any gaps which might be fatal for human civilization. This is indeed long-term work, which will be arduous, complex and difficult, but none the less necessary, if not imperative, if we wish to safeguard the coming generations. This is a vital and high-priority objective given the threats looming over our planet. It is also the reason why we call upon the space Powers, as indeed upon all the members of this Conference, not to stint their efforts to meet the aspirations of the international community through the drawing up of "space disarmament" treaties. This purpose can be achieved only through the categorical proclamation of the prohibition of the development, testing, manufacture, stockpiling and use of all space weapons, as well as the total destruction of such weapons.

Among these weapons to be prohibited and destroyed we should include any system capable of launching attacks against spacecraft from outer space or from land, sea or sky, as well as any weapon system capable of attacking targets on land, at sea or in the sky from outer space.

Given this vision, we might be criticized for being over-ambitious, but can we be otherwise in a world where daily the arms race is being stepped up on Earth and particularly in space? Our sole hope remains nevertheless vested in the wisdom of man and his unshakeable will to survive. He must still

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

display courage in order to transcend all other considerations that take him further away from, rather than bring him nearer to, the peace and security that he constantly seeks.

It is precisely this state of mind that prompted us to voice reservations concerning, without however opposing, the terms of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Outer Space. Without prejudging the results of its work, guided by Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia with dedication, experience and tact, we seriously doubt that the current mandate of this Committee can meet either the justified concern of the international community or the terms of General Assembly resolution 40/87, much less the principles that we have unanimously endorsed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

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(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

It would certainly be timely to clarify how any further escalation of the arms race and the refusal to accept drastic disarmament steps can account for national security interests in a world which consists of more than 150 sovereign States.

At any rate, the more and more advanced development of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction as well as space weapons as a means of guaranteeing national and international security has become inappropriate. On the contrary, the arms race alarmingly jeopardizes the security of all States, including those which are themselves escalating it.

Is such an assessment mere polemic or excessive dramatization?

The plain facts of the nuclear arms race speak for themselves to testify to the contrary. There is and there will be no true chance of defence against nuclear weapons. Until now it was possible to respond to a nuclear strike also with total destruction. It was a most dubious security, but it had a sobering effect on everyone who harboured the thought of nuclear war. Evidently, we are now entering a stage of the arms race at which even that barrier to nuclear war is undermined.

Let us have a look at the nuclear weapons that are currently being tested, in particular with regard to the following characteristics: first, tests are made with nuclear warheads of highest accuracy. Though the Titan II, taken into service by the United States in 1962, still had an average margin of error of 1,300 metres, the Minuteman III already attained, in 1970, a circular error probable of 280 metres. The land-based cruise missiles of the Tomahawk type and the Pershing II which have been deployed in Western Europe since 1983 already have an accuracy, as to the average margin of error, of less than 50 metres. It is said that the new MIRV warheads designed for the MX, which are presently under development, will have a CEP of less than 30 metres. Second, attempts are made to render warheads insensitive to the so-called fratricide effect of the electromagnetic impulse. As is common knowledge, this is a decisive prerequisite for fighting against hardened targets simultaneously with several warheads and for the assured destruction. Third, warheads are being developed which will possess an

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

improved penetration ability in order to destruct hardened targets. Fourth, as is well-known, the tests serve to develop nuclear powered x-ray lasers which are designed to play a major role within the SDI programme.

My delegation takes the view that the implementation of such plans does not at all enhance the security of any State. Weapons of highest precision which are capable of destroying hardened targets are suitable only for offensive or pre-emptive attack. As a response to a nuclear attack they would have, in a military sense, no rational function. The targets of such precise, highly specialized weapons would be the weapons and logistics of the other side. The prospects in this respect are that a real "window of vulnerability" might open up for both sides. Its inevitable consequence would be a maximum amount of instability. Then, there will not be any longer security, but only the latent danger of a mutual mobilization race.

SDI cannot change this state of affairs either, and, by the way, is not designed to do so. It would have the opposite effect and lead to weapons which are able to destroy their target at the speed of light.

The real danger emanating from an arms race that is out of control requires with ever greater urgency concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The security of all States depends on this, including that of the United States and their allies. More weapons, fresh nuclear tests and new armaments programmes cannot but increase insecurity.

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

I have asked for the floor today briefly to introduce document CD/708 submitted by my delegation, which I understand has been circulated in all the working languages. This document contains our proposal for the adoption of an international instrument to supplement the ABM Treaty.

In my statement on 22 April 1986, relating to agenda item 5, prevention of an arms race in outer space, I have emphasized that the present and planned activities of the space Powers, involving the introduction of anti-satellite weapons and missile defence systems etc., in space, would have the result of substantially eroding the Outer Space and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaties. I had pointed out in addition that, as a consequence other arms control and disarmament agreements which derive from the ABM Treaty would also be jeopardized. We continue to believe that such developments, if they come about, would be highly grave both for a stable relationship between the major Powers as well as for global security.

Based on these considerations, we have suggested that the Conference on Disarmament should adopt interim confidence-building measures until such time as a comprehensive international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space have been evolved. It is in this spirit that we have submitted the Working Paper before you, which calls upon the two major Powers, as well as other technologically advanced States, to adopt an international instrument to supplement the ABM Treaty, with a view to ensuring that the self-restraint accepted by the two super-Powers in that Treaty is not negated by acts of omission or commission by either of these Powers or by other technologically advanced States. The instrument that my delegation has in mind should, inter alia: (a) recognize and reconfirm the importance of the United States-USSR ABM Treaty, in preventing the escalation of an arms race, especially in outer space; (b) note the commitment of the two Powers to continue to abide strictly by the provisions of this treaty, in particular its Article V under which they have undertaken not to develop, test or deploy ABM systems or components of such systems that are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile-land based; (c) provide a clear interpretation of the research activities permissible under the ABM Treaty, not only for the two parties but also for other technologically advanced States, so as to facilitate an impartial interpretation of ambiguous aspects of the Treaty such as the definition of "research" and the phrase "use of other physical principles"; (d) include a commitment by other technologically advanced States not to take their own research beyond the limits accepted by the United States and the USSR; and (e) include a mechanism to provide for the redress of such activities that are contrary to the limitations contained in the ABM Treaty.

It is the hope of my delegation that the document submitted by Pakistan will be given early and appropriate consideration in the Conference on Disarmament as well as by its Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

I would like to turn now to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Canadian Government believes that this negotiating body can make a substantive contribution to our shared objective of preventing an arms race in outer space. It is important that this be done in ways which complement and support, and do not disrupt, the efforts of the United States and the USSR to seek the same objective in their bilateral negotiations.

The lengthy delay in reaching agreement on a mandate for a subsidiary body on agenda item 5 (prevention of an arms race in outer space) was therefore cause for much disappointment. However, now that the mandate has been accepted, we can hope that our agreed programme of work will permit speedy resumption of substantive discussion of this item. Supplementary to the broad legal survey Canada submitted last year, my delegation intends later in the session to submit a further working paper dealing with selected aspects of legal terminology in relation to outer space. The working paper will, we trust, further elucidate the legality or otherwise of current and contemplated activities in outer space in light of existing treaties and legal precepts.

Canada is also continuing to devote a major effort to its PAXSAT studies, centering on the technical feasibility of using certain types of existing space technologies for verification purposes. The results of these studies will become available in due course. In one of its key aspects, the PAXSAT concept is based on the notion that existing non-classified technology permits the designing of satellites capable of determining with an acceptably high degree of confidence whether other space objects have been designed to perform a weapons function. The Canadian studies are intended to develop a data base with respect to PAXSAT from which it may be possible to assess other similar related concepts.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

A new dimension of the arms race that seems dangerously imminent is in outer space. Here too Sri Lanka has been associated in efforts in this forum and in the United Nations to prevent an arms race in outer space. Nearly two decades ago Sri Lanka cautioned against unrestrained military activities in outer space. We did so because of our past concern with the phenomenon of the terrestrial arms race and its dynamics entailing the familiar sequence of research, development, testing and deployment. As the representative of Sri Lanka -- then Ceylon -- to the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, I had occasion to state, at the time of the adoption of the Outer Space Treaty, that:

"The second paragraph of Article IV prohibits military manoeuvres and all other kinds of military activities on celestial bodies. Here again, we note with disappointment that military activities are not prohibited in outer space and on the Moon.

... My delegation wishes to record its reservations on Article IV and our hope that by implication it will not give a licence for military activities in outer space and on the Moon. In that case, the lofty objective of the treaty would be negated."

Our concerns have been borne out by the military-related development of space capabilities which took place during the past two decades. Speaking at the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held in Vienna in August 1982, I said that "The World Community will indeed run the risk of misdirecting the achievements of Space Science and Space Technology if these remain the special preserve of a few to be exploited

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

in rivalry for narrow national benefit. Therein would be the grave danger of militarizing space not only through auxiliary military applications such as surveillance satellites and search and rescue operations but also through specifically aggressive weapon systems placed in space". Four years later we witness an arms race in space weapons being conducted in research laboratories. Before the research of today becomes the reality of tomorrow we must legislate effectively to keep space free of weapons. We are glad to note that the Ad hoc Committee under this agenda item has begun serious work in identifying and examining the issues involved. The vital need to preserve the ABM Treaty of 1972 and to arrive at an agreement banning Anti-Satellite weapons has been accepted by an overwhelming number of nations. The strengthening of the Space Registration Convention and the inviolability of satellites for registered peaceful uses are other necessary steps. The technical complexities of the subject demand that a global effort be made to seek agreement on the parameters of the discussion before any negotiation can begin. Sri Lanka's view is that this is best achieved within a group of scientific experts working on an independent mandate to provide this Conference with the technical expertise it requires.

We have also worked for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and I recall again my statement in the UNISPACE Conference of 1982 in Vienna where I stated -- "Some consideration has already been given to the possibility of creating an International Space Agency. This is in keeping with an evolving trend in international life today ... It is necessary to prepare ourselves for the space age with the institutional machinery which could make outer space a truly successful area of genuine co-operation among nations". We believed then, as we do now, that a World Space Agency would be in the best interests of the international community to ensure that the peaceful uses of space was conducted in a co-operative manner guaranteeing that developing countries also benefited from the common heritage of mankind. We are glad therefore to welcome the recent initiative to convene an international Conference to consider the creation of such an organization. Peace and stability in space are pre-requisites for productive investments for exploration and exploitation of outer space for the benefit of mankind. If we fail now to create such conditions, we will have failed again, as we did 20 years ago.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

The purpose of the statement I am making today is to submit for consideration by the Conference our working paper which has been distributed under the symbol CD/709 and which I think all delegations now have.

In our paper we have taken as our starting point the approach adopted by the delegation of the Soviet Union in referring to "space strike weapons" which, in Spanish, we have translated as "armas espaciales de ataque". The usefulness of this notion is that it enables us to establish a fairly clear distinction between space objects that are genuine weapons and those space objects which, while having a military nature or character, do not actually carry out a weapons function, that is to say, they are not capable, on their own, of attacking or causing damage. It is clear that the latter type of space objects, which are not genuine weapons, may, if necessary, be considered as such when they become part of a weapons system.

The use of the expression "space strike weapons" thus has a purely methodological justification, and if members of the Conference so wish, we could perfectly well leave out the adjective "strike" and confine ourselves merely to speaking simply of "space weapons".

In our Working Paper we have endeavoured to identify the main elements which, in our view, should be taken into consideration in formulating any definition of space weapons. It is not an exhaustive listing of such elements, but we do think that what we mention in the paper are the most important ones. I am not going to give a detailed description of the document that we have submitted because I think it is self-explanatory. I merely wish to stress that we are not trying to claim that ours is the perfect definition. As stated in our document, it is a draft definition the sole purpose of which is to stimulate discussion and exchange of ideas in the Conference on Disarmament and thus help to elucidate this issue which, in our view, will facilitate the progress of our work on agenda item 5. It is really an empirical contribution and we hope that it will be of some interest and use to the experts.

In any event, we will welcome any observations or comments that members of the Conference may wish to make and we are of course open to any proposal made in order to add to or improve the draft definition given in our document.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

I will now turn to the question of outer space. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a priority issue for Australia.

In our view the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has two dimensions: the prevention of the emergence in space of a competition between defensive and offensive systems and active and passive counter measures against each of these; and the protection of the existing uses of space which, although capable of supporting and even enhancing terrestrial military capability, have to a large extent, operated in the interests of stability and arms control verification.

It will therefore be important for us, in this Conference, to reach a common understanding on the military functions performed from or through space which are desirable or tolerable, even in time of war, and which in turn -- and this is of fundamental importance -- could reduce the incentives to engage in an arms race in outer space.

For these reasons it is not enough to concentrate in our Committee on ballistic missile defence in space and we should also certainly avoid debating current issues in a way that could be taken as implying that space-based weapons are inherently bad but ground-based weapons are somehow not. Surely the point is that any anti-ballistic missile defences, additional to those allowed in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, are not admissible.

Our mandate clearly states that we must examine and identify issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This means that we must examine all issues relevant to this goal. We must not allow our Committee to degenerate into a seminar on the definition of so-called "space-strike weapons" or to become merely a forum for accusations about the validity and permissibility of current activities in outer space.

We would miss the point of our responsibility if we were to devote ourselves exclusively to a discussion of what is currently the subject of negotiations between the two Powers with the major capability for the military use of space. That bilateral process must be complemented by the multilateral process we are engaged in here and, in a practical and realistic way. Our programme of work gives us ample opportunity to do this.

First, we recognize that there are existing agreements relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and that these must be fully understood. In this regard, we have to concentrate on the following: what do these rules cover and how much do they cover? Are they being fully complied with? Do they need to be strengthened, and how can this be done? How can they be verified?

(Mr. Butler, Australia).

In this context we agree fully with the United Kingdom delegation that greater terminological precision is desirable, so that we can work on a common vocabulary. That process has already begun during the discussions of point one of our programme of work. But that process is far from complete, and it does not apply only to the identification and understanding of terminology relevant to ballistic missile defence in space. Accordingly we also welcome Canada's announcement that it will table a paper on terminology relevant to this item.

The final point in our programme of work deals with existing proposals and future initiatives on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Conference will be aware of the proposal made by the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Bill Hayden, in the Conference on 7 August 1984, that we study the possibility of agreements to protect satellites and their ground stations which contribute to global stability. We attach particular importance to the contribution which reconnaissance, early warning and communication satellites make to such stability.

I want now to recall the second part of the objective for the prevention of an arms race in outer space -- to reduce the incentive to engage in an arms race in outer space by ensuring the maintenance of global stability in the context of our overriding aim to advance international peace, stability and security and, to find ways in which this can best be achieved.

There are other proposals than our own already tabled, which the Conference can address under its current mandate and programme of work.

These include the problem of implementing existing rules; the question of the multilateralization of existing agreements; the necessity to strengthen and devise new confidence-building measures; the possibility of establishing an international information and monitoring system; and the fundamental and extremely complex question of verification and compliance with existing and possible future agreements. Here we welcome the United Kingdom's announcement that it plans to submit an additional paper on verification.

(Mr. Hinteregger, Austria)

The efforts to reduce and finally to abolish nuclear weapons on earth would be futile, if they were not supplemented by appropriate disarmament agreements regarding the militarization of outer space. In this respect, Austria welcomed the understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union reached in January 1985 in Geneva to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on Earth, to limit and reduce nuclear arms and enhance nuclear stability. The establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space by this Conference appears to us a necessary multilateral complement to the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the USSR on that subject. We should have hoped that the creation of that ad hoc committee would have led more rapidly to a substantial debate with a view to action in the spirit of the policy laid down in the January 1985 Geneva agreement.

Further delay would engender new dangers. Huge scientific endeavours and the allocation of corresponding resources to the development of new military technologies make it imperative that the search for understandings on the curtailing of the dangers inherent in those technologies be continued and intensified. If the results of research on new military space technologies are made use of outside an agreed framework, countermeasures will necessarily follow. Whether they consist in the increase of the offensive capacities to compensate for the impact of a space based system or whether they are reciprocal measures, the result would be a military equilibrium on a more expensive and less stable level.

Such a waste of resources must be avoided and those members of the international community that are rich enough to afford such weaponry must do everything to prevent humanity from being burdened with such irrational costs. Any other course of action could not be understood by the great number of people in the world who live in hardship and misery and cannot satisfy even the basic needs of a life in human dignity.

In this disarmament forum of the international community Austria, therefore, urges those concerned to pursue substantial and constructive negotiations so that the world is spared another arms race in a new dimension.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Today I am going to address the problem of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I will explain why my country considers it a question of vital interest that outer space remains free of an arms race and its peaceful uses remain open to all countries, irrespective of their economic or military capability.

Let me stress at the outset that for Czechoslovakia this is a very practical problem, having direct repercussions on our security and national economy. As a small country with relatively limited resources we could not afford our own, independent programme of exploration of outer space. We therefore welcomed the opportunity to join the international Intercosmos programme, uniting the efforts of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Hungary, Mongolia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Romania at the end of the 1960s. It is a mutually advantageous co-operation. The member countries provide their own financial and material means for the preparation of scientific experiments, some special systems for satellites and probes and processing of data obtained. The USSR supplies, free of charge, carrier rockets and satellites, and it also ensures launching and monitoring of space instruments, which represents a substantial part of the total costs.

In practically all flights by Intercosmos various Czechoslovak instruments have been used, such as an X-ray photometer for studies of the sun and a photometer designed to search for dust layers in the Earth's atmosphere, instruments for measuring space radiation, a telemetric transmitter for the transmission of low-frequency signal parameters and others. We have gained

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much through the peaceful activities of Intercosmos in the areas of space physics, space biology and medicine, space meteorology, space communications and research of the Earth's surface from space. Czechoslovak scientists have obtained interesting results in research on the high-altitude atmosphere and magnetosphere, in solar and non-solar X-ray astronomy, in the studies of hard components of the interplanetary matter of the moon and planets as well as in some other fields. And I certainly cannot avoid mentioning that, thanks to close co-operation with the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia became, in 1978, the third country whose citizens entered outer space.

Our participation in the peaceful exploration of outer space requires substantial investments. It is thus only natural that we are deeply interested in outer space remaining free from military confrontation. Otherwise, all investment in its exploration would become rather a risky venture. But this economic aspect is not the only, and even not the most important, reason why we look with disquiet at the recent developments on the Earth which might soon result in the permanent introduction of weapons into outer space. What is at stake is security, not that of individual countries, but of the whole international community. The creation and deployment of space strike weapons, and the involvement of further States in the notorious "Star wars" programme, would represent a direct threat to the territory of countries around the globe and, in the final analysis, also to these weapons' creators. It can result only in general destabilization, insecurity and incalculability of risks.

In his letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, dated 3 July, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bohuslav Chmoupek, stressed that Czechoslovakia considers the main direction of the efforts of States against the militarization of outer space to be the achievement of a strict prohibition on the development, testing and deployment of space strike weapons under appropriate verification, including access to the relevant laboratories. Minister Chmoupek emphasized that in the nuclear and space age security for all can only be provided through nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The tendency to introduce weapons into outer space, which is becoming more and more obvious, can and must be stopped. An important, partial step toward this end, would be the elaboration of an agreement on the immunity of space objects and on the prohibition of the development, testing and deployment of new, and the elimination of existing, anti-satellite systems.

The programme usually described in the United States as the "Strategic Defence Initiative" is far from being truly defensive. My delegation and many other delegations have on numerous occasions pointed out the offensive, aggressive nature of the SDI. Today I will limit my remarks to analysing the effect it will have on the existing disarmament treaties. Here, the negative impact of the SDI will be imminent. Immediately upon its entering the stage of development and testing, for instance of X-ray lasers -- and it is now on the verge of doing so -- the United States programme will violate two treaties. One of them is the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, prohibiting any nuclear explosions "in the atmosphere, beyond its limits, including outer space". It would also violate the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits placing in orbit around the Earth "any objects of weapons of mass destruction", installing such weapons on celestial bodies, or stationing them

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in outer space "in any other manner". Let me note in passing that if we heard, in the past, statements about the strictly non-nuclear nature of the SDI components, such utterings later became only sporadic and now we simply do not hear them any more.

A widely discussed question is whether the SDI would be a violation of the Soviet-American ABM Treaty of 1972. We uphold that it would violate both the spirit and the letter of the ABM Treaty. As to the first aspect further elaboration is hardly needed. The ABM Treaty was clearly based on the recognition of the fact that efforts to build an anti-missile defence would automatically lead to an increase in offensive capabilities, and thus neither reliable defence nor restraint in any further arms build-up or arms limitations could be achieved. The SDI again departs from this elementary reality, which today, 14 years after the conclusion of the ABM Treaty, remains fully valid. But the SDI goes also clearly against the letter of the 1972 Treaty. While its Article IV permits some limited development and testing of fixed, land-based ABMs, Article V expressly forbids development, testing or deployment of ABM systems or components which are "sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based". This provision, fixed, land-based way of deployment, applies also to ABM systems based on "other physical principles", covered by the frequently mentioned Agreed Interpretation D of the ABM Treaty.

With respect to this Treaty it is amazing to occasionally listen to arguments that the Soviet Union continues to keep an ABM system around Moscow while the United States "abandoned" their system in North Dakota. These arguments sometimes deliberately imply that by doing so the USSR is somehow taking the lead in ABM technology to which the United States must respond. But one does not have to be a specialist to understand that the Soviet ABM system around Moscow is in full compliance with the ABM Treaty. On the other hand, the United States system in Grand Forks, which is described as conserved, can relatively quickly and easily be brought back to full functioning capability. As far as we know, not a single installation there was dismantled. Its "PAR" radar is operating, and "MSR" may also be quickly reactivated. Nor does the re-introduction of missiles into the silos represent a complicated technical operation. Let it also be noted that the USSR assumed in 1982 the unilateral obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, while the United States has no similar commitment.

There is one more detrimental consequence that the SDI, if it enters the stage of development and testing, will have on disarmament treaties. All existing and possible future treaties on the limitation of offensive strategic weapons will be permanently hampered and directly or indirectly undercut by any SDI-related activities. We have been informed recently that one of the Parties to the SALT II Treaty is considering withdrawing from it and exceeding the limits it imposes. We regard this as a highly negative, unprecedented action. But even if both participants to the SALT Treaties were willing to abide by their provisions, we would be very much afraid for the destiny of those two Treaties, as well as for the prospects for future strategic arms limitations, once the SDI is implemented. Sooner or later the offensive strategic arms race would be fully reignited and the arms limitation measures achieved so far would become meaningless. In view of all this we maintain that if the SDI is to be practically realized it will become a turning point

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leading to the destruction of all the essential results of arms limitation achieved in the 1960s and 1970s, launching a qualitatively new chapter in the offensive nuclear arms race and, finally, fully introducing the arms race into outer space, turning it, thus, into a source of vital danger to all States. It would be a difficult question then, to ask "What will come next?".

It seems that all delegations in the Conference agree that the arms race in outer space should be prevented. We firmly believe that it is still not too late and that if we all realize the danger we are confronted with it would be possible to act promptly. With respect to outer space we have a very good precedent. After the first man-made satellite entered outer space in 1957 it was suddenly fully realized that humanity had started its exploration without any laws and rules to regulate it. And it is almost unbelievable how fast space law developed. What took centuries in other fields of international law was accomplished in space law within years. As early as December 1958 an ad hoc committee on outer space was established by the United Nations General Assembly, which later became the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Between 1961 and 1963 the ethical principles of space activities were developed into a Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space. The "golden age" of United Nations work on outer space matters reached its peak in 1967 when the Outer Space Treaty was agreed, prohibiting, inter alia, the placing in orbit around the Earth of nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, or installing such weapons on celestial bodies. The following year, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space was adopted, as was the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects in 1972. And let me finally mention the 1974 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space and the 1979 Moon Treaty. All these international treaties, and the especially brief period during which they were achieved, clearly confirm that we can act expeditiously when it is objectively necessary. And such an objective necessity today, as far as outer space is concerned, is to prevent it from being militarized. For the time being, there are no weapons installed in outer space. If we fail, in the very near future, to formally agree not to introduce weapons in outer space, we shall ignore the objective need of our time, and we may lose an opportunity which will not be repeated.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space is, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, discharging actively its mandate and we consider that it is doing so very well. The ongoing exchange of views clearly indicates that important things still need to be done, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to ensure that outer space remains free from an arms race. But for this to be achieved multilaterally here in Geneva the Ad Hoc Committee should be given an appropriate, clear-cut mandate. My delegation has already expressed its views on what it considers an appropriate mandate for the Outer Space Committee. I will not deal with it in detail now and I will, perhaps, defer my comments in this respect for next February. Rather, I would welcome it if the Committee were to undertake useful exchange of views on some specific problems, such as the definition of space strike weapons. Any results achieved in this regard will be useful when we, hopefully, move towards more concrete work on measures needed for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Before I conclude my statement today I would like to touch upon one aspect we consider urgent. I mean the growing need for close international co-operation in all fields of outer space activities. Next year we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of humanity's entry into outer space. During that relatively short period, 2,300 launches were undertaken, 2 per cent of them piloted. By December 1985 there were 2,766 objects in outer space. On the geostationary orbit alone there are about 500 objects. In the near future we shall be confronted with the problem of outer space around Earth being rather crowded. It is quite clear that the SDI could place in orbit a huge number of additional objects, bringing no use but danger, and substantially complicating international co-operation for peaceful uses of that environment.

The placement of objects in outer space, the assigning of an orbit to them and the regulation of their movement will of necessity become more and more the subject of international co-operation. Broad international co-operation will also ensure that all States, whether large or small, can receive the benefits of the peaceful exploration of outer space in practically all fields of science and economy. This co-operation will be simply inevitable, since, as the founder of astronautics, Tsiolkovsky, foresaw, society will be incorporating outer space into the sphere of its creative activity to an ever-increasing degree. First, this activity will be limited to our solar system, but later it can expand into other planetary systems, into other, still more distant worlds.

In view of all these realities, with military and peaceful aspects mutually interconnected, we associate ourselves with the plan for the creation of a solid material, political and organizational foundation of "star peace" in the spirit of the three-stage programme of joint steps proposed by the Soviet Union on 12 June 1986. We consider it a realistic plan, starting with the thorough study of the needs of humanity concerning the uses of space technology, with agreeing on the main directions of the qualitatively new co-operation and common projects for the peaceful uses of outer space, proceeding gradually to the establishment of the material basis for such co-operation through the development and build-up of the relevant space technology and, finally, resulting, by the end of this century, in the carrying out of specific programmes with the most effective application of space technology. We are attracted by the proposal to establish, by 1990, the World Space Organization, which could co-ordinate peaceful uses of outer space and verify compliance with agreements aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It would be possible to proceed to such verification without undue delay since, in the first stage, the WSO could use technical means offered by countries active in space exploration.

As I noted in the beginning of this statement, Czechoslovakia has broad experience in international co-operation for the peaceful uses of outer space. Such co-operation, expanded to all countries, is the most reasonable course to follow. It would be unwise to split and unnecessarily repeat efforts of States in space exploration. In any event we strongly prefer that States unite their efforts for generally advantageous peaceful activities in outer space instead of throwing huge resources into, and endangering their security with the senseless concepts of "star wars".

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

Indeed, our main purpose in asking for the floor this morning is to make a related announcement foreshadowed in my statement of 3 July in which I informed the Conference of my delegation's intention to submit a working paper dealing with selected aspects of legal terminology relevant to arms control and outer space.

Last year, my delegation tabled a working paper, CD/618, entitled "Survey of International Law Relevant to Arms Control and Outer Space". In general, it comprised a broad discussion of the significance, scope and application of existing relevant treaties. Supplementary to that survey, and in accordance with our conclusion that certain key definitions need consideration and clarification, I am now pleased to table another Canadian working paper, which will bear the number CD/716, entitled "Terminology Relevant to Arms Control and Outer Space". An advance copy in English only will be distributed this morning to all delegations.

As you know, several delegations to the Conference on Disarmament have drawn attention during our current session, both in their plenary statements and in meetings of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, to the need for greater terminological precision, and a common understanding of certain basic definitions relating to outer space. There is evident concern that imprecision or perceived imprecision in defining treaty obligations has led in some instances to controversy regarding compliance with those obligations. While it has been argued on occasion that "constructive" ambiguity may facilitate negotiations and eventual agreement, such an approach, in our view, should be used with the greatest caution. The need for

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flexibility should not be transposed into an acceptance of ambiguity. It is essential to come to a shared understanding of the nature of obligations -- a commonality of commitment -- in order to ensure that parties apply the same standards when judging the compliance behaviour of others.

The Canadian working paper, which has been submitted to the Secretariat for translation and reproduction and which will soon be distributed officially to all delegations, summarizes a range of views concerning some key terms. As I indicated on 3 July, it is our hope that the working paper will serve further to elucidate the legality or otherwise of current and contemplated activities in outer space in light of existing treaties and legal precepts. More specifically, CD/716 outlines the variety of interpretations that exists among international legal experts, which is to varying degrees reflected in views of governments, and draws the following conclusions based on the analysis contained in the working paper:

Having in mind conflicting interpretations of the concept of "peaceful purposes", it is difficult to arrive at an unqualified and clear-cut definition of "peaceful purposes". It is our view that a restrictive interpretation is the most appropriate in view of the negotiating history of the Outer Space Treaty, its actual wording and State practice since its coming into force.

Terms such as "weaponization" and "militarization", which have been widely used, are even more ambiguous. These terms are not used in space treaties and do not even appear to have any generally accepted meaning in political discussions.

States have agreed to or acquiesced to a considerable extent in the military use of outer space. Many of the satellites now in orbit must be considered to be military. The ABM Treaty provides for verification by "national technical means" including photoreconnaissance satellites, which are clearly military. However, such stabilizing military uses of space are highly desirable and should continue without interference. Indeed, they should be supported by the international community and by international law.

Apart from weapons of mass destruction, the placement of weapons in earth orbit has, in the past, not been addressed in any extensive fashion, partly because, until recently, this was not seen as a technically feasible or militarily useful possibility.

The paper postulates that, in the absence of more developed treaty law in outer space, general international law would apply. This has been explicitly done to some extent already, according to the terms of various outer space conventions.

From the point of view of general international law, outer space may be analogous to other environments beyond national jurisdiction, notably the high seas. I hope I will be forgiven for saying that the Law of the Sea Convention stipulates in article 88 that "the high seas shall be reserved for peaceful purposes". This is a more clear-cut expression of the concept than appears in the Outer Space Treaty. Article 88 has never been interpreted as preventing, for example, the passage of warships or prohibiting maritime military

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

activities such as naval exercises or even weapons tests. Nor has it been seen to ban the stationing of any type of weapons on the high seas. "Peaceful purposes", as this phrase applies to outer space, is open to military activity. If the international community decides on restrictions on certain types of activity which do not otherwise contravene international law, it must do so by specific agreement, as indeed it did to some extent in the Outer Space Treaty. Again an analogy with the law of the sea is relevant. The 1971 Seabed Treaty, as its title states, prohibits "the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed and ocean floor". This treaty embodies the prohibition of a particular use of a particular weapon which would otherwise not have been contrary to international law, except with respect to the continental shelves of other States. The same considerations apply in outer space. In the absence of a specific existing prohibition (such as, for example, the one against nuclear weapons) and on the assumption that the activity in question is not contrary to an existing principle of international law (such as non-use of force) the placement of weapons in orbit in space is not per se unlawful, at this stage of development of the law of outer space.

It is not suggested, and I would like to emphasize this, it is not suggested by the Canadian delegation that placing or using weapons in space (or the increased "militarization" or "weaponization" of space) would be a desirable development. However, the elementary level to which space law has so far progressed does not of itself seem an adequate basis on which to prevent such a trend. To prevent the risks to security on Earth which may be posed by the threat of weapons placed in space or for use in space will require that States develop the law well beyond this elementary stage. And may I express my personal hope that this forum will make a major contribution to just that process.

As in the case of all Canadian working papers, CD/716, on terminology relevant to arms control and outer space, is being submitted for the sole purpose of accelerating progress in our deliberations on item 5 of our agenda. Whether delegations all agree with our conclusions or not, in our view, attempts to clarify the meaning of outer space related concepts could constitute a useful step and we therefore hope that our working paper will enable the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space to advance its work pursuant to its mandate and agreed work programme.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

Today, I wish to make some comments on the existing international legal instruments relating to outer space.

Nearly 30 years have elapsed since the first man-made earth satellite was launched into outer space in 1957, which marked the beginning of space activities by mankind. During the short span of 30 years, which was but a twinkling of the eye from the perspective of history, mankind made speedy progress in its activities in outer space. The exploration of outer space, representing the crystallization of human labour and wisdom, has opened up broad prospects for the development of science and technology and has had an increasingly important impact on human life. However, it is a cause of deep concern that the advanced space technology in the hands of the major space Powers has been used to pursue their arms race and to strive for military preponderance. Consequently, the prevention of an arms race in outer space has become an issue attracting world-wide attention, and one of the priority items in the Conference on Disarmament as well.

Over the past 20 years, the international community has worked out a number of treaties, conventions and agreements in an effort to regulate the activities of States in outer space. Some are devoted entirely to the activities in outer space, for instance, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the Agreement Governing the Activities of

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, etc., while others only touch upon outer space in certain aspects. By and large, these international legal instruments have reaffirmed the exclusively peaceful uses of outer space, advocated international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space and provided that space activities must conform to the United Nations Charter and international law. The Outer Space Treaty stipulates that no objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction shall be placed in orbit around the earth, nor shall such weapons be installed on celestial bodies or stationed in outer space in any other manner, and that the moon and other celestial bodies shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects provides that a launching State shall be absolutely liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space object on the surface of the earth or to aircraft in flight. The Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space has set up a preliminary régime of registering objects launched into outer space, a measure conducive to building mutual confidence. These international legal instruments have in some aspects played a certain role in restraining military activities in outer space.

With the advance in military space technology, the arms race between the super-Powers has extended from land, sea and atmosphere to outer space.

The major space Powers' efforts to use outer space for military activities began with their launching of military satellites. To date, the two space Powers have each built up a comprehensive system of military satellites of various functions, such as photo-reconnaissance, electronic reconnaissance, ocean surveillance, early warning, communication, navigation, meteorology and geodesy. In fact, these satellites make up a major component of their military systems. As military satellites play a crucial role in the military command systems, the two sides have been actively searching for various anti-satellite technologies. One space Power already has ASAT weapons in its possession, while the other is currently engaged in experiments for more advanced versions of these weapons. ASATs are only one dimension of their arms race in outer space. In their bid for greater strategic preponderance, the two sides have been pouring substantial resources into the development of more sophisticated space weapons capable of destroying each other's nuclear missiles. Currently, building upon their existing capabilities in high-energy laser, particle beams, advanced optical-electron sensing techniques and computer technology, they are concentrating their efforts on the development of directed-energy, kinetic-energy and other types of space weapon systems. A successful development and deployment of such new space weapon systems will undoubtedly lead to further escalation of the arms race and pose a greater threat to international peace security. It is precisely for this reason that the development of space weapons has caused great anxiety and concern throughout the international community.

At a time when the two space Powers are intensifying their research and development of space weapons, the existing international legal instruments on outer space are obviously inadequate for the purpose of preventing an arms race in outer space as they all have drawbacks of one kind or another.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

These legal instruments contain no provisions explicitly banning any arms race in outer space, totally prohibiting military activities therein, or banning all space weapons. For instance, the Outer Space Treaty, though prohibiting the stationing of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in outer space, does not cover "non-nuclear space weapons" in its scope of prohibition. The fact that quite a few space weapons non-existent at the time of its formulation nearly 20 years ago have since appeared indicates that its arms control provisions are far from being adequate for the total prevention of an arms race in outer space. This shows that general provisions banning nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction alone are not sufficient and that the scope of prohibition should be extended to include all space weapons, i.e., all devices or installations either space-, land-, sea-, or atmosphere-based, which are designed to attack or damage space-vehicles in outer space, or disrupt their normal functioning, or change their orbits, and all devices or installations based in space (including those based on the moon and other celestial bodies) which are designed to attack or damage objects in the atmosphere, or on land, or at sea, or disrupt their normal functioning. Furthermore, though the Treaty stipulates that the Moon and other celestial bodies should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, it does not expressly provide that the entire outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects is another case in point. Though providing for the general liability of the launching State of space objects for damage caused by its space activities, the Convention is silent on the militarization of or the arms race in outer space, which threaten international peace and security, nor does it provide for the international liability for damage to other States caused by the testing, deployment and use of space weapons, or by other military activities in outer space. Consequently, this Convention cannot restrain the gradual militarization and weaponization of outer space. The Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space provides another example. The Convention only stipulates that each State of registry shall provide the "general function" and additional information it wishes to furnish to the United Nations Secretary-General. As a result, though approximately two thirds of the satellites launched by the major space Powers are military satellites or used for military purposes, their military functions have not been specifically registered.

On the issue of verification, the provisions contained in some relevant international legal instruments on outer space are inadequate to ensure the effective monitoring of their compliance.

In the view of the Chinese delegation, the existing international legal instruments on outer space all have limitations to a certain extent, since they came into being under the specific circumstances prevailing at the time. With the development of space science and technology, particularly when the super-Powers are using new technology to extend their arms race to outer space, these legal instruments, though still of positive significance, can no longer meet today's needs, as they are inadequate for the total prevention of an arms race in outer space. The need therefore arises to conclude new international agreements.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

Over the past two years, preliminary discussions have been held in the Conference on agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space", during which many members expressed useful views. We share the view expressed by Sweden, Pakistan, Argentina and some other countries that the Conference should start negotiations on the conclusion of a new international agreement which, in our view, should aim at achieving the "non-militarization of outer space" with the "non-weaponization of outer space" as its main objective at the present stage.

The United Nations General Assembly at its fortieth session adopted without any votes against a resolution urging the USSR and the United States to pursue intensively their bilateral negotiations in a constructive spirit aimed at reaching early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space, and to advise the Conference on Disarmament periodically of the progress of their negotiations. We subscribe to the view held by many countries that the United States and the USSR should engage in earnest negotiations for the speedy conclusion of an agreement without prejudice to the interests of other States and that the Conference should meanwhile continue to play its positive role.

The Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space was established by the Conference for the first time in 1985. After its re-establishment this year, and presided over by Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, the members of the Conference further exchanged views on the definition of space weapons and the relevant international legal instruments, which served to clarify certain complex issues involved and contributed to the better understanding of each other's positions. We sincerely hope that the Ad hoc Committee will carry out its in-depth and practical work on the substantive issue of preventing an arms race in outer space, with a view to achieving greater progress than it did last year.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

With regard to the item "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space", everything has been said in this forum about the possible implications of the spreading into outer space of the already grave rivalry existing between the Great Powers to achieve universal supremacy.

The comparatively lesser degree of development of the arms race in outer space offers on the one hand the possibility to avoid what is obviously avoidable, but at the same time it encourages a dangerous temptation to establish new defensive frontiers. Apparently, it would only seem to be a matter of undertaking preliminary activities for research and development purposes, but in fact what may occur is the well-known phenomenon of inertia in the dynamics of the arms race, which can per se generate the evolution of this initial research phase into the next phase of broader activities, and ultimately the deployment of new weapon systems.

In this forum we have heard new views, such as that establishing a certain analogy between the problems of the high seas and the problems of outer space. Nevertheless, aside from the relative value of any analogy, a comprehensive approach to the problems of outer space would be closer to that developed in the past by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. In that regard, my delegation will on another occasion present its ideas on the possible value as an example of the concept of the "common heritage of mankind" enshrined in the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We share the view of the distinguished representative of China that the first step must be to promote the non-weaponization of space, and then take up the complex problem of its demilitarization. In purely pragmatic terms, Peru believes that it is necessary to supplement the 1967 Treaty on the exploration and use of outer space, and also that it is essential to reaffirm and improve the force and the scope of the Treaty on the limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. These are not definitive solutions, of course, but they can represent the necessary palliative measures while we are negotiating broader agreements.

As was said a few days ago in plenary by the distinguished representative of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, the new space age requires a global institutional structure to make space an area of model international co-operation. Accordingly, my country's delegation fully shares the approval expressed by the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka for the initiative of convening an international conference which could very well be UNISPACE III. One of its objectives would be the establishment of an international space agency which will make it possible to use for the benefit of all mankind the tremendous technology developed over the last 20 years. The conquest of space should not serve to underpin Faustian power policies but to save mankind from backwardness and poverty.

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(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Resolution 40/87 of the United Nations General Assembly calls for negotiations with the aim of achieving an agreement, or agreements, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Although the mandate and the programme of work of the Ad Hoc Committee is far from responding to this decision of the General Assembly we should do all we can in order to ensure constructive work by that body.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

We should like to express to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Bayart, our appreciation for the excellent way in which he promoted an agreement on the programme of work and is guiding the work of the Committee.

The future activities of mankind in outer space are confronted with the following alternative: on the one hand, of peacefully using outer space for the benefit of all peoples, and respecting the right of each State to participate in that use; or, on the other hand, of including outer space in the arms race and subjecting activities in that area to a large extent to military purposes, and thereby threatening the future of all peoples.

Here at the Conference on Disarmament we have to deal above all with the prevention of the second variant. I shall not embark on a lengthy discussion about the feasibility of an SDI shield capable of providing shelter from a massive offensive nuclear strike. Doubts are growing everywhere about whether such an objective has ever been seriously contemplated by the initiators of that Programme. Has it not rather been the objective from the very beginning to create space weapons intended to be a component of an offensive nuclear strategy?

A surprise attack assisted by outer space means would require the following scenario. A propitious orbital constellation of a few communication and reconnaissance satellites is sufficient for executing all decisive tasks during a surprise attack. Some ASAT weapons appropriately stationed in outer space or even on Earth simultaneously eliminate all important space-based communication, early-warning and command means of the adversary. Due to their highly improved degree of accuracy, intercontinental ballistic devices destroy a great percentage of the adversary's ICBMs on the ground. The SDI system reliably wards off all the strategic forces remaining to the adversary for response.

Allow me to call your attention just to one of the possible aspects in this connection. Let us assume that the SDI system were based on nuclear-powered X-ray lasers which, indeed, range among the possible weapons systems. A comprehensive shield system would need about 100 space stations equipped with X-ray lasers, waiting for a massive ICBM attack of the adversary. Such a system is extremely expensive, complicated and vulnerable. But if the calculation includes the option to carry out a surprise attack on the adversary, thus permitting a 90 per cent destruction of ICBMs on the ground, about three X-ray lasers -- in the given moment positioned over the territory of the adversary at an altitude just above the air space -- would suffice in that case to eliminate the remaining ICBMs of the adversary provided, of course, no countermeasures would be taken.

One fact is absolutely definite: such a weapons system would constitute a hard blow for international stability. It would amount, inter alia, to the destruction of cornerstones of the present system of treaties on disarmament and arms limitation and prevent successful negotiations on complementary agreements in the most important fields.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

At the conclusion of his latest visit to Moscow, President Mitterand was absolutely right when he explicitly pointed out that SDI was an obstacle to the promotion of the disarmament process.

For all these reasons we object any attempt to add, through a so-called European Defence Initiative (EDI) still another medium-range and tactical variant to the strategic first-strike option, thereby carrying further first-strike nuclear versions to Europe.

The most reasonable and responsible decision would be to abandon the SDI programme and to refrain from the development, testing and deployment of ABM and other space strike weapons according to the ABM Treaty and other international legal instruments. Logically, this includes to forego the demonstration of a respective weapons capability.

In all disarmament negotiations and deliberations the issue of verification is emphasized, by some representatives -- sometimes so intensely that the real subject is pushed into the background. Let us briefly consider the issue of space weapons also from the angle of verification.

One can concede that verification of the prohibition of research is difficult to implement. But it begins to be feasible, at the latest, with testing weapon capability. Therefore the cycle of development should be stopped, at the latest, at that stage. An agreement should prohibit the testing phase because after the transition into production compliance with an agreement on prohibition would hardly be verifiable any more.

Let us take ASAT weapons, for instance. On 13 September 1985 the United States demonstrated a new ASAT system. Further tests are planned. The deployment of an ASAT system with two squadrons of F-15 fighters is intended to be effected in 1987. If it were possible to obtain a treaty on the prevention of ASAT weapons in the near future, before the planned further testing of the complete system, then the observance of that treaty could be easily verified. Even national technical means would be sufficient. The situation in this field can change very quickly however. The verification of a possible prohibition would pose much greater problems after the demonstration of weapons capability. F-15 fighters and ASAT weapons can be stationed at many airports and easily be camouflaged. At advanced levels verification would become more and more difficult. In this respect, the general awareness corroborated by practical experience is particularly true: the earlier the conclusion of an agreement, the easier and more effective the verification.

During the deliberations we have had so far in the Committee, several delegations have emphasized the importance of certain terms and asserted that the solution of substantial problems depended on them. I see no obstacle to a constructive discussion of definitions if they are necessary for the agreements to be worked out. The point is to orient our work more towards practical objectives. Therefore we advocate setting about elaborating without delay an agreement or several agreements on the prevention of the arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The USSR has proposed as a first step to begin with the prohibition of ASAT weapons and the immunity of space objects. This seems to us a very realistic approach. A preparedness by the United States also to observe a moratorium on ASAT weapons, as the USSR has unilaterally undertaken it since 1983, would considerably favour negotiations on that issue. Such a step would be all the more urgent as ASAT experiments already cause at the present time a number of interferences in peaceful activities in outer space.

The objective is clear but ideas are required on the ways and means to achieve it. Like other delegations, we concern ourselves with the question of what a treaty on the prohibition of ASAT weapons and the immunity of satellites would look like. Taking into consideration previous discussions at the Committee, a future treaty could contain in our view the following principal elements: firstly, outer space should be free of any weapon intended for use against space objects; second, any weapons system on Earth intended to be used against space objects has to be prohibited; third, a prohibition of the use of space objects as means to destroy, damage and disturb the normal functioning, or change the flight trajectory of space objects of other States; fourth, a prohibition of the threat or use of force against space objects; fifth, any harmful effects on outer space should be prevented in order to preserve its attributes for further exploration and peaceful utilization; sixth, unintentional interference with the functioning of space objects should be minimized; seventh, the free access of any State to outer space in accordance with the principles of international law should be guaranteed.

During the process of deliberation and negotiation, terms such as "space objects", "outer space" etc. would have to be defined for the purpose of that treaty. A system of verification measures would have to be agreed upon, too.

My delegation is convinced that an understanding on these fundamental elements of a treaty would promote a goal-oriented continuation of work. During that process it will also be possible to speedily clarify which aspects should be dealt with by other United Nations bodies.

The Committee's work has gained in substance this year. The deliberations have more and more focused on factual issues and the main building blocks, thus tending to shape the outlines of possible agreements. This tendency should be reinforced.

(Mr. Nguyen Thuong, Viet Nam)

With respect to the problem of space weapons, the non-aligned countries, and among them Viet Nam, have always held that outer space is part of the common heritage of mankind which is to be exclusively reserved for peaceful uses, for the well-being of all nations. The development of research on space weapons based on lasers or particle-beams, inter alia, arouses great concern among the non-aligned countries. The above mentioned declarations of the six leaders call for "the prohibition of the development, testing, production and use of all space weapons", and state that "an arms race in outer space would be enormously costly, and have grave destabilizing effects. It would also endanger a number of arms limitation and disarmament agreements". The Minister of India, in his statement of 22 April, quite rightly stressed that the SALT II and ABM treaties should be strictly observed and complied with and that the immunity of satellites should be guaranteed for their normal and peaceful functioning in space. On the basis of these very well-known views of the non-aligned countries, my delegation believes that this question of the prevention of the arms race in outer space, a problem which is of the highest importance and priority, should not be dealt with in just one paragraph of a sub-chapter entitled "Related measures"; it should be given broader treatment and have its due place among the main disarmament measures.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

In the statement that I made in the plenary on 10 July, I made some reference to my Government's policies towards the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We do not have many meetings of our Ad hoc Committee on that subject left this year, and it is our hope that Australian representatives in that Committee will make some further remarks shortly. But my subject today in the plenary is the prevention of an arms race in outer space and we have chosen to make these remarks in the plenary because of our wish to have them recorded.

Space has been used and indeed, predominantly used, for military purposes since the dawn of the space age and its twin, the age of the intercontinental ballistic missile. The initial reaction to the appearance in space of satellites and at least potentially, ballistic missile warheads, was to set about countering those objects.

The history of what happened subsequently is complicated and somewhat messy. But it is fair to say that partly by design and formal agreements and partly through tacit understandings, the major military Powers, essentially the two super Powers, elected to preserve space as a relative sanctuary from the use of force. Put another way, had the super Powers judged it desirable, on balance, to try to deny the use of space for military purposes, space would now be a far less hospitable environment than it is at present.

In recent years the pressures on this régime of restraint have grown steadily and can now be described as acute. The possibility of an arms race in space, that is the competitive development and deployment of weapons systems specifically intended for use against objects in space both missiles and satellites, has become very real.

Thus the prevention of such a competition has jumped to the top of the arms control agenda in both the bilateral super Power negotiations and in multilateral forums. Clearly, there has been a marked shift in the balance of considerations. The earlier tolerance of the use of space for military purposes, even though in the case of satellites these uses supported and even enhanced terrestrial military capabilities, is giving way to intolerance.

The Ad hoc Committee of our Conference is tasked to examine and to identify issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In executing this task Australia believes that we should begin at the beginning and try to clarify, in our own minds, why this shift in the balance of considerations has occurred. In our view, preventing an arms race in outer space is crucially dependent on addressing the incentives to develop and deploy space weaponry.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

With respect to ballistic missile defences, which both super Powers are actively researching, it is clear that one strand of motivation is the same Powers' failure, to date, to conclude agreements that would reduce offensive nuclear forces and yield a more stable balance in the residual forces. This is a central issue in the super Power negotiations on nuclear and space arms.

With respect to anti-satellite weapons, the issues would seem to fall more squarely within the purview and competence of this forum. Over the past quarter of a century, satellites have flourished in number and variety. The majority of them perform military or military-related functions and have done so, without being challenged, under a legal régime that specified that space is to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It would seem to follow, then, that there has been a strong consensus that these satellites perform functions that are in the common interest, and are consistent with both international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Under these circumstances, a first order of business is to establish, as clearly as possible, what these common interests are and how satellites contribute to them.

Further, if, as is clearly the case, the consensus to leave satellites in peace is breaking down we should endeavour to find out why this is occurring. Technological advances are clearly a factor but surely a basic goal of arms control is to make technology the slave of security not the reverse -- to make security the hostage of technology.

Another possibility, clearly, is that the functions performed by satellites have crossed or are in danger of crossing some invisible threshold of tolerability. We should look into this.

An enquiry into the motivations for the existing Soviet ASAT system and the United States system now in development, would be instructive and relevant.

In Australia's view, establishing: why it is in our collective interests to protect space from the use of force; what space assets should, on these grounds, be protected, and what should be done about those which do not warrant such protection; will constitute a valuable guide to consideration of how this can most effectively be accomplished.

An investigation of this kind would complement the other preparatory tasks or "building blocks" on which our Ad hoc Committee is already engaged. For example, the analysis of the existing legal régime relating to arms control in space, and also to ensure that we have a common terminology: these are two building blocks.

We would then be armed to assess the relative urgency and efficacy of the many sound and imaginative ideas that have been put forward to accomplish our objective, ranging from confidence-building measures to specific suggestions for the further development of international law as it applies to outer space.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

At this stage in our proceedings for this year I do not propose to comment on these proposals individually. But I will take this opportunity to recall the suggestion put to this Conference in August 1984 by Australia's Foreign Minister, Mr. Hayden, that this Conference consider measures to protect from attack all satellites (and their associated ground stations) that contribute to strategic stability and to the verification of arms control agreements. We continue to believe that this proposal goes to the heart of the task assigned to our Ad hoc Committee. We would wish to see it fully discussed.

Finally, there is one proposal which a number of delegations have made and which Australia regards as a basic requirement for the prevention of an arms race in space. I refer to improving and strengthening the régime for the registration of space objects. In outer space, no less than in every other field of arms control, the degree of success will be strongly dependent upon the degree of transparency that States give to their activities.

Australia attached the greatest importance to the Schultz-Gromyko agreement of January 1985 that underpins the present negotiations in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union. That agreement specified that the objective of the negotiations would be to "work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on Earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms and at strengthening strategic stability". These negotiations are crucial, but in Australia's view, the Conference on Disarmament can and should play an important complementary role in this vital task.

As the bilateral agreement states, an arms race in space is still preventable. But it is folly to believe that a wall of words erected around space will be sufficient. We must deal instead with the incentives, with the pressures that are generating the interest in looking to space for solutions to security problems that have eluded us on the ground.

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

As far as developments outside the Conference are concerned, in the view of my delegation it is important to note that the dialogue between the two major Powers on disarmament has recently become more direct, more dynamic and more comprehensive. In some respects it has contributed to the definition of their priorities in the field of disarmament. This dialogue concerns also three key disarmament issues which are on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament: chemical-weapons ban, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and reduction of nuclear armaments. We welcome such a development, just as we have welcomed the objective of two major nuclear-weapon States to accelerate the negotiation of agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and terminating it on Earth, with the ultimate goal of achieving the complete elimination of nuclear arms everywhere. We hope that these developments will have a positive effect on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly in preparation of the 1987 session.

The Conference on Disarmament has recognized that prevention of an arms race in outer space is a matter of high concern, importance and urgency. It has also recognized that such an arms race is far easier to arrest now, before it has become a reality. Therefore, the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament -- which run parallel to bilateral negotiations -- should, in our view, be more focused on the resolution of this problem: because if not stopped, the spread of the arms race into outer space might have an adverse effect both on the use of space itself and on the security and peace of nations on Earth.

The debate held in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and numerous working papers submitted to it seem to indicate that the problems involved require extensive and complex considerations, including, inter alia, consideration of certain definitions, arriving at a consensus on activities in outer space which are intended solely for peaceful purposes and on those which should be completely banned or subjected to international control; reaching a consensus as to which of the existing outer space agreements should be reinforced or supplemented and what new agreements should be concluded. Given the serious task entrusted to the Conference in the field of outer space, we consider it necessary to promptly proceed to setting the priorities and rounding up of the activities within the mandate of the Conference. In doing so our attention should be focused on specific tasks of the Conference on Disarmament which should constitute a basis for arriving at a final result in the form of an agreement or several related agreements. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee should, at the beginning of the 1987 session, work out a concrete programme of work, under its existing mandate, on all issues within its competence that the Conference should address.

(The President)

Distinguished delegates, please allow me now to make a brief concluding statement as the President of the Conference, since this is the last formal plenary meeting I shall be presiding over.

With regard to agenda items 4 (Chemical Weapons), 5 (Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space), 7 (Radiological Weapons) and 8 (Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament), the respective subsidiary bodies continued their activities with vigour under the able leadership of their respective Chairmen.

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(The President)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a high priority for Canada, and this Conference agenda item warrants special effort and attention. As was the case last year, Canada submitted a substantive working paper designed to facilitate consideration of existing relevant international law and the possible need for it to be supplemented by additional negotiated measures. We have also commissioned extensive research into the potential for using existing technology for purposes of space-based verification. We intend in the future to make the results of this research more widely available.

It was a matter of disappointment that a mandate for a subsidiary body on the outer space item was agreed only half way through the 1986 session. As a result, for a second consecutive year, only half of the session's time could be devoted to substantive deliberations. Once the mandate was agreed, the ensuing discussion was on the whole characterized by an impressive sobriety and thoughtfulness. In the Canadian view, the existing mandate is demonstrating its usefulness.

(Mr. Sutowardoyo, Indonesia)

Indonesia attaches great importance to item 5, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. We share in the concern at the prospect of outer space becoming a new arena of arms competition between the rivalling major Powers as current developments indicate. Outer space as the common heritage of mankind must be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes and uses that are beneficial to all mankind. This is the principle that has been endorsed by the international community. We hold this principle to be sacrosanct.

There are other reasons deriving from our country's location and singular geographical composition which make us take a special interest in item 5. As a country consisting of over 10,000 islands, big and small, scattered in an area straddling the Equator, and extending roughly 5,000 kms from east to west and 2,000 kms from north to south at its widest, our domestic telecommunications system is largely dependent on the unhindered functioning of a space-based communications satellite. We are concerned at the way the militarization of outer space would impinge on peaceful satellite communications. As an equatorial country we are not less worried about the uses satellites in geostationary orbit might be put to. The GSO is a limited natural resource and its uses exclusively for peaceful purposes must be safeguarded.

We have followed with great interest the discussion and debate in the Ad hoc Committee which is so ably chaired this year by Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia. We share the view that the currently existing legal régime is not sufficient for our goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We remain convinced of the need to remedy this situation on an urgent basis lest further advances in space weapons technology would render it more difficult or impossible altogether. In this context the banning of anti-satellite weapons should, in our view, be given first priority.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

The United States position with regard to a nuclear-test ban remains the main obstacle in starting by the Conference a concrete work on a test-ban treaty, an important first step in the process of cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. We sincerely hope that the recent and planned further bilateral USSR/United States contacts and the efforts within our Conference will bring much needed change in the United States position and will pave the way towards the solution of this most urgent question. We are now at a particularly critical point in postwar disarmament negotiations. Despite numerous talks no substantial step forward was made in the last few years. Some of the important arrangements, which in the not-so-distant past created hopes of curbing the increase of military arsenals, today are threatened. The armaments efforts are gaining dramatic speed. There is an imminent threat that the arms race will be driven into a new, higher spiral. Stories of star wars have ceased to be merely a subject for movie script-writers.

There is also an increasing understanding that unless we are able to prevent this new dangerous evolution in outer space, the search for solutions of acute problems on the Earth cannot but remain a story of failures. This is why my delegation would like to present again today some comments on item 5 of our agenda, "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space", which is one of the most serious and pressing problems of our deliberations.

The history of disarmament negotiations is not only the history of achieved treaties, but also the history of lost opportunities.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

So far there are no weapons in the Earth's orbit and there is still a chance to prevent military rivalry in outer space. Let us seize this opportunity. The basic rule of any medical treatment is non nocere -- to abstain from causing harm. The basic principle of curing the present situation should be not to make it worse. This common-sense logic has already led to a number of arms-control treaties which prevented military competition in some areas and fields. This sound approach, which can be termed as preventive arms control, is particularly valid today when we are pondering over the problem of outer space. In this vast and increasingly important area of human activity we must establish a strong bulwark against deadly competition, which, if not hindered today, will create enormously complicated problems tomorrow.

Our preventive action would be of great value in building confidence, so needed today among nations and so urgently sought in different forums. It would create much better conditions for disarmament negotiations. It would help to establish a good basis for peaceful co-operation in outer space for the benefit of all mankind.

It is a strong conviction of my delegation that this Conference, representing the world community, has an important role to play in preventing an arms race in outer space.

Poland attaches particular weight to the prevention of turning outer space into another domain of the arms race. It was emphasized in the statement made in this hall on 17 April of this year by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Henryk Jaroszek. We expressed our deep satisfaction when it became possible to establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It was a timely and significant step, notwithstanding the limited mandate we gave to this body.

We have been following with great interest the work of this Committee carried on under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia. The Committee has become the forum for a substantive, active and stimulating discussion both on the existing legal régime of outer space and on proposals and new initiatives which could prevent an arms race in outer space. A considerable part of its debate has been devoted to defining basic terms and notions used in this new field of disarmament negotiations. It is a valuable exercise and an important stage in any negotiating process. As has been stressed by some speakers, the results which can emerge from this debate could become necessary "building blocks" of a future agreement. In fact, it is essential to know what we mean by using newly-coined terms or expressions.

What is more important, however, is to know what we want and what we can do. The process of creating "building blocks" will be much more fruitful if it is oriented towards a concrete goal, if we know what kind of an edifice we intend to build with these "blocks".

This Conference has received from the United Nations General Assembly a clear indication as to the way it should proceed in its efforts. It has been stressed in numerous General Assembly resolutions that the spread of an arms race to outer space should be prevented by concluding an appropriate

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

international agreement or agreements. This Geneva forum has been repeatedly requested to embark on negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on the text of such a treaty or treaties.

This clear guidance of the United Nations General Assembly should not be forgotten by some delegations when we define again the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee for its next session. The work of this Conference on prevention of an arms race in outer space cannot be just a simple consideration of the problem, but must be directed towards negotiating and reaching concrete agreement or agreements "preventing an arms race in all its aspects and guaranteeing that the outer space is used for exclusively peaceful purposes", as stated in General Assembly resolution 39/59.

After all the discussion we have had on this item, there is a pressing need to undertake a serious effort aimed at identifying the concrete end or ends of the work of Conference in this field. The urgency of the question has been recognized by the General Assembly, which has repeatedly asked the Conference to begin appropriate work "without delay" and called upon the States "to undertake immediate measures to prevent an arms race in outer space".

We are conscious that we are not working in a vacuum, that our work, including that on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, cannot be considered in isolation from other important negotiations and, in particular, in isolation from bilateral Soviet-American talks which are held in Geneva.

Poland wholeheartedly welcomed the agreement between the USSR and the United States to discuss bilaterally the most vital issues relating to nuclear and space weapons. We fully support the constructive Soviet approach to these talks. We understand their importance for the future of disarmament and we follow the dialogue with the hope that it will contribute to better mutual understanding and confidence of the Great Powers and will bring meaningful results. I am sure that our expectations are shared by everybody in this hall.

But does it mean that we should simply mark time and wait for the possible results of those negotiations? Let me quote the opinion of one of the States participating in those negotiations: "We cannot allow the Conference to sit idle and wait for results to be reached at neighbouring negotiations. What, in effect, prevents the starting of work on an agreement or agreements to exclude space from the sphere of the arms race, as called for by the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution voted for by 151 States? Not only are there no contra-indications, but indeed there is every possible reason for it, particularly as all nuclear-weapon States and States with a space potential are represented here at the Conference".

This is the view expressed in June of this year by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Vladimir Piotrovsky. We note this position with appreciation. I am sure that the similar attitude on the part of the United States would be most welcomed by all members of this Conference.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

The fate of outer space, which is the natural environment for the whole of our small planet, cannot be determined merely by technical possibilities of military use of outer space nor by any single power which decides to take advantage of them. We cannot forget that the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 established not only some specific restrictions on the use of outer space, such as the prohibition to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, but also some general limitations. They include inter alia that: any activity of a State in outer space should take into account the common interests of all mankind in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes only; such an activity should be for the benefit and in the interests of all countries; and, further, it should be in the interest of international peace and security and promote international co-operation and understanding.

These restraints following from the language and the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty considerably limit the freedom of States in their outer space activities and give all the parties to the Treaty a legitimate right to express views on the question of how outer space is used, particularly when their interests as well as interests of international peace and security are threatened.

This legitimate right must be recognized by all space Powers. This right is an important element of the foundation on which the work of this Conference on prevention of an arms race in outer space is based.

The discussion we have held so far on existing proposals and future initiatives has shown that there is a wide spectrum of measures which can be undertaken in this field.

They cover radical proposals such as the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth and the banning of all space-strike weapons, as well as suggestions for limited confidence-building measures which could be undertaken pending the realization of more far-reaching solutions, which include such valuable ideas as moratoria on the development and testing of space weapons. Our attention was drawn to a number of "partial" arrangements -- to a ban of anti-satellite weapons or ban of emplacement of weapons in the Earth's orbit. There was discussion on the idea of immunity of space objects and the prohibition of tests of ASAT systems. Steps to strengthen existing space law have been suggested.

It is not my intention to make a repertory or classification of all the proposals which appeared in our discussion. What I want to stress is that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee was substantive and useful for this stage. We were able to set an interesting possible menu. What we need now is to make our choice in order to move towards preparing a dish -- that is negotiating and reaching concrete agreement or agreements preventing an arms race in outer space. This is what this Conference has been asked to do and what its *raison d'etre* is.

We are aware of the difficulties which are connected with this task, just as we are aware of some limitations on our efforts. But this cannot be an excuse for the lack of concrete action. Time is not our ally.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

In fulfilling this task we need more imagination. In our discussions, the growing threat of anti-satellite weapons and anti-missile defence has often been stressed. In fact, their deployment would mean a qualitative change in the use of outer space. The consequences of this change should be assessed, however, not only in terms of the immediate negative impact for the security of nations but also in longer terms. Introduction of these weapons will not be the end but rather the beginning of a process. They must be considered as only the first chapter of a still unwritten book. One can also reasonably assume that if no limitations are established, in a foreseeable future more than two States could have space weapons at their disposal, thus escalating further the risk of war.

The 40-year lesson of "vertical" and "horizontal" proliferation of nuclear weapons -- from the Hiroshima bomb to the present arsenals -- is a good illustration of all the dangers we will have to face if we fail in our preventive action.

We also need more courage. The great danger of today is not only the existence of a number of difficult international problems. What is disturbing also is the anachronism in the search for their solution. This especially applies to the problem of security. It is urgent to begin to think about this problem in new ways. Neither international security nor the security of any nation will be ensured by development and deployment of space-weapons.

Finally, we need more of a feeling of responsibility to the forthcoming generations. If we are not able today to solve the problem of outer space, let us -- at least -- look for ways and means of postponing decisions which could lead to the point of no return. This could be done through unilaterally decided moratoria on development and testing of any type of space-strike weapons or through mutually agreed and verifiable agreements on not undertaking such development and testing for an agreed period of time. The Conference on Disarmament could play a significant role in sponsoring and elaborating such steps.

"Space exploration demands from all States new, truly global thinking and the renunciation of the categories of strength and military superiority". This is one of the basic assumptions of the ambitious Soviet programme of joint practical actions of all nations in peaceful exploration and use of outer space presented in the message of Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to the United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this programme for wide, and open to all co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space. Such co-operation would mean not only a rational co-ordination and pooling of efforts that will bring tangible scientific and economic benefits to all nations. It could also be of great help in solving our task of prevention of an arms race in outer space. It will contribute significantly to trust and mutual understanding among nations. Exchange of information, joint projects, increasing openness of space activities will play a substantial role in facilitating the solution of the problem of verification. A World Space Agency, which has been proposed, could perform

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

similar tasks in assuring the peaceful uses of outer space to those fulfilled by the International Atomic Energy Agency in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

All this means that this important Soviet initiative should be advocated not only on ethical, scientific and economic grounds but also as an important part of efforts aiming at prevention of an arms race in outer space.

To secure that the exploration and use of outer space are carried on exclusively for peaceful purposes is one of the greatest challenges to the contemporary world. The solution of this problem is needed urgently and requires multiplication of efforts both in this Conference and in other forums. Prompt completion of the UNIDIR study on disarmament problems relating to outer space and the consequences of extending the arms race into outer space could be of great help in these efforts.

We certainly have a chance to get successfully through this period of decision on the future use of outer space, but only if all States give up egoistic political and military ambitions and seize the great opportunities of co-operation which it creates.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet delegation would like to focus attention in today's statement on item 5 of the Conference's agenda, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

The importance and topicality of this question are beyond doubt. The nuclear-space age makes us all take a new look at the problem of war and peace and questions of international security. The realities of our age leave no State any hope of defending itself only by military and technological means, even the most up-to-date ones. The extension of the arms race into outer space would inevitably ruin the basis of strategic stability and the foundation of peace. If we cannot prevent the appearance of weapons in outer space, the arms race may become irreversible and uncontrolled and lead to a general catastrophe.

For a number of years already efforts have been made to convince us that the so-called "Strategic Defence Initiative" is allegedly the only way to rescue humanity, and various arguments have been put forward to support that idea, but none of them works. The grave danger posed by the "Star Wars" programme is widely understood throughout the world. The world public is well aware that the space strike means now being developed are primarily weapons, and this all amounts to starting an arms race in outer space.

The Soviet Union believes that the "Star Wars" concept is pushing mankind to take the road leading to nuclear catastrophe. This, for example, is how the consequences of the "Star Wars" programme are seen by the well-known American computer specialist David Palmers, who concluded, incidently, that it was impossible to create a reliable space missile protection system. He writes, and I quote "If a 'Star Wars' system were untrustworthy, the United States would be unable to abandon deterrence. The Soviet Union could not assume that the SDI would be completely ineffective. Realizing that the United States had both a defensive shield and missiles, the Soviets would feel impelled to improve their offensive forces to compensate. The United States, not trusting its defence, would build still more missiles and the arms race would escalate dangerously". I quoted there an article by David Palmers published in the International Herald Tribune today, and the author is familiar with the substance of the subject. Until recently he was one of the members of the special Pentagon group working on the SDI. Of course, one could disagree with details of his assessment but basically we think he is

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

right. Peace on Earth can be preserved not by a senseless, insane build-up of weapons but by limiting and reducing them and by banning their appearance in outer space.

The Soviet Union has opposed the policy of "star wars" with the alternative of "star peace", i.e. exploring outer space for peaceful purposes on the basis of joint efforts of all States. Responding to the call of the United Nations, the USSR has submitted for consideration by the international community the step-by-step programme of such actions, outlined in the letter of Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers to Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the United Nations Secretary-General, made public on 13 June 1986. We hope that this programme will be studied with due attention at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would now like briefly to recall the basic provisions of the Soviet programme, the adoption and realization of which is not tightly bound up with other issues.

The Soviet Union does not consider it wise to disperse and duplicate the efforts of States in space exploration. If they become joint efforts, the most difficult tasks, which a single country, even the most developed, is incapable of carrying out, could be realized in practice. The proposed programme envisages three stages and pursues the aim of laying down the material, political, legal and practical foundations for "star peace" by the year 2000.

In the first, organizational, stage, it is proposed to hold not later than 1990 an international conference or a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on outer space, or to consider these questions at some other suitable forum. The forum would approve the programme of action for the 1990s and for the next 10-15 years. It would set up a World Space Organization (WSO) and, under its aegis, specialized programmes for the realization of concrete projects of co-operation in the following areas: communication, navigation, rescue of people on Earth, in the atmosphere and outer space; remote probing of the Earth in the interests of agriculture, development of the natural resources of the land and the world's seas and oceans; the study and preservation of the biosphere of the Earth, establishment of a global weather forecasting service and notification of natural calamities; the use of new sources of energy, and creation of new materials and technologies; exploration of outer space and celestial bodies by geophysical methods and by means of unmanned interplanetary spacecraft.

Developing States could participate in these projects on easy terms, and the least developed States could receive scientific and technological results of the work as aid towards their development objectives. The Soviet Union is ready to exchange information concerning its accomplishments in outer space, and to launch the peaceful space vehicles of other countries and of international organizations using Soviet carrier rockets on mutually acceptable terms.

The Soviet Union sees the WSO as a universal inter-State organization with its own charter in the form of an international treaty, associated with the United Nations through a co-operation agreement. The Organization would

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

co-ordinate the implementation of specialized programmes and be financed primarily by countries possessing a major space capability and by other economically developed States.

The WSO's efforts would be directed towards the peaceful exploration of outer space and verifying the observance of agreements on preventing the spread of the arms race into space as they are concluded. To exercise such control, it would initially use technical facilities granted by space Powers, and later its own facilities.

The second stage (material preparations) would cover the first half of the 1990s. It would comprise the designing and creation of space systems under the agreed projects. The transition to the exploitation of specific systems would take place as soon as they were ready. The co-ordination of the activities of specialized international programmes to ensure the utmost rationality and efficiency of all co-operation on a global scale, would be one of the main functions of the World Space Organization.

In the third stage (implementation) all areas of co-operation would have a tangible content by the year 2000. The corresponding spacecraft would be gradually launched, the functioning of relevant ground systems would be organized and specialized programmes in various spheres of the application of space technology would start operating on a self-supporting principle, yielding practical returns.

In other words, this would create the real prerequisites for turning terrestrial civilization into an interplanetary one from the very beginning of the third millennium.

We would like to share our views on the work of the Ad hoc Committee on item 5 of the Conference's agenda. The Ad hoc Committee has carried out over two years considerable preparatory work which we consider sufficient to proceed to work out an agreement or agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. There are practically no obstacles preventing the beginning of concrete negotiations on this issue at the Conference. The only obstacle, as we see it, is the position of some Western States.

Indeed, we have a common goal -- to prevent the arms race in outer space, and all the participants in the Ad hoc Committee wish to attain it. The delegations in the Ad hoc Committee have already got down to studying various terms that could be included in the future agreements. Thus, the delegations of Bulgaria, Hungary, China, Sri Lanka, the USSR and Venezuela have presented their definitions of "space strike arms" and "space weapons". And, finally, all groups of countries have put forward proposals and initiatives on how to prevent the arms race in space. Besides the proposals of the group of socialist countries, Sweden has tabled a proposal on banning the creation, testing and deployment of space weapons, including anti-satellite systems; there is an Argentine proposal to study the issue of prohibiting arms in space where they have not yet been deployed; Sri Lanka has advanced ideas on international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space; there are the Pakistan proposal contained in CD/708 and the proposal of China to solve on a priority basis the question of prohibiting development, production, deployment and use of any kind of space weapons; the proposal of

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Australia for the Conference to study the possibility of concluding an agreement on protection of satellites and their ground stations, and the proposals of France, the Federal Republic of Germany and many other States introduced at plenary meetings and in the Ad hoc Committee on outer space.

I would say that we have in fact closely approached the negotiating process and possibly have already launched its first stage. But the absence of a negotiating mandate constrains the Ad hoc Committee on outer space, does not allow it to go beyond "research", "identifying problems", "studying terms", etc. Such "exploratory" work cannot go on indefinitely at the Conference. The right place for it to be conducted is scientific research bodies -- national as well as international. International public opinion expects the Conference to produce practical treaties on disarmament, not theoretical studies.

We focus on this situation because, from the viewpoint of an objective observer, the work on item 5 of the Conference's agenda looks like this.

The whole spring session is spent in agreeing upon a mandate for the Ad hoc Committee, and part of the summer session on negotiating a programme of work. The time left for the Ad hoc Committee allows no more than a dozen meetings. But even those meetings are devoted to exploratory exercise. As a result, the Conference's work continues all by itself, while in parallel with it new types of arms are being developed and space strike weapons are being created. As we see it, the re-establishment at the outset of the 1987 session of the Ad hoc Committee on item 5 of the Conference's agenda with a mandate providing for the commencement of negotiations directed at preventing the arms race in outer space would provide the solution.

Mankind can benefit from outer space as long as it remains peaceful: it should be a source of good, not of danger. As we see it now, space is the key to many problems facing humanity. We have come close to a stage when we shall need to use space extensively on a new technological level for peaceful purposes. The Soviet Union is convinced that terrestrial civilization should enter the twenty-first century with a programme of "star peace" and not with reckless plans of "star wars".

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

The Romanian delegation has already repeatedly stressed the very heavy responsibility devolving on the Conference on Disarmament regarding the special need and urgency of effective measures and agreements to put an end to

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

and prevent any action which might trigger off an arms race in outer space, and the need to draw up and establish a true code of exclusively peaceful conduct for States to ensure that outer space used exclusively for purposes compatible with the common interests of mankind.

The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, even after an unduly long delay and with a limited mandate, and particularly its work under a well-conceived programme, are all positive elements. We are fully appreciative indeed of the active and even constructive spirit in which the work of the Ad Hoc Committee has taken place under the Chairmanship of the head of the Mongolian delegation, Ambassador Bayart.

A problem which the debates of the Ad Hoc Committee have always addressed more or less overtly or directly is the relationship between the already existing legal régime and the rules to be drawn up. We consider that the former should not constitute or become an end in itself, but rather its consideration should lead to practical conclusions concerning the problems to be settled and the rules as yet to be drafted. Moreover, in our view, generally speaking, we are all aware of what is required, of the major gaps in the existing conventions.

Like many other delegations here in the Conference on Disarmament or even at the United Nations General Assembly, we consider that every effort should be exerted to draw up and establish one or several international legal instruments designed to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Consensus regarding such a need and priority, which, we hope, no one contests or has any interest in contesting, derives moreover explicitly from the many texts adopted within the United Nations, particularly paragraph 9 of the operative part of General Assembly resolution 40/87 of 12 December 1985.

In our view, the work of the Conference on its agenda item 5 can make the desired progress only if in this specific case there is also a real will to define both the things and the terms on which we are truly going to negotiate in the nearest possible future.

All the discussions, studies and working papers so far have shown that we now do have in hand some important elements for a code of exclusively peaceful conduct in space, and rules which need to be consolidated and developed in a broad, unified manner in the light of existing and foreseen needs. The facts prove that without resolute action on the political, legal and practical front at the same time, the arms race in outer space may well become a dramatic reality, and according to views already expressed here, it can be considered that such a race has already indeed begun in specific forms.

Much has been said about concepts and the meaning of certain expressions or the criteria to be used. In our view the fundamental criterion which any attempt to establish to the legal régime cannot elude consists in the provision of the United Nations Charter regarding the duty of all States not to resort to force or the threat of the use of force; an obligation which should apply in full with respect to conduct in outer space. Likewise, any

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

negotiations or any real intention to negotiate in good faith require that we must at least refrain from any act that could render future rules or even prohibitions or limitations inoperative.

Finally, the Romanian delegation considers that this year's work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has provided arguments and once again revealed the political, legal, security and also practical reasons for drawing the conclusion, or rather reaffirming the need, that the Ad Hoc Committee should for its future sessions be given a specific negotiating mandate within the context of more structured work oriented towards the accomplishment of the important and urgent responsibilities devolving upon the Conference on Disarmament, specifically, the drawing up of one or several international legal instruments designed to prevent the arms race in outer space in all its aspects. We also consider that the research and studies carried out so far by various United Nations bodies, particularly the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, also offer a useful complementary base for defining the areas and efforts yet to be undertaken and arriving at a complete code of the obligations of States designed to reserve space exclusively for peaceful activities.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

With respect to the item of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, even though we cannot really speak of concrete results, at least stimulating work has been done which enables us also to harbour a modicum of optimism. The Ad Hoc Committee dealing with the item has done work which my delegation considers both useful and positive. We should like to express our recognition to its Chairman, Ambassador Bayart, for the efficiency, devotion and impartiality with which he has led the work of the Committee.

In today's statement, we should like to make a number of comments on agenda item 5 in the light of the deliberations which have taken place, both in the plenary meetings as well as in the Ad Hoc Committee's meetings.

We wish to begin by highlighting, in connection with this item, the important contribution made by the delegation of Canada, with the presentation of a series of working papers where several very important aspects of the item are approached. The most recent of these documents, on terminology relating to arms control and outer space, is a meaty, soundly documented study and is therefore an invaluable working instrument for us. Further on in this statement, I shall refer to some of the questions dealt with in that document.

In our view, the debate held this year on the prevention of an arms race in outer space has helped to highlight a number of very interesting aspects of the task to be accomplished by the Conference on Disarmament, which I shall summarize.

Firstly, the need to spell out the meaning of certain terms and the scope of some of the concepts related to the item. In my previous statement on the item, I stressed the need to define more precisely the meaning of certain terms and the scope of certain concepts which we usually use during our deliberations. The Canadian document relating to terminology also highlights the importance of terminological precision in disarmament negotiations, and argues that certain terms should be defined. We agree therefore, with the Canadian document that the documentation of the Conference on Disarmament "reveals considerable imprecision in the use of terms relating to arms control and outer space", adding that "The tendency to use a number of terms loosely, if not corrected, could have a significant impact on the precision of language and upon the intent of statements, resolutions and treaties". The deliberations in the Ad Hoc Committee confirm these assessments and the need to achieve greater terminological precision.

Within this context, we consider that to make progress in the consideration of this item it is essential clearly to establish its scope. We need to spell out what we understand by the "prevention of an arms race in outer space". This is an idea on which there is not a uniform view in the Conference. To some, the prevention of an arms race in outer space means the demilitarization of space; to others, it means non-militarization of space; to yet others, it means the prohibition of the use of space for military purposes; and for some others, including my delegation, it means preventing the weaponization of space. These notions are apparently similar, but when carefully analysed they reveal fundamental differences which mean that the item is given a different approach and a different content in each case.

In our view, preventing an arms race in outer space consists in preventing the beginning of competition, between the Powers that have the technological capacity to do so, in the field of space armaments. Hence, it

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

is a question of nipping in the bud the development testing, production and deployment of space weapons. The category of space weapons should include, in our view, any weapons likely to turn space into a theatre of war operations.

Secondly, the need for a definition of space weapons. The above characterization of the notion of the prevention of an arms race in outer space highlights the need to make an effort to spell out the concept of space weapons. In this respect, a first step has been taken at this session of the Conference with the various proposals for definitions submitted by several delegations, among them Venezuela, whose Working Paper CD/709 refers to this subject. We do not believe that it is absolutely essential for the moment to draw up an agreed definition of space weapons. We share, however, the view expressed in the Canadian document to the effect that "At this early stage of multilateral discussions on issues relating to arms control and outer space, it would be prudent to recognize, clarify and understand fully the nuances of these terms and expressions". We therefore believe that a shared view of space weapons, or at least a statement of their features or main elements, will considerably facilitate the work of the Conference on this item.

Thirdly, the existing legal order. The Ad Hoc Committee reviewed the existing legal order applicable to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In our view, the discussions on this aspect of item 5 have shown the following. (a) There exists a set of international, multilateral and bilateral legal instruments governing very important partial aspects of the issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in space. (b) It is necessary to consolidate and strengthen that set of instruments in order to ensure their full implementation and observance by States parties. (c) The existing international legal order suffers from certain shortcomings which should be corrected. These shortcomings stem, inter alia, from the fact that 30 years have elapsed since man began the conquest of space and 20 since the Outer Space Treaty was signed. In this lapse of time, space science and its military applications have developed at a dizzying pace. The existing legal régime therefore does not cover all issues involved now or at some future point in the task of preventing an arms race in outer space. In this connection we should also like to endorse the statement contained in the last paragraph of the Canadian document which after noting that space law relating to the prevention of an arms race in space has barely reached an elementary level, concludes by saying: "To prevent the risks to security on Earth which may be posed by the threat of arms placed in space or for use in space will require that States develop the law beyond this elementary stage". (d) It is essential to begin work as rapidly as possible to remedy the shortcomings and fill the gaps in the legal régime applicable to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. (e) That effort should be channelled towards the drawing up of an instrument or several legal instruments to prevent the extension into space of the arms race which is now taking place on the surface of the planet. (f) The most effective manner to achieve that objective would be to establish a general and complete prohibition of the development, testing, production and deployment of space weapons. In due course, the Conference will have to establish a precise delimitation between what constitutes research and what is understood by development, two notions that as we know carry particular importance and significance in the area of space weapons. (g) Whilst that general prohibition is being achieved, partial measures can be furthered to build up confidence and facilitate the task of negotiating a

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

treaty designed to prevent, in a comprehensive manner, the arms race in space. (h) The instrument or instruments that will be agreed will naturally have to provide for the necessary verification procedures and machinery to guarantee strict observance of and proper compliance with its provisions.

I should now like to refer to some ideas and views expressed during the discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space which we do not wish to pass over in silence.

During the discussions on the legal instruments relating to the item, we heard the view expressed that the existing legal order is more than adequate to take care of current and future challenges raised by arms control in outer space. According to that opinion, there is no need to negotiate new agreements in this field and what is required is greater participation in the existing treaties and greater compliance with the existing legal régime. I think that the reasoning set forth above is sufficient to demonstrate that our delegation does not share this view.

Yet another view expressed in the Committee is that the United Nations Charter and, more specifically, its Article 51, enshrining the principle of self-defence, authorizes the use of space weapons for defensive purposes. This line of reasoning combined with the broad interpretation that is attempted of a certain bilateral treaty, would seem designed to seek support in the United Nations Charter for building up a legal justification for the possession of defensive systems based on the use of space weapons.

The meaning and scope of Article 51 of the Charter are perfectly clear. Self-defence is conceived as a recourse, as a reaction to armed aggression. Self-defence is accepted as a means to repel aggression. To try and justify the development of defensive space weapons on the grounds that the Charter authorizes the use of these weapons for the purposes of self-defence is somewhat exaggerated, to say the least.

Another view expressed during the work of the Ad Hoc Committee is that as bilateral negotiations are currently proceeding between the two main space Powers, the work of the Conference should be confined to negotiating agreement on confidence-building measures in connection with existing agreements. I think that it is not superfluous to stress the idea, now generally accepted, that bilateral and multilateral negotiations are complementary and can in no way restrict, interfere with or hinder one another. As I said above, we believe that nothing prevents the Conference, at the same time as it makes progress on the substance of item 5, consisting in preventing an arms race in space weapons in all its manifestations, from also encouraging the adoption of measures likely to contribute to creating a favourable climate for the achievement of its main objectives. We do not believe, however, that the role of the Conference can be confined, as has been suggested, to dictating a space "highway code" or designing signs and signals designed to regulate traffic in space.

In conclusion, we wish to express our hope that during its 1987 session the Conference on Disarmament will without delay tackle its substantive task on agenda item 5 and at the outset re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee to carry forward work on this important issue. In this connection, it is worth

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

keeping in mind what the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Vidas, said in his statement last week when he expressed the view that the Ad Hoc Committee dealing with item 5 could continue working under the current mandate. My delegation is among those which consider that the work of the Conference on Disarmament does not depend on the mandate allocated to a subsidiary body but rather on the programme of work adopted. The Ad Hoc Committee on item 5 has very fruitful substantive work to carry out given an appropriate work programme. In our view, the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee next year should be directed at identifying the aspects where there is a need to complete the existing legal order so as to give the international community an appropriate set of rules designed to prevent an arms race in outer space and to establish a general prohibition of the development, testing, production and stationing of space weapons.

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(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

The Ad Hoc Committee on item 5 has completed its substantive work on the examination and identification of issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. All delegations have confirmed their adherence to this goal and expressed readiness to contribute to its accomplishment. Many delegations, including those of the Socialist countries, have pointed out that such a willingness should be substantiated with a view to an early solution of this problem. They have also pointed to recent developments which threaten to extend the arms race to outer space.

(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

The consideration of the legal regime regulating activities in outer space has underlined again the importance of preserving and strengthening the existing legal restraints. There are some loopholes, however, which, if not properly addressed, could lead to the introduction of a new class of weapons -- space strike weapons. The outer space agreements in force do not preclude, for instance, the development, testing and deployment of non-nuclear ASAT weapon systems, which, incidentally, are based on technologies suitable for ABM purposes as well. A number of proposals have been put forward by delegations from various groups with a view to filling up these gaps. It is our belief that all delegations will have to consider seriously these valuable proposals. References to the ongoing bilateral negotiations could not solve a problem which has important multilateral dimensions. May I, also, recall that our agreed goal is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which substantially differs from the idea of regulating such a race, as advocated by few delegations.

We have welcomed the efforts of a number of delegations to clarify the basic object of possible agreements in this area -- the concept of space weapons. Definitions of space strike weapons or space weapons, have been proposed by the delegations of Venezuela, Sri Lanka, the Soviet Union, China, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and my own country. The analysis made during the proceedings of the Ad hoc Committee has revealed the existence of a very wide area of common ground among them. All suggested formulations have many common elements and cover all basic categories of space strike weapons. This is a fact which the Conference should, perhaps, further explore in its future work on the subject. Thus the work of the Ad hoc Committee on item 5 has recently acquired some negotiating features. In such circumstances it seems that the exploratory mandate of the Committee this year, has exhausted itself and even posed some artificial restraints on the substantive work on this item. The next logical and natural step should be, therefore, to set up next year an Ad hoc Committee with a mandate which permits to start negotiations aimed, directly, at the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

The more pressing areas in which we were expected to deliver, and in regard to which not an iota of progress has been made, relate to nuclear disarmament, prevention of nuclear war, a nuclear-weapon-test ban and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Six Nation Initiative has placed particular emphasis on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As has been pointed out by my delegation in the past the question of introduction of weapons into space has far-reaching implications not only for the space powers but for all nations. The introduction of defence systems in an altogether new arena will inevitably prompt retaliatory defence measures and enhanced offence capability by the other side resulting in the emergence of multiple new systems for offensive strikes against targets in space and on Earth. Thus the extension of the arms race into outer space through the pursuit of space-based defences against strategic ballistic missiles will merely precipitate an unrestrained competition in offensive and defensive weapons on Earth and in space which would almost certainly undermine the existing complex of arms control agreements, aggravate the risk and threat of nuclear war and result in an unacceptable misuse of scientific, technological and economic resources. The shifting objectives of the proponents of strategic defence are presently related to enhancing the existing nuclear deterrent by heightening the uncertainty element in the adversary's calculations through the introduction of space-based ABM systems rather than to rendering nuclear weapons obsolete as was earlier claimed. The uncertainty element is not new and was very similarly articulated in the debate about ABMs in the sixties. The ABM Treaty of 1972 reflected the recognition that emergence of defences against nuclear-armed ballistic missiles would inevitably produce a spiralling offence-defence arms race which would be exceedingly destabilizing and afford protection to neither side. There can be no doubt, therefore, that graduation to ABM systems on an inevitably competitive and escalating scale would bring the world that much closer to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. Surely the answer would lie in negotiating agreements to eliminate nuclear weapons on Earth rather than to venture into the hazardous area of space weapons. Fortunately the space weapon systems in question have not yet been fully developed and deployed and we still have time to take firm preventive action.

Our basic concerns relate to the dedicated and planned development of two specific categories of weapon systems in space, namely, ABM and ASAT systems.

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

While the testing and deployment of the former is prohibited under the ABM Treaty there are no such prohibitions in regard to the latter. Current space technology allows for development of ABM systems through the ASAT loophole. Moreover, the ABM Treaty itself does not ban the development and testing of a limited category of ABM systems whose deployment is permitted. The advent of directed energy beams and developments related to high speed kinetic energy weapons and the assimilation of all related technologies into a single project may before long result in the development of both ABM weapons and ASAT weapons despite the existing legal restraints. A mandatory ban on ASAT weapons could contribute effectively towards the prevention of the emergence of such new weapons. Such a ban should include prohibitions on testing and deployment of ASAT weapons as well as dismantling of existing systems under appropriate verification.

We have heard arguments about the difficulties inherent in defining an ASAT weapon as a satellite can be rendered inoperational in a variety of ways. To meet this objection we would propose examination of each of these various ways and prescription of suitable measures to protect satellites from non-destructive interference with their functioning on the one hand and from dedicated ASAT weapons on the other. The major military Powers should manifest the basic political will to omit the ASAT option from their reckless global strategies. The Mexico Declaration of 7 August has called on the United States and the Soviet Union to halt the testing of such weapons in order to facilitate the conclusion of an international treaty on their prohibition. This Conference should facilitate that process and its speedy conclusion.

The Conference on Disarmament has an overriding responsibility to act to prevent the emergence of space weapons since unlike other weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear and chemical weapons these would be the first weapons to emerge since our Conference came into being. The Ad Hoc Committee dealing with this question has concluded its programme of work for this session under its seriously flawed mandate. My delegation has followed the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committee with care and interest. We admire the dedication and skill with which the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, has conducted its work during this session. We regret to note, however, that the exercise being conducted in this Conference is too severely constrained by the positions of some delegations to be of any practical utility. My delegation for instance, finds no justification for an interminable examination of existing legal instruments. The scopes of these treaties are in our view self-evident. If, however, doubts about their interpretations are being raised these can be resolved only in the process of fresh negotiations. The most important instrument in this regard is the Outer Space Treaty which had codified in the mid sixties the commitments of its States Parties to keep outer space free from dangerous weapons as identified in terms of the then prevalent technologies. While the spirit of that Treaty is clearly against the use of force against space objects in general, the Treaty is silent about the rights of the contracting parties to develop, test and produce weapons for use in future space wars. Even the limited existing restraint on the use of ASAT weapons is negated by the assertion that the Outer Space Treaty would cease to apply in the event of the outbreak of war involving space Powers. In any case, an arms race is caused by the very introduction of the weapons in question regardless of the

(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.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

However, the United States in actual fact has not been adhering to these crucial provisions, and has been putting forward various fabricated pretexts to sidestep these agreements.

It is now strenuously argued that the Strategic Defence Initiative programme is allegedly purely defensive and does not threaten anyone, that it is almost the only way to eliminate nuclear weapons and to strengthen stability, that the offensive devices which are being developed are merely harmless, and that the SDI is just a research programme.

That argument, however sophisticated, cannot mislead anyone. In connection with this, legitimate questions are raised over and over again. For instance, if the SDI is a way to eliminate nuclear weapons, then why does the United States continue increasingly to create new types of strategic offensive weapons, to develop thousands of cruise missiles, and to deploy medium-range missiles in Europe?

If the SDI is a way to stability, why do the leaders of the United States declare that it would be terrible if the Soviet Union were the first to create an anti-missile shield?

If the SDI is mere research, then can one imagine that the United States, having spent tens of billions of dollars in the coming years, will then give up their idea simply because "the Russians will not agree to its development"?

We sometimes hear United States representatives declare that the USSR effort in the field of defence technology is much bigger than the American one and the American research is designed to establish parity with the advances made by the USSR. Were we to believe this, would it not be more advantageous and less difficult from every standpoint for the United States Administration to agree with the USSR proposals to prohibit research and to open up on a mutual basis the relevant laboratories and other institutions dealing with military research in order to verify that they are not developing offensive space weapons?

We believe that this would be the simplest, most expeditious and most effective means to solve the problem of safeguarding outer space from weapons. Moreover, we believe that one of the effective avenues leading to the prevention of an arms race in outer space is the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

When there are no nuclear explosions, the basis will also disappear for the improvement of nuclear weaponry and the creation of new types and varieties of such weapons, including X-ray lasers for deployment in outer space. At the same time there will be a qualitative reduction of nuclear charges as a result of their obsolescence and, in future, a progressive disappearance of nuclear weapons. As a result, the expensive strategic delivery systems for nuclear charges designed to span inter-continental distances would simply become unprofitable, and their use would provide no strategic advantage.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

On the basis of these considerations, we believe that in the event that nuclear-weapon tests are prohibited and given the ensuing obsolescence of nuclear weapons, the need to create an anti-missile shield which is basically conceived as a means of interception and elimination in just a few minutes of a large part of the nuclear-warhead-carrying rockets launched in a retaliatory strike, would disappear of its own accord. Hence, if we are talking about a means of making nuclear weapons "useless and obsolete", then the international community would vastly prefer just such a nuclear-test ban rather than the creation of a space anti-missile "shield".

This is shown by the well-known resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the voice of the international community, especially loud and clear at a time when 41 years ago the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki became the victims of the use of nuclear weapons. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that they were the very last victims of atomic bombing.

The unilateral Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions is now one year old. For a whole year the world's eyes have been turned to the United States and the other nuclear Powers in the hope and expectation that they will all seize the unique, historic chance provided by the USSR and make this moratorium mutual. In turn, the representatives of the five continents meeting recently in Mexico also made an appeal to this end; but unfortunately these hopes have so far not been justified.

As space strike weapons, as I said before, are designed to neutralize the adversary's nuclear capability, to eliminate facilities and installations vital for his survival, in other words, to create the conditions for a nuclear attack or nuclear first strike, unless they are banned it is impossible to reduce strategic offensive weapons.

This is particularly true when the United States is in fact abandoning the comprehensive consideration of issues pertaining to nuclear and space weapons, i.e. the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its cessation on Earth as agreed with the USSR in January 1985 and confirmed at the Summit Meeting in November of the same year, and is now attempting to impose a reduction and limitation of strategic missiles alone (in other words precisely those armaments which form the basis of Soviet strategic retaliatory forces) and to sheer off from a solution to the outer space problem.

All this is evidence that the SDI is part of the United States overall military plan based on offensive strategy. Basically, the Star Wars plans are designed to revise Soviet-American relations in the field of strategic stability, which is in fact based on mutual deterrence. Hence the conclusion must be drawn that the SDI is the main hurdle to the limitation and balanced reduction of nuclear armaments until their complete elimination.

Mankind is called upon to unite its intellectual, material, energy and other resources and together undertake the peaceful exploration of outer space. To achieve this noble task, a stage-by-stage programme for outer space exploration was proposed by the USSR in June this year. The very heart of this proposal is, in our view, the creation in the next few years of a world

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

space organization whose main task would be the peaceful exploration and use of outer space through the joint efforts and for the benefit of all States without exception, and the monitoring of compliance with treaties aimed at preventing the arms race from spreading to outer space as they are concluded.

Thus, this programme represents the only viable alternative to an arms race in space and there is no doubt whatsoever that all States, large and small, developed and developing, only stand to gain from it. The member States of the Conference on Disarmament can and indeed must make a substantial contribution to the serious consideration of this important initiative at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly, if only for the simple reason that the Conference bears the main responsibility for drawing up measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

In the course of the 1985 and 1986 sessions the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space has done a good deal of work to study and define issues connected with the prevention of an arms race in outer space. On some important issues concrete proposals were advanced and working papers were submitted which deserve serious and thorough consideration in future.

At previous plenary meetings and at today's meeting a number of delegations, including the delegations of the Soviet Union, Venezuela, Bulgaria, India and others, have given their assessment of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. The Mongolian delegation on the whole shares these assessments and, not wishing to repeat them, simply wishes to point out that the discussion held in the Ad Hoc Committee provides even more striking confirmation of the need to undertake negotiations on the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as necessary, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

(Mr. Velayati, Islamic Republic of Iran)

A crucial point which has generated numerous debates and arguments is the recent initiatives to intensify the arms race in outer space. While backing and supporting the international measures and the attention paid by the members of this Conference to prevent such an adventurist move, we believe that there is a need for a more comprehensive and encompassing action. Outer space is the "common heritage of mankind" and should be used in a peaceful manner for all nations and not merely the developed ones. It has unfortunately turned into a militarized zone by a few countries, and both super-Powers, along with the countries having the technology, have saturated space with military and spy satellites. More than 90 per cent of satellites today have military purposes. The notion that the world military Powers have to acquire constant information in order to maintain mutual confidence in East-West military relations might be a justification for the presence of spy satellites, but the sphere of action of these satellites is not confined to the two blocks -- rather it brings all countries under their intelligence reconnaissance. This puts the countries independent from the two blocs in a difficult situation and removes their intelligence security, particularly as such information will be totally at the disposal of the owners of satellites and may in turn be used for political blackmail against other countries. At the moment, the Iraqi régime is benefitting from data provided by American satellites during the war of aggression launched against Iran by Iraq. This matter, which is well known, is in fact a complicity in the war while no international measure has been adopted to counter such an intervention.

This matter is noteworthy in other aspects too. The satellite can now take and process pictures as small as a few square centimetres, thanks to the progress and advancement of technology. This possibility which is at the unique disposal of a few countries, without any limitation or control, is a flagrant violation of the rights of nations to privacy. No military or civilian object is immune from the satellites' view and this is an important subject for human rights. Although the United Nations reports found the formation of an "International Satellite Monitoring Agency" difficult at the present juncture, attaining this goal is a must, and talks on this issue and studying practical and possible ways are necessary. The exact registration of satellites and their purposes is a step to this end. We believe that the arrest of the arms race in outer space is indispensable, regardless of developments on Earth. The nations can not wait for the super-Powers to reach an agreement on Earth and then talk about space -- which will be completely and irreversibly contaminated by that time. The countries having space technology should, while abiding by the existing "Outer Space Treaty" refrain from tests and the deployment of destructive weapons in space, and whatever is contrary to the peaceful use of space in the framework of a convention. The right to the peaceful use of outer space should be provided to all nations.

In addition, an initiative to annihilate the military satellites would have a destructive effect on telecommunication and non-military ones. Safeguarding the world system of telecommunications, including the satellites and ground stations, is an international obligation and any threat to it should be prevented. Apart from the disrespect shown by the Iraqi régime for all international values in repeatedly attacking our ground stations, other countries are fully aware of the significance attached to this point.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

On Wednesday the sixth and Thursday the seventh of August, six statesmen from Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe, who have repeatedly and tangibly demonstrated their profound interest in contributing to disarmament and peace, met in Ixtapa, Mexico. They were Raúl Alfonsín, President of Argentina; Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, President of Mexico; Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India; Andreas Papandreou, Prime Minister of Greece; Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of Sweden; and Julius Nyerere, who was the First President of Tanzania.

The Conference they attended was a continuation of a process started with the Declaration of 22 May 1984 (contained in document CD/502) and continued with the New Delhi Declaration of 28 January 1985 (document CD/549) and with three joint messages of 24 October 1985 (to be found in document A/40/825), 28 February 1986 (document CD/676) and 8 April 1986.

At that meeting, which I had the privilege to attend, two fundamental documents were adopted, both signed on 7 August 1986. One is a Declaration bearing the title "Mexico Declaration", and the other is the "Document on verification measures issued at the Summit Meeting at Mexico".

The authors of the Declaration also recall that in October 1985 and February and April 1986, they urged the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union "to undertake a fully verifiable suspension of nuclear testing, at least until their next summit meeting", repeating that "the unilateral moratorium by one of the two major nuclear States" should become "at least a bilateral moratorium". It then proposes that a suspension of this kind, for whose verification the Six offer their unconditional co-operation, should be "immediately followed by negotiations for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty". The Declaration also refers to the main measures that the assistance offered would comprise, a subject that I will not refer to at present to avoid repeating myself, since I will be looking at this later when I get on to the second document I mentioned.

The other aim emphasized by the six signatories of the Declaration is the same as the one that appeared in January 1985 in the Declaration of New Delhi, on which we can read inter alia in the Mexico Declaration:

"We reiterate our demand that an arms race in space should be prevented. Space belongs to humanity, and as participants in this common heritage of mankind, we object to the outer space of our Earth being misused for destructive purposes. It is particularly urgent to halt the development of anti-satellite weapons, which would threaten the peaceful space activities of many nations. We urge the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union to agree on a halt to further tests of anti-satellite weapons, in order to facilitate the conclusion of an international treaty on their prohibition. Our New Delhi warning that the development of space weaponry would endanger a number of agreements on arms limitation and disarmament is already proving to be justified. We stress that the existing treaties safeguarding the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, be fully honoured, strengthened and extended as necessary in the light of more recent technological advances."

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

Outer space is already very much in use, such as for meteorological observation, commercial and other communications, or geological and geophysical observations as represented by activities of the Earth resources satellites. At the same time there is no question that outer space represents the most sophisticated and advanced technologies of our time. Also, the distinction between peaceful uses, military uses, and offensive and defensive systems has traditionally been one of the most challenging and conceptually complicated.

In spite of a considerable degree of complications, technical, legal and financial, we nevertheless feel that outer space has to be jointly and multilaterally administered, based upon a widely accepted legal and technical régime. Mankind's contact with outer space has been so far very limited, while the number of countries with direct access to various Earth orbits has not been large. We suspect, however, that with the expansion of such contact, extensive and complicated work will be required, and if that is the case, we should begin now, and begin with the examination of the broad framework of possible agreements as to what kind of order we would like to see in outer space from the viewpoint of effective prevention of an arms race. In this sense, although disarmament may be our primary concern, we do not need to limit ourselves to the immediate subjects such as ballistic missile defence or anti-satellite weapons. To do so hastily will confuse the issue. In my understanding, many BMDs are technically capable of ASAT functions, while most ICBMs may be BMDs.

CD/PV.381

19-20

(Mr. Kerroum, Algeria)

The disappointment and frustration are the same as regards outer space. Rather than the possibility of preventing the development of the arms race in outer space while there is still time, the preference seems to be to consider no more than controlling that race.

Despite the numerous commendable efforts that have been and still are being made, this stalemate and this tendency to move backwards cannot, logically, lead to substantive results as regards either the prevention of nuclear war or a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

In politics, the art of the possible, realism is undeniably a fruitful virtue. Now, it may seem more realistic, in a world which is more and more governed by the law of relative might, to focus our energies on controlling the arms race, but that same realism should lead to the realization that sooner or later, with the constant improvement of more and more sophisticated and destructive weapons and the unceasing growth of mistrust, the arms race will inevitably become uncontrollable. That realism ultimately accepts the assertion -- unacceptable because what is at stake is the survival of mankind -- that war, even nuclear war, is a biological necessity. At all events, it contradicts what was said in the joint statement issued after the Reagan-Gorbachev summit to the effect that a "nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought".

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, People's Republic of China)

Though the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space was relatively late this year, it is a positive result of the current session. Under the able guidance of Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, this Ad Hoc Committee has engaged in extensive and in-depth discussions on issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Delegations have further examined the existing international legal instruments on outer space, held preliminary discussions on the definition of space weapons and put forth various proposals and programmes on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

It is clear from these deliberations that the existing international legal instruments, notwithstanding certain positive significance, all have their limitations and are thus inadequate for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is therefore necessary to conclude new international legal instruments. More and more delegations agree that at the present stage the Conference should proceed to negotiations with the emphasis on prohibiting all space weapons. Many delegations proposed to start with the prohibition of ASAT weapons. Such a proposal, in our view, merits consideration. In so much as the importance and urgency of the prevention of an arms race in outer space have already been widely recognized, we are of the view that at the beginning of the next session the Conference should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space at an earlier date, so as to enable it to address substantive issues as soon as possible.

CD/PV.382

7-8

(Mr. Ruth, Federal Republic of Germany)

In discussing Conference on Disarmament matters, I have concentrated on the topics of chemical weapons and nuclear testing. At the same time we attach great importance to the discussion of other topics, such as the prevention of war and outer space, as shown by our contributions here and in New York.

(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.

CD/PV.382

17 & 19

(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."

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

On behalf of the Group of Western countries, I would like to address some concluding remarks on the work which has been done this year on item 5 of our agenda, that is, the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is an objective to which Western countries are deeply committed. We are also of the view that it is a subject on which the Conference on Disarmament can play an important role.

In our view the Ad Hoc Committee on this item has achieved some useful work in this session. In this context we would like to congratulate Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia for the calm and efficient way in which he has guided this Committee in implementing its programme of work. Despite the regrettable delay in getting down to work, we were able to gather information which can assist our future endeavours. While some aspects of this topic have been usefully clarified, it is, however, apparent that in view of the limited time which has been available much still remains to be done.

One of the more helpful features of the Ad Hoc Committee this year has been the discussion and elucidation of the existing legal régime in relation to arms control and outer space. We have studied many of the important agreements in this area, which already play a wide-ranging role in the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Any further initiatives in this area should clearly build on these existing provisions and not duplicate them. We would also stress the importance of strict compliance with the existing legal régime and the importance of wider participation in it.

The Ad Hoc Committee has also given us the opportunity to examine some of the activities which are currently being carried on in outer space. It is clear that the use of outer space for military purposes has occurred since the start of the space age. Activities such as the use of satellites to monitor compliance with existing arms control agreements and the use of communications satellites have a stabilizing function and thereby contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is also apparent that to refer to outer space as a zone which is immune from use by certain active military systems is inaccurate. Apart from the fact that ballistic missiles are programmed to travel through space on the way to their targets, it is apparent that one country already has an existing and deployed ASAT system.

The Committee is clearly in need of more technical and other information. We would in particular call upon the Soviet Union to display the same degree of openness and transparency in regard to its activities in outer space as that which is already shown by other countries.

Apart from the study of technical matters to which I have referred there are several other areas which merit continuing and intensified consideration.

The contribution on terminology which your delegation has made, Mr. President, in Working Paper CD/OS/WP.15, is most pertinent and could help us in our future work.

It has in fact been apparent that much of the terminology used in this area is unclear, especially in relation to some of the new language being used. Terms such as "weaponization" and "militarization" are frequently used but often without clear or precise definition.

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

Moreover, the important issue of verification has not yet received the attention which it deserves. We would note the contribution on this subject made by the United Kingdom in the Committee on 29 July. Verification is at the heart of any arms control measure: an undertaking which cannot be adequately verified can have a negative and destabilizing influence. In the context of outer space there are clearly particular difficulties such as detecting, identifying and tracking in the vastness of space itself; the possibility of concealment of existing weapon systems on Earth; and the limitations of existing verification technology.

We were disappointed that the discussion of proposals in this year's Ad Hoc Committee tended to concentrate on some of the less realistic and less constructive ideas which have been put forward. The attempt by some countries to press their ideas on so-called "space strike weapons" seems to us to be particularly unhelpful, first because the particular term chosen is an emotive one; secondly because it is selective in the systems which it seeks to ban; and thirdly because it seems designed to put pressure on one party to the bilateral negotiations at present being conducted.

We are convinced that those bilateral negotiations have a very important role to play in the prevention of an arms race in outer space and we would emphasize that the work carried out in this Conference should be complementary rather than prejudicial to the outcome of those bilateral negotiations. We would also note that the bilateral negotiations are tackling the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the context of overall strategic stability and disarmament. This is certainly a reason why the call for immediate negotiations on a particular subject like "space strike weapons" seems to us not to represent a practical way of proceeding.

While much time was spent on the discussion of these ideas, other proposals received less attention. We hope that next year the Committee will be able more thoroughly and systematically to carry out its mandate.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to emphasize that, although useful work was done this year, the time at our disposal was severely limited. There is still a great deal to be accomplished within the framework of the existing mandate. In this respect we welcome the indications in plenary statements by some delegations that they could continue work on this basis. We intend therefore to encourage this Conference to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee under the present mandate at the earliest possible opportunity in the 1987 session so that this important and substantive work can be pursued.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

At this final stage in our work, I should like to take the floor briefly to present to the Conference the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It was my honour to preside over this body during the present session. The report is to be found in document CD/726.

The Ad Hoc Committee, having been re-established by a decision of the Conference taken on the day that the first part of its session ended, namely 24 April 1986, started its work the following day and, during the second part of the session, following an initial exchange of views, adopted on 24 June 1986 a work programme comprising the following points:

- "(1) Examination and identification of issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- (2) Existing agreements relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- (3) Existing proposals and future initiatives on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In carrying out its task, the Ad Hoc Committee will take into account developments which have taken place since the establishment of the Committee in 1985."

To allow these subjects to be dealt with in a balanced fashion the Committee decided to allocate an equal number of meetings for each one. The Committee therefore held nine meetings to consider these three subjects and a final summing-up meeting.

Part III of the report reviews the various positions taken on these subjects. Although it does not give similar views concerning the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee, part IV of the report, entitled "Conclusion", indicates that a consensus was reached within the Committee recognizing the significant role of the legal régime applicable to outer space, the importance of paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to Disarmament, recognition of the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in space and the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee is ready to work to attain this objective. Lastly, the Committee decided that no effort should be spared in continuing to do substantive work on item 5 of the agenda, and to this effect recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee be re-established with an adequate mandate at the beginning of the 1987 session.

I hope that the Committee's endeavours have laid the foundations for the work of its future sessions, enabling it to fulfil faithfully the objective that has been set and the well-known recommendations by the General Assembly of the United Nations, contained more particularly in resolution 40/87, adopted at its fortieth session.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

With regard to outer space, I will confine myself to one brief point. The subject has been tackled repeatedly in our plenary meetings, but also last year and this year in the Ad hoc Committee, in which we have this session conveyed our thoughts on the legal aspects of the problem and tried to determine the headway made in the existing legal régime, as well as its shortcomings, and it seems to us that it would be opportune to go deeper into the legal aspects of the limitation of the military use of space. More generally, and as you know, France has on a number of occasions over the past 10 years made various proposals on this matter and we hope that, in due course, the seed thus sown will germinate and bear fruit.

I should also like in connection with this work on outer space to make a remark in passing, a more pragmatic remark. The Ad hoc Committee, as stated at the beginning of this meeting, held some 10 meetings this year. Nine were held last year, but this year had much more time, something that brings us face to face with the budgetary restrictions we have had to bow to. I think this should give us some thought for the future.

CD/PV.383

19 & 22

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet Union, consistently working for a radical solution to the problem of preventing an arms race in space, which is essential if we wish to remove the danger of nuclear war, has expressed its readiness to elaborate and conclude a multilateral agreement to ensure the immunity of artificial Earth satellites and to ban anti-satellite systems as a partial measure. In this instance again our proposals have been supported by unilateral steps. A unilateral Soviet moratorium on anti-satellite weapons has been in force for more than three years.

Although the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space was not provided with a negotiating mandate, who could deny that within the framework of that Committee negotiations have in fact started, whether the opponents of these negotiations like it or not? About a dozen States submitted definitions of the term "space strike weapons" and expressed their opinion of the legal aspects of a future agreement for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Specific proposals submitted by delegations will undoubtedly be used in future work on this important area of disarmament talks.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

As to the subject of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the delegation of Peru shares the favourable view of other delegations about the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee, despite the limitations of its mandate and the little time made available to it to work out valuable although preliminary conceptual approaches.

On the assumption that a consensus does exist to avoid extending of the arms race to outer space, there is no doubt about the priority in time of maintaining the agreement on anti-ballistic weapons and of concluding other complementary agreements which can be linked, among other matters, to anti-satellite weapons and the specific protection of non-military satellites.

Another indispensable step is to clarify accurately the nature and scope of existing agreements on the use of space and celestial bodies for peaceful purposes, with a view, inter alia, to determining exactly to what extent military activities in space may be compatible with such peaceful use.

As rightly stated by the distinguished delegation of Canada, those agreements, and especially the one of 1967, are open to two dissimilar interpretations, one broad, and the other restrictive, of what is to be understood by uses for peaceful purposes, or even more, by exclusively peaceful purposes.

The delegation of Peru is not only in favour of the first of the aforementioned interpretations. It is convinced of the need for a future legal régime in space to be conditioned by the norms contained in the instruments mentioned, and thus thinks that the régime should be viewed with the same comprehensive breadth as in the case of the negotiations on the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In other words, it is desirable to have a broad vision that will enable all of the international community to participate in the benefits of the use of space for peaceful purposes, on the understanding that such use for peaceful purposes will not continue to be for the major Powers an entelechy that is difficult to define and which in practice is used only in keeping with their interests, which moreover are dangerously self-contradictory in themselves.

Hence it is necessary to give proper substance to these peaceful activities in space, for from that substance it will be possible to infer the requisite strict limitation of military activities in this domain. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how the concept of space as the common heritage of mankind can be applied. Naturally, all this would entail international consultation and agreement that would be beyond the competence of this forum and would be of the scope favoured, at this session by, among other delegations, the delegation of Peru.

(Mr. Meizster, Hungary)

At the present time item 5 on the agenda of the Conference, "prevention of an arms race in outer space", is becoming increasingly urgent. The United States is pressing on with the creation and production of space strike weapons, hoping, with the help of the so-called "Star Wars" programme, to achieve strategic superiority. The socialist countries' response to this policy is their programme of "Star Peace".

We resolutely call for the Disarmament Conference, which has an Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, to start specific negotiations on this subject. The proposals made by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries on banning space strike weapons and, as a first step, drafting and concluding an international agreement on ensuring the immunity of artificial Earth satellites and on banning the development, testing and deployment of anti-satellite systems, as well as eliminating those systems that already exist, create a solid basis for a satisfactory solution of this problem too.

CD/PV.384

4 - 5

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

As to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we consider that the work this year of the Ad Hoc Committee and of the Conference in general have revealed yet again, and in a most convincing way, the political, legal, security, and also practical, reasons for reconfirming the urgent need to assign the Ad Hoc Committee in the future with a specific mandate for effective negotiations to elaborate one or more international legal instruments designed to prevent an arms race in space, in terms of all those aspects.

CD/PV.384

8

(The President)

I will not take your time to outline in any detail what we may have achieved in this session of the Conference, as you are well aware of what has been accomplished -- our hopes, our expectations, our failures, our successes.

Assessments of the results differ in any event, if they fell short of our hopes, and even our expectations, none the less there is a widespread view that there were some positive and substantive developments which can be noted. There was also less antagonism, the atmosphere was healthier, and, as a consequence perhaps, there was more business-like work, more in-depth discussions, and greater clarification of basic arms control issues, even on such questions as outer space and a nuclear test ban. There are positive signs even on these last two issues, although not, I am sure, as much as we would all wish.

