REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA
OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE: DECLARATION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 22 September 1981 from the Minister for
Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics addressed to the Secretary-General

The Soviet Union proposes the inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-sixth
session of the United Nations General Assembly of an important and urgent item
entitled "Prevention of nuclear catastrophe: declaration of the General Assembly".

The present alarming development of events in the world makes it urgent to
take immediate measures with a view to preventing a nuclear war which would have
catastrophic consequences for mankind.

Through the fault of the States which have embarked on a course of undermining
détente and set the objective of ensuring for themselves a position of military
supremacy, the arms race is becoming ever more dangerous. Swift and radical
changes in military technology are leading to the emergence of ever newer types
of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Control over new types
of weapons and, consequently, their agreed limitation may become in the course of
time an extremely difficult if not an impossible task.

The intensification of the arms race is accompanied by the emergence of all
sorts of doctrines proclaiming the "admissibility" and "acceptability" of a nuclear
war. Influential forces are whipping up military hysteria and fomenting hostility
and hatred against other States and peoples.

Activities of the same forces have resulted in the suspension of negotiations
on major areas of arms limitation, especially the limitation of strategic arms.

The supreme duty of the United Nations is not to permit the irreparable to
happen. The Soviet Union proposes that to this end the United Nations should
authoritatively and resolutely declare the first use of nuclear weapons to be
the gravest crime against humanity. Concurrently, it is proposed that all doctrines allowing such use of nuclear weapons should be condemned as contrary to human moral standards and the lofty ideals of the United Nations, and that the leaders of nuclear-weapon States should be called upon to act in such a way as to eliminate the risk of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict.

The Soviet Union is submitting an appropriate draft declaration for consideration by the General Assembly. We believe that its adoption is the minimum action the United Nations should urgently take in order to exert a restraining influence on the dangerous development of world events.

I request you, Sir, to regard this letter as the explanatory memorandum required under rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to have it circulated, together with the attached draft declaration, as an official document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) A. GROMYKO
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE

Declaration of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that the foremost task of the United Nations, born in the
flames of the Second World War, has been, is and will be to save the present and
succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

Recognizing that all the horrors of past wars and all other calamities that
have befallen people would pale in comparison with what is inherent in the use
of nuclear weapons capable of destroying civilization on earth.

ON BEHALF OF THE STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SOLEMNLY PROCLAIMS:

1. States and statesmen that resort first to the use of nuclear weapons will
   be committing the gravest crime against humanity;

2. There will never by any justification or pardon for statesmen who would
   take the decision to be the first to use nuclear weapons;

3. Any doctrines allowing the first use of nuclear weapons and any actions
   pushing the world towards a catastrophe are incompatible with human moral standards
   and the lofty ideals of the United Nations;

4. It is the supreme duty and direct obligation of the leaders of nuclear-
   weapon States to act in such a way as to eliminate the risk of the outbreak of a
   nuclear conflict. The nuclear arms race must be stopped and reversed by joint
   effort, through negotiations conducted in good faith and on the basis of equality;

5. Nuclear energy should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and only
   for the benefit of mankind.