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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A NEW ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

INTENSIFICATION OF EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR
AND ENSURE THE SAFE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

Letter dated 1 October 1982 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-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly of an important and urgent item entitled "Intensification of efforts to remove the threat of nuclear war and ensure the safe development of nuclear energy".

The practical need for raising this question stems from the irreversible process of the rapid development of nuclear energy, which, as the non-renewable reserves of organic fuel on earth are being depleted, makes it possible to meet mankind's increasing needs in the fields of power supply, industry, agriculture and scientific research. This is evidenced by all the data of contemporary science. The further development of nuclear energy is needed for the sake of progress in human civilization, and it will inevitably take place at a rapid rate and on an ever-growing scale. Accordingly, there will be an increase in the sophistication and the number of nuclear installations such as atomic power stations, research reactors, nuclear-fuel production and reprocessing plants and facilities for storing fissionable materials.

Investigations show that the destruction of such installations would result in the release of radioactive substances and the radioactive contamination of large areas. Thus, for example, according to the calculations of specialists, the radioactive contamination caused by the destruction of one atomic power station with a power of 1 million kilowatts would be comparable to that resulting from the explosion of a 1-megaton nuclear bomb in the short run and would be dozens of times as great over a period of a year or more.

Therefore the destruction of peaceful nuclear installations even by means of conventional weapons would in fact have consequences equivalent to those of an attack with nuclear weapons, that is to say, of actions which the United Nations has already described as the gravest crime against humanity.

Destruction of peaceful nuclear installations by means of nuclear weapons would have totally disastrous consequences on a global scale.

The need for ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy is therefore organically linked to the problem of preventing the unleashing of nuclear war. And this, in turn, makes it even more urgent to intensify efforts to remove the very possibility of the outbreak of such a war - in other words, to reduce and ultimately to eliminate nuclear weapons.

As the first and most easily realizable step in this direction, in the opinion of the Soviet Union, all nuclear States should simultaneously suspend (freeze) the production and development of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, and also the production of fissionable materials for the manufacture of various types of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the cessation of the nuclear arms race, combined with the ensuring of the safe development of nuclear energy, would provide additional incentives for the further development of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of the atom.

I should be grateful, Sir, if you would regard this letter as an explanatory memorandum in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and have it circulated, together with the annexed draft resolution, as an official document of the General Assembly.

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

Annex

INTENSIFICATION OF EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR
AND ENSURE THE SAFE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

(draft resolution)

The General Assembly,

Noting that the increasingly widespread use of nuclear energy is an objective necessity for meeting the growing needs of mankind in various fields of activity as other, non-renewable energy sources are being depleted,

Taking into consideration the fact that the irreversible process of the development of nuclear energy involves the establishment of a large number of peaceful nuclear installations with a high concentration of radioactive materials,

Bearing in mind that the destruction of such installations would bring on a considerable release of radioactive nuclear materials even if conventional weapons were used, and if nuclear weapons were used, it would have totally disastrous consequences on a global scale,

Expressing its concern at the fact that under such circumstances the unleashing of nuclear war would be all the more dangerous,

Reaffirming the will of the States Members of the United Nations, as expressed in the Declaration on the Prevention of Nuclear Catastrophe,

1. Calls upon all States to intensify their efforts to remove the threat of nuclear war and ensure the safe development of nuclear energy;
2. Declares that the deliberate destruction of peaceful nuclear installations even by means of conventional weapons is essentially equivalent to an attack using nuclear weapons, that is to say, to actions of a kind which the United Nations has already described as the gravest crime against humanity;
3. Notes that the limitation and reduction of the nuclear arms race will produce more favourable conditions for the development of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of the energy of the atom;
4. Calls upon all nuclear-weapon States, as a first step towards the reduction and ultimate elimination of their nuclear arsenals, to agree on a simultaneous suspension (freezing) of the production and development of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, and also of the production of fissionable materials for the purposes of manufacturing various types of nuclear weapons.
