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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE
AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

CONCLUSION OF A TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE STATIONING
OF WEAPONS OF ANY KIND IN OUTER SPACE

Letter dated 10 August 1981 from the Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
addressed to the Secretary-General

The Soviet Union requests the inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space".

In 1982, mankind will observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the conquest of space, which is one of the greatest achievements of science and technology in the twentieth century. The use of outer space is already producing considerable benefit to mankind today in such areas as communications, study of the earth's natural resources, meteorology, navigation, and many other areas. It may be said that people are beginning to make space "habitable".

At the very beginning of the space age, as early as 1958, the Soviet Union made a proposal in the United Nations envisaging the banning of the use of outer space for military purposes. Over all the years which followed, it invariably stated and continues to state that space should be a sphere of exclusively peaceful co-operation. And it is gratifying to note that much has been done in this regard.

1963 saw the conclusion of the international Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, provides for the use of the moon and other celestial bodies exclusively for peaceful purposes and also prohibits the placing in orbit around the earth or stationing in outer space in any other manner any objects carrying nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. The 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Bodies develops and spells out the obligations of States to ensure the exclusively peaceful use of the moon and other celestial bodies within the solar system.

However, all these international instruments do not exclude the possibility of the stationing in outer space of those kinds of weapons which are not covered by the definition of weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, the danger of the militarization of outer space still exists and has recently been increasing.

The Soviet Union considers that this is inadmissible. It believes that outer space should always remain unsullied and free from any weapons and should not become a new arena for the arms race or a source of aggravating relations between States. In the opinion of the Soviet Union, the attainment of these goals would be promoted by the conclusion of an international treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space.

The draft treaty on this subject proposed by us is enclosed with this letter.

I should be grateful if you would consider this letter as an explanatory memorandum in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and circulate it and the draft treaty as official documents of the General Assembly.

(Signed) A. GROMYKO
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

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Annex

Draft treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons
of any kind in outer space

The States Parties to this treaty,

Guided by the goals of strengthening peace and international security,

Proceeding on the basis of their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations,

Desiring not to allow outer space to become an arena for the arms race and a source of aggravating relations between States,

Have agreed on the following:

ARTICLE 1

1. States Parties undertake not to place in orbit around the earth objects carrying weapons of any kind, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner, including on reusable manned space vehicles of an existing type or of other types which States Parties may develop in the future.

2. Each State Party to this treaty undertakes not to assist, encourage or induce any State, group of States or international organization to engage in activities contrary to the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article.

ARTICLE 2

States Parties shall use space objects in strict accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and mutual understanding.

ARTICLE 3

Each State Party undertakes not to destroy, damage, disturb the normal functioning or change the flight trajectory of space objects of other States Parties, if such objects were placed in orbit in strict accordance with article 1, paragraph 1, of this treaty.

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ARTICLE 4

1. For the purpose of providing assurance of compliance with the provisions of this treaty, each State Party shall use the national technical means of verification at its disposal in a manner consistent with generally recognized principles of international law.

2. Each State Party undertakes not to interfere with the national technical means of verification of other States Parties operating in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.

3. In order to promote the objectives and provisions of this treaty, the States Parties shall, when necessary, consult each other, make inquiries and provide information in connexion with such inquiries.

ARTICLE 5

1. Any State Party to this treaty may propose amendments to this treaty. The text of any proposed amendment shall be submitted to the depositary, who shall promptly circulate it to all States Parties.

2. The amendment shall enter into force for each State Party to this Treaty which has accepted it, upon the deposit with the depositary of instruments of acceptance by the majority of States Parties. Thereafter, the amendment shall enter into force for each remaining State Party on the date of deposit of its instrument of acceptance.

ARTICLE 6

This treaty shall be of unlimited duration.

ARTICLE 7

Each State Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from this treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject-matter of this treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests. It shall give notice to the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the decision adopted six months before withdrawing from the treaty. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events which the notifying State Party regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests.

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ARTICLE 8

1. This treaty shall be open to all States for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Any State which does not sign this treaty before its entry into force in accordance with paragraph 3 of this article may accede to it at any time.

2. This treaty shall be subject to ratification by signatory States. Instruments of ratification accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. This treaty shall enter into force between the States which have deposited instruments of ratification upon the deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the fifth instrument of ratification.

4. For States whose instruments of ratification or accession are deposited after the entry into force of this treaty, it shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of their instruments of ratification or accession.

5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall promptly inform all signatory and acceding States of the date of each signature, the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification and accession, the date of entry into force of this treaty as well as other notices.

ARTICLE 9

This treaty, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall send duly certified copies thereof to the Governments of the signatory and acceding States.
