



HISTORICAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

CHAIRS

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Letter from the Chair

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my distinct honor to welcome you to the Historical General Assembly at HKMUN 2026. My name is Pablo Alejandro Rodríguez Alcaraz, and I will be serving as your Chair for this committee.

You are entering one of the most volatile and transformative moments in modern history. It is December 1991, and the Soviet Union is collapsing. A nuclear superpower is dissolving into fifteen independent states, leaving behind unresolved questions of sovereignty, security, and international order. As outlined in this guide, the decisions made during this moment will shape not only the fate of these emerging states, but also the structure of the global system moving forward .

This committee is not a traditional debate—it is a crisis. Events will evolve rapidly, alliances will shift, and uncertainty will define your experience. Success here will not come from memorized facts alone, but from your ability to think like the leaders you represent, adapt under pressure, and make decisions with limited information.

At the core of this committee lies a fundamental dilemma: how can the international community manage the dissolution of a nuclear superpower without triggering instability, conflict, or proliferation? You must balance self-determination with stability, legal principles with political realities, and national interests with global responsibility.

I strongly encourage you to immerse yourselves fully in your roles. Understand your country's priorities, but also recognize the importance of negotiation and compromise. The most effective delegates are those who not only defend their positions, but who can build coalitions and drive solutions forward.

Above all, remember that this is a space to challenge yourselves. Take initiative, think creatively, and engage deeply with the crisis. The outcome of this committee will depend entirely on your decisions.

I look forward to seeing the direction you take.

Kind regards,
Pablo Alejandro Rodríguez Alcaraz
Chair, Historical General Assembly
HKMUN 2026



Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear delegates,

It is a true pleasure to welcome you to this Historical General Assembly. Our names are Maya and Layla, and we are honored to serve as your co-chairs for this committee. Model United Nations has been a meaningful part of our growth, not only as students, but as individuals. Through our experiences, we have learned how to think critically, communicate effectively, and navigate complex situations. But most importantly, we have learned that leadership is not about acting alone, it is about listening, collaborating, and building solutions together.

Throughout our time in MUN, we have seen delegates demonstrate incredible knowledge, strong arguments, and powerful speeches. However, one of the most important aspects of this environment is often overlooked: perspective. In a historical committee, success is not only about understanding what happened, but about questioning it. The best delegates are those who fully immerse themselves in their roles, who think like the leaders they represent, and who are willing to explore how history could have taken a different path.

Now, regarding the topic, you are stepping into one of the most critical turning points in modern history. The year is 1991, and the Soviet Union, once one of the most powerful nations in the world, is on the verge of collapse. What was once a symbol of strength and global influence is now facing internal division, economic crisis, and political instability. The decisions made in this moment will not only determine the future of a single country, but the direction of the entire international system.

This committee will place you in a fast-changing and uncertain environment. As a crisis-based simulation, events will evolve rapidly, and you will be required to adapt, negotiate, and make decisions under pressure. Alliances may shift, tensions may rise, and outcomes that seem unlikely may quickly become reality. You will not simply be observing history, you will be shaping it.

As your chairs, our goal is to create an environment where you feel challenged, engaged, and motivated to push beyond your limits. We encourage you to take risks, think creatively, and fully step into your roles. From our experience, the most meaningful moments in MUN are not defined by awards, but by the ability of delegates to come together and solve complex problems through collaboration.

So we invite you to take this opportunity seriously, but also to enjoy it. Learn from each other, challenge each other, and most importantly, work together. Because at the end of the day, this committee is not about individual performance, it is about what you can achieve as a group.

Welcome to the committee. We are excited to see what you will accomplish.

Thank you.

-Maya Cardona & Layla Muro



Committee's History

The Historical General Assembly is a committee format that recreates a specific moment in history, asking delegates to engage with the knowledge, pressures, and uncertainties that actual governments faced at the time. Unlike a standard General Assembly, delegates in HGA cannot draw on modern knowledge — positions, arguments, and proposals must reflect what your country knew and believed in December 1991.

The United Nations General Assembly was established by the UN Charter in 1945 as the principal deliberative body of the United Nations, operating on the principle of sovereign equality — one state, one vote. The Assembly cannot pass binding resolutions in the way the Security Council can, but its declarations carry significant moral and political weight and have historically shaped the norms of international law.

The General Assembly has been central to defining how the international community handles questions of statehood and self-determination. Resolution 1514 (1960) established the right of peoples to independence. Resolution 2625 (1970) elaborated key principles: the prohibition on acquiring territory by force, the right of self-determination, and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. These documents form the legal and moral backdrop against which the Soviet dissolution must now be managed.

The Assembly has also grappled with questions of state succession before — the process by which one state assumes the rights and obligations of another. But the Soviet case is without precedent: it is simultaneously the dissolution of a federal state, the emergence of fifteen new entities, and the potential creation of four nuclear-armed governments overnight.

Introduction

It is December 1991, and the world is watching something that most people believed impossible: the collapse of a nuclear superpower. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — which for seven decades defined one half of the global order — is ceasing to exist. Fifteen republics are declaring independence. The red flag is coming down over the Kremlin. And the international community has no framework, no precedent, and very little time to manage what comes next.

Three urgent crises demand immediate attention from this Assembly. First is the question of state succession: who inherits Soviet rights and obligations, including the permanent seat on the UN Security Council, thousands of bilateral treaties, and approximately \$67 billion in foreign debt? Second is the nuclear emergency: roughly 27,000 Soviet nuclear warheads are now distributed across four governments, creating the greatest proliferation risk in history. Third is the question of international recognition: which republics should be recognized as independent states, under what conditions, and with what obligations attached?

These three issues are deeply interconnected. A country's position on recognition affects its leverage on nuclear negotiations. Russia's claim to the Security Council seat depends on how the international community interprets state succession. And the economic desperation driving the collapse creates humanitarian urgency that the diplomatic process cannot ignore.

The decisions made in this Assembly in December 1991 will set precedents for the entire post-Cold War international order. Delegates must balance self-determination with stability, legal principle with political reality, and the interests of great powers with the legitimate aspirations of newly independent peoples.

Historical Background

The Soviet System and Its Contradictions

Gorbachev's Reforms



The Soviet Union was founded in 1922 when Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Transcaucasian federation united under the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR. Over the following decades it expanded to fifteen republics, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic to the borders of Afghanistan, China, Iran, and Turkey. At its height it covered one-sixth of Earth's land surface and commanded the world's largest nuclear arsenal.

On paper, the Soviet system was a voluntary federation — Article 72 of the Soviet Constitution gave each republic the right to secede. In practice, the Communist Party ruled all political life from Moscow, and any attempt at genuine independence was crushed by force. The Soviet interventions in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 — the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine — made clear that Moscow would always send tanks before it would allow a republic to leave.

Why the System Was Failing

By the 1980s, deep structural contradictions were catching up with the Soviet state. Decades of central planning had produced chronic inefficiency: shop shelves were frequently empty, consumer goods were scarce, and technological development lagged far behind the West. The war in Afghanistan, which began in 1979 and dragged on for a decade, cost approximately 15,000 Soviet lives and drained resources with nothing to show for it. The nuclear arms race with the United States consumed an estimated 15 to 25 percent of Soviet GDP — a burden the economy simply could not sustain.

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster of April 1986 proved to be a turning point in public consciousness. The explosion at the reactor and the Soviet government's initial cover-up exposed the dysfunction and dishonesty of the Soviet bureaucracy not just to the outside world, but to Soviet citizens themselves. Trust in the system, already eroding, began to collapse.

Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985 and immediately recognized that the system needed fundamental change. He launched two interconnected reform programs. Glasnost, meaning openness, relaxed censorship and allowed public debate about Soviet history and current problems for the first time. Perestroika, meaning restructuring, sought to decentralize economic decision-making and introduce limited market mechanisms.

Both reforms had consequences Gorbachev did not anticipate and could not control. Glasnost unleashed suppressed national grievances across all fifteen republics. Baltic peoples — Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians — began demanding recognition that their forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940 under the secret protocols of the Nazi-Soviet Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had been illegal all along. In the Caucasus, Armenians and Azerbaijanis went to war over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988. Nationalist movements gained popular legitimacy across Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Central Asia.

Gorbachev's most consequential decision was to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine — to signal that Moscow would no longer send tanks to keep allied governments in power. The consequences were immediate and dramatic. Between 1989 and 1990, communist governments fell across Eastern Europe in rapid succession: Poland elected a Solidarity government in June 1989, Hungary dismantled its border fence with Austria in May, the Berlin Wall fell in November, and Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution brought Vaclav Havel to power in December. Romania's Ceausescu was overthrown and executed. Germany reunified in October 1990. The message was unmistakable to the Soviet republics: Moscow would not send tanks anymore.

The August Coup and Collapse



The Failed Coup

The decisive break came on August 19, 1991. A group of Communist Party hardliners — including Vice President Yanayev, KGB Chairman Kryuchkov, and Defense Minister Yazov — placed Gorbachev under house arrest at his Crimean dacha and declared a state of emergency. Calling themselves the State Emergency Committee, the plotters announced that Gorbachev was ill and that they were assuming power. The coup collapsed within three days. Russian President Boris Yeltsin climbed atop a tank outside the Russian parliament building and called on Russians to resist. Key military units refused to fire on civilians. The plotters, disorganized and uncertain, lost their nerve. Gorbachev returned to Moscow, but the political landscape had been transformed permanently. The Communist Party was suspended. Yeltsin emerged as the dominant political figure in Russia. And the republics, sensing that the center could not hold, accelerated their independence drives.

The Cascade of Independence

Estonia and Latvia declared independence while the coup was still underway, on August 20 and 21. Ukraine declared independence on August 24. Belarus on August 25. Moldova, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan followed within days. The Baltic states were admitted to the United Nations in September 1991. The remaining republics issued their declarations through October and November, leaving the Soviet Union as an empty legal shell by the time December arrived.

The Belovezha Accords

The formal death of the Soviet Union was signed at a hunting lodge in the Belovezha Forest of Belarus on December 8, 1991. Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, and Belarusian Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich met without Gorbachev and declared: 'The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality ceases to exist.' In its place, they established the Commonwealth of Independent States — a loose international organization to manage the transition.

Gorbachev was furious, arguing the three leaders had no authority to dissolve a union created by fifteen republics. But on December 21, eleven of the remaining twelve republics signed the Alma-Ata Protocol at a summit in Kazakhstan, formally endorsing the CIS and agreeing that Russia would assume the Soviet seat at the United Nations. On December 25, Gorbachev resigned. The Soviet flag was lowered over the Kremlin and replaced by the Russian tricolor. On December 26, the Soviet parliament voted the Union out of existence.

The speed of the collapse stunned the world. What had seemed unthinkable in January 1991 was completed fact by December 26. The international community now faces the consequences: fifteen new states of wildly varying sizes, economies, and political capacities; a nuclear arsenal spread across four of them; and no clear legal framework to guide what comes next.

Yugoslavia: A Warning

Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were collapsing simultaneously in 1991, and the international community understood from the beginning that what happened in one would send powerful signals to the other. Both were multinational communist federations held together by a single-party state and a strong central army. Both faced the same pressures: economic failure, ethnic nationalism, and the sudden removal of the ideological cement that had held them

Germany's unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in December 1991 — pushed through over the objections of most EC partners and the United States — is the most debated decision in the entire Yugoslav crisis. Historians are still divided: some argue it 'internationalized the crisis in the worst way,' locking in borders that Serbia was determined to violently redraw. Others argue Yugoslavia was already effectively defunct and recognition was simply



together. The key difference was that Yugoslavia's dissolution became a war — and the Soviet Union's did not, at least not immediately.

The U.S. administration explicitly saw Yugoslavia as a test case for the Soviet situation. As one analysis at the time noted, American policymakers feared the uncontrolled disintegration of the Soviet Union above all else — particularly what might happen to its nuclear arsenal — and initially tried to keep Yugoslavia intact as a signal to Soviet republics that the West would not automatically endorse secession. This proved to be a costly miscalculation, sending mixed signals that encouraged both the Yugoslav federal army and the secessionist republics to escalate rather than negotiate.

acknowledging reality. What is not disputed is that premature or poorly conditioned recognition, without adequate security frameworks in place, contributed to a conflict that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives over the following decade.

This is the central lesson Yugoslavia offers for the Soviet case. The question before this Assembly is not simply whether to recognize the former Soviet republics, but how and on what terms. Recognition without security guarantees left Yugoslavia's minorities unprotected. Recognition without border agreements locked in boundaries that minorities were willing to fight over. Recognition without a nuclear framework in the Soviet case could be catastrophically worse. The international community has one chance to get this right, and Yugoslavia shows exactly what happens when it does not.

The Nuclear Emergency

The Scale of the Problem

The Soviet Union possessed approximately 27,000 nuclear warheads at the time of its dissolution — the largest nuclear stockpile in history. Most are on Russian territory, but a substantial portion are stationed in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Ukraine now theoretically possesses the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal: roughly 1,900 strategic warheads, including 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 44 strategic bombers. This is more than France, China, and the United Kingdom combined. Kazakhstan holds approximately 1,400 strategic warheads on 104 SS-18 missiles. Belarus holds 81 mobile SS-25 launchers.

The critical distinction is between physical possession and operational control. Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan do not actually have the ability to launch these weapons — the launch codes and command authority remain with the Russian military in Moscow. But physical possession gives these three states enormous diplomatic leverage. Some Ukrainian politicians have argued that Ukraine should retain the weapons as a deterrent against potential Russian pressure. Others see them as a bargaining chip: give them up in exchange for economic compensation,

The Lisbon Protocol Path

The framework that will eventually resolve the nuclear question is already being discussed in December 1991, but it has not yet been concluded. The proposed solution is what will become the Lisbon Protocol, signed in May 1992. Under this framework, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the United States would all become parties to the START I arms reduction treaty — which the Soviet Union and the United States signed just months before the collapse, in July 1991. Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan would commit to joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states 'in the shortest possible time,' effectively recognizing Russia as the sole nuclear heir to the Soviet Union.

But the Lisbon Protocol framework faces significant political obstacles in December 1991 that delegates must address. Ukraine in particular is deeply ambivalent. Ukrainian politicians are aware that they are being asked to give up an enormous source of strategic leverage in exchange for promises. The question of what constitutes adequate compensation — economic assistance, fuel for civilian reactors, and above all, security guarantees — is entirely unresolved. And security guarantees that are only



international recognition, and credible security guarantees.

The Brain Drain Risk

Beyond the weapons themselves, the international community faces a dangerous secondary threat: Soviet nuclear scientists, engineers, and weapons designers are suddenly unemployed, economically desperate, and technically available. The knowledge to build nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons exists in thousands of individuals across the former Soviet Union, many of whom are facing a dramatic collapse in their living standards. Secretary of State James Baker warned that a 'Yugoslav-type situation with 30,000 nuclear weapons presents an incredible danger.' The U.S. Congress responded in November 1991 with the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act, providing funding to help secure and dismantle Soviet weapons of mass destruction and employ former weapons scientists in peaceful projects.

political assurances, rather than legally binding treaty commitments, may not be enough. Ukraine will ultimately require that the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom sign formal assurances respecting its territorial integrity — what will become the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. In December 1991, none of this has been agreed.

The NPT itself is also under strain. The treaty recognized exactly five nuclear weapon states: the United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, France, and China. If Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan are permitted to keep their weapons, even temporarily, the NPT's fundamental bargain collapses and the precedent set could encourage other states to pursue nuclear programs of their own. The urgency cannot be overstated: this Assembly must build the political conditions for denuclearization before the window closes.

State Succession and Borders

Russia's Continuing State Claim

Russia argues that it is not a new state — a successor to the USSR — but the same legal entity under a new name, a 'continuing state.' This claim has enormous practical consequences. As the continuing state, Russia assumes all Soviet treaty obligations, all Soviet foreign debt (approximately \$67 billion), and all Soviet foreign assets — embassies, bank accounts, and overseas properties. In exchange, the other fourteen republics receive a legal 'clean slate': free from Soviet debt, but also without claim to Soviet assets abroad. This arrangement is called the 'zero option,' and it is currently being negotiated.

On December 25, Russian President Yeltsin formally notified the UN Secretary-General that Russia would assume Soviet UN membership, including the permanent Security Council seat with its veto power. The Security Council acquiesced without a formal vote. But this has not been formally endorsed by the General Assembly, and the legal basis for Russia's claim is contested. Whether the Assembly should

The Border Problem

The Soviet Union's internal administrative boundaries were drawn by Stalin and his successors with deliberate disregard for ethnic and historical realities — often intentionally mixing populations to prevent any single ethnicity from consolidating power. These internal lines have now become the international borders of fifteen new states. The principle of *uti possidetis juris* — that new states inherit the borders of the administrative units they emerge from — provides legal clarity but produces political instability wherever ethnic populations do not match the borders.

The consequences are already visible. Armenians and Azerbaijanis are at war over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-majority enclave inside Azerbaijan. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are asserting independence from Georgia, with Russian sympathy. Transnistria, a Russian-speaking region, is seeking to separate from Moldova. Crimea, transferred from Russia to Ukraine by Khrushchev in 1954, has a majority



formally ratify this arrangement — or whether it requires proper deliberation — is one of the key questions before this committee.

The Baltic Exception

The three Baltic states present a completely different legal situation. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were sovereign states that were forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 under the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The United States and most Western democracies never legally recognized this annexation, maintaining Baltic diplomatic missions throughout the Soviet period. When the Baltic states declared independence in 1991, they did so as the legal continuation of states whose statehood had never lapsed — not as successor states to the USSR. They have already been admitted to the UN and refuse to join the CIS.

Russian-speaking population and contested political loyalties. And within Russia itself, Chechnya is demanding independence — a precedent that Moscow is desperate to prevent the international community from endorsing.

Arms Control Treaties

The Soviet Union was party to landmark arms control treaties — START I, the INF Treaty, and others — negotiated between two superpowers that no longer both exist. The Lisbon Protocol framework will eventually clarify that Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Russia all assume Soviet obligations under START I as successor states. But in December 1991, none of this has been formalized. This Assembly must consider how to keep these crucial arms control frameworks alive during the transition, before they fall apart entirely.

The Commonwealth of Independent States

The Commonwealth of Independent States, established by the Belovezha Accords on December 8 and expanded by the Alma-Ata Protocol on December 21, is the institutional framework created to manage the transition from the Soviet Union to fifteen independent states. It is not a new state, not a government, and not a military alliance. It is a loose intergovernmental organization — closer to a forum for cooperation than to the federation it replaced. Currently eleven of the twelve non-Baltic former Soviet republics are members; Georgia has not yet joined.

The CIS has several practical functions that matter enormously right now. It provides a mechanism for coordinating the transition of the Soviet military — including agreement that Russia will assume command of all nuclear forces. It creates a framework for addressing the complex economic entanglements left by Soviet central planning: shared infrastructure, energy pipelines, trade relationships, and currency arrangements that cannot simply be severed overnight. And it gives the former republics a venue to negotiate the many unresolved questions — borders,

The CIS's limitations are just as important to understand. It has no enforcement mechanisms. It cannot compel member states to honor agreements. Its founding documents leave most of the hard questions — the 'zero option' on debt, nuclear weapons transfer, military assets — to bilateral negotiations rather than multilateral resolution. Critics in the smaller republics already worry that the CIS is simply a vehicle for Russian dominance in a new institutional form, providing Moscow with continued leverage over its neighbors without the formality — or the accountability — of the old Soviet structure.

For the international community, the question is whether to engage with the CIS as a legitimate framework or to treat it with suspicion. The Baltic states have already refused membership entirely, and some other republics are ambivalent. Whether the CIS can provide a stable foundation for the post-Soviet transition, or whether it will simply delay the inevitable fragmentation, is one of the most consequential open questions of December 1991.



citizenship, property, debts — that the collapse has left open.

Economic Collapse

The Soviet economy was deeply integrated by design. Ukrainian factories depended on Russian raw materials. Kazakh energy flowed to Russian refineries. Scientific institutes in Moscow collaborated with research facilities across all fifteen republics. The entire system was planned and coordinated from the center, and when the center disappeared, the supply chains collapsed with it. The result is hyperinflation, severe shortages of basic goods, and an economic crisis that threatens to destabilize the political transitions before they have a chance to take hold. Ukraine, as just one example, will lose approximately 60% of its GDP over the course of the 1990s.

The international community is being asked to provide emergency assistance, but faces real dilemmas about how and to whom. The Bush administration is cautious about pouring resources into unreformed Soviet-era institutions. The European Community is stretched by German reunification and the Yugoslav crisis. The IMF and World Bank are developing programs for the transition economies, but their standard prescriptions — rapid price liberalization and privatization — are deeply contested, and Russia's experiment with 'shock therapy' beginning in January 1992 will be watched anxiously by the entire former Soviet space.

Two countries illustrate what abrupt Soviet disengagement looks like at its worst. Cuba had been receiving approximately \$4 to 6 billion annually in Soviet subsidies — roughly equivalent to its entire export earnings — along with oil at below-market prices. With the collapse, these ended almost overnight, triggering the 'Special Period': severe food shortages, fuel rationing, and the collapse of major industries. Afghanistan's government under President Najibullah was entirely dependent on Soviet military and economic support. When aid was cut off after the August coup, Najibullah reportedly wrote to former Soviet officials: 'You talked me into it, promised support. Now you are throwing me and the Republic of Afghanistan to its fate.' His government will fall within months, opening the door to civil war and eventually the Taliban.

The economic dimension of the Soviet collapse is inseparable from the political and security dimensions. A Ukraine in economic freefall is a Ukraine more likely to hold onto nuclear weapons as leverage. A Russia in an economic crisis is a Russia more vulnerable to nationalist extremism. Central Asian states without economic lifelines are states more vulnerable to authoritarian regression. This Assembly must consider economic assistance not as a separate humanitarian issue, but as a core component of the security architecture needed to manage this transition safely.

Bloc Positions

Russian Federation: The Continuing State

Russia enters this Assembly claiming to be not a new country but the same legal entity as the Soviet Union under a new name. This claim — already accepted by the Security Council without a formal vote — justifies

Caucasian Republics: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan

The three Caucasian states face the most immediate security threats of any former Soviet entities. Armenia and Azerbaijan are at war over Nagorno-Karabakh, a



Russia keeping the Soviet permanent seat, assuming Soviet debts, and controlling the nuclear arsenal. Russia wants a stable CIS that preserves economic integration across the former Soviet space. Moscow will fiercely resist any framework that encourages NATO expansion toward Russia's borders and will oppose any international endorsement of sub-national secessionism — Chechnya and Tatarstan are watching.

Ukraine and Belarus: Nuclear Leverage

Both states hold nuclear weapons they cannot independently operate, which gives them extraordinary diplomatic leverage and equally extraordinary vulnerability. Ukraine is genuinely divided: many politicians see the weapons as the only guarantee of sovereignty against a historically dominant neighbor, while others view them as a bargaining chip for Western economic integration and security guarantees. Ukraine's fundamental demand is for credible, legally binding assurances that its territorial integrity will be respected if it gives up its nuclear inheritance. Belarus is more economically dependent on Russia and more willing to comply quickly, but still seeks formal recognition of its sovereignty.

Kazakhstan and Central Asia

Kazakhstan has clearly signaled its desire to transfer all nuclear weapons to Russia and focus its resources on economic development. The Central Asian republics — Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan — share the harshest economic transition challenges and the most arbitrary Soviet-drawn borders. Their political leaderships are mostly former Soviet Communist Party officials reinventing themselves as nationalist presidents. These states generally support stable CIS frameworks, seek international economic assistance, and want recognition of their sovereignty without conditions they cannot realistically meet.

The Baltic States: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia

Already recognized by the international community and admitted to the UN, the Baltic states do not consider themselves successor states to the USSR at all. Their primary goals are securing the withdrawal of remaining Russian troops from their territory, achieving broad recognition that the 1940 annexation

conflict that will intensify dramatically now that Soviet restraint has been removed. Georgia faces secessionist movements in South Ossetia and Abkhazia with Russian sympathy. Armenia depends on Russia for security against both Azerbaijan and Turkey. Azerbaijan and Georgia seek Western and Turkish partnerships as counterweights. All three urgently need international recognition and peacekeeping mechanisms, but their divergent relationships with Moscow make unified positions difficult.

Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia: Former Satellites

These states welcome the Soviet collapse as the definitive end of decades of domination. Their immediate priorities are economic integration into the European Community and security integration into NATO — as quickly as possible. Poland is the most assertive, given its historical experience of partition and occupation, and views a stable democratic Ukraine as a vital security buffer. Czechoslovakia is simultaneously managing its own political tensions between Czech and Slovak movements, which will produce its own peaceful 'Velvet Divorce' by January 1993.

United States: Stability and Nonproliferation

The Bush administration's priorities are preventing nuclear catastrophe, maintaining stability, and promoting democracy and market economics — in that order. Secretary Baker's five principles for recognition — self-determination, democratic governance, existing borders, minority rights, and respect for international law — define the American framework. The U.S. is prepared to fund denuclearization through Nunn-Lugar but is cautious about rushing recognition or triumphalist posturing that could destabilize Russia and fuel nationalist extremism. Washington is acutely aware that a humiliated, chaotic Russia with thousands of nuclear weapons is a far greater danger than a Russia that feels respected in the transition.

UK, France, Turkey, China, Iran, Cuba, Afghanistan

The UK and France share Russia's interest in preventing additional nuclear states and will support strong security guarantees for Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Turkey sees strategic opportunity in the



was illegal under international law, and beginning integration into Western structures. They will advocate forcefully for principles of sovereignty and non-interference and will oppose any framework that normalizes Russian influence over former Soviet territory.

newly independent Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus and will push for their full sovereignty. China watches with relief that the Soviet threat is gone and deep anxiety that the forces that destroyed the CPSU could threaten the CCP — Beijing will resist any international precedent endorsing separatism. Iran sees cultural and economic opportunity in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Cuba faces catastrophic economic loss and will resist any triumphalist narrative. Afghanistan's government is effectively abandoned and faces imminent collapse.

Proposed Solutions

A Framework for Recognition

Delegates should consider adopting a resolution establishing clear, principled criteria for recognizing former Soviet republics as independent states. Drawing on the European Community's December 1991 recognition guidelines — themselves developed partly in response to the Yugoslav crisis — such criteria could include commitments to democratic governance, acceptance of existing borders as inviolable, protection of minority rights, and cooperation on nuclear security. Recognition should be understood not as a reward for declaring independence, but as the beginning of a relationship with specific obligations attached.

Nuclear Security Architecture

The Assembly should build the political conditions for what will become the Lisbon Protocol framework: Russia as the sole nuclear successor state, with Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan committing to transfer all weapons and join the NPT as non-nuclear states. But this requires the Assembly to address the fundamental political obstacle — Ukraine's demand for credible security guarantees. A resolution calling on the recognized nuclear powers to provide formal, binding assurances of Ukraine's territorial integrity, backed by UN Security Council endorsement, is essential to make denuclearization politically achievable.

State Succession Principles

The Assembly should consider formally endorsing the principles governing state succession in the Soviet case: Russia as the continuing state for purposes of UN membership and treaty obligations, with the zero option as the framework for debt and asset allocation. The Assembly should also clarify that Soviet arms control treaties remain operative — particularly START I — during the transition, to prevent a legal vacuum that could allow all parties to walk away from their disarmament commitments.

Peacekeeping and Economic Coordination

The Assembly should call for an international coordinating conference on economic assistance to the former Soviet states, involving the G7, the IMF, and the World Bank. It should also consider deploying UN observers to the most volatile conflict zones — Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria — before these disputes escalate into full-scale wars. An international science and technology fund to employ former Soviet weapons scientists in peaceful research could address the brain drain risk directly while contributing to long-term stability.



Guiding Questions

Sovereignty and Legal Status

- Should Russia's assumption of the Soviet Security Council seat be formally endorsed by the General Assembly, or is the Security Council's acquiescence sufficient?
- Is Russia's 'continuing state' claim legally valid under international law, or are all fifteen republics equally successor states?
- Should the Baltic states be treated differently from the other twelve republics, given that their annexation was never legally recognized?
- What specific obligations — treaties, debt, minority rights — should successor states be required to assume as a condition of recognition?

Nuclear Security

- What security guarantees must be provided to Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to make denuclearization politically achievable — and can they be made legally binding?
- How should the Assembly address the risk that Soviet nuclear expertise flows to states seeking weapons of mass destruction?
- What is the role of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction framework, and how can it be expanded and internationalized?
- If Ukraine refuses to transfer its weapons, what tools does the international community have — and should it use them?

Borders and Self-Determination

- Should the principle of *uti possidetis juris* — that new states inherit existing administrative borders — be definitive, or should ethnic and historical claims be given weight?
- Does the right of self-determination that justified the Soviet republics' independence also apply to groups within those republics — Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Chechnya?
- What protections should be provided to Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan?

Economic and Humanitarian Issues

- What obligations does the international community have to populations suffering from the economic collapse accompanying the Soviet dissolution?
- Is the 'zero option' — Russia assumes all Soviet debts and assets — the fairest solution for all parties involved?
- What special responsibility does the international community have toward states like Cuba and Afghanistan that are suffering from the abrupt end of Soviet patronage?
- How can economic assistance be structured to support genuine democratic reform rather than entrenching former Soviet elites under new names?

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