STATEMENT

by V.L. Vasiliev, Representative of the Russian Federation
to the 1st Committee of the 63rd UNGA Session
on Agenda item 87 entitled
"Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the
Context of International Security"

Rapid development and universal introduction of the most advanced
information and telecommunication technologies (ITT) is one of the most
characteristic features of modern times. The ITT, permeating all the spheres of
human activities, forms a global information environment upon which the state of
political, defense, economic, socio-cultural and other components of national
security, as well as an overall system of international security and stability
depends.

The ITT have opened to the world a new non-material – virtual space. However, this space has not proved to be safe at all, on the contrary, globalization
of information systems, embracing territories of a great number of countries,
created a completely new situation in the sphere of challenges and threats in the
area of information security.

Specific nature of the international information security (IIS) is connected
with the fact that when the ITT are used with hostile intentions it is impossible to
speak about an application of arms in a traditional sense as the ITT as such are
basically civil technologies or dual use technologies. Nevertheless, the range of
consequences of their hostile use can be compared to the damage from the use of
"classical" weapons and even weapons of mass destruction.

Specific feature of information and telecommunication means when they are
used with destructive purposes is their common accessibility, in many instances –
non-selective impact, a possibility of anonymous application and disguise as
peaceful activity, a potential for broad trans-border application, low cost and
efficiency. One may speak about a “triad” of threats. The ITT can be used not only
by individual delinquents and criminal groups, but also by terrorist and extremist
organizations, as well as by states for hostile political, military, economic and other
purposes creating threats to security at national, regional and international levels.
We believe that consideration of the IIS issues should be continued in the 1st
Committee of the UN General Assembly as all the aspects of this topic, that is the
use of information and telecommunication technologies for military and political,
and terrorist and criminal purposes, are closely interconnected. Under conditions
when new threats emerge in information sphere the problem of promoting
information security has become one of the most urgent tasks for a single state, as
well as for the whole international community.

Wishing to contribute to a better understanding of IIS threats and to find
common ways of how to fight them, in 1998 Russia moved forward the initiative
of raising the issue of ensuring the IIS at the international level. Up to 2005 the resolution entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”, proposed by Russia, was being adopted by the UN General Assembly by consensus.

One more time together with the group of co-authors Russia has introduced the draft resolution entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” (item 87 of the 63rd UN GA session) for consideration in the 1st Committee of the 63rd Session of the UN GA.

At this stage of consideration of the IIS topical issue within the United Nations it is necessary to continue the research on the nature and specificity of new challenges and threats in this sphere in order to define common mutually acceptable approaches designed to address them. It would help use to the maximum degree the advantages offered by the rapidly developing global information community for the benefit of all the countries of the world. The UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the IIS should become the most efficient practical mechanism for such work. As is well known, under the resolution on the IIS, the Group has to start its work in 2009. The decision was first adopted at the 60th and then confirmed at the 61st and 62nd GA sessions practically unanimously. The objective of the draft resolution of the same title, which is practically identical to the one of the previous year, is to confirm the intention of the world community to continue research on existing and potential threats in the sphere of international information security within the GGE. The convening of the GGE remains urgent and reasonable.

The representative international conference on the IIS topical issues organized by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and held in Geneva 24-25 October, 2008 once again confirmed broad support to the Russian approach to the IIS. The Conference became one of the stages in the preparation for the work of the UN GGE on IIS in 2009. The Conference has demonstrated common vision of the experts from 47 countries regarding the international information security of military and political, criminal and terrorist nature.

We call upon all the countries to support the draft resolution proposed by us and join it as co-sponsors.