

## Mikhail Gorbachyov's reply to leaders of the 'Delhi Six'

MOSCOW, August 23, TASS: Here follows the full text of the reply of Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, to the address from the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania:

To Mr Raul Alfonsin, President of Argentina,  
Mr Andreas Papandreou, Prime Minister of Greece,  
Mr Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India,  
Mr Miguel de la Madrid, President of Mexico,  
Mr Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of Sweden,  
Mr Julius Nyerere, Tanzania,  
Dear Sirs,

I want to thank you for your address of August 7, 1986, in which you formulate a new concrete initiative, aimed at breaking the deadlock in the key question of lessening the risk of nuclear war, that of ending nuclear weapon tests.

We are in full agreement with the conviction, stated in your declaration, that responsibility for protecting our planet is being borne by all the people who live on it. The task of preserving human civilisation and preventing it from perishing in the flames of nuclear catastrophe is indeed a common cause for all states, all nations. Once a nuclear war breaks out, it would affect all, everyone.

We share your appreciation of the fatal consequences to which the use of even a small part of the nuclear arms arsenals existing in the world may lead. The process on their improvement and further stockpiling is going on, and nuclear weapon tests are contributing to it. That is why there is no more urgent and important task today than that of ending all nuclear testing. This measure could help in practice to halt the qualitative improvement and quantitative growth of the nuclear arms arsenals. We link to this measure the beginning of progress on the road leading to a nuclear-free world.

There are no obstacles to the ending of nuclear testing except the position of certain powers, which are rooted in a suicidal reliance on nuclear muscle. The interests of preserving human civilisation in the nuclear-space age imperatively demands a new political thinking. It should be based on the recognition of the fact that the escalation of the nuclear arms arsenals, far from adding to security, can, conversely, bring about 'zero' security, that is, total self-annihilation.

Guiding ourselves by a sense of responsibility

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for the fate of mankind, we introduced a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions. Today, after it has been in effect for over one year, the Soviet leadership has taken another decision to extend it to the beginning of 1987. I want to stress that was not an easy decision for us to take. You know that the United States, in spite of our moratorium, has not stopped nuclear explosions and therefore is making progress in the build-up of its nuclear arms arsenals. Yet we think that our unilateral action is justified because it should contribute to the solution of the problem of nuclear testing and the deliverance of mankind from the nuclear threat. Taking this step, we believe that people in all countries will appreciate the long silence at the Soviet testing sites.

It is my profound conviction that if the USA joined the Soviet moratorium—our extension of the moratorium gives it an extra chance to do so—a serious and responsible step would be taken towards stopping the improvement of the most destructive weapons and their stockpiling.

This bilateral moratorium would undoubtedly help achieve a treaty to ban nuclear weapon tests. Verification measures which would be worked out to monitor compliance with the moratorium could, as you rightly note, become an important step towards the establishment of a system to verify compliance with a total test ban treaty. In the general political context, too, the moratorium could create good preconditions for the conclusion of such a treaty.

We think that the Soviet-American talks which opened in Geneva in late July should be oriented to that goal. The Disarmament Conference can become an important forum for multilateral talks on the same problem if artificial barriers blocking

its effective work to draw up a treaty to ban all test explosions are removed.

We think that the United Nations, which has been debating the problem of ending nuclear weapon tests for more than three decades, has not yet exhausted its potentialities in resolving it and that they should be used more energetically.

It is our view that efforts in this field should be made in every way and that one set of talks should complement another rather than preclude or replace it. I therefore believe that a meeting of experts from the six countries and Soviet and American experts proposed by you could make a valuable contribution towards the accomplishment of the goal of a comprehensive nuclear test ban and set the stage for energetic and business-like talks on these problems. We are ready to send Soviet experts to such a meeting.

The Soviet Union has already expressed its readiness to make use of your proposal of assistance in verifying the suspension of nuclear testing, including on-site inspection, naturally, if it is accepted by the other side. It would of course be useful jointly to discuss your new proposals and look for mutually acceptable solutions to the problem of verification of the suspension of nuclear testing.

It is clear from the Mexico Declaration adopted by you that you and we approach in the same manner the serious consequences with which the opening of outer space as a new scene of the arms race is fraught. Just like you, we are convinced that space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, in the interest of all mankind. It is from this concept that our country's recent initiative, calling for the

(Continued on next page)

## Message to Mikhail Gorbachyov

MOSCOW, August 23, TASS:

Here follows the text of the message sent by the leaders of six states to Mikhail Gorbachyov:

To Mr Mikhail Gorbachyov,  
General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Dear Mr General Secretary,

In our letters to you of October 24, 1985, February 28 and April 10, 1986, we expressed our fervent hope for the successful outcome of the current negotiations between your country and the United States.

You will recall that we called on both yourself and President Ronald Reagan to undertake a mutual suspension of nuclear testing, at least until your next summit meeting. We wish to express to you our sincere appreciation for having unilaterally extended your suspension of all nuclear tests.

As you know we have been meeting in Ixtapa, Mexico, over the past two days to discuss ways in which we might be able to help facilitate progress in arms control and disarmament. We have adopted today the Mexico Declaration, the text of which will be duly transmitted to you.

We believe that we are in a position to make a contribution in the field of verification. We have outlined in a separate document some concrete ideas with respect to how we could assist in such verification.

We welcome the fact that the US and the USSR have recently started bilateral talks on nuclear testing issues. We wish to propose to you that experts from our six nations meet with your and American experts. The details of time and place could be arranged through mutual consultations. The purpose should be to explain in detail the proposals which we have presented, to discuss how they could be implemented, and to explore other possible ways in which our six countries could facilitate test ban verification. We suggest a very open agenda covering any verification issue that your experts may consider important. We hope that by making this invitation to both you and President Reagan we might be able to assist in this crucial field.

Raul Alfonsin, President of Argentina,  
Andreas Papandreou, Prime Minister of Greece,  
Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India,  
Miguel de la Madrid, President of Mexico,  
Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of Sweden,  
Julius Nyerere, of Tanzania.

□



## Nikolai Ryzhkov's conversation with Iranian minister

MOSCOW, August 19, TASS:

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, today received in the Kremlin Iran's Minister of Oil, Gholam Reza Aqa-Zadeh, now staying in Moscow on a brief business visit.

The Iranian Minister handed over to Nikolai Ryzhkov a message from the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mir Hussein Moussavi.

Having discussed the state of Soviet-Iranian relations, the sides expressed the opinion that the difference in the social systems of the Soviet Union and Iran must not be an obstacle to fruitful relations between the two countries, and declared for development along the road of consolidating confidence and good-neighbourliness.

It was pointed out that the present level of Soviet-Iranian commercial and economic ties was not in keeping with the possibilities of both countries. Attention was called to a number of concrete problems whose solution would promote the widening and deepening of mutually advantageous economic relations.

When regional problems were discussed, the Soviet side noted that the USSR declared consistently for an early ending of the Iran-Iraq war and for the settlement of the conflict between Iran and Iraq by political means, through talks. □

## Senegalese parliamentary delegation visits USSR

MOSCOW, August 19, TASS:

A PARLIAMENTARY delegation from Senegal led by Louis da Costa, Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly, stayed in the Soviet Union on an official visit from August 8 to 14 at the invitation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, it was reported here today.

The two sides exchanged opinions on current international problems and matters involved in bilateral relations.

The parliamentarians of the two countries expressed satisfaction with the friendly character of Soviet-Senegalese relations.

When discussing the international situation, the two sides expressed serious concern over the tense situation in the world. They stressed the need for resolute actions by parliaments, governments, political parties and public organisations to bring about disarmament and detente. The Soviet side called the attention of the Senegalese parliamentarians to Soviet foreign policy initiatives, particularly the programme for complete elimination of nuclear and chemical weapons, set forth in the January 15 statement of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee,

Mikhail Gorbachyov, as well as to the concept of establishing an all-embracing international security system put forward by the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

The Soviet and Senegalese parliamentarians called for further efforts to eliminate seats of tension in different regions of the world, and for a just political settlement of conflict situations by peaceful means only, with due respect for the right of every people to self-determination.

Deputies of the parliaments of the USSR and Senegal pointed to the need for establishing and maintaining a normal political atmosphere on the African continent, and for making Africa a zone free from nuclear weapons. The Soviet and Senegalese parliamentarians expressed solidarity with the liberation struggle of the people of South Africa and Namibia and called for measures to carry out in full the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

They reaffirmed the need to normalise economic relations, establish a new world economic order ensuring equal economic security for all states, a just settlement of the problem of foreign debts, discontinuation of the neo-colonialist exploitation of developing countries and consolidation of the independence of young states. □

## Pyotr Demichev receives Chea Sim

MOSCOW, August 25, TASS:

PYOTR DEMICHEV, an alternate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and First Vice-President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, received a delegation of the National Assembly of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, led by Chea Sim, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea (PRPK) and chairman of the assembly, in the Kremlin today.

The sides confirmed the community of views in the appraisal of the existing difficult international situation. It was noted that the purpose of the Soviet peace initiatives formulating concrete proposals aimed at safeguarding peace and ensuring security was to bring about an effective solution to the urgent problems—a solution that

would be acceptable to all.

Special attention was devoted to ways for promoting peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific. Both sides emphasised the paramount importance and timelessness of the Soviet proposal on establishing a comprehensive system of international security in that region.

On behalf of the PRPK Central Committee, the Government and the People of Kampuchea, the delegation of the National Assembly of the People's Republic of Kampuchea expressed approval of the Soviet Union's decision to extend its unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions till January 1, 1987, and highly appraised the statement made by Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, on Soviet television on August 18. □

## Political Bureau meeting

MOSCOW, August 21, TASS:

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee approved at its session today the results of the talks held by Nikolai Ryzhkov with Saadiq el-Mahdi, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Sudan.

The Political Bureau pointed out with satisfaction the identity of the stands of the Soviet Union and Sudan on many international problems, primarily those dealing with the curbing of the arms race and the consolidation of peace, as well as their mutual interest in the expansion and deepening of mutually advantageous ties on the basis of principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other.

The Political Bureau analysed the preparation of the USSR energy system for work in the autumn and winter period. Special attention was devoted to the all-round saving of fuel and energy resources.

The CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers have adopted a resolution on measures for a further development of the fine arts. The resolution mapped out measures for consolidating the material and technical basis of the fine arts, more incentives for workers in art, and for the development of artistic education in the USSR.

The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee discussed some other questions connected with home and foreign policy and adopted corresponding resolutions. □

(Continued from previous page)

development of international co-operation in averting an arms race in space and in its peaceful uses, proceeds. Concrete proposals aimed at preventing outer space from becoming a scene of military rivalry have been tabled by us at the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons.

We stand for tightening the regime of the ABM Treaty, which in today's conditions constitutes the foundation of strategic stability, and for full and unflagging respect for every stipulation of that document, concluded in perpetuity. Much importance, we think, is attached to an early agreement between the USSR and the USA to ban space-to-Earth and space-to-space strike weapons and to prohibit anti-satellite systems, including the dismantling of the systems already available to the sides. The Soviet Union is open to both the solution of the complex of these problems in their entirety and to a search for individual agreements eventually leading to the

above goal of dependably blocking the way to weapons in outer space.

You also touch in the Mexico Declaration upon the question of another Soviet-American summit. The Soviet Union stands for such a meeting. Yet this new meeting should serve the normalisation of relations between the USSR and the USA, the improvement of the international situation and the speeding up of arms reduction talks. We would be prepared at such a meeting, for instance, to sign an agreement to ban nuclear tests. In short, a Soviet-American summit should be really meaningful. This was the thrust of the accord reached by the leaders of the two countries in Geneva.

In conclusion I want to express the confidence that our joint efforts to curb the arms race and to end nuclear weapon tests will eventually be translated into concrete measures leading to the accomplishment of that important goal.

Sincerely yours,  
Mikhail Gorbachyov. □

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# Soviet parliamentary delegation's visit to Greece

*ATHENS, August 21, TASS:*

A DELEGATION from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which is led by Ringaudas Bronislovas Songaila, a Vice-President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, now staying here at the invitation of the Greek Parliament, has met and held talks with the leadership of this country.

During its conversations with Christos Sartzetakis, President of the Hellenic Republic, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu and Parliament Chairman Ioannis Alevras, notes were compared on a wide range of international problems, most notably the issues of nuclear disarmament, the situation in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, and the Cyprus problem. The conversations took place in a warm atmosphere.

Much attention was paid to further developing Soviet-Greek relations. The Greek leaders spoke highly of the Soviet Union's peaceful foreign policy, making special note of its latest proposals for removing the threat of a nuclear war, made in the statement by Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

## On USSR's relations with IMF and GATT

*MOSCOW, August 22, TASS:*

"THERE are no contacts between the International Monetary Fund and the Soviet Union. We have not taken any steps, either, that would be aimed at seeking some participation in the International Monetary Fund, or credits," said Ivan Ivanov, chief of the International Economic Relations Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry. He was speaking here today at a press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists.

"As far as our stand with regard to the International Monetary Fund as a whole is concerned, we do not regard the IMF practice as reasonable," he went on.

"As to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Soviet Union wants rapprochement with GATT to promote better commercial and political conditions in the entire international trade and expanded trade between the Soviet Union and GATT member countries," Ivanov said. "At the same time, our participation in the work of GATT would enable us to acquire the necessary opinion that would help us decide the question of joining in the agreement in future as a full-fledged member on mutually agreed-upon terms".

Ivanov said that the Soviet side was considering the possibility of setting up joint enterprises with companies from capitalist countries. "Apparently, such an opportunity will be implemented in future within the framework of the reform of external economic relations now under way in the Soviet Union," he said. □

**STATEMENT  
by Mikhail Gorbachyov,  
General Secretary of CPSU  
Central Committee  
January 15, 1986.**

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Christos Sartzetakis said those initiatives had evoked a wide response among the Greek people. He said there was much in the efforts for peace that united Greece and the Soviet Union and the Greek and Soviet peoples.

Andreas Papandreu described the latest Soviet proposals as "highly important". "This has moved us, both the Government and the people. We would like to hope that despite the initial negative reaction, Washington will realise the importance of this proposal and give a positive response to it," he said.

Ioannis Alevras also put a high value on the Soviet Union's peace initiatives.

He said that its activities for peace had won broad support among the Greek people and in the Greek Parliament.

The Greek leaders also expressed appreciation for the Soviet Union's stand for a just Cyprus settlement, which was reaffirmed by the Soviet delegation during the talks here.

The delegation from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, for its part, spoke highly of the efforts by Greece to strengthen peace, in particular in the framework of the 'Group of Six' ('Delhi Six').

It was noted by both sides that the peoples of the Soviet Union and Greece were linked by traditional bonds of friendship, which had deep historical roots. A desire was voiced to further develop Soviet-Greek relations for the benefit of peace and progress on Earth, an important contribution to which was made by inter-parliamentary relations between the two countries.

*ATHENS, August 22, TASS:*

On Thursday (August 21) the Soviet delegation had a meeting with Harilaos Florakis, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece.

During the conversation, which passed in a warm and comradely atmosphere, notes were compared on international problems and Soviet-Greek relations.

Harilaos Florakis said that the delegation's visit had helped further strengthen relations

between the two countries. He also pointed to the expressions of support for the latest Soviet initiatives advanced by Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in his statement on Soviet television by all political parties in Greece as a very positive fact.

The leader of the Greek communists said his Party would do everything to make every Greek realise the significance of those initiatives.

Harilaos Florakis said that safeguarding peace was the top priority today. He added that in Greece that meant securing the removal of US military bases and nuclear weapons from its territory.

The delegation from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR handed the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece a message from Mikhail Gorbachyov.

*ATHENS, August 25, TASS:*

The delegation of the USSR Supreme Soviet left Athens today for Moscow. The delegation was seen off by Chairman of the Greek Parliament Ioannis Alevras and other officials.

Speaking at Athens airport to Soviet and foreign journalists, the leader of the Soviet delegation said that meetings and conversations with the President of the Republic of Greece Christos Sartzetakis, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu, Chairman of Parliament Ioannis Alevras and leaders of the main political parties were friendly, frank and efficient.

He noted that Greece's foreign policy activities for peace, including those within the framework of the 'Delhi Six', are in tune with the Soviet peace initiatives. Ringaudas Bronislovas Songaila wished the friendly Greek people peace, happiness and prosperity.

M Stefanidis, Vice-President of the Parliament of Greece said that the visit of the delegation of the USSR Supreme Soviet was "very important in the progressive development of Greek-Soviet relations." "We Greeks are confident that the visit will promote further development of friendship and mutual understanding between our peoples." he said. □

## Soviet commission to mark International Peace Year

*MOSCOW, August 20, TASS:*

A MEETING of the commission on marking the International Year of Peace in the USSR was held in the Kremlin today. It examined the question of the holding in the USSR on September 1, 1986 of a peace lesson and events of the International Day of Trade Union Actions for Peace.

Mikhail Zimyanin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and deputy chairman of the commission, noted in his speech at the meeting that the statement by Mikhail Gorbachyov of August 18 on the decision of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government to extend the unilateral nuclear tests moratorium to January 1, 1987 was a new graphic confirmation of the commitment of the CPSU and the Soviet people to the cause of peace. "The entire world focuses its attention on this statement, it is warmly hailed by all our people and all people of goodwill, by political and social forces and broad sections of the world peace movement," pointed

out Mikhail Zimyanin.

The meeting pointed out that the two major actions—a peace lesson in all general educational schools in the USSR and participation of Soviet working people in the International Day of Trade Union Actions for Peace—were linked not only by their common date, September 1, but both of them would also be active forms of mass participation by Soviet people in the struggle for peace.

The commission recommended that the principal ideas contained in the statement by Mikhail Gorbachyov of August 18 be highlighted during the peace lesson in Soviet educational establishments and during events of the International Day of Trade Union Actions for Peace, devoted to the International Year of Peace.

The commission also recommended that during International Peace Year colloquia be held, similar to the peace lesson, at vocational schools, special and higher educational establishments in the country. □



# Press conference on causes of Chernobyl accident

**MOSCOW, August 21, TASS:**

"THE lesson of Chernobyl will serve for a long time to come as a reminder of the need for a disciplined, careful and cautious attitude to new technology in general and to nuclear technology in particular," said Academician Andranik Petrosyants, Chairman of the State Committee of the USSR for the Use of Atomic Energy. He was giving an opening address at a press conference devoted to the report to the IAEA on the accident at the Chernobyl atomic power station and methods of removing its consequences.

The report will be submitted to the conference of technical experts from the IAEA countries due to take place in Vienna on August 25.

Petrosyants noted that the accident in Chernobyl had been caused by a series of gross breaches of operating regulations by the staff of the atomic power station.

"The accident at the Chernobyl atomic power station badly affected Soviet atomic power engineering and will undoubtedly have an effect on the world's atomic power industry as a whole," Andranik Petrosyants went on.

According to him, the Chernobyl station, incorporating four 1,000,000 kw reactors, had been working satisfactorily. In 1985, it generated 29 billion kwhr of electricity. According to the scientist, the orderly and smooth operation of the atomic power station resulted to some extent in complacency and laxity which eventually gave rise to irresponsibility, negligence and indiscipline, and caused grave consequences.

Petrosyants said that two people had been killed on the first day of the accident and that 29 more had since died from radiation sickness.

Going back to the history of the disaster, the scientist said that before the fourth unit had been stopped for planned repairs after two years in operation, the plant managers had decided to test

the turbogenerator. This was a purely electrical engineering job which was not at all related to the reactor.

The investigation found, however, that the quality of the execution of the test programme had been poor and that it had not provided for essential safety measures. There were obvious manifestations of negligence, irresponsibility and conceit, which resulted in the accident. Those guilty of the accident had been severely punished.

"To ensure the international safety of nuclear power engineering," Petrosyants continued, "the IAEA with the participation of representatives of the Soviet Union and other member-countries of the agency drew up two conventions, one on the mandatory notification of nuclear accidents and the other on assistance to countries in case of accidents at atomic power stations. The documents will be considered by an IAEA special international conference in Vienna in late September."

"At present the ruined reactor at Chernobyl and the premises around it, in which remains some of the escaped fuel, are sufficiently safe from the point of view of the non-proliferation of radiation pollution. The situation is being monitored by a series of systems developed specifically for the purpose after the accident," Andranik Petrosyants continued.

The academician noted that the process of fission was not taking place in the reactor at the moment. He also said that part of the dust containing radioactive particles, which was being carried out by air currents from the reactor silo, was being filtered by a layer of materials introduced in the destroyed building during the first days after the accident.

"The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government," the scientist said, "expressed profound gratitude to the socialist countries which displayed solidarity with the Soviet people over the Chernobyl accident. They are also thankful to all the other countries and their citizens for moral support and practical assistance."

## *Pravda* on a nuclear-free zone in Nordic Europe

**MOSCOW, August 20, TASS:**

"THE establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Nordic Europe is a long overdue problem which should be resolved without delay," *Pravda* says today.

The newspaper notes that a recent meeting in Denmark of the heads of government and then foreign ministers of the five Nordic countries—Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland—was another reminder of this fact. The leaders of the five Nordic countries stated the need to appoint a special expert commission of the Nordic countries jointly to study possibilities and plan measures for the establishment of such a zone.

"The idea of a nuclear-free Nordic Europe has now been supported by millions of people in that region, the overwhelming majority of whom want it implemented as soon as possible," the newspaper says. "Such broad pressure from public forces, embracing very different world outlooks, has forced many political parties, parliaments and even governments to initiate joint actions for the establishment of such a zone.

"The United States and NATO are doing what

they can to bury the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-free zone because it is contrary to the global nuclear strategy of the alliance," the newspaper goes on. "However, this idea is taking on flesh and its proponents keep growing in number. The Soviet Union supported the establishment of a nuclear-free zone from the start. Small wonder that Mikhail Gorbachyov's latest statement on the extension of the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions to January 1, 1987, immediately drew a very favourable response from the Nordic countries. There are those who would like to link the solution of this purely regional problem to other questions which are not immediately relevant to it. In this context Finland and then Sweden stated that any linkage to other arms limitation measures in Europe should not be an obstacle to progress on the establishment of a nuclear-free zone."

"A nuclear-free Nordic Europe, as the ever broader sections of the population and political forces in the Nordic countries point out, is a realistic step towards a nuclear-free Europe. It is the road that millions of Europeans, all those who cherish peace and the security of our common European home, want to follow today," *Pravda* stresses. □

Yuri Izrael, Chairman of the State Committee of the USSR for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Control, said that the radiation levels at the site of the debris around the damaged 4th reactor amounted to units and even tens of roentgens per hour. That was why special measures had to be used in operations there, either remotely controlled machinery or special walls shielding the zone of operations from the areas with especially high contamination levels.

Yuri Izrael stressed that major Soviet cities, such as Moscow, were absolutely clean from the point of view of radiation contamination. Radiation levels in Minsk, Gomel and other cities close to the zone of the disaster were practically at normal background levels. The natural environment and sea water at the Black Sea resorts in the Crimea and the Caucasus were free from contamination and people could spend their holidays there without any restrictions.

"Deactivation work is being carried out on a large-scale in the 30-kilometre zone around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant," Yuri Izrael said.

Answering questions from newsmen at the press conference, he touched upon the measures for the elimination of the consequences of the accident at Chernobyl.

"Right after the accident, it was decided to move people not only from the places where contamination had taken place, but also from the whole 30-kilometre zone, bearing in mind the danger of radioactive fallout reaching there. Now the situation in some areas of the zone is absolutely normal. And part of the population has returned there. The problem of the return of people to other points will be decided after deactivation work is completed. This work is being done on a large scale and includes, in particular, the removal of debris and various objects with traces of radioactive contamination."

"Soviet specialists", the scientist said, "are attentively studying not only the radiation situation, but also the isotope composition of contamination in the monitored zones, and the possibility of economic activity there. Depending on the results of the studies, questions will be resolved pertaining to a further return of the population."

Leonid Ilyin, Vice-President of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR and Director of the Institute of Biophysics of the Ministry of Public Health of the USSR, noted that in a number of cases milk and other contaminated food had been destroyed. A great deal had been done to organise food control and at present all the regulations were being strictly enforced. He pointed out that no stall or shop received for sale food which had not first been thoroughly checked for radiation.

Leonid Ilyin described as favourable the prognosis for those who are now under medical supervision at sanatoria and rest-homes. "Yet all of these people", he pointed out, "will remain under careful medical supervision and roughly once a year will have to undergo medical examination at clinics." □

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# Press briefing on Soviet moratorium

MOSCOW, August 22, TASS:

THE Soviet Union is prepared for any forms of control over a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapon tests: national and international, including on-site inspection, Gennadi Gerasimov head of the Information Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, has pointed out.

Speaking at a briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists here today, he recalled that the Soviet Union had agreed to the installation of American equipment in the Semipalatinsk region.

"There had appeared commentaries in the West, which belittled the Soviet decision to extend the unilateral nuclear test moratorium," Gerasimov said. "They claim that before introducing the moratorium the Soviet Union had modernised its nuclear forces, while the United States, purportedly, needed to conduct testing in order to catch up with the Soviet Union."

The Soviet spokesman emphasised that the US had detonated far more nuclear explosions and that the point at issue was not so much the modernisation and perfection of American

weapons, but the development of new weapons, including space-based arms.

Gerasimov said that if both the US and the Soviet Union gave up nuclear testing, the two sides would find themselves in the same position. Further perfection of nuclear weapons would be hampered, and this would benefit all—the USSR, the US and the entire world.

The Soviet proposals indicated that ending tests was a step towards cutting armaments, eliminating nuclear, chemical and other weapons. The logic of events had brought the question of ending nuclear tests to the foreground.

The Soviet spokesman pointed out that agreement could be reached and a corresponding document signed this year at the Soviet-American summit meeting.

"Certain actions by the United States may block the work at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva on drafting a convention banning chemical weapons", Gennadi Gerasimov went on.

He recalled that President Ronald Reagan told Congress on July 29 that the US could start production of chemical binary munitions.

On August 16, the President in his radio address asked the House of Representatives to review its decision on quotas on the funds to produce binary munitions.

Simultaneously, Washington claimed that seven laboratories developing bacteriological weapons were operating in the Soviet Union. The US Defense Department accused the USSR of manufacturing such weapons. "These allegations," said the Soviet spokesman, "were false from beginning to end".

"Their aim was to divert attention from the preparations for bacteriological weapons production in the United States," Gerasimov added.

The USSR, unlike the United States, joined the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and voted in 1981 in favour of the resolution of the First Committee (Political and Security) of the UN General Assembly on the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons, which called upon all nations to refrain from producing and deploying new types of weapons of mass annihilation.

One hundred and fifty seven countries voted for the resolution, only one country, the United States, voted against. □

## New stage opened in struggle to avert a nuclear war

MOSCOW, August 22, TASS:

"A NEW stage has been opened in the struggle to avert a nuclear war—a stage of exceptional importance, if not a decisive one," Yuri Zhukov, *Pravda's* political news analyst writes in the newspaper today.

"The situation is on the whole propitious for achieving success in this struggle. The peace defenders are now armed with a well-composed and logical programme of action, a programme which is intelligible to each and everyone.

People see that:

—the Soviet proposals of January 15 on the

elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere on Earth by the year 2000 fully meet the demands of our age,

—the package of constructive proposals on nuclear and space armaments put on the negotiating table by the USSR in Geneva opens up the way to accords,

—the set of measures on reducing the armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals proposed by the Soviet Union jointly with its allies in the Warsaw Treaty awaits its discussion and adoption,

—a broad programme, worked out by the USSR, for ensuring security and co-operation in Asia and the Pacific is in the vital interests of the peoples not only of this region but also of the

whole planet,

—the Soviet 'Star Peace' plan, countering the US 'Star Wars' programme and providing for the establishment of a world space organisation, awaits discussion at the United Nations,

—the new Soviet proposals on chemical arms allow the signing, as early as before the close of the year or next year, a convention on banning this weapon, on eliminating its stocks and the industrial base for its production,

—the proposals tabled by the USSR and fraternal socialist countries at the Stockholm Conference, in co-operation with other participants in this conference, have opened up the way towards reaching important agreements on the non-use of force, on notifications regarding military exercises and troop movements, on exchange of annual plans of military activity, and on verification,

—the Soviet plan for establishing an international regime of the safe development of nuclear power engineering was put to debate to involve all organisations concerned,

—socialist countries elaborated proposals on setting up a comprehensive system of international security which await their discussion at the next session of the UN General Assembly.

No one will be able to disprove the indisputable truth that the solution of the vital and burning problems of today—the problems of banning nuclear testing—would become a prologue to the implementation of this comprehensive programme and to the radical amelioration of the situation in the world," Yuri Zhukov concludes. □

## ANTI-LIBYAN PROVOCATION

MOSCOW, August 20, TASS:

Boris Shabayev, TASS political news analyst, writes:

SHIPS of the US Sixth Fleet are again heading at full speed to an area adjoining the Libyan coast to hold another 'exercise' in which, as the Associated Press reports, planes based on the aircraft-carrier *Forrestal* will be used. This time Washington officials are in no hurry to divulge to the press any details about the exercises since they are 'secret'.

But no matter how the Pentagon generals and admirals might try to shroud this action in a pall of secrecy, its openly provocative character is impossible to conceal. It reminds one of the piratic raid made by US planes on peaceful Libyan cities just four months ago, the raid that took the lives of innocent people and caused destruction. That disgraceful operation caused stormy indignation all over the world, so much so that even many allies of the United States, except perhaps Great Britain and Israel, tried to dissociate themselves from it in one way or another.

And now Washington again takes steps aimed at a sharp aggravation of the situation around Libya.

Just as then, before the piratic raid on Tripoli and Benghazi, the preparation for new aggressive actions against Libya is accompanied by a feverish search for an invented pretext that can mislead perhaps only absolutely naive people or those who are duped with false propaganda. For it must be clear to any sane person that this is an overt and gross manifestation of the policy of state terrorism, the striving to punish the country that dared challenge US *diktat*, that courageously upholds the just cause of Arabs, victims of Israeli expansionism. It will not be amiss to recall that the highest leaders of the Washington Administration openly expressed regrets that the Libyan leadership was not eliminated in the April raid.

By all indications, the 'secret' of this further show of US military force close to Libya is that the 'hot heads' in Washington apparently, intend to repeat the aggression against the country that annoys them and for the same purposes as last time. And gripped with neo-globalist hysteria, they refuse to consider the fact that such actions are fraught with unpredictable consequences for peace and stability, not only in the Mediterranean but also beyond it. □

### A Real Step Towards Disarmament

Mikhail Gorbachyov's meeting with representatives of the International Forum of Scientists for a Nuclear Test Ban, Moscow, July 14, 1986

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## PRAVDA EDITORIAL:

# A Historic Chance

FROM time immemorial people strongly believed in the infinite continuation of the human race. But the blasts of the US atomic bombs in 1945 shook this faith, and the arms race launched and brought to madness by the US, especially the bid to extend it to outer space, has produced a conviction everywhere in the world that the very existence of life on our planet is at stake. And there is no more pressing care on the Earth now than the worry born out of the threat of general nuclear destruction. The time has come for determined and responsible actions, the utmost mobilisation of reason and common sense.

Of exceptional significance in this regard is the statement made by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachyov, on Soviet television. Received as an event of great importance, it is today being studied and discussed all over the world.

Having comprehensively and scrupulously weighed up all the pros and cons, and guided by its high sense of responsibility for fate of peace, the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and the Government of the Soviet Union have decided to extend the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions until January 1, 1987.

This decision is based on the unanimous will of the Soviet people. The nations of the world

highly appreciate and welcome the new political initiative of the USSR. The only way for genuine peace is the full elimination of the most formidable weapons of destruction. The Soviet programme for the deliverance of the Earth from them by the year 2000 fully meets the requirements of our epoch. Over a year ago the USSR was the first to take a bold and wise step on the road to this aim: it unilaterally introduced a moratorium on nuclear explosions. Now the moratorium has been extended once again. This decision is already action, and not just a proposal. It signifies the beginning of a new phase in the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons, the winding down of the arms race and the improvement of the international climate.

In accordance with its programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons, the USSR has put a package of constructive proposals on the table at the Soviet-American negotiations. Together with its Warsaw Treaty allies it has suggested a complex of measures to reduce the military forces and conventional arms in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Our new proposals make it possible to sign by the year's end or next year a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of their stockpiles and production facilities. The broad Soviet platform for ensuring security and co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region has also evoked considerable response. As an alternative to the 'Star Wars' programme, the Soviet Union has submitted to the UN a programme for the construction of a Star Peace. The most generalised expression of the new approaches in foreign policy was the basic principles for a comprehen-

sive system of international security formulated by the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

One year of the moratorium has shown and clarified a lot. Above all, the pressure of the peace forces increased. A significant and authoritative part of the world community became more active. Moscow received messages from political and public figures, individuals and organisations in many countries, including the USA and other NATO states, asking for an extension of the Soviet moratorium in order to give one more chance for coming to reason to those who are still insisting on nuclear explosions.

On the other hand, that year showed the world public who actually stands for disarmament and who is mad on the arms race, what socialist morality is and what the principles of the money bag are. The long silence at Soviet nuclear testing grounds and the 18 US explosions are a contrast which cannot be glossed over with any verbal tricks. During this time, the advocates of nuclear weapons were also deprived of their excuses about the impossibility of control over tests. The propaganda veil was removed from their machinations. By demonstratively ignoring world public opinion and arrogantly responding with the Nevada explosions to the Soviet peace moves they would like to provoke us into new rounds of the arms race. But today, and Washington should not forget this, it is suicidal to build inter-state relations on an illusion of achieving superiority in weapons of mass destruction.

The Soviet people know with whom they are dealing. National security is a sacred cause for us, and we shall spare no effort to ensure it. The entire history of the Soviet Union attests to its ability to find quickly an answer to any challenge. And let the Washington leaders once again consider their new military programmes from the point of view of US interests, its security and the prospects of Soviet-American negotiations, and the interests of world peace. We believe in the wisdom of the American people and are confident that a termination of nuclear tests equally meets both their interests and the security of all nations.

The Soviet Union is confident that an agreement on the termination of nuclear tests can be achieved quickly and already signed this year at the Soviet-American summit meeting. This event would unquestionably become the main practical result of the meeting and a significant step to the cessation of the arms race. It would be a kind of prologue to further progress at the talks on nuclear arms and their elimination, to a radical improvement in the political climate in the world.

By extending its unilateral moratorium, the USSR has made one more invaluable contribution to the general efforts to ensure that the International Year of Peace goes down in history worthy of its name. The governments and peoples of all countries, and primarily the Government of the USA and the American people, should not lose once again this historic chance that could lead to the end of the arms race.

(August 21. In full)

## EDI: a new twist to 'Star Wars' defence

By Vladimir Katin, *Novosti political correspondent*

ORIGINALLY, the 'Strategic Defense Initiative', also known as the 'Star Wars' programme, was conceived by the White House to shield US territory from a possible nuclear attack and at the same time provide coverage for the deployment of offensive space-based weapons. Then other countries, US NATO allies above all, were invited to take part.

The bait they were offered and rose to was a chance to share in US technological advances and the US space missile defence system. When the governments of several countries, including West Germany and Britain, announced they were joining SDI, Washington urged them to devise their own European variant of 'Star Wars' defence, currently known as the 'European Defence Initiative' (EDI). Why?

US strategists say the most promising weapons for hitting intercontinental missiles and their warheads in boost or midcourse phases are directed-energy means based on an x-ray nuclear-pumped laser—if only because these may destroy ICBMs in flight during boost, before their warheads start splitting. The trickiest point, however, is where to have such weapons. If they are deployed in space, they may pose an array of technical and legal problems. Long-living battle stations in outer space would be costly and vulnerable to the enemy's relatively cheap and unsophisticated satellite-killer systems. On the other hand, if nuclear weapons are placed in near-Earth orbit, this will violate the 1967 Treaty on the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, and stir up worldwide criticism of the United States.

This being so, the only way out is to make directed-energy weapons carried by land-based missiles. But this alternative, too, has a grave disadvantage about it, as x-rays emitted by nuclear-pumped lasers can kill the enemy's missiles only from a distance of no more than 3,000 km. Which means, if they are stationed on US territory, they cannot be used against missiles in the Soviet Union.

This largely explains why the United States is so anxious to have its West European allies involved in SDI and at the same time have their own version of missile defence. For both cases suggest the deployment of a first, highly effective echelon of an ABM system, having a swarm of missile-killer missiles armed with lasers and stationed in close proximity to Soviet borders.

Washington's motives are clear: once it has a powerful nuclear arsenal deployed in Western Europe and in outer space, the US will be in a position to deliver a first strike and then intercept Soviet retaliatory missiles with the help of its killer missiles deployed close to Soviet territory.

The Soviet Union has undoubtedly not failed to take these plans into account. Should they get underway, Moscow will take adequate steps to counter any threat to its security. This may entail innumerable dangers for the West Europeans, if they are involved in the 'Star Wars' programme and start devising their own version, EDI, conceived as part of SDI. For in the final analysis, Western Europe may find itself even more a hostage of the US 'nuclear strategy'. The plan devised by the US is insidious indeed, as it wants to imperil Europe and by so doing try to emerge from a possible nuclear conflict with minimum losses. □

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# At the Stockholm Conference

**STOCKHOLM, August 26, TASS:**  
*TASS special correspondents Vladimir Bogachyov and Nikolai Vukolov report:*

CHARLES REDMAN, a spokesman for the US State Department, has recently made a statement on the course of the talks at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, in which he was trying, in particular, to call in question the constructive character of the proposals of the Socialist countries on on-site inspection.

The socialist countries have set forth at the current session of the conference their principled stand on the issue of verification of compliance

with the agreements being drawn up at the forum. In the development of the control concept set forth in the Budapest appeal of the Warsaw Treaty countries, the USSR and the other socialist countries have declared their preparedness to discuss the question of on-site inspection to check on the confidence-building measures on the basis of a limited quota—one-two inspections a year on the territory of each state.

The new initiative of the socialist countries has been positively evaluated by the participants in the forum. Addressing the conference on August 25, Ambassador Wolfgang Loibl, head of the Austrian delegation, said that that highly important step of the socialist countries had created a new situation at the conference and considerably broadened prospects for its successful completion.

For his part Ambassador Viktor Gauci, head of the Maltese delegation, described that initiative as a real breakthrough in the field of

international relations which will bring about considerable progress at the conference. Ambassador Aleksandar Bozovic, head of the Yugoslav delegation, has positively evaluated this approach of the socialist countries.

The statement by the representatives of the US State Department, in which he commented on the stance of the socialist countries, sounded, at least, a strange note, since the USA has permanently declared its adherence to the idea of on-site inspection. Now that the USSR has put forward a mutually acceptable solution to that problem, the US State Department has described it as a propaganda ploy. The statement by the spokesman for the State Department is a source of serious concern about the true intentions of the USA.

Can it be that they are planning a last-moment attempt at preventing the attainment of agreements by giving up their old positions, including their positions on the question of inspection? □

## Against a new round of the arms race

**MOSCOW, August 23, TASS:**

IF reason triumphs and if we succeed in combining equally sober-minded, and new political thinking and scientific achievements, mankind will also succeed in tackling the task of survival and save our planet for future generations, said Academician Roald Sagdeyev, Director of the Space Explorations Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

"Opportunities which science has shared with mankind," he emphasised, speaking today on *The 9th Studio* programme of the Soviet Central TV network, "have reached such a scale by their influence on mankind and the environment that we have really approached the fatal line."

In this context the academician pointed out that the unilateral nuclear tests moratorium declared by the USSR was an unusually bold move, aimed at stopping completely all types of nuclear tests in the world as a first and very important stage. This would mean, he noted, putting a roadblock in the path of a further qualitative growth in armaments.

Roald Sagdeyev pointed to the link between the nuclear arms race and the US 'Strategic Defense Initiative' programme. He called quite unfeasible the SDI programme in the form it was being advertised now. The academician noted that it was extremely difficult and practically impossible to create a fool-proof defence against flying nuclear warheads, saying that there were means for penetrating the SDI.

"We warn of this due to the fact," said the Director of the Space Explorations Institute, "that putting into orbit of the 'Star Wars' system first and then the means of combatting it constitutes another round of the arms race, putting off a political solution of the question of how to get rid of the huge arsenal accumulated on the Earth."

"Though we have various ways of neutralising the SDI," noted Roald Sagdeyev, "the main desire of our people and the main task of the USSR is to prevent this new dangerous and destabilising round of the arms race." □

## Yuri Vorontsov on Soviet-US summit

**MOSCOW, August 25, TASS:**

YULI VORONTSOV, USSR First Deputy Foreign Minister, said at a press conference here today that the Soviet side favoured a Soviet-American summit meeting that would end in serious agreements in the field of disarmament.

There is so far no agreement on a specific date for the meeting.

## Anti-war demonstrations and rallies in Moscow

**MOSCOW, August 23, TASS:**

THE slogans 'Let us Rally in the Struggle for Peace', 'To Enter the 21st Century Without Nuclear Weapons' and 'No to Star Wars' were the keynotes of demonstrations and rallies held in Moscow today in support of the Soviet State's peaceful foreign policy.

They involved more than 300,000 people and were sponsored by Moscow's public organisations: the Peace Committee, a section of the Soviet War Veterans' Committee, a section of the Soviet Peace Fund, Trade Unions, the Committee of Moscow's Youth Organisations and also the Soviet Women's Committee.

Early on Saturday morning, thousands of Muscovites took to the city's streets, heading through the Sadovoye Circle to the venue of one such rally, workers and scientists, physicians and students, schoolchildren and teachers marched past the US Embassy in Moscow. They were carrying placards reading: 'We Stand for Unity of all Peaceable Forces' and 'The Soviet Union Renounced Nuclear Explosions, it is Time for Others to Follow suit'.

Opening the anti-war rally in the square outside the Central Recreation Park, Valeri

In Washington they have started using purposeful 'leakage' in order to distract the attention of the world public from the question of US accession to the moratorium on all nuclear blasts and on concluding immediately an agreement on their termination. Apparently such 'leakage' is designed to mislead the public, present Washington's stand in a more favourable light, and hint at its constructiveness, where it does not really exist. □

## Message to Gorbachyov

**MOSCOW, August 26, TASS:**

Anatoli Kovalyov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, received today N. Marshall, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* of Britain in the Soviet Union, who handed over a personal message from Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of Britain, to Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

During a conversation they discussed some topical problems, specifically those connected with the Soviet unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions. □

Saikin, mayor of the city, said: "We have assembled here so as to declare our unanimous approval and wholehearted support for the statement on the extension of the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions until January 1, 1987, made by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachyov". The speaker stressed that mankind was faced with a choice: either peace and life or collective nuclear suicide. To shy away from the quest for ways to prevent the military threat means to gamble with the destiny of the whole of civilisation. Not a single state can defend itself only by military-technical means. Reliable security for all countries and peoples can be ensured only by political means, by joint efforts of all states.

In conclusion, the participants in the rally attended by more than 25,000 people adopted an address in which they called upon the residents of the world's capitals to exert all efforts to arrest the arms race and stop nuclear explosions. "The capitals of countries throughout the world can and should give an example of a new thinking and common sense", the document says.

The participants in the other six anti-war rallies held in various districts of the Soviet capital today also voted overwhelmingly in support of this address. □

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# USSR: public opinion and ecology

By Gennadi Pisarevsky, *Novosti* political analyst

TWO major projects have been suspended by decision of the top Soviet leadership: diversion of part of the European northern rivers' flow to the Volga and of parts of the Siberian rivers' flow to Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

What is the problem about? The country's south, in Europe and Asia, is short of fresh water, which gives life and is the only irreplaceable resource of any production. The USSR has ample water resources, with an annual river flow of 4,300 to 4,700 cubic kilometres of water, or more than 16,000 tons per capita (a thousand cubic metres is a billion tons). We also have many lakes: Baikal alone, which is unique in the world, holds one-fifth of the Earth's surface fresh water. But it has so happened that over 80 per cent of the flow is in rivers that empty into the Arctic Ocean. For this reason there is less than 2,000 tons of water per capita in the southern areas.

This was the background when it was decided to intervene in nature. Two projects were prepared. One—which was to be launched in the 12th five-year period (1986-1990)—was to divert 5,800 cubic metres of water from the Pechora and Northern Dvina to the Volga, while the second was expected to take water from the Irtysh in Siberia.

From the beginning the projects became a focus of heated and emotional debates, lasting many years. But it could not have been otherwise in a country where over 60 million people are members of nature conservation societies.

Being a confirmed conservative-minded ecologist who believes in Hippocrates' 'don't harm' dictum, I will give a brief and objective exposition of the case as it is presented by advocates of, so to speak, ecological surgery. In our country which leads the world in its extent, 47 per cent of territory is on permafrost, which is sort of a 'black hole' for farming. In the southern regions, on the other hand, abundant in fertile soil and warmth, droughts are a regular feature of the farmer's calendar. Two-thirds of commodity grain, for example, is grown in arid zones—areas of high risk agriculture.

The average biopotential of our hectare is one-half or one-third of that in the US or Western Europe, which is provided with water and warmth by the beneficent Gulf Stream. As for Central Asia with its bone dry and hot deserts, crops can be raised only by irrigation, which has been done for millennia. Cotton growing forced the country to invest astronomical sums in the amelioration of Central Asian lands.

Weighing up all the pros and cons, planners became hardened in the belief that they could not go on without tapping the northern rivers. And they set about making projects. The first to catch their eye was the Volga, Europe's largest river spanned by huge dams and forming a chain of vast reservoirs. According to a universal law of nature, there had been a redistribution of water resources. The annual contribution of the Volga to the Caspian decreased, as a result, to 40 cubic kilometres, which adversely affected the situation in the largest landlocked body of water in the world.

What was to be done? A dam was hastily built to separate the shallow Kara Bogaz Gol Gulf, that boiling pan of the desert, from the sea. The savings reached amounted to six cubic kilometres. But the gulf began to shrink disastrously. Industry was losing vast quantities of minerals of that unique deposit where the sun 'converted' the sea water into a variety of the Mendeleev Table mirabilite (Glauber salts). The temperature of the already heated debate went up a few degrees.

There are no obvious truths in nature, the external aspect is not even the tip of the iceberg, it is rather an indication of the direction in which to look. Such was the case here. Planners had miscalculated: all of a sudden the Caspian Sea began to "heal" (a favourite word of Dostoyevsky) itself—since 1978 its level has risen by 114 centimetres. And no one knows the origin of the 400,000 cubic metres of water, or almost 70 times the amount that annually flows through the northern rivers. Mother nature has given us only biological time to measure the space of our being in this "best of all worlds", as Voltaire said. As for itself, it exists in a system of multiple coordinates: its clocks show not only biological time, but also geological, cosmic (stellar near the Sun), galactic (via the Milky Way), intergalactic and so on, until the end of our expanding universe, if there is such an end. All in all, nature has put a big question mark over the project to save the Caspian. Whether it will review its opinion is anybody's guess. A "thing in itself" that is all.

## RESOLUTION

MOSCOW, August 19, TASS:

THE CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government have passed a resolution on stopping all development work and other activities related to the rerouting of part of the flow of northern and Siberian rivers to the southern regions of the country. The decision is motivated by the need for additional research into the problem, which the Soviet public is urging. The resolution, the text of which has been released today, plans to invest the funds thus saved in land improvement programmes in the central and northern parts of the country and in the modernisation of irrigation systems in the Volga basin.

The decision was taken to seek savings (15-20 per cent) in water consumption in the Central Asian Republics, whose interests were to be served by the rerouting project. The governments of the Central Asian republics and research institutions are offered to draw up a programme for the development of their productive forces to the year 2010 on the basis of the existing water reserves.

Although preparatory work for rerouting water reserves from north to south has been terminated, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and other research institutions have been instructed to continue to study the problems involved in the redistribution of water resources between individual regions of the country. □

But the planners did not give ground. Modifying their arguments, they put a case for using northern waters to irrigate southern fields. Ecologists, however, made calculations and showed that the European south was using, for various reasons, 60,000 to 80,000 cubic metres of water more than it should.

In short, the debate reached its climax in 1986. The best showing was made by intellectuals. In January, Russia's writers made an appeal—the most read and revered ones such as Leonid Leonov, Vasil Belov, Valentin Rasputin, Victor Astafyev and others. Their letter, published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, the newspaper of the CPSU Central Committee, evoked a big public re-

sponse. The problems of ecology featured large also at a congress of Soviet writers. And on top of all that came grief for everyone of us—the pain of Chernobyl. Things came one after another, and mercy to nature became our spiritual imperative.

By suspending work on stupendous land-improvement projects the Soviet leadership demonstrated its concern for the coming generations: we will demonstrate its concern for the coming generations: we will be gone, but nature will remain, so let it shine for our descendants as an "eternal beauty", to quote Pushkin.

The main thing now being to put agriculture on a footing of intensive development, and making economies in everything; the sums so released can be used to improve the irrigated lands, repair and upgrade land-reclamation systems and apply intensive technologies. There is much work ahead and most of it must be done by the Central Asian republics. Half the water on their cotton and other plantations fails to reach the fields, evaporating on the way, salinating the soil and remaining absorbed there. Why, then, risk building a prohibitively costly canal from Siberia when such reserves are there for the taking?

I will further say that today the solution of all questions big and small in the USSR is subject to approval by public opinion, which is playing an increasing part in the dynamic democratisation of society. Democracy implies responsibility in the first place. To the present and the future. It is this responsibility which made the Soviet leadership take the far from easy decision: the south needs water for crop growing and improving food supplies for the population, which in itself is the supreme task of our society.

But everything must be viewed philosophically and soberly, with feet firmly planted on the ground of realities. And these are such that terrestrial civilisation is on the point of reaching that stage of development when people can guarantee the successful outcome of ecological operations. Ecological surgery—diversion of waters, local and global regulation of the climate—is a matter of the future, near or distant, if and when enough cheap energy is available. At the present time, we must do all we can for nature. We must start the application of no-waste technologies on a large scale, plant forests, the more the better, recultivate lands, curb water and wind erosion, save animals, "our lesser brothers", entered in the *Red Data Book*, control "acid rains", and reduce—ideally to natural values—the pollution levels of water, the atmosphere, and the soil. There will be enough work for a lifetime. Work that is intensive, creative and largely pioneering. Noble and merciful to our mother nature. □

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