

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Tetsuzo Fuwa

ON May 4 Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, met Tetsuzo Fuwa, Deputy Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan.

Fuwa is heading a party delegation to talks in Moscow.

Gorbachev expressed on behalf of the CPSU Central Committee satisfaction with the regular ties that have been established between the two parties.

Time compressed developments, imparted dynamism to them, which called for a vigorous character of relations between the communist parties.

Noting that the negative period in relations between the Communist Party of Japan and the CPSU had been left behind, Gorbachev expressed readiness to discuss in the spirit of goodwill and openness any problems with the use of the "reserves understanding" that had been accumulated ever since.

Major issues of international significance were discussed in the five-hour conversation. Greatest attention was given to problems of eliminating nuclear weapons and building a nuclear-free world.

Both sides stated that in the period since the previous meeting of the CPSU and the CPJ at top level, the world had witnessed major changes, favourable on the whole for the solution of the historic task of reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons.

The interlocutors highly assessed the diverse significance of the INF Treaty signed in Washington. Gorbachev voiced the opinion that the treaty would be ratified, that it was hard to imagine that someone would dare assume responsibility for its disruption in full view of the world.

At Fuwa's request, Gorbachev informed him about the course of talks on the 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons and prospects for reaching an agreement.

In discussing the question of difficulties involved, the Japanese comrades, taking into account the geographical situation of their country, drew special attention to the need for resolving the issue of sea-based nuclear weapons, that is SLCMs.

It was stated that the process of talks on nuclear disarmament received a powerful impetus from the change in the public atmosphere with regard to nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war.

The programme for creating a nuclear-free world, set out by the Soviet leadership in January 1986, in defining the ultimate objective with time-tables for attaining it, provided the anti-nuclear movement with a clear perspective.

This goal fully met the principled concept of the Japanese communists and sentiments of broad circles of the Japanese public who were consistently and persistently campaigning for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Obstacles along that path were analysed. They were substantial, and the situation should not be viewed as rose-coloured. Many people in the world had not as yet realised the entire danger of the doctrine of "nuclear deterrence" which they were using to justify various plans of "compensation" and "modernisation", including in Japan.

Like the attempts to put weapons in outer space, this doctrine was leading to the acceleration of the arms race and enhancing the threat of nuclear war. It fed on the intentions to gain military superiority and reach commanding heights in world politics.

Importance was stressed of specific steps towards the ultimate objective, such as the consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, prevention of the deployment of nuclear weapons in other countries, creation of nuclear-free zones, limitation and termination of nuclear testing. It was worth while thinking about returning to the idea of a moratorium. Gorbachev observed in this connection.

Proposals

The sides considered issues of co-operation between the CPSU and the CPJ in the campaign for peace, participation of public forces in both countries in the anti-nuclear movement that was playing such an important part in present-day politics.

On behalf of the CPSU and the Soviet public, Gorbachev expressed solidarity with the campaign of collecting signatures under the Hiroshima and Nagasaki appeal, and announced the intention of Soviet public organisations to take an active part in the "second peace wave".

Mikhail Gorbachev and Tetsuzo Fuwa expressed confidence that a nuclear-free world is attainable in conditions of recognition of the freedom of socio-political choice by every people, every country. The idea has been expressed that the 21st century will be for capitalism, as a social system, a real test of its ability to exist and develop in conditions of demilitarisation.

Special attention has been devoted to the problems of the Asia-Pacific region. The significance has been confirmed of the ideas and proposals expressed by Mikhail Gorbachev in his Vladivostok speech and in the interview with the newspaper *Merdeka*. More and more facts are being accumulated, which are evidence of the interest in these constructive initiatives on the part of many states of the region. The US response to that was a build-up of pressure. Its military presence there runs counter to the obvious tendencies in most of the states of the Asia-Pacific region towards business-like co-operation, interaction and peaceful settle-

ment of pressing problems, vital for every country and the region as a whole. The militaristic approach is in conflict with the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and the growing realisation among the public and in many political circles there of the responsibility for the destiny of the whole world, especially in connection with the growing role of the Asia-Pacific region in the development of civilisation.

Part of the meeting was held within the full delegation, and a larger part of it was an eye-to-eye meeting.

In conclusion of his meaningful and useful conversation, Mikhail Gorbachev reaffirmed the significance of the joint statement by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Japan in 1984, whose basic provisions of fundamental significance remain topical, albeit, it goes without saying, that a specific analysis of a concrete situation is necessary in their application. There are quite a number of questions which deserve to be jointly discussed with the use, in particular, of the best scientific forces of both parties on a regular basis.

Mikhail Gorbachev requested that greetings and friendly wishes be conveyed to Kenji Miyamoto, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan and the whole leadership of the Communist Party of Japan. He also expressed preparedness for new meetings, for developing relations on the basis of equality, respect, mutual non-interference, including on questions of phrasing the stands on some or other issues.

Taking part in the meeting were Anatoli Dobrynin, Georgi Kornienko, Mitsuhiro Kaneko, Hiroshi Tachtiko, Hiroshi Kikunami, Seiji Niihara and H. Nisiguchi. □

Anniversary of liberation from fascism

THE Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Soviet Government congratulated Erich Honecker, Willi Stoph and the people of the German Democratic Republic on the 43rd anniversary of the liberation of the German people from fascism.

"The road traversed by the GDR over the decades patently shows the historic significance of the victory over German fascism for the destinies of the Germans," the message said.

It pointed out the GDR's success in socialist construction and emphasised that "the GDR, shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, is actively working for disarmament and prevention of war, and comes out with major foreign policy initiatives."

The message said that "the peoples of the Soviet Union and the GDR are linked by inviolable friendship and common ideals." □

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Tetsuzo Fuwa	p. 165
Mikhail Gorbachev receives delegation from Socialist Party of Japan	p. 166
Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at media meeting	p. 167
Eduard Shevardnadze's message to UN committee against apartheid	p. 170

Mikhail Gorbachev receives delegation from Socialist Party of Japan

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV met at the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee on May 6 a delegation from the Socialist Party of Japan and the chairman of that party's central executive committee, Takako Doi.

The leadership of the two parties thus continued their dialogue which is regular in nature and has long-standing traditions.

The meeting developed into a lively discussion right from the very beginning. Gorbachev set the tone by showing an interest in the concerns of the Japanese people today and in what they think about the world situation, the Soviet Union and the outlook for Japanese-Soviet relationship.

The problems of the times were discussed from the positions of each party's responsibility to its nation and with account taken of the great possibilities inherent in Soviet-Japanese relations for positive processes in the world as a whole and for general security.

The interlocutors exchanged opinions about the tremendous interest demonstrated in the world in new thinking and about the positive results of the new Soviet foreign policy stemming from perestroika.

"On the issues of campaigning for a nuclear-free world," Gorbachev said, "we take heed very attentively of the opinion of the Japanese people. They have perhaps the priority right to put this issue squarely on the agenda. Consistent compliance by Japan with its three non-nuclear principles is of exceptionally high and of international significance."

Practical steps

The conversation touched more than once on the causes behind the obstructions to improvement in the international situation. It was agreed, however, that the atmosphere in the world had changed markedly over recent times.

"The world is changing," Gorbachev said, "it is changing in a positive direction, although it is not yet possible to say that it has already left the crossroads where it has found itself since coming to face the threat of nuclear catastrophe."

"Major imaginative ideas and initiatives have caught on, finding broad support, and had already impacted the process of rebuilding international relations," he added.

The famous Delhi Declaration of 1986 was recalled as an important contribution to the philosophy of their renewal.

The interlocutors spoke highly also of practical steps to realise the new ideas, most notably the INF Treaty.

Doi asked about the prospects for the forthcoming Soviet-American summit and wished it success. She also requested that this meeting take account, if possible, of some problems which are especially worrying to the Japanese public, primarily the issue of sea-based nuclear arms.

Much attention was paid to the situation in Asia and the Pacific. "The process has got under way there also, the thinking has started," Gorbachev noted. "The trend is mounting for joint and equitable discussions of problems concerning economic, political and cultural co-operation. The ideas voiced in Vladivostok have found a use in these efforts as well."

Doi, for her part, voiced considerations which were received with interest and with a readiness to study them concretely.

"We are realists," Gorbachev said, "and we realise the vastness, complexity and contradictoriness of that great part of the present-day world, which is to play an ever bigger role in the fate of human civilisation. We now see a lot of problems there and many hotspots."

"We are not inclined to speed up events and do not expect quick results. But one should not be discouraged by this. It is essential to make the first steps."

Foreign policy

"We believe that if all countries of the Asia-Pacific region and particularly such states as China, the Soviet Union, India, the United States, Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Australia, show wisdom worthy of their peoples, relationships in the region will be given a powerful impetus and a sound orientation. The principles on which they can be built are universal: the recognition of the right of everyone to a free choice, renunciation of interference and imposition of one's views, a balance of interests, the awareness that the time has come when not a single people, even the smallest one, will put up with diktat, and the realisation of the truth that, in the final analysis, we all belong to one and the same civilisation which calls for treating it as an indivisible entity."

In response to Takako Doi's remark about the special responsibility of the Soviet Union and the United States, Mikhail Gorbachev, while not denying that, emphasised that by no means everything depended on the two powers.

"No one should stay aloof, wash one's hands of it, shaking off responsibility for developments in the world. Everyone should bear one's load of responsibility. Otherwise, there would be no improvement of international relations."

"In our days it is also of importance to take into account," he pointed out, "that the peoples are less and less inclined to agree that their destiny should be decided for them and without them by governments. They more and more actively and directly intervene in foreign policy. This applies both to the Soviet Union and Japan."

The issue of settling regional conflicts (Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Nicaragua) was touched upon. There was a common opinion that a settlement of regional conflicts is possible now only on the basis of an exclusively political approach to the resolution of contradictions and problems connected with these conflicts.

Japanese-Soviet relations held an important place in the conversation. On behalf of the Soviet people, Mikhail Gorbachev expressed invariable respect for the Japanese people. "We proceed from the view that Japan is our neighbour," he said. "This is a reality which neither you, nor we can avoid. It is a constant in our international policy. The development of relations with Japan is an aspect of our long-term policy."

"Various things happened in the history of our relations, but it is high time to turn, at last, a new page. In an atmosphere when progress is made in the Soviet Union's relations with Western Europe, with Latin America and even,

despite great difficulties, with the United States, it is abnormal when Japanese-Soviet relations remind one of a feeble fire which smoulders, instead of burning brightly. It is pointless and unproductive to continue trying to prove that we can live without each other," Gorbachev said.

He agreed with Doi that new facts should be accumulated for the development of relations and went along with a pronouncement that it is necessary to build such bricks for a Soviet-Japanese bridge that could be used also for the construction of good relations everywhere in the world.

Gorbachev emphasised two aspects in the Soviet approach: the readiness for an improvement of relations on the basis of post-war realities and the groundlessness of the expectations that the USSR will ever be trying to impose itself on others.

"The Soviet people and the Soviet leadership are sincerely in favour of friendship with the Japanese people, with Japan. We shall not be making guesses where history can lead. If we are actively developing relations, striving to make them friendly, we shall have one kind of future. If we take a different road, we shall have another kind of future. It depends on this what role our relations will play in the world process, in ensuring universal security," the Soviet leader said.

Clarity

"Let us begin rebuilding our relations rather than allowing them to resemble a skipping record which goes over the same snatch of a tune again and again instead of executing the whole song," he added.

On Doi's initiative the conversation turned to Gorbachev's visit to Japan. "What is important is the circumstances under which it could really become an impulse to a real shift in our relations."

"Let's see our discussion as making the visit problem a topical matter. But we need to know the standpoint of the Japanese Government and its understanding of the circumstances connected with the visit."

"Complete clarity about the stands is essential. Clarity about disagreements is important to making headway as well."

Gorbachev expressed satisfaction with the meeting: "The discussion was one of substance, candour and goodwill and demonstrated that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Party of Japan share the same anxieties in the principal issues of world significance and we are not inclined to dramatise the differences."

"Our parties are independent, they act in different conditions and so the differences are only natural. We are prepared to act in the spirit of dialogue and co-operation in the future as well," Gorbachev said. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at media meeting

A MEETING with media executives and the heads of ideological institutions and professionals' unions took place at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on May 7.

Mikhail Gorbachev said in his opening remarks there:

"We want to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. We see that society and the Party have become involved in the process of preparing it. This is why guideposts are needed.

"The press has already introduced relevant rubrics and the debates have effectively already got under way — and not only within the Party, but on a nationwide scale as well. I think the mass media have already gained some experience in this respect and some questions have arisen, too."

Many of those attending then expressed their opinions on matters under discussion. In conclusion the meeting was addressed by Gorbachev. He said:

Such meetings are very important to us, to the Central Committee, and it is good that we now have such a tradition. There are at least two points that could be taken up.

First, the Party's leadership needs to consult you. A policy devoid of a scientific basis is doomed to vacillation and errors. We know this from our own experience. A policy not resting on morality can cause, I think, no less harm. And we are aware as well of what this has led to. This is why this meeting is important to us.

Second, I hope that the exchange of opinions offers a possibility for you, heads of ideological organisations, journals and newspapers, as well as to check your tack and your approaches. For it is common reference points that we all need, especially in the sphere of ideology and consciousness. I think that freedom always goes together, comrades, with increasing responsibility. The editors, the media executives bear vast responsibility at this watershed time when our society has found itself at a very crucial phase in its history. Every editor, of course, needs such contacts, such meetings so that, as they say, to check his watch. This is why I welcome this meeting once again.

You may rest assured that we take in the entire pluralism of opinions at these meetings with you. After all, it offers food for thought and the basis for understanding things better, for honing ideas and formulating them so that later to realise them in practice. I find it inspiring, for example, that our meetings are growing each time more substantive and the dialogue is getting ever more meaningful and profound. This is understandable, though, as perestroika, too, has scaled new heights and acquired new parameters.

I said in my opening remarks that we wanted to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. Much is expected from this conference in our Party and in our society indeed. Much is expected from our conference also by our foreign friends. Our antagonists are also making their own plans and calculations. This probably explains the tremendous interest in our conference.

Very many people are anxious about the question of who will be elected to the conference, of who will have the power to decide on vital problems bearing on the fate of our society and of socialism.

In short, people are showing concern for the destiny of perestroika. And even this by itself is very good.

The CPSU Central Committee has expressed its opinion on procedures for electing delegates to the conference: Our position is it is committed, stalwarts of perestroika, active communists, that should be elected delegates. There must be no more quotas, as was the case in the past, specifying how many factory workers and farmers and how many women are to be elected, among others. The principal political directive is to elect active supporters of perestroika to go to the conference.

We expressed ourselves for the candidates to be picked out necessarily with the participation of Party organisations and worker collectives and of Party committees at district and city levels, in short, by all the people. Some regional Party committees have decided to make the names of the candidates public in the local press even before the plenums that are to elect the delegates, so that they could be publicly discussed. This is quite right, in our view. This will make it possible to approach the candidate selection from correct positions.

The CPSU Central Committee will keep the entire process of electing the body of delegates to the Party conference in its focus of attention all the time. Some 5,000 delegates will be elected, or the same number that has been elected to the 27th Party Congress.

Comrades, we are positive that the line of the 27th Congress is correct. The three years since the April 1985 Central Committee plenum have borne out we have made the right choice.

How do we define the task for the conference? What is its concept? The conference is to make a thorough review of the progress of perestroika and give it a further and strong fillip. The conference is to create the political, ideological and organisational prerequisites that would not only guarantee the irreversibility of the processes of perestroika and democratisation, but also contribute decisively to unfolding these processes and furthering them.

We have entered, figuratively speaking, the boost-phase of perestroika. And we have been able to foresee that the second stage, these coming two or three years, will be very difficult. Strategy is being transformed into real policy, into real social processes and affecting all sections of society. We knew that we should expect a tension and that a new situation would emerge. And still — as it was pointed out correctly here — far from everybody has proved prepared for this. It is only natural, comrades, that the load on the Party, on the cadre and on all society is increasing. This is evidenced by broader glasnost and democracy and by deep-going changes in the very basis, in the management system and in every aspect of society's life. It is as if doors had opened for us to a new and unusual environment. And it has proved vast and unfamiliar in many respects. We are covering new ground, like pioneers, and this means that we're making progress. And hence the varied reactions of people to the processes under way.

We knew: we should be prepared for this. Be prepared to think, act and live in a new manner.

In the Politburo we have compared notes and concluded that the novel nature of problems and the dimensions of new phenomena and processes at the second stage of perestroika have put the whole Party and its cadre in a new situation. We saw that far from everybody was prepared to view the present situation correctly. We found veritable confusion in the minds of many people — workers, intellectuals and administrators alike. And, let us be blunt, not only

on the ground level, but also on the top. So the Politburo decided that the General Secretary had to speak on ideological support for the second stage of perestroika. I want to stress that everything that has been said on behalf of the Politburo and won backing at the February plenum fully retains its significance as reference points today as well.

I am telling you this because some people have indeed lost their bearings amid all these processes under way. Some people have failed to keep their heads and panicked. And the panic — and this is very serious — has taken the form of asking: 'Isn't perestroika coming to mean the wrecking and rejection of the values of socialism, isn't it giving rise to alien phenomena, isn't it destabilising society?' I'll tell you that all these questions are very serious. And I wouldn't reckon those who have panicked to be irresponsible people or people opposed to perestroika out of hand.

No, comrades, we should treat this seriously, without falling into another extremity, without branding everybody who has voiced some doubts as an opponent of perestroika. And I am especially against the position of those who have put the 'enemy of perestroika' phrase into circulation in the press.

What does it mean, comrades? This sounds somewhat ominous. This is the same as the allegation which has been floated through *Sovetskaya Rossiya* that we are being threatened by the descendants of Nepmen and Kulaks. Just think of it: 70 years on, they're trying to scare us with the descendants of Nepmen, Trotskyites and Dans. Let's rise to the occasion, comrades.

Through perestroika, we want to restore Lenin's image of socialism and lead Soviet society to a drastically new level. We should really bring out the humanist potential of socialism — that is the task for perestroika. But this means that at the second stage of perestroika we should see the overriding goal — an updated society and updated relations among people in line with Lenin's ideas.

We should work towards this end by using methods marked by humanity, trust and respect. This does not mean lack of principle, any eclecticism or reconciling the irreconcilable. No, it doesn't. We should restore the genuine, wonderful meaning of the great word 'Comrade'. Restore the spirit of comradeship in the Party and in society.

We cannot pursue perestroika, which aims to upgrade socialism to meet the parameters of Lenin's thinking in the interest of the people, by practising a free-for-all. We aren't after all destroying the social system or changing the forms of ownership. The soviets (elected governing councils) will stay put. Listen to Lenin: socialism should be built with the human material inherited from capitalism. We are effecting perestroika with people born under socialism. So should we renounce part of them, then?

No, we can't put the question this way. Our slogan is: uniting and rallying society for perestroika. This is the main thing, comrades. When it is essential, we should find out the root causes of these or other negative phenomena. This approach is proof of our confidence in the chosen path, in the chosen aims and in the chosen methods. And we have already identified them. This is precisely what, in my opinion, distinguishes perestroika and makes it strong. We should all think it over in real earnest. This would be useful for us and, most important, simply indispensable, vital for us. I already said it in a remark here and I want

to stress it once more: both the Party is at the service of the people and all the media are at the service of the people.

It is impossible to write of the people's destiny in a formal, bureaucratic, soulless way. Sometimes a true-to-life picture is presented, but the author writes in such a way as if the pain of the people is not sensed. And if there is no awareness of this pain, then epithets and metaphors are used, labels are stuck, anything. This, I repeat, happens if the author does not sense the people's pain. And if this sense is present, if you remember your people always, if you write with an anguished heart of the grimmest things, then there will surely emerge something which in the long run will contain a lesson and optimism. For there will be a sense of involvement in the destiny of the people and the care that its life should be better. I am not going to teach you, I simply address your hearts and minds.

All in all, you, too, should reform. The media are an instrument of perestroika. And in order to be an effective instrument they should undergo restructuring, just as the entire society. We say that there is no monopoly to criticism, that no zones are denied to criticism. But, hence, the press itself cannot be exempt from criticism. You should pose questions in a serious way, truthfully, in the interests of the people, socialism, restructuring. And in this the press can count on the support of the Party.

Why is conservatism so tenacious? This is another theme which I would like to discuss with you. What is it that feeds conservatism?

I believe that conservatism is the main factor impeding perestroika. Establishing what it is that feeds conservatism should not be avoided as the answer to this question will help the Party and the media to determine correctly the methods of overcoming this phenomenon.

We must defeat conservatism on the roads of perestroika. Conservatism in part of society is nourished not only by dogmatic mentality, the habit of thinking in stereotypes, the fear of everything new, but also by egoistic interests. As to egoistic interests, this theme is raised by the press. It is shown that perestroika pinches someone and they start resisting, hampering the process of renewal of society. But this is just part of the problem. The main thing for all society is still the need to overcome dogmatic mentality as it is something that a politician, a writer, a scientific worker have. It exists in all who are connected with intellectual activity and this largely determines theoretical analysis, the shaping of politics, and so on.

There are stereotypes of thinking and action and they have a grip on a worker, an intellectual, a politician. This is a serious and profound phenomenon. We are all products of our time. We have conceived perestroika and we also manifest many of the things that inhibit it. To reveal this, comrades, is a very important task of the media and, certainly, of the Party and ideological work. Such a treatment of this subject helps man make a revolution in his own thoughts and determines his stand.

Indeed, conservatism quite often stems from egoistic interests. But will anyone mount the rostrum now and say he will write in a letter to a newspaper, that he raises some or other problems in order to save his present position and preserve what suits him very much? Not at all. His stand will be presented in such a way as if he were acting to the benefit of the people, for the sake of socialism. This is something to be seen and understood.

And, comrades, there is another very important aspect. We often label as a conservative a person who holds his own special point of view. But take a more attentive look and you will realise that he gets into this position for the reason that so far he has not learnt how to work in new conditions. He just does not know how to work, comrades. This is quite commonplace now. And we see how difficult it is to learn to

work in a new way when we have been acting for decades in the framework of methods of the command-and-administer system. Then should these people who have not yet learnt how to work be regarded as adversaries of perestroika, as inveterate conservatives?

A real process of perestroika is conducted in society through concrete experience, through debates, comprehension and realisation of this process and changing positions with taking into consideration the renewal of our society. And these are important things. We give everyone a chance to adjust. We talk about this in conversations, in the press. But sometimes it is reasoned in the following way: everyone has been given three years for perestroika and that is enough. If you failed to reform, get out. But we, all of us, have not yet reformed. I shall say this outright that we have not yet reformed and are only doing this.

What is to be done now? What emphasis is to be placed in the Party work, in the work of the media? A correct idea was expressed here that though during perestroika much is being done in all directions, the main thing — the life of the people, their well-being, their mood, the way they feel — should not be overlooked, comrades. It is not only material well-being, social environment, but also the way people feel, their dignity, that should be taken into consideration.

The main thing that is to be done in every area, including spiritual, is to overcome alienation which, deplorably, takes place under socialism when it is deformed by authoritarian-bureaucratic aberrations. And it is only on the roads of democracy, glasnost, on the roads of moral purification of our society that alienation, bureaucratism, formalism can be overcome. In this work we are aware of the vigorous involvement of the enhanced political, intellectual, cultural potential of the entire people.

We also feel the support from our intelligentsia, and this support is growing. How can restructuring be implemented without the intelligentsia? The matter is that not only workers and peasants but also our intelligentsia played an important role in what has been achieved.

An atmosphere that would guarantee the successful holding of the Party conference should be created in the Party and in society. The merit lies not in being the first to point out some or other fact or event and proclaim this the loudest. What is needed is that the media should raise vital problems. There already exists a history of perestroika, difficult and complicated, which should be revealed. And when we address ourselves to the past, this has the aim of understanding better what we need now so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

All this should be done without undue sensationalism. I would like to say that a good sensation for us is the one that our people is waiting for and our adversaries fear. It is the success of perestroika.

The further development of criticism, the widening of glasnost is a matter of extreme importance. This matter has been resolved. It is asked sometimes what the limits of criticism and glasnost are. We have resolved this matter in the framework of socialist pluralism of opinions. We are for broad development of criticism and glasnost but in the interests of society, of socialism, in the interests of the people. Waging consistently and resolutely the struggle against conservatism, rooting out everything that hinders the process of perestroika we must no less firmly protect, popularise and uphold everything which promotes perestroika, which is in favour of the country, of the people.

We need new approaches, new methods, new discoveries in asserting perestroika. Let us recall Lenin's words: do not try to resolve new problems by old methods. Nothing will come of it. Hence we must conduct the quest for new

methods. And we conduct it in every direction — in the economic area, in the spiritual area, in science, in education. The mass media must help the people master new forms, new methods, new approaches.

At the February plenary meeting we set ourselves the task of grasping Lenin's concept of socialist society more profoundly in order to apply it creatively in the present concrete historic conditions. Note, creatively. It was right that when the theme of Nep cropped up, it was said that we cannot copy, cannot repeat precisely the approaches of the past. No, comrades. We must study Lenin's thinking. It always provides many instructive things.

Consider, for instance, how Lenin acted in suggesting Nep. In the situation when the country was in ruin Lenin's resolute thinking, decisive policy were addressed to realities, based on realities. Therefore not everyone, not even Lenin's closest associates, accepted Nep at once. Lenin was accused of apostasy. It was thought he was pushing the country onto a road leading to ruin. So I say that we should address ourselves to Lenin's thinking instead of copying concrete decisions of that period. And there is room for new, off-beat decisions. This is natural. And it sometimes happens with us that as soon as an off-beat decision is made, there is an outcry: 'Help, socialism is in danger, they are spawning private operators!'

Therefore I repeat that we should grasp Lenin's concept of socialist society in order to apply it creatively with taking into account the present conditions. What is needed is not just a return to the past. This would be the worst kind of talmudism, dogmatic mentality.

We should get rid once and for all of the view of socialism as if it were levelling out, negating personality, of the notion of socialism as a certain minimum: the minimum of material benefits, the minimum of justice, the minimum of democracy.

We have a right to pose the question in the following way — realistic and serious: with the economic, intellectual and cultural potential accumulated over seven decades of our history, we should implement a contemporary model of society ensuring for all its members civilised living standards and multiform opportunities to meet spiritual and cultural needs, the freedom of choice and expression of opinions. But all this should be implemented in the framework of our socialist choice, in the framework of our socialist democracy and morals. This society will inevitably be more multi-layer, but it will remain socialist and it will not forgo the principles of social justice, comradeship and internationalism in the slightest.

Why do I mention this? Generally speaking, our entire society is for socialism.

The point is that we are now faced with the task of the renewal of socialism. All of us, comrades, should realise what socialism is and by what methods it can and must be built, renewed and improved. This is the theme on which one should think and work. We should advance our traditional notions of socialism in the level of contemporary demands, so that they should keep abreast of the present day and the future of science, economic, scientific and technological progress. In short, we should restore the revolutionary character and historic perspective to socialism. Perhaps it is necessary to establish the criteria of socialism for as soon as some advance is made and some new features appear, the question arises: where are we moving, are we not moving away from socialism?

It is necessary to determine these criteria. What is truly socialist and what is alien to the very idea of socialism? It is necessary to rid socialism of everything pseudosocialist, distorted and deformed in the period of the personality cult, command system, stagnation, and restore the truly Leninist sense to socialism. And the role of the media in this cannot be overestimated.

We need that, without that we cannot go to the conference. We cannot do that without a clear idea, without drawing a picture, as it were, of the society, for which we strive. We, certainly, should do this work with the greatest responsibility. I will say again: we should look for answers to the objectives of perestroika within the framework of the socialist choice.

And let no journal, no newspaper urge us onto another path, by referring to the diversity of views.

Socialism in Lenin's interpretation makes it possible to ensure a pluralism of views, a pluralism of interests and of requirements, and to ensure that these interests and requirements are met.

We are going to the conference, which means that we must give an account and sum up the results. We must have more discussions at the conference already on the history of perestroika proper. Accent shall be laid on summing up the results. And this is to be done from the standpoint of self-criticism: what has been done, and wherein our weaknesses lie. Then we will be able to outline the perspectives better. It is necessary that the conference be more business-like.

The time has come to lay even greater emphasis on the question of the unity of the word and deed, on the decisions taken and the course of their implementation. We have taken very important decisions which shall ensure a serious change in the structural policy towards the light and the food industries, the social field. All this should lead to improving the living standards of the Soviet people.

And now on how things stand today. In 1987, our gross national product grew 3.3 per cent. The growth of the volume of industrial output was 3.8 per cent.

Over the three years from 1985 to 1987 the average annual growth rates were: as regards national income — 3.3 per cent, the gross national product — 3.9 per cent, industrial output — 4.2 per cent, the output of consumer goods — 4.7 per cent. The gross agricultural output in average annual count grew 1.9 per cent, the commissioning of the fixed assets — 3.5 per cent of housing — 3.6 per cent.

We have made progress in the output of commodities, progress has also manifested itself in health protection and public education.

The creative forces of the society have been set into motion. Positive tendencies are appearing. This is exactly what changes life. And this should effect a change, if we develop these trends in the right way.

Take, for example, labour productivity. From 1981 to 1984 we obtained 86 per cent of the national income due to it. From 1985 to 1987 — 96 per cent. In 1987 the whole increase was ensured through labour productivity. In the first quarter of this year labour productivity in industry grew 5.4 per cent, including at enterprises working on conditions of full cost-accounting and self-financing — 6.6 per cent. In the building industry — this growth was 8.9 per cent, and of those who work on conditions of full cost-accounting — 9.8 per cent. This is, comrades, serious progress. If we keep up this trend, I believe that many things will change then for the better.

Here is an interesting fact. In 1985 the renewal of the machine-building products was 3 per cent, and in 1987 — 9.1 per cent. This is a three-fold increase. We set ourselves the aim of achieving the 13 per cent mark. Contract discipline is heightening. Cost-accounting is beginning to produce its fruit there too. The positive trend is making headway, overcoming the natural difficulties involved in transition to cost-accounting, to new economic standards, state quality control and many other things, which fundamentally renew our production field.

Now what we eat, what are we short of? Above all meat, fruit and vegetables.

The situation with foodstuffs is a source of concern for us, of much concern. We should look for more cardinal measures to advance towards resolving that problem faster. It is necessary to stock the shops, public catering, the market and co-operative trade with enough foodstuffs.

Now about housing. Over the three years ten million families have bettered their housing conditions. This is a considerable growth. We had no growth in housing construction for several five-year-plan periods.

Now about the trade turnover. It has grown 13 per cent. And it is apt to note, that over the past three years the sale of alcoholic drinks has declined by more than half.

The growth is evident. But the shortages are evident too. This means, comrades, that we must have by far more of everything, of everything including the services, but their volume is insufficient. There are enormous potentialities for co-operatives in that field.

Every year the country's population increases by two and a half million. This dynamics should determine the growth of the rates of production of foods and commodities.

We are at a difficult stage in the economy, a very difficult one. We are introducing the reform, enhancing state quality control, mastering cost-accounting. Half of the country is run on cost-accounting and the other half not. This is, indeed, an unusual situation. To rectify the errors a decision is now being prepared on state orders.

Such are, comrades, the realities of perestroika. I would ask you to show more competence in covering the perestroika processes whatever fields they may concern. This takes profundity, responsibility and a well-balanced attitude. While criticising conservatism and shortcomings we should most actively support everything that is progressive.

In general, comrades, we should raise all of these questions both at the stage of preparations and at the conference itself from the positions of principle.

We have what to tell the conference, both as regards the results and as regards the further perspectives.

We should come to the conference with major proposals concerning our society's political system, which is also in need of a fundamental restructuring.

We should comprehend the role of the Party as the political vanguard as the current stage. We do not give up Lenin's concept of the Party as society's political vanguard. We believe that at the stage of perestroika, the Party's role further grows in the perfection of the socialist society, in carrying out far-reaching transformations. This necessitates from it that a science-based policy be outlined on the strength of correct appraisals and forecasts. This necessitates a large volume of ideological and organisational work.

Only the Party equipped with the methods of science-based Marxist analysis can cope with this task. Therefore far from calling in question the guiding and leading role of the Party, we believe, on the contrary, that we should comprehend it more deeply. This role should, undoubtedly, be a different, a weightier one, precisely in the terms which I am speaking about — as regards the carrying out of the functions of the political vanguard.

In that connection the question arises about dividing the functions between the Party, the soviets and the economic management bodies. A mixing of the functions resulted in a situation in which the Party has taken upon itself many economic matters and began resolving specific issues, down to day-to-day ones.

This brought about a weakening of the functions of the political vanguard. On the other hand, this has resulted in a decline of the responsibility both of the soviets and of the economic management bodies.

We should reappraise also the structure of the Party machinery. This will uncover the enormous potentialities inherent in our Party. If we simultaneously with that do everything necessary so that every communist should become more active, that every primary organisation, all of our cadres start working more vigorously, then things will start moving. We are planning to table a number of proposals on that score at the congress.

And naturally, comrades, in connection with the reappraisal of the functions of the Party as the political vanguard, the role of the soviets should be comprehended in a new way. It is necessary to enhance the role of the soviets, the significance of the work of the sessions of the soviets and the commissions of deputies. The activities of the Supreme Soviet should also be reorganised. We should all give enough thought to it.

We should come to the creation of a machinery, a permanently functioning and democratic one, that would contain everything necessary to ensure the irreversibility of perestroika, an active involvement of the people in it, that would name most active persons for leading offices, be aware of the sentiments and make the necessary corrections in the work. If we fail to do so, comrades, the economic reform will get bogged down and other processes will also get bogged down.

If we take a closer look, we will see that the key to everything is through democratisation, through drawing people into all matters. Therefore the aim of perestroika is man and the means of perestroika is a mobilisation of the human potential. We will press ahead with perestroika through that and naturally through the cultural field, through strengthening the spirit of the people.

We must complete the creation of a socialist legal state. Therefore we will also need a judicial-legal reform. And this shall also be formulated as an objective at the conference.

This is a major turn, comrades. We are now creating the prerequisites, upon which our society will function for decades. This determines the measure of our today's responsibility. Therefore when we are told that we are indecisive in something and are reproached for that, we say: no and once again no. The most costly mistakes are the political ones. The best results are produced by well-prepared political decisions. In general, comrades, we wish the 19th All-Union Party Conference to take responsible decisions, that would give our perestroika new, second wind, and open for our society an even wider road of progress towards democracy, the road of socialism. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Kim Yong Nam

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV on May 4 met Kim Yong Nam, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, Deputy Premier of the Administration Council and Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who is in the Soviet Union on an official visit.

Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, took part in the conversation.

The Korean official handed over to Gorbachev a personal message from Kim Il Sung, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the DPRK, and wished the Soviet people success in perestroika.

The Korean side highly assessed the Soviet-American INF Treaty and the USSR's consistent efforts to preventing nuclear war and improving the international climate.

The Soviet stance on Afghanistan has become an example of constructive approach to settling crisis situations. A certain softening of the situation created conditions for resolving topical problems in Asia as well.

Peace and security

The DPRK was pressing for the elimination of the threat of war on the Korean Peninsula and for the peaceful democratic unification of the country. Kim Yong Nam pointed out.

The withdrawal of the American troops and nuclear weapons from South Korea constituted a condition for that.

Gorbachev reaffirmed the Soviet side's interest in peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. The USSR would continue to back the DPRK's course towards defusing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and creating conditions for the political solution of outstanding problems in that region.

This would be a major contribution to improving the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and would wholly meet the ideas of detente set out in Vladivostok.

Mikhail Gorbachev extended friendly regards and wishes of success in building socialism to Kim Il Sung and the fraternal Korean people.

The meeting was held in a warm, friendly atmosphere. It was attended by the Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK, Gennadi Bartoshevich, and the DPRK Ambassador to the USSR, Kwon Hui Guons. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's message to UN committee against apartheid

HERE follows the full text of a message by Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, to the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.

The UN Special Committee Against Apartheid is marking the 25th anniversary of its activity, aimed at pooling the efforts of the international community in the struggle for the elimination of the apartheid system in South Africa.

The stubborn unwillingness of the Pretoria rulers to put an end to the policy of racial discrimination, oppression, repressions and terror against those fighting this inhuman system and to halt the illegal occupation of Namibia — all this turned the situation in southern Africa into a destabilising factor of international significance.

The apartheid system would long ago have sunk into oblivion but for the aiding and abetting to the racist regime by the more reactionary circles in the West. They seem not to be embarrassed at all by the fact that the policy and actions of the South African regime were condemned by the United Nations as a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, of the generally recognised principles and norms of international law, as a threat to peace and security and a crime against humanity.

An explosive situation persists in southern Africa. To defuse it there is an urgent need to realise the relevant decisions of the UN and the Security Council, as well as to impose the all-embracing mandatory sanctions as stipulated under article 7 of the UN Charter.

A resolute, more concerted position of the international community in the struggle against apartheid is exactly what is needed today to break the deadlock in the course of the political settlement in southern Africa on the basis of balanced interests of all countries involved in the regional conflict there. Underlying the settlement, we see such decisions which would help strengthen independence, freedom and security of all countries of the region.

The role which the United Nations played in reaching an agreement on the settlement around Afghanistan is a good example and incentive to fresh efforts in achieving the political settlement of international conflicts in various parts of the world.

The situation in southern Africa makes it incumbent on all members of the United Nations, who cherish the goals and ideals of this organisation, to step up the efforts in defence of the rightful course of the people of South Africa who favour the elimination of the hateful system of apartheid, in support of the patriots of Namibia fighting for the independence of their country, and to rebuff the policy of aggression and subversion pursued by South African racists against the 'front-line' states. The Soviet Union will continue to exert its efforts to achieve a just and lasting settlement in southern Africa in the interests of peaceful life and prosperity of the peoples of this part of the world.

It is my conviction that the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid will continue making a weighty contribution to the world community efforts aimed at eliminating such an anachronism of our time as the apartheid regime in South Africa. □

(Moscow, May 5)

Soviet Press: facts and figures

THE Soviet Union is second to none in the world as regards the number of daily newspapers printed. Last year 19 million more people subscribed to newspapers and magazines. More than 8,000 newspapers, with a single print run of 180 million copies, and more than 1,500 magazines are issued today.

They are published in 55 languages of the peoples of the USSR. Journalists were told at the USSR State Committee for Printing, Publishing and the Book Trade, on the Day of the Press, which is marked annually in the Soviet Union on May 5, when the first issue of the newspaper *Pravda*, founded by Lenin, was published in St Petersburg in 1912.

It was noted at the meeting that the publishing industry had gained a wide scope in the USSR. The country has 219 publishing houses and 4,000 printing establishments which put out annually more than two billion books and pamphlets. Fiction accounts for more than a half of these publications.

Perestroika, now under way in the USSR, has also affected the publishing trade. A number of important decisions have been taken recently. Publishing houses, for example, have the right to compile and approve the book printing schedules themselves. The readers' demands are being better studied and the publication of books at the authors' expense is being used more widely. Heads of publishing houses are now more often elected than appointed.

Moscow is the country's largest publishing centre, with 71 publishing houses and 120 printing establishments. Newspapers in the capital are printed in more than 21,000 million copies every year. □

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Soviet Defence Minister's article in *Pravda*

"THE victory in the Great Patriotic War was the natural victory of the October Revolution-created state of the working people, the most progressive social system, and the economic socialist system", says Dmitri Yazov, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Defence Minister of the USSR in an article in *Pravda*. The newspaper carries his article which is devoted to the 43rd anniversary of the Soviet people's historic victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) in its May 9 edition.

"All that we now have has largely been predetermined by our victory and illuminated by its unfading light. Every new success in the struggle for the consolidation of international security and the preservation of peace is also organically linked with it", the Defence Minister underlines.

"The possibilities which are opening up along the lines of a joint, constructive solution of very complex problems of the present are shown by the Soviet-American summit dialogue, with its milestone being the meetings in Geneva, Reykjavik and Washington. On the credit side of the dialogue is such a historic accomplishment as the signing of the treaty on the elimination of Soviet and American intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. Major steps towards disarmament could become an agreement

between the USSR and the USA on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive armaments, provided strict compliance with the ABM Treaty as it was signed in 1972, an international convention on universal prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, an agreement on a radical reduction of troops and armaments in Europe — from the Atlantic to the Urals", Yazov says.

Consistently and firmly fighting for the consolidation of peace and international security and disarmament, "we have no right to close our eyes to the fact that in leading capitalist states influential reactionary circles are the bearers of the spirit of militarism", Yazov goes on.

"We cannot but take all that into account," he underlines. "We learnt well the lessons of the past war and drew the necessary conclusions from them. Being aware of our responsibility for the future of our Motherland, socialism and peace we have been doing and shall continue doing our utmost to keep high vigilance, to maintain combat readiness of the armed forces at a proper level, to reliably safeguard the peaceful life and labour of the Soviet people". □

PEACE DAYS

THE holiday which celebrates the Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War is to start the Peace Days in the Soviet capital. They coincided with the week of action, announced by the World Peace Council, for security and co-operation in Europe.

The start of the Peace Days was announced

on the evening of May 8, the eve of Victory Day, at a meeting in the Columned Hall of Trade Unions by representatives of the Soviet War Veterans Committee.

Today Muscovites — the residents of the city bearing the honorary title of Messenger of Peace awarded by the United Nations Organisation — were the first to put their signatures to an address to the United Nations Secretary-General.

"We call on the international community of nations, all people of goodwill", the document says, "to be imbued with a sense of responsibility for the future of our interdependent and indivisible world. We are calling for active efforts towards the assertion of the new political thinking in world politics and the priority of values common to the whole of mankind."

On the eve of the opening of the UN General Assembly's third special session on disarmament, the Muscovites state that they will do everything to assert the ideas of peace and international co-operation and to restrain the arms race. They are convinced that to preserve peace and the very life in the nuclear age is the concern of all countries and peoples and of every person on Earth.

The first festive day will be marked by a peace relay race on the streets of the capital, and by a cycle race for a trophy presented by the newspaper *Moskovskaya Pravda*. A flower fair will be held under the motto Flowers are the Symbol of Peace and Friendship Among the Peoples. All proceeds from it will go to the Soviet peace fund. There will also be get-togethers of war veterans and young people in Moscow's districts. □

Pravda on security in the Mediterranean

THE new proposals on the Mediterranean launched by Mikhail Gorbachev in Belgrade evoked lively interest in the world. Numerous comments noted that they are of a comprehensive and realistic nature and, expanding the framework of previous Soviet initiatives, reaffirm the USSR's eagerness to create a comprehensive system of international security. *Pravda* says on May 10 in an article headed On the Junction of the Continents devoted to the problem of security in the Mediterranean zone.

The present-day tension in the Mediterranean region is explained, first and foremost, by a steady rise in the level of militarisation. A vast amount of miscellaneous navy systems are concentrated there, nuclear weapons are

deployed and a ramified network of military facilities and bases are maintained. By the way, these are not only of Mediterranean states but most of them belong to states which do not have Mediterranean shores. *Pravda* emphasises.

The United States is the main source of militarisation. It intends to forge ahead with building up its military potential in the Mediterranean. *Pravda* stresses, citing several specific facts to prove this conclusion.

The US military activity in that region affects not only the Soviet Union. US researchers William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse write that it is fraught with negative consequences for the Mediterranean states as well. The risk attending the maintenance of US military facilities in their territories, especially those armed with nuclear weapons, is rather high in a situation where the arms race goes on unabated and the means of a retaliatory strike are refined.

So, two tendencies clash in the Mediterranean: on the one hand, the awareness of the danger of foreign military presence, on the other, the bid to gain a foothold on foreign land. By the way, the second tendency is manifest also in new forms, since the United States tries to adapt to the changing situation. Specifically, the Americans seek to draw its NATO allies into its Mediterranean policy.

Not only the problems of military security determine the USSR's interest in the Mediterranean Sea. *Pravda* goes on. Our sea lanes to all parts of the world have run through it from time immemorial. Economic exchanges with many Mediterranean countries are traditionally effected to this day by relatively cheap water shipment. The volume of Soviet trade with the countries in the region is quite significant.

The Mediterranean Sea holds an important place in both European and world trade and economic ties. It is not fortuitous that a prominent place is allotted to this region in the Helsinki Final Act and its problems are tied closely with the CSCE process on the whole.

The new Soviet initiatives give an obvious chance to move off dead centre the issue of turning the Mediterranean into a zone of security and co-operation. They are formulated with due account for the Brijuni Conference of the foreign ministers of the non-aligned Mediterranean countries, the results of the Belgrade meeting of the foreign ministers of the Balkan states, numerous statements by leaders of the countries in the region, are congruent with the principles contained in international acts which were deployed by the world community, including the United States. In other words, the USSR's proposals take into account the broadest balance of interests. *Pravda* stresses. □

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Soviet Foreign Ministry briefings

HUMAN RIGHTS: RAPPROCHEMENT OF POSITIONS IS NECESSARY

PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan's admission that the USA has its share of problems in the field of human rights is a fresh confirmation of the justice of the provision that the approach to these issues is a "two-way street". Gennadi Gerasimov, chief of Information Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, said at a briefing on May 5.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman described the speech made by the US President in Chicago on the problems of human rights as a kind of lecture on human rights, noting that it contains many arguable points. However, Gennadi Gerasimov said, one cannot but agree with a provision in Ronald Reagan's speech that the main thing in international relations is the desire for a peaceful settlement of problems.

Humanitarian problems and questions of guarantees of human rights were at the centre of attention during the briefing in the Press Centre of the USSR Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "It is necessary to move step-by-step along the road of rapprochement of the positions and for achieving agreements which in the final analysis are in the interests of all the participants in the Helsinki process," Fyodor Burlatsky, Chairman of the newly-created Soviet Public Commission on Humanitarian Co-operation and Human Rights, said in this connection.

As regards the very notion of human rights, in the West it is very frequently utilised for political, propagandistic and even speculative purposes against the socialist countries, including against the Soviet Union. In this sense, they try to reduce all human rights to one sole right — that to leave the USSR. "Our understanding of human rights is broader," Gerasimov said. "We consider, among other things, that every individual as it is, incidentally, pointed out in the preamble to the US Constitution, has the right to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. It is these major rights of the Arab people of Palestine that are constantly violated. Despite their flagrant violations, we do not hear any special protests on the part of the USA in connection with the flouting of the rights of the Palestinians."

The special attention which is now given to the problems of human rights can be seen from the fact, he said, that since quite recently this problematic question is discussed at Soviet-American meetings, meetings of ministers and at the highest level, and it is discussed, moreover, in a constructive spirit.

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SOVIET-US RELATIONS — UNDERSTANDING WITH BRITAIN

Gennadi Gerasimov described as "quite reasonable and useful" an amendment passed by the House of Representatives to prohibit any nuclear tests exceeding the one-kiloton limit as long as the Soviet Union reciprocates.

The measure fitted in with efforts made at full-scale Soviet-US talks in Geneva for limiting nuclear testing and eventually discontinuing it altogether.

Gerasimov also said in connection with those negotiations that an "airlift" was being organised to prepare a joint verification experiment at the Semipalatinsk and Nevada test sites in the two countries.

During the airlift operation six US Air Force transport planes will fly US drilling equipment needed for the experiment to Semipalatinsk over several days.

The experiment, he said, should form the basis for decisions on improved verification arrangements to monitor compliance with the 1974 Treaty Limiting Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests.

Gerasimov also reported that the Soviet Union and Britain had reached a specific understanding on exchanging visits of experts to military chemical facilities at Shikhany, USSR, and Porton Down, Britain.

The visit to Porton Down will take place on May 23-27 and the one to Shikhany on June 30-July 4.

"The Soviet side proceeds from the premise that much significance to successfully concluding a convention on a complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons belongs to trust and openness in this field," Gerasimov said.

Commenting on the latest edition of the US pamphlet *Soviet Military Power*, he said it showed an obvious desire to exonerate Washington's military build-up programmes, by renovating the rather dilapidated myth about a "Soviet military threat", and to bring pressure on US Nato allies in Europe to increase their contribution to bolstering the bloc's non-nuclear potential.

AFGHANISTAN

Gennadi Gerasimov went on to make the following statement:

The implementation of the Geneva Agreements on settling the situation relating to Afghanistan has begun as UN groups have arrived in Islamabad and Kabul to observe compliance with the commitments stemming from these accords.

In the first place, this is related to questions connected with the ending of interference in Afghanistan's affairs.

The world public, including in Western countries and NATP, welcomed the Geneva agreements, regarding them as a breakthrough in the solution of regional conflicts.

The successful completion of the Geneva negotiations made it more realistic to achieve an internal Afghan settlement and establish an inter-Afghan dialogue.

Pakistani-based extremist organisations, however, flatly rejected the Geneva Accords, saying that they would fight till the end. In other words, they regard the overthrow of the legitimate government in Afghanistan as their sole objective.

The news of a meeting between the extremist leader, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, and heads of the diplomatic missions of the Federal Republic

of Germany, Denmark and Greece came from Peshawar.

If the ambassadors of those countries had made an attempt to persuade the extremists to take a realistic look at agreements and respond to the Afghan Government's calls to cease hostilities and settle outstanding issues by peaceful means, that meeting would have probably evoked a certain positive response.

Judging from Pakistani press reports, however, the meeting was of a clearly provocative character. It grew into an expression of encouragement and support for the policy of the forces which are opposed to the Geneva agreements and cessation of bloodshed in Afghanistan and are guided by purely selfish and egoistic interests.

The Geneva agreements open up prospects for resolving the Afghan problem. The task is to facilitate in all ways the implementation of the agreements rather than to add fuel to the fire of the fratricidal war.

DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

The results of the spring session of the Conference on Disarmament, which ended in Geneva on April 29 after making only limited progress on its work, have left many participants worried, Gennadi Gerasimov said.

Gerasimov went on, the session had shown low productivity despite certain improvement in the world situation and positive shifts in the Soviet-US relationship.

"The only area where some headway has been made is the drafting of a multilateral agreement for banning chemical weapons.

"But talks on the problem have now reached a phase where every participant should make the appropriate political decision.

"The Soviet Union has said a decisive yes, as have a number of other nations.

"The United States so far has said neither yes nor no. Mention ought to be made also of the position of France, which has not been conducive to a successful completion of the talks," Gerasimov said.

It had not proved possible to open multilateral talks on the other issues on the conference's agenda, including a nuclear test ban, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and nuclear disarmament, he added.

"The main stumbling block in the way of the multilateral negotiations is, as before, the posturing of the US delegation which has been not only blocking their commencement, but also countering in every way efforts to start substantial work," Gerasimov concluded. □

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