

Mikhail Gorbachev answers questions from the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*

On May 18 Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, met with a group of American journalists from the *Washington Post* company, had a conversation with them, and answered their questions. Here follows the full text of the interview:

QUESTION: Have the three meetings with President Reagan changed your ideas as to how peaceful competition between capitalist and socialist countries should be regulated in the future? How do you think the forthcoming summit will contribute to stabilising that competition?

GORBACHEV: I am convinced that positive trends are unfolding in the world. There is a turn from confrontation to coexistence. The winds of the cold war are being replaced by the winds of hope. And I see that a significant role in that process is played by the signs of improvement in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. All over the world there is an acute need for change or, if you wish, a need for restructuring international relations. In that situation it is essential to continue positive contacts between East and West.

As for the dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union, it is simply vital because of the great role they play in today's world.

The very fact of that dialogue is working for peace, not to mention its content with such exceptionally important joint statements as those regarding the inadmissibility of wars, nuclear or any other, the necessity of resolving problems by political means and of recognising the realities of today's world.

It is very important that all this has sounded loud and clear for the whole world to hear, and we have seen how the world has responded to it. All this leads to the following conclusion: yes, we are different and will remain so. We will remain loyal to our ideas and our way of life. But we have a common responsibility, especially our two great powers, and our every action must measure up to that responsibility.

As for the potential results of the forthcoming fourth meeting with the President and, notably, the prospects for a detailed agreement on a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive weapons, the past few months and weeks have seen so much speculation that I would like to make the following point: be patient, the meeting is just a few days away, let the President and I work together. Whatever we arrive at will certainly not be concealed from the public.

There are two more points to be made here, though. The very continuation of the Soviet-American dialogue at summit level is important and substantive. In any case, I hope our attention will be focused on the main

international problems like at the previous meetings and that we will be able to rise to a new level of dialogue and mutual understanding.

And next, if an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons comes to be drafted under the present US Administration, I see no reason why President Reagan and I should not sign it. I would certainly welcome that.

QUESTION: Many people in the West think that nuclear weapons have been instrumental in maintaining stability in the world over the past few decades. Would it not be more rational for the USSR and the US in those conditions to agree on preserving minimal nuclear deterrents?

GORBACHEV: I cannot agree with those who think that the drive for a nuclear-free world is hopeless.

I have argued more than once with representatives of the West over their case that without nuclear weapons we would never have survived for 40 years without another world war. This is just a conjecture. But what about a sober evaluation of the real role played by the so-called "balance of fear"? It has given us nothing but unheard-of militarisation of foreign policies, economies and even intellectual life. It has caused damage in the sphere of international morality and ethics and has killed the atmosphere of mutual trust, friendliness and sincere interest in each other which was born in Soviet-American relations in the years of joint warfare and victory over fascism.

I am convinced that strategic military parity can be maintained at a low level and without nuclear weapons. We have clearly formulated our choice: to stop, then reverse the arms race.

As for the so-called "minimal nuclear deterrence", I will not argue now with the proponents of that idea. So far, you and we have more than 10,000 warheads each in our strategic arsenals. Let us first cut them by 50 per cent. Maybe then by another 50 per cent and then once again. In the meantime, let us come to terms on the elimination of chemical weapons and start reducing conventional armaments in Europe. That process should be open not only for the US and the USSR but for all other nuclear and non-nuclear states. That will be an important incentive for the demilitarisation of politics, ways of thinking and international relations in general.

And, another point: if we start orienting ourselves on a "minimal nuclear deterrence" now, I assure you that nuclear weapons will start spreading around the world, devaluing and undermining even what we can achieve at Soviet-American talks and at the negotiations among the now existing nuclear states.

A peaceful future for mankind can be guaranteed not by "nuclear deterrence", but by a balance of reason and goodwill and by a system of comprehensive security.

QUESTION: The NATO leaders have announced that even with a balance in the conventional forces in Europe, nuclear weapons will still need to be preserved on the continent

as a means of retaliation. If, in keeping with that position, nuclear disarmament is unacceptable for the West, should we not try to reach a joint agreement on the terms of modernisation of the tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe?

GORBACHEV: The talk about nuclear weapons on the continent as a means of retaliation is the same old concept of a "limited" nuclear war in Europe. It absolutely contradicts what I conferred with the US President about back in Geneva — notably, that nuclear war cannot be won and simply must not be allowed to happen. Can you really not see that materialisation of the formula of modernising tactical nuclear weapons in Europe is fraught with the danger of a nuclear catastrophe in the centre of the continent?

I know of the NATO statements concerning nuclear weapons. But I also know that people are thinking not only at NATO headquarters but also in public, scientific and government circles. There are already a number of ideas which have authoritative supporters both in the East and West of Europe — on ways of reducing conventional armaments, including dual-purpose systems, from the Atlantic to the Urals. We support the ideas of nuclear-free zones in northern Europe and in the Balkans. We are also in favour of a 300-kilometre corridor free of all nuclear and any other heavy weapons in Central Europe. I am naming just some ideas but certainly not all.

I am positive that it is here, in such intermediate projects, that we should seek ways of removing the threat of nuclear war, instead of clinging to nuclear weapons which do not lead to genuine security in any version. The ideas that you mention in your question are self-delusion.

As for deterrence, isn't awareness of the very fact that a strike at nuclear power stations and

Western publications to be sold in USSR

A number of Western publications, including *The Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, the *Economist* and *Newsweek*, will be sold from ordinary newspaper stands in Moscow, Leningrad and capitals of union republics, the newspaper *Moscow News* reported on May 18. To this end, it is planned to increase their purchases.

The first step towards extending the sales of Western newspapers and magazines was the decision to open access to these publications to the general public.

"I think that our Western partners will be interested in an exchange of publications. Interest in our press is growing along with the interest in our country: for the first time the single number of export copies of Soviet newspapers and magazines reached 12.5 million copies," head of the Souzpechat Agency Viktor Pukalov said in a *Moscow News* interview. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev answers questions from the <i>Washington Post</i> and <i>Newsweek</i>	p. 181
Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with American publishers	p. 184
Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Prime Minister of Thailand	p. 187
Nikolai Ryzhkov's speech at Supreme Soviet	p. 188

chemical plants even with conventional weapons would be lethal for densely-populated Europe enough of a deterrent to war?

QUESTION: NATO suggested cutting tens of thousands of non-nuclear weapons that could be used for surprise or large-scale offensive operations. Does this approach fall within the boundaries of your stated willingness to negotiate on the basis of asymmetrical reductions?

GORBACHEV: On our side, there are no obstacles to that. As for the existing asymmetries in the arsenals of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. I have already expressed my views on that score many times: asymmetries exist on both sides. We stand for eliminating the asymmetry on the basis of reciprocity. For example, the Warsaw Treaty armies have more tanks. And the NATO armies have more attack planes. The Soviet Union and our allies are ready to eliminate these and other asymmetries without delay but, let me repeat, on the basis of reciprocity. And then it would be possible to balance armaments on the lowest possible level sufficient only for defence.

We are not satisfied with the pace of the Vienna consultations of the 23 countries elaborating the objective and format of the future conference. If the work in Vienna proceeds in the same on-again off-again manner, Europe will have to wait for a long time before those asymmetries are eliminated.

Quite possibly — I would even say certainly — there are people whom such a situation suits just fine. But I believe that they will be unable to adhere to their positions for long. Quarters which realise that the issue of the dangerous level of armed forces on the European continent should be resolved at all costs are becoming stronger.

QUESTION: In the months remaining of the Reagan presidency, what is required to broaden your personal relationship with the President into an institutional relationship and carry both into the future?

GORBACHEV: The experience of present-day international relations shows the paramount importance of meetings between the leaders of states, all the more so, when the case in point is the United States and the Soviet Union. Since both countries are well aware of the need for intensifying the dialogue and improving relations, it is absolutely obvious that it is not only the leaders' personal views that matter. This is the imperative of our time. This is the striving of our peoples. Such is the constant in the Soviet-American dialogue. It remains intact. And if we add to that the experience we have accumulated, all these factors taken together give rise to hopes for continuity and even for intensified contacts and improved mutual understanding. However, let me repeat that everything rests on the interests of our countries and peoples, not on the sentiments of individual political figures or their personal motives. No one can allow relations to slide to a point beyond which the unpredictable may happen. Such is the basis for continuing and developing the Soviet-American dialogue. It will remain the same in the future as well.

In a word, we are interested in developing the dialogue, we will strive to make it more productive, we will try to facilitate the "adaptation" of the next US Administration to contacts with us, and will do everything within our power to keep the process begun in Geneva in 1985 from stopping. And, naturally enough, we hope for the same attitude on the American side.

QUESTION: Do you feel President Reagan is a different kind of American leader? Which of his qualities and/or ideas would you most hope to see his successor hold as well? Has he been able to persuade you that the military-industrial complex does not determine US policy?

GORBACHEV: As is known, I made President Reagan's acquaintance in Geneva less than three years ago. We have maintained contacts in

various forms ever since. There were three one-on-one meetings. The fourth is approaching.

I'm not particularly fond of giving personal character references. But since you ask, I would like to say that realism is an important quality in President Reagan as a politician. By this I mean the ability to adapt one's views to the changing situation, while remaining faithful to one's convictions.

Who would have thought in the early 1980s, both in the Soviet Union and the USA, that it would be President Reagan who would sign with us the first nuclear arms reduction agreement in history? However, the sober-minded realisation that the world has changed and that the interests of our countries are changing enabled the President to take a fresh look at the existing realities, while holding to his well-known convictions. And don't the leaders of such powers as the USSR and the USA, which bear a unique responsibility for the destiny of the modern-day world, really need such qualities as the ability to give up dogmas and discard outdated ideas for the sake of making progress? For the goal in question is most noble — ridding our peoples and all humanity of the nuclear nightmare, building new relations and improving the international situation.

As for the military-industrial complex, let me remind you that it wasn't us, it was one of the predecessors of the current president, Dwight Eisenhower, also a Republican, who came up with that notion.

It seems unlikely that he made a mistake. But is that complex the only force shaping American policy? Hardly so, although, let me repeat, its influence is substantial. And it makes itself felt especially obviously and candidly whenever there are signs of positive change in the disarmament sphere, whenever there are prospects for reaching agreements in that field, and whenever Congress is about to consider military budgets and other allocations for armaments.

But, to quote the ancient Greek philosophers, all is in a state of flux, nothing stays still. If the process of disarmament proceeds actively, if corporations receive fewer military-related orders and if the US stops wielding a "big stick" every time something happens tens of thousands of kilometres away from the US — something pictured as a threat to America's national interests — then we will be able to discuss that matter again.

QUESTION: The Americans are familiar with the rapid erosion that occurred in the situation in Vietnam once they decided to withdraw from that war. What changes, in your view, will take place in Afghanistan in the next year while the Soviet Union is pulling out its troops? What will the Soviet Union's contribution to bringing about those changes be?

GORBACHEV: Any parallel between Vietnam and Afghanistan is artificial. Not to mention how different the nature-of-the conflicts is. I would only like to remind you of the fact that prior to the Americans pulling out of Vietnam, that country was divided for 20 years into two nearly equal parts by a border along the 17th parallel. In both sections, there existed governments personifying regimes opposite in nature and incompatible in aim.

There is nothing of the kind in Afghanistan. On the contrary, the government there has set itself the goal of achieving the Afghan people's national reconciliation and, on this basis, its own reorganisation into a coalition government with the participation of all parties to the conflict.

It goes without saying that the future depends in many respects on how honestly and consistently all the signatories to the Geneva agreements will meet the commitments assumed, without trying to get around them in some way or another or deceive their partners.

I can reaffirm once again that the Soviet

Union intends to meet its obligations precisely and undeviatingly.

It is the Afghans themselves who are to decide how the settlement will proceed, what changes are to take place in Afghanistan in the future. We adhere firmly to this principle, which means non-interference in internal affairs. The Soviet Union will render assistance to Afghanistan in dealing with the consequences of the war, in strengthening the Afghan economy. In a word, it will act in keeping with the long-standing traditions of good-neighbourliness and friendship with this southern neighbour of ours, undoubtedly, respecting its status as an independent, neutral and non-aligned state.

QUESTION: You said that when the Afghan knot is untied, it will have the most profound impact on other regional conflicts too. Is the Soviet Union prepared to co-operate with the United States and other countries in resolving other conflicts, for example in Central America, the Persian Gulf and Angola?

GORBACHEV: Yes, it is prepared. I have already said that, given constructive co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States and major emphasis on the prestige and capabilities of the United Nations, its Security Council and other bodies, political settlement of regional conflicts and prevention of new ones will gradually become an international practice, a norm. I would like to confirm this conviction of mine.

The world has ample proof that dragged-out conflicts are the result of politics being exposed to pressure from outdated stereotypes. They are orthodox approaches to national security, with power politics being preferred to sober considerations and political boldness, the old habit of seeking to satisfy one's rights and interests at other people's expense, and a shortage of fairness and humanness in international relations.

The President and I have discussed this more than once and we will have a chance to take up these matters at the forthcoming meeting too. Of course, such a talk can be productive only if there is respect for the right of every people to choose their own road.

QUESTION: Recalling her talks with you, Mrs Thatcher drew a comparison between the criticism and resistance a Western leader faces in bringing change and what you have encountered in pushing perestroika and glasnost. She wished you success. Is the comparison accurate? Or is it fundamentally different? To be more specific, by glasnost you seem to mean something quite different from what we think of as freedom of speech. Could you elaborate on the differences?

GORBACHEV: I appreciate the kind words Mrs Thatcher addresses to us now and then. However, I cannot help saying that I disagree with her views on ways to preserve peace, her dedication to nuclear deterrence and her assessments of socialism.

About the similarities and dissimilarities of economic policy in this country and in the West. Of course, it is possible to find a likeness, formal at least, in anything and such a likeness does exist if you do not go into the essence of one reform or another. However, it is the difference of principle that matters. What is taking place in the USSR is an all-embracing process of revolutionary renovation of socialist society on the basis of the historic choice which we do not doubt and which proved in principle the only correct one for our people 70 years ago. Otherwise the country with which you are discussing things that affect the future of the world as a whole would not exist. Of course, combatting stagnation in the course of perestroika and dismantling the mechanism of retardation require that sluggishness and conservatism be overcome. Sometimes we are confronted with hectic impatience. There is also conscious resistance on the part of those whose narrow selfish interests are incompatible with perestroika, socially, economically or morally.

However, this is precisely what we mean by perestroika, in the course of which we want to renovate our society, upgrade it quality-wise. Perestroika is proceeding in width and depth, encompassing all public groups and all our territory. Perestroika is growing and gaining momentum.

As for glasnost, it and freedom of speech are, of course, interconnected. However, these are not identical things. I would put it this way: while freedom of speech is indispensable for glasnost, we see glasnost as a broader phenomenon. For us it is not just the right of every citizen to openly say what he or she thinks about all social and political questions, but also the duty of the ruling party and all bodies of authority and administration to ensure openness in decision-making, be accountable for their actions, act on criticism, and consider advice and recommendations from the shop floor, public organisations and individuals. Glasnost accentuates an environment allowing citizens to effectively participate in discussing all of the country's affairs, in elaborating and making decisions that affect the interests of all of us and in monitoring the implementation of these decisions.

QUESTION: Could you discuss what ideas from abroad have had influence in the formation of your political and economic thinking and your mode of action? Conversely, what is the effect of glasnost and perestroika in other socialist countries?

GORBACHEV: In my book on perestroika published by Harper and Row, I wrote that our new political thinking is a result of our comprehension of the realities of the nuclear age, the fruit of deep and self-critical reflections on the past and present of our own country and of the surrounding world.

The new thinking took into account and absorbed the conclusions and demands of the Non-Aligned Movement, of the public and of the scientific community, of the movements of physicians, scientists and ecologists, and of various anti-war organisations. We also take into consideration the experience of other socialist countries just as they take ours into account. The process of mutual enrichment with experience, in which no one tries to impose any models on others, is under way.

Yes, all of us really do understand our dependence on one another and feel that we live in an interrelated world and that all of us are inseparable parts of the single present-day civilisation.

Supreme Soviet recommends ratification of INF Treaty

THE Foreign Affairs Commissions of both chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet recommended to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet ratifying the Soviet-US Treaty on Eliminating Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles.

At their joint session in the Kremlin on May 23 the Foreign Affairs Commissions of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR reached the conclusion that the provisions of the treaty and the attendant documents meet the security interests of the Soviet Union and its allies as well as broader interests of lessening the threat of war and strengthening peace.

The commissions arrived at the positive conclusions also regarding the reliability of the measures to verify compliance with the treaty, which are envisaged by it, and regarding other aspects of the treaty. □

QUESTION: Judging by the President's statements, you disagree with him on human rights. At the same time, your dramatic decision to free Andrei Sakharov and to ease the conditions of emigration for some Soviet Jews who desire to live abroad have attracted attention around the world. What further steps do you plan in this direction?

GORBACHEV: Our perestroika, the main factor of which is creative effort, also includes doing away with all deformations of the past years, with everything that hampers manifestation of the humanitarian essence of socialism.

We know our problems and speak honestly and openly about them. The process of democratisation does not bypass the sphere of human rights and liberties. We are enhancing the political and public status of the personality. Many issues have already been resolved within the framework of the democratic process, while others will be resolved as Soviet society changes qualitatively in the course of perestroika. But that is our job. We are resolving these issues not because we want to play up to somebody or to please somebody, but because this meets the interests of our society, because perestroika cannot be carried out without it, and, last but not least, because it is wanted by the Soviet people who have long outgrown the restrictions which they put up within the past and which were to a certain extent an inevitable part of the unusual revolutionary development which we have gone through.

Once I said, and it seems to me, to an American: please, show me a country that has no problems. Each country has problems of its own, human rights included. Of course, we are well informed about the situation with political, social, economic and other rights in the United States. We know well the achievements and problems, but also the flaws of American society. But we do not tolerate interference in your home affairs, though we deem it right to express our views on the processes taking place in American society, on your administration's policy. But we do not want to make all this a reason for confrontation. We consider such an approach to be correct, fair, we see it as meeting the interests of Soviet-American relations and their future. I want to emphasise once again that we do not try to impose anything on the United States, but at the same time we rebuff attempts by any side to meddle in our affairs, no matter who tries to do so in your country.

Such is, in principle, our approach. At the same time, there are problems in the human rights sphere which require joint consideration. The mechanism of co-operation in that area has begun to take shape of late. Scientists, specialists and public representatives have been widely drawn into it. Specific issues are analysed at their meetings in a calm atmosphere and a business-like manner.

We also welcome the accord on setting up a permanent body on human rights with the participation of deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet and US Congressmen. It is the duty of legislators in both countries to show concern for observance of the citizens' rights.

We are prepared to go on acting in this spirit.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to say the following. As it seems to me, pragmatism, preparedness to seek new decisions if what has been tested does not work is the Americans' forte. But they also have a trait — please do not resent my frankness — which sometimes makes it difficult to deal with them. I mean their confidence that everything American is the best, while what others have is at least worse if not altogether bad and unfit for use. I am not talking about anti-communism, which has been implanted in the USA for decades, despite the fact that Alert Einstein called it "the greatest lie of the 20th century" many years ago.

For the sake of our mutual understanding, please, do not try to teach us to live according to American rules — it is altogether useless. And I repeat that, for our part, we do not intend to suggest our values to the Americans.

Let each side live in its own way, respecting each other's choice and voluntary exchanging the fruits of our labour in all the spheres of human activity.

I am sure that each nation, each people does not lose but, conversely, wins if it looks at itself critically and does not ignore others' experience, if it is open to understanding of and respect for a different culture, a different way of thinking, different customs, lastly, a different political system, of course, if it is not terrorist, fascist or dictatorial.

QUESTION: Does your policy of perestroika require fundamental changes in the way relations among Soviet nationalities are structured? Does this policy offer new ways of addressing the interests of cultural diversity and internationalism among nationalities?

GORBACHEV: The question of changing the socialist principles of relations among the peoples, big and small, in our country is not on the agenda in the USSR. But we will set right the violations of these principles. It is such violations that caused the recent developments in some of our republics. The West has displayed, I would say, a morbid interest in them, not infrequently with anti-Soviet innuendo and bad intentions. It made lavish use of speculations aimed at weakening our multi-ethnic union.

Problems certainly do exist, and they are linked with the legacy we inherited from the time of the personality cult and the period of stagnation — in the economy, social policy, spiritual life and human relations. Internationalism, which is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Soviet people of all nationalities will help us resolve the problems in this sphere, too. And we will resolve them in the spirit of perestroika and in close linkage with the accomplishment of all the main tasks it involves, in the process of radical renewal of society. □

If you missed last year's editions of Moscow News or would like to have them all together in one book you need

MOSCOW NEWS 1987

It is a large paperback edition of all last year's Moscow News and costs just £20 (including post and packaging).

ORDER NOW FROM

*Dept MN,
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.*

Please send me copies of Moscow News 1987.

I enclose cheque for £.....

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with American publishers

Here follows the text of the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev, the publishers of the newspaper Washington Post and the magazine Newsweek:

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: I'm glad to greet you here in Moscow on the eve of the summit. What is the mood in Washington?

KATHARINE GRAHAM: All are preparing for the summit. Thousands of people will come here in connection with this event. Everyone has great hopes and expectations.

GORBACHEV: Moscow, too, is looking forward to the summit. That's good. It's good that the cause once started continues. The Soviet-American dialogue may have its ups and downs, it may have its evolution, but there's no doubt, that since it's proceeding, it promises specific results in the development of our relations. I stated this in the written answers to your questions, handed over to you. We highly estimate the very fact of constant Soviet-American dialogue. Contacts with the US in different fields — political, scientific, technical, economic and cultural — are diversified. And yet, they cannot replace summit meetings.

To this I can add and inform you that Moscow, too, lives in an atmosphere of preparations for a visit by the President of the United States after an interval of years.

GRAHAM: I would like to note that you, together with President Reagan and with George Shultz and Eduard Shevardnadze, have created a new mechanism of fruitful discussions, something that was missing previously.

GORBACHEV: I think it really is an important result of our joint work over the past few years. Of course, I highly rate specific agreements reached during these discussions, especially the INF Treaty. And yet, I believe that the most important political achievement is regular and systematic dialogue.

Well, it sounds like I'm beginning to question you . . . to seize the initiative. But then I've already answered your written questions. Now we can just talk.

GRAHAM: To begin with, I would like to thank you for your answers to our written questions. They mean a great deal to us and we are grateful to you for this and for the sincerity of your answers. Of course, in this conversation we would like to discuss very many things. Preparing for this meeting we talked with very many people and virtually everywhere we were told how many problems you are confronted with and how hard it will be to solve them. Many are just stunningly impressed by the boldness of your plans. May I ask you, do you ever experience moments of doubt, when a task seems incredibly complicated and even unrealisable? Do you experience moments of hesitation?

Why do you think your programme of reforms must be crowned with success, whereas the programme of such of your predecessors as Nikita Khrushchev were not and failed?

GORBACHEV: Well, you've asked perhaps the most important question which is worrying our people and, I think, the Americans on account of the fact that, one way or another, whether we like it or not, it is the destiny of our two peoples and our two countries to co-operate and to learn to live together. And this, naturally, implies knowing each other, and, particularly, knowing each other's plans. They are truly grandiose. It is for this reason that our perestroika is called revolutionary.

Paradoxical as it may seem, although difficulties have multiplied, I feel more confident we've chosen the right political course towards perestroika and renovation of our society. How can I explain this? Probably now we know better what we want and how to reach it, and this gives us greater confidence.

In the Party Central Committee tomorrow we'll discuss the document for the coming 19th Conference. I can tell you that it will give second wind to our plans and our work to implement the concept of perestroika.

I might appear over-confident if I say what I've said. Taking decisions at this turning-point in the development of our society is a responsible thing, before our people above all. We're not guaranteed against mistakes, because political mistakes are the worst. We'd like to fend them off. We are therefore making all our main decisions of principle with the active participation of all society and its intellectual forces, within the framework of the democratic process. This is the best way of avoiding political mistakes. This is why we are developing the processes of democratisation and openness so persistently. We won't back-track. It is perhaps in this area that perestroika has made the greatest strides.

I've approached the second part of your question. Indeed, earlier, too, our society and party understood the need of reforms and renovation. Attempts to implement such reforms were made on a very large scale, including by, as you said, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev and the leadership he headed. I think that in the times of Brezhnev the leadership under him also conceived and launched big plans. But they were not completed, mostly because they were not based on the decisive force — drawing people into the modernisation and restructuring of society. We've learnt a lesson from our history and this is why we are developing democratisation with so much persistence.

The now popular expression "more democracy — more socialism" is more than a pretty slogan. It is a thoughtful guideline: through developing the democratic process, through involving people in economic, political, social and cultural reforms, to discover the potentiality of socialism and all that is contained in this system.

Now that we have behind us three years and the experience of perestroika, of our work at the new stage, we can say with confidence that perestroika has become a cause of the entire people, a national cause.

Many generations, my generation for sure, may not have witnessed, may not remember such activity and interest in the affairs of society as we're observing. People are eagerly discussing the activities of Party, state and economic bodies, and all developments. Tremendous interest is being shown in everything taking place in our country. This is evidence of stagnation and apathy being overcome. Our life is tempestuous. It's no easy job to steer the ship in this turbulent sea. But we have the compass and the crew, and our ship is strong enough.

JIM HOGLAND: I'd like to ask you a number of more specific questions on perestroika. You said that the present time is stormy and that there exist more difficulties than earlier in certain fields. I think a reform of prices is, in part, called upon to become an extremely important component of perestroika. The system of subsidies operating in your country is part of the

old social contract between the people and the government. Which means that every Soviet citizen receives a three-rouble subsidy for every kilogram of meat and a 30-kopecck subsidy for every litre of milk which he buys. Do you believe that this system, so costly for the nation, needs to be changed? If you do believe so, how urgent is this task and how will it be accomplished?

GORBACHEV: We're examining this problem and not only in the government quarters but in society. Those who stay in Moscow may confirm that our press is already carrying out a discussion of these issues. The discussion involves ordinary citizens, industrial workers, collective farmers, intellectuals, veterans, and experts. The problem concerns the whole of society.

Prices and price formation play rather an important role, to put it more precisely, in the package of measures constituting a radical economic reform. When I speak of prices, I mean wholesale, purchase and retail prices. We want a new five-year-plan to be based on these new prices.

How should we approach them in essence? The standpoint on this score has already taken shape in both government and scientific quarters. We've already preliminarily set it forth to the people. While reforming the prices and changing price formation we, above all, see to it that no decline will take place in real living standards.

You may ask what is the aim of all this. The aim is to make the prices correspond to real economic processes and reflect real expenses and work in-put. This will make it possible to cleanse the entire financial system and on this basis to more successfully develop cost accounting, to use in all work establishments the material incentives moving the economy in the right direction, toward greater scientific and technological progress and higher labour productivity, to search for ways of better meeting society's needs for means of production, commodities, and higher-quality services.

Today we're very carefully thinking over the ways of compensating for the losses that might be caused by the introduction of new prices, in the given case retail prices are meant. When we're ready for this and when the measures are well-thought-out and weighed comprehensively, we'll submit them for nationwide discussion. We've promised this to the people and we'll act in this way. We'll do nothing without the people's consent.

HOGLAND: We just saw that a reform of prices gave birth to civil unrest and serious problems in neighbouring socialist Poland. Do you suppose that you'll be able to avoid similar stormy events?

GORBACHEV: The situation is different here. Our situation is characterised by the fact that the major mass of prices is under strict public control.

Therefore it is very important to find the facet enabling us to combine the release of the economic mechanisms needed with the preservation of the necessary centralised control. I do not think this issue can be solved at one go. The shaping of a new price mechanism will be a process that will pass within the framework of economic reform.

We are being prodded from the inside and from the outside towards steps which would be tantamount to a leap. But we will act in a considered and prudent way, and will con-

tinuously seek counsel from the people via the democratic mechanism.

Anyway, I believe that after this answer the *Washington Post* will stop advising us to take reckless steps to accelerate perestroika.

MEG GREENFIELD: Mr Gorbachev, I would like to ask you a question concerning perestroika in another sphere. You wrote about perestroika in international relations, and particularly in relations between socialist countries.

You very vividly wrote that every country must exercise an absolute right to choose its own road of development: capitalism, socialism or some other variant of the road. I would like to ask, to what degree and how could it be applied to the East European socialist countries? For instance, there are elements in society in Poland that call for a pluralistic system in which the Communist Party perhaps would not play the leading role. To what degree is that acceptable? To what degree is that endurable to you?

GORBACHEV: I think you should better ask the Polish leadership about that. That would also correspond to the point of departure of your question. But still, I can say a few words.

We recognise each people's right, wherever in the world it lives, to social choice and to the choice of the way to improve its society. I think, the Polish people can better see now, what should be done for Poland to gain strength and consolidate so that her development would bear fruit for the people.

Whatever we do in our country is our affair. Perestroika was brought about by our conditions. We need it. We will continue widening and deepening it. But we do not impose our methods for developing and improving society on anybody. That is everyone's own affair. I think the Poles will also see what they should do for Poland's development. I am sure that the bulk of people, the overwhelming majority of Polish society are for the road they chose after the war.

GREENFIELD: I would like in this connection to refer to one of your Belgrade statements. You said there that there are no circumstances under which interference by force into another country's affairs could occur, and under which such interference could be admissible. Does this mean that, as we see it in the West, a situation similar to that, say, in 1956 in Hungary or in 1968 in Czechoslovakia, that a similar situation would not occur again, and is such an interpretation correct?

GORBACHEV: Yes, I did speak on that subject in Yugoslavia. I can only reiterate what I said then, and generally speaking, there is nothing I could add to that. I would only note the following, perhaps: interference from any side is impermissible. When you speak about interference, I can see what you mean. But recalling those situations, I also have in mind something else, and here it is: before what you said occurred, there was interference of a different kind.

Look how much time has passed since the war but the parliaments and bodies analogical to them in some Western capitals adopt resolutions which can be regarded only as interference in the home affairs of other countries.

The world has dramatically changed in the post-war decades, and today even the smallest people would not tolerate interference and commands from anybody. Our relations with the socialist countries are equal relations of independent states, relations of co-operation and mutual assistance. We share many things, including resources, and depend on one another in the sense that our co-operation allows and allowed in the past to build up the economy of each country and to carry out major social changes.

I believe such co-operation is a good basis, and it will play a positive role also at the new stage when deep changes in the socialist countries are under way.

RICHARD SMITH: I would like to know your personal reaction to some specific proposals which are advanced on the threshold of the Party Conference. Specifically, do you support the proposal to limit the term of office for Party leaders and, if you do, does it concern the post of general secretary?

GORBACHEV: You will receive answers to these questions in coming days. For the time being, I would answer in one word — yes.

SMITH: Still we hope that you will say more . . .

GORBACHEV: I would anticipate what you will read in . . . What day is it now? Is it the eighteenth of May? In five or six days. The *Washington Post* always wants to know more and earlier than others.

Someone corrects: This is *Newsweek*.

GORBACHEV: It's all the same. It is your empire.

GREENFIELD: There is competition inside our empire, too.

GRAHAM: Mr Gorbachev, from the moment of our arrival here we see immense interest in the forthcoming Party Conference. Could you tell us in general outline what do you expect from this exceptionally important event?

GORBACHEV: My expectations coincide with the expectations of society as a whole. We want to sum up the results of the last three years and to analyse already the history of perestroika. We want to make a critical analysis of this entire period and to draw lessons from it. Perhaps, some corrections will be needed. But the central question is: how to move the perestroika forward, how to make it irreversible? That is why the questions of deepening economic reform and democratising the Party and society will be the principal ones. You will soon learn all the rest.

Richard Smith asked whether the publication of the article in the newspapers *Sovetskaya Rossia* and *Pravda* reflects the serious differences in the Soviet leadership.

GORBACHEV: I get the impression that the theme of serious differences among the Soviet leadership about perestroika and assessment of the past is prompted by the West, not by Soviet editors. I don't know the motives of those who regularly tout this theme, which is constantly discussed in foreign radio programmes in Russian and other languages. It may be a desire to understand what's going on in this country or it may be a desire to make capital of the discussions being conducted here, sow suspicion and provoke a real split in our leadership.

The present leadership, both in the Politburo and in the government, was mainly formed after April 1985, when we had already launched the policy of perestroika. All the members of our leadership are deeply committed to the cause of perestroika and actively participate in formulating its policy and carrying it out.

Let's think it over together and the situation may become clearer to you. When people take on a task as ambitious as this and when they have to formulate not only strategy but also the tactics for attaining the goals they have set, can they do so without active debate or dialogue within the leadership and in society as a whole? This is what is happening now. The whole country has become one big debating club. And it is only natural that there is lively debate among the leadership about ways of handling the problems arising from perestroika.

Only Jesus Christ knew all the answers to all questions and could feed 20,000 Jews with five loaves of bread. We do not possess such miraculous power and have no ready-made answers to all problems at hand. We are looking for such answers with the whole society. And this inevitably leads to discussions and heated debate. This is natural. The trouble is that for many years there was no such debate in society, in the Party, in the Central Committee, in the government or in the Politburo. And that caused many failures, shortcomings and errors. It is

a big mistake to picture our current discussions as differences in the leadership. They are the normal democratic process. It is another thing that some people may want differences, divisions and even battles within the Soviet leadership. But this has nothing to do with understanding the real situation within our leadership.

SMITH: The thing is that we get the impression that many of your enthusiastic followers, people who support perestroika, are concerned about a possible political division. There was a letter in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kultura*, whose author worried that "the Central Committee will hold a plenum and topple Gorbachev" (it's a quote). And he suggested holding a referendum on your leadership and your policy, in which everyone would participate. My question is this: have you heard about that letter and what do you think about the idea of holding a referendum?

GORBACHEV: That's not the only letter I've heard about. I consider the appearance of such things to be a positive development. It means that society does care about who is in the country's leadership. It means that people are taking a great interest in what is happening. I think the fact you have mentioned is an interesting symbol, which also demonstrates the progress perestroika is making. It shows that people have become involved in the political process and are eager to participate in it and have their say. This is wonderful. It may be the main thing that came with perestroika, because in the economy and in the social sphere we still have a lot of work to do. There are improvements there too, but we need time to change things in such a radical way that all society would feel the change.

As regards the fears you have mentioned, nothing is happening in the Party or in society to justify them.

I don't mean myself, I am talking about the problem in general. And one has to know our political process to realise that if the general secretary did not have the support of his closest associates and the people he is working with, nothing would have changed here since April. Everything that has happened in our society, our Party and the Central Committee happened with the participation of the present leadership.

There is one more thing I want to say. Perestroika is now bringing to the surface interesting new people in all spheres — in the political process, in the economy and in culture. Continued democratisation will bring onto the political scene more and more interesting new people with fresh ideas. The aim of perestroika is to create mechanisms that would regulate society and facilitate its self-adjustment within the framework of the democratic process. That will help involve the people and, of course, their best, intellectual forces, able and talented people at all levels and in all echelons, in managing the affairs of society and the state.

Our society will never again be what it was. It is changing. There are mechanisms working for this change. A great deal is to be done, but the train has already started off and is gathering speed.

ROBERT KAISER: For me, a person who has lived in Moscow, the most dramatic changes are precisely the changes in the press and on television. Everything has become so interesting. Many political prisoners have been released, and many former refuseniks have been allowed to leave the USSR. On May 7 you stated that the goal is to create a socialist law-based state. And you said in your very interesting written answers to our questions that freedom of speech is absolutely necessary. At the same time we see that some Soviet citizens find themselves in trouble because they, as it seems to us, simply want to exercise this right, to exercise the freedom of speech. I mean Airikyan in Armenia and Grigoryants in Moscow. Why does that happen? Is it because some officials have not

yet mastered the new thinking or because, in your view, what these citizens do goes beyond freedom of speech?

GORBACHEV: An interesting question. I will answer it in brief. The most substantial thing that perestroika has shown is that our people, striving for renewal of society, for changes, have said in no uncertain terms: only within the framework of socialism and on the basis of its values.

Even such measures in the economy as the development of co-operatives, self-financing, lease contract and individual enterprise were and are discussed very seriously and scrupulously in our society from the following standpoint: is it not a deviation from socialism? Does not it undermine the socialist principles? Today, nine tenths of our country's population was born and grew up in the socialist period. And the present leadership is unable to do anything except develop socialism, which has opened a great road to us in all spheres of life. We know socialism and its achievements and we know its problems. And we will act within the framework of our socialist choice.

That is why when they try to force other values on us, specifically in the sphere of political philosophy, it brings a critical reaction from the people. But it is also a democratic process. This is democracy.

Our people know that Grigoryants' "organisation" is linked with the West organisationally and financially, that Western correspondents are his constant visitors and guests. That is why our people regard him as something alien, parasitising on the democratic processes and on perestroika. Alas, that happens sometimes. It also happens in nature: all kinds of parasites attach themselves to a living organism and try to damage it.

Our society is strong enough to cope with this, too. Once I said that the whole society will be resmelted in the perestroika furnace. This will make it stronger and will open up even more its democratic, humane potential in the interests of man. Our people reject the proposals that we seek prospects elsewhere, for instance, the proposals that we eliminate socialist ownership, and so on. This will not be accepted, this is an illusion, and you should be aware of this.

In conclusion I would like to express my satisfaction with our meeting and the hope, a slight hope that the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* will cover the processes in the Soviet Union on a basis of an objective analysis and a serious and responsible approach. We are not asking for praise. We invite you to try and comprehend the truths born of perestroika.

Authoritative publications should do everything professionally.

GRAHAM: If you will allow, we'd like to ask another very important question. A few words, please, about the summit, its content and atmosphere. You said in your written answers that you would welcome another meeting with President Reagan if you could sign an agreement to cut strategic offensive arms by half. Can we take it for granted that the understanding on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive arms is vital and close enough to completion enough to be signed with the ABM and SLCM talks still under way, that is, without waiting until the work on space and SLCM issues is finished?

GORBACHEV: We are confirmed and principled advocates of resolute cuts in nuclear arsenals, and so we are for the signing of the treaty on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive weapons. As we see it, we have travelled a long way together in search of solutions. But what's the point in signing understandings on strategic offensive arms cuts in one sphere, if there is an arms race in space or at sea? I think you'll agree it's nonsense.

So our persistence isn't a whim, a tactical subterfuge on the part of the Soviet side. It's a responsible, well thought-out attitude. It meets the interests of the Soviet and American nations, and the whole world. If we were to replace one kind of arms race with another, in space, things would become really dramatic. We'd have undermined emergent confidence, and depreciated the experience stored up at the Geneva talks. What we have here is a new kind and a new sphere of the arms race. We'd need new criteria to come close to understandings and arrive at agreements. And that would take us decades.

As I see it, those who encourage an arms race in space are committing a crime against their own and other nations. That has to be said with full clarity and responsibility. Such an approach and such thinking lead to destabilisation, to unpredictable developments in security issues. The advocates of that approach deserve to be pilloried.

To leave sea-launched cruise missiles without limitations and beyond control would be another manoeuvre, another channel of the arms race.

So we tie all those issues together. I think it's a valid approach. The main thing is that we see ways to solve all those interrelated issues and arrive at a treaty on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive weapons. Then, we can proceed further.

GRAHAM: I asked because, to my mind, both sides have made enough headway towards an understanding. Now, take the SDI and ABM issue. As we see it, the Washington Declaration

brings us close enough to the main question: what will happen when the period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty is over? Do you think the joint Washington statement offers a solution even now?

GORBACHEV: I think what the statement says on understanding the ABM Treaty the way it was adopted in 1972 and the way both sides understood it before 1983 gives a basis for progress toward an agreement on 50 per cent strategic offensive weapon cuts. But only that way.

I still have to answer another part of your question. We will work together with any US Administration in that crucial field of Soviet-American relations. We shall seek ways to make new nuclear arms cuts in the framework of the Geneva process. We'll be glad if it happens during Mr Reagan's presidency. If it happens under a new president, we aren't going to mark time either. We shall work on. It's all up to the US side.

I'm going to talk to the President about co-operation in Mars expeditions.

Mikhail Gorbachev invites everybody to look at the pictures of the launch. He continues:

This is a mock-up of our Energia rocket. Last year it placed a 100-ton load in orbit. With some improvements, the rocket will be capable of carrying 200 tons. Here's the picture of its start. I received it from Baikonur, which I visited last year. I will suggest to the President co-operation in organising a joint flight to Mars. The results expected to be produced by the SDI and ABM programmes can very well be achieved through peaceful projects for the development of space. For instance, the implementation of the project on a flight to Halley's Comet provided us with dozens of new materials and numerous scientific results in such areas as electronics, mathematics, and so on.

This is an area for work and co-operation worthy of the American and Soviet people. I will suggest to the President . . .

HOGLAND: As you probably know, we have published an article by Academician Sagdeyev on this issue.

GORBACHEV: How interesting! Is it about Halley's Comet?

HOGLAND: About a joint flight to Mars. It is suggested to send an automatic station. As we see it, the flight could be feasible.

GORBACHEV: That would be a tremendous breakthrough in science, technology and engineering. In the meantime, you can see what we have been doing. . . . I am very glad to have met with you.

Graham and the others thanked Gorbachev for the conversation and the interview. □

Vladimir Petrovsky on summit meeting

"THE Soviet Union is doing everything so that the coming summit in Moscow will become a major milestone in the process of the normalisation of Soviet-American relations," Vladimir Petrovsky, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister said at a press conference in Moscow on May 19.

Normal functioning of the world system of states is impossible without good relations between the USSR and the USA, he said. The practical steps taken by the Soviet Union and the United States, above all in the military-political area, assume a qualitatively new dimension in the present situation. The Treaty on Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles which went far beyond the framework of the classical 'bipolar' scheme is among such steps. "Nuclear disarmament, the starting point to which this agreement is, objectively requires that

other nuclear states be involved in this process, concerns each and everyone," he said.

The same is true of the settlement of conflict, and crises with the participation of the USSR and the USA, Petrovsky went on. In this area, just as in the area of disarmament, it is important that all states, including the Soviet Union and the United States, should actively co-operate with one another, and bring fully into play the United Nations possibilities.

"Recognising the special responsibility of the USSR and the USA, we at the same time take into consideration the fact that far from everything depends on these two powers," the USSR Deputy Foreign Minister said. "New thinking by which the Soviet Union is guided in the international arena presupposes the active involvement in an equal measure of bilateral and multilateral forums and talks in the process of shaping the all-embracing system of security on Earth." The USSR is striving to ensure that

alongside unilateral and bilateral actions, international organisations and conferences which link national interests, synchronise political actions of states and open up opportunities for the involvement of people's diplomacy in the solution of questions of war and peace should become an important source of positive changes.

Vladimir Petrovsky noted with satisfaction the tendency for the internationalisation of the efforts of states to resolve problems. □

The Imperative of the Nuclear Age

by *Izvestia* political observer Alexander Bovin
—on the new way of political thinking which alone can guide us to a world without nuclear weapons

Price 40p

Available from Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens, LONDON, SW7 4NW.

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Prime Minister of Thailand

ON May 18 the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev met in the Kremlin the Prime Minister of Thailand Prem Tinsulanonda, who is in the USSR on an official visit.

Greeting the distinguished guest, Gorbachev expressed the hope that the visit by the head of the Thai Government would promote relations between the two countries.

The Soviet-Thai negotiations held on these days, he said, matched the general line of the Soviet Union's foreign policy aimed at broadening dialogue and co-operation with all countries and improving the international situation.

This policy rested on principles of new thinking. The Soviet leadership had not only proclaimed them, but had also been consistently converting them into constructive proposals directed at cutting nuclear arsenals, banning chemical weapons and reducing conventional arms.

"We invite all states to look for solutions to outstanding international problems," Gorbachev pointed out.

Tinsulanonda said that Thailand showed interest in the processes taking place in this country and viewed with sympathy the Soviet Union's large-scale initiatives in favour of consolidating international peace and security.

The Prime Minister expressed the Thai Government's interest in developing relations

with the Soviet Union in various areas.

Proper attention was given in the discussion to the problem of the political settlement in Kampuchea. Both sides agreed that the resolution of the problem could only be secured by political means, by way of talks.

In setting out the Soviet approach to regional problems, Gorbachev emphasised, referring to the experience gained by the international community, that these conflicts, no matter how complicated and protracted, should be resolved along the lines of political settlement. Military solution was out of place.

This related in full measure to the Kampuchean problem as well. It should be settled on the basis of recognition of the realities, with the participation of all forces involved in that conflict in one way or another. Such was also the stance of the USSR's Kampuchean and Vietnamese friends, Gorbachev said.

This problem should be resolved without disregard for the interests of all sides, all sides should move towards one another. A balance of interests was required here. If that approach prevailed, the conflict could be settled quicker. The ASEAN countries, too, including Thailand, could contribute to that.

The Thai Prime Minister remarked that favourable conditions were now developing for resolving the Kampuchean problem. In this context, he mentioned the forthcoming meeting in Jakarta of the sides interested in a settlement.

Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union highly assessed the ASEAN countries' contribution to resolving international and regional problems. The USSR would like to maintain good relations with all member countries of the association.

In view of Thailand's current chairmanship at the ASEAN standing committee, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee conveyed through the Prime Minister greetings to the leaders of the ASEAN countries and reaffirmed the Soviet Union's sincere desire to co-operate with that organisation.

Tinsulanonda conveyed to Gorbachev wishes of success in connection with the forthcoming Soviet-American summit.

Winding up the conversation, Gorbachev expressed the hope that relations between the Soviet Union and Thailand would pick up momentum, thus facilitating the search for new approaches and development of mutually beneficial ties in economic, trade and other fields.

The Prime Minister invited Gorbachev to visit Thailand. The invitation was accepted with gratitude.

The meeting was attended from the Soviet side by Nikolai Ryzhkov, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and from the Thai side by Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila and Ambassador to the USSR Prajit Rojanaphruk. □

Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee at its regular meeting on May 19 considered and endorsed draft theses of the CPSU Central Committee for the 19th All-Union Party Conference. It was decided to convene a plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee to consider the theses and subsequently to bring them up for wide discussion by communists and all working people.

The Political Bureau endorsed the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Hans-Jochen Vogel, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. It was pointed out that the meeting was of serious importance from the viewpoint of further intensification of interaction between the two parties in the interests of new development of relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany and headway along the road of all-European co-operation. The meeting again reaffirmed the need for and usefulness in present-day conditions of the dialogue between communists and social democrats on matters concerning the present-day development and prospects for the building of a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

The results of Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting and Nikolai Ryzhkov's and Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda of Thailand were considered and approved. It was emphasised that the constructive exchange of views accorded with the task of stimulating more active relations with Thailand, just as with other member countries of the association of South-East Asian nations,

within the context of the Soviet Union's principled policy aimed at strengthening peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and at resolving conflict situations.

The accords reached create favourable prerequisites for further steps in the cause of giving greater scope to fruitful contacts and onward development of relations between the Soviet Union and Thailand in the spirit of mutual understanding and trust.

The meeting approved the results of Andrei Gromyko's official friendly visit to the Socialist Republic of Romania. His meetings with Nicolae Ceausescu and other Romanian leaders corresponded to the line of strengthening the traditional relations of friendship, co-operation and good-neighbourliness between the Soviet Union and Romania.

It was pointed out that taking Soviet-Romanian co-operation to still higher levels both in party-to-party and state-to-state contacts and in interaction between social organisations meets the interests of the USSR and Romania and the cause of peace and socialism.

Special attention was paid to developing economic co-operation, in particular to promoting co-operative production arrangements and joint ventures and upgrading ties between work collectives.

The Political Bureau heard a report by Eduard Shevardnadze on the results of his talks with the US Secretary of State in Geneva. Note was taken of the significance of that round of talks between the two ministers ahead of the forthcoming summit, scheduled to be held in Moscow on May 29-June 2, from the standpoint of preparing

it and reviewing the progress of work on practical agreements between the USSR and the United States.

It was stressed that the forthcoming summit can lead to further progress along the path charted in Geneva, Reykjavik and Washington and give an extra fillip to the onward development of Soviet-American relations.

(continued on next page)

Anatoli Adamishin on Angola

IT is becoming clear to an increasingly larger number of people the world over that regional conflicts cannot be surmounted by military means, Anatoli Adamishin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, told a press conference for Portuguese and foreign journalists in Lisbon on May 19.

He said that the Soviet Union is an adamant supporter of the settlement of these conflicts by political means. As an important positive example the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister cited the attainment of the accords on a political settlement around Afghanistan with the Soviet Union and the United States acting as their international guarantors.

Noting the involved nature of the Angolan-Namibian knot, Adamishin expressed confidence in the possibility of untying it. The USSR firmly stands for a peaceful solution to this problem. It seems that the United States also desires it now. The Soviet Union considers as fair such a solution that will be accepted by the governments of Angola and Cuba, he stressed. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's speech at Supreme Soviet

SOVIET Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov described co-operatives as a highly important form of popular activity.

He was commenting at a session of the nation's parliament — the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which opened in the Kremlin on May 24, on a draft law on the co-operative sector.

Ryzhkov said that since large government-run enterprises forming the backbone of the Soviet economy find it hard to adjust to fast-changing demand all the time, it is needed to promote small- and medium-sized production units with flexible, manoeuvrable structures geared directly to the market.

Co-operatives have all these desired qualities, he noted.

Ryzhkov observed further that local authorities have to this day been frequently resisting the growth of the co-op sector, often under the pretext of concern for the "purity" of socialism.

He explained the posture by "the burden of

distorted ideas of socialism" still bearing weight.

The Party and the government, Ryzhkov stressed, see the need to develop the co-operative movement throughout the land as a top priority.

"The draft law on co-operatives, which has been submitted for consideration by the USSR Supreme Soviet," Ryzhkov continued, "will drastically alter the existing legal status of co-ops."

"It is very important that the co-operative sector, along with the state sector of the socialist economy, becomes a really equal and active participant in perestroika (as the reform policy has come to be known in the Russian).

"This is why it has become essential to formalise its underlying principles in legislation," the Soviet head of government said.

He noted that over a period of less than three months since the draft law's publication nearly 6,000 co-ops have sprung up, as compared with 14,000 over the preceding 18 months.

The draft has been widely discussed across the nation and none of the criticisms or suggestions voiced has been ignored, he added.

A total of 42 out of the 50 clauses in the draft have been amended in this or other way, Ryzhkov said.

He spoke then of a system of economic levers and incentives in the draft law for creating favourable conditions for co-op activities.

One provision in the draft makes it no longer necessary to obtain a special permit to set up a co-op and another stresses that launching such a venture shall be an utterly voluntary undertaking.

The Prime Minister emphasised the inadmissibility of raising any obstacles to people willing to quit the state sector of the economy in favour of the co-op one.

If it is accepted, the law on co-operatives is to be on the books from July 1, 1988.

One indispensable condition of it taking effect as scheduled is a revision of such major pieces of legislation as the fundamentals of civil law and the law on lands of both the Soviet Union as a whole and of its constituent republics, Ryzhkov said. □

CMEA discuss multilateral co-operation

THE Executive Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) concluded at its meeting in Moscow on May 19 after discussing documents prepared for the forthcoming 44th session of this organisation of socialist countries.

It paid special attention to working out a tentative collective concept for the international socialist division of labour in the years between 1991 and 2005.

The drafts discussed included also programmes for promoting multilateral co-operative production arrangements in the CMEA framework in the fields of machine-building, radio engineering, electronics and the chemical industry.

Besides, the meeting approved draft comprehensive programmes for multilateral co-operation between the European members of the CMEA, on the one hand, and Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia, on the other.

The committee decided that proposals be drawn up for more effective measures to carry out the council's comprehensive programme for scientific and technological progress, which covers the period until the year 2000, and to deal with arising related problems.

It was decided to map out measures to develop the manufacture of new types of communications equipment in the CMEA countries and step up multilateral co-operation in producing medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

In addition, the meeting hammered out guidelines for upgrading the multilateral interstate economic and international economic organisations of the CMEA countries, which provide for converting some of them to the pay-your-own-way system.

Proposals were prepared to streamline the structure of the CMEA and rebuild its information systems.

CMEA Secretary Vyacheslav Sychoy said that the need for perestroika, or restructuring, in this or that form was stressed in discussing practically every issue on the agenda.

The agreed guidelines for such changes and a new approach to the division of labour among countries, he said, were reflected in the draft of the collective concept for the international socialist division of labour.

The draft, Sychoy explained, sets ambitious new targets for developing the economic interaction of socialist nations and defines ways to accelerate and intensify it. □

(Continued from previous page)

It was reaffirmed that the Soviet side intends to do everything needed for the forthcoming meeting to become an important landmark on the way to preparing a package of agreements on strategic offensive arms and anti-ballistic missile systems.

It was pointed out at the same time that achieving the agreed aims presupposes corresponding readiness on the US part as well.

The Political Bureau heard a report on the results of Dmitri Yazov's official friendly visit to the German Democratic Republic.

The meeting made decisions on also some other issues of Party and state affairs. □

Ryzhkov receives representatives of foreign firms

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, on May 19 received Charles Hugel, President of the US firm Combustion Engineering, and also representatives of the companies McDermott, Ipatco and Mitsui which conduct negotiations with Soviet organisations on matters of business co-operation.

The senior executives of the aforementioned companies toured Western Siberia where they familiarised themselves with prospects for its further industrial development. Their meetings with Soviet people, whose enthusiasm for developing the vast potentials of that part of the country made a great impression on them.

During a substantive talk the executives of the firms assessed positively the opportunities for co-operation with the Soviet Union, primarily in implementing projects to build large-scale

petrochemical enterprises based on rich deposits of hydrocarbon in the west Siberian region.

They showed interest in promising new forms of trade and economic co-operation with the Soviet Union, which receive a boost as the foreign economic activity is being streamlined in the USSR and orientated at a more vigorous involvement of the Soviet economy in the international division of labour.

Ryzhkov's statements to the effect that the logic of the world economic ties, growing interdependence of states and the new political thinking demand that artificial hurdles that are put up by certain Western quarters on the way towards broad and mutually beneficial co-operation be cleared were met with understanding. □

USSR YEARBOOK '88

This multi-purpose information and reference publication uses a vast amount of statistical material to tell about:

- Soviet society;
 - foreign policy;
 - the highlights of the past year in the life of the Soviet Union;
 - the efforts to carry out the decisions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU, which adopted a policy of accelerating the country's socio-economic development.
- Intended for the general readership in all countries.*

available at £1.00 from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW