

CPSU Central Committee Plenum

Mikhail Gorbachev's report on Nationalities policy

Moscow September 19 TASS — There follows the full text of Mikhail Gorbachev's report on the CPSU nationalities policy at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that opened here today:

Comrades,

The logic of perestroika and our daily experience have led us to conclude that the need for comprehensive profound changes is long overdue in ethnic relations.

Let us be frank: we did not arrive at the understanding of the need for such changes immediately after April 1985.

This was due to the widespread belief that things were more or less satisfactory in this sphere of social development.

Of course, we knew about the existence of sensitive nationalities problems. They were mentioned at the 27th CPSU Congress.

But the entire scope of overdue change in this sphere revealed itself later, which advanced these issues to the focus of attention at the 19th Party Conference.

The current situation in inter-ethnic relations cannot be assessed in any other way than as extremely complex. Unresolved issues have surfaced one after another, errors and deformations that were accumulated over decades have now made themselves felt, and dormant ethnic conflicts erupted.

Socio-economic and state-legal, ecological and demographic problems, problems of the development of language and culture and the preservation of national traditions have become closely intertwined.

Each of them calls for immense attention, each is associated with human beings and with the destinies of whole nations.

We are facing the task of discussing from comprehensive and principled positions the current state of ethnic relations in the country and working out an up-to-date strategy of the party on the nationalities issue by relying on Leninist principles, realities and prevalent trends in the world public movement.

Discussions on this issue in the party and society have long been underway.

A great deal of analytical work has already been done.

All this has resulted in the party's draft platform published for nationwide discussion and submitted for consideration to the Central Committee's plenum today.

The text of the draft and suggestions that have been submitted are well known to you. That is why I will dwell only on some key issues.

I

The nationalities issue and, above all, the issue of the correlation between international and national in our party had to be handled even back when the revolution was being prepared and especially when building socialist society.

In full accordance with Marxist teaching, the party has upheld the internationalist stance from the very beginning.

As understood by Lenin, internationalism includes unfailing regard for ethnic interests, respect for the identity of each ethnic group, the recognition of all peoples as being equal, and an

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Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher meet in Kremlin

SOVIET President Mikhail Gorbachev and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had a meeting in the Kremlin on September 23, which effectively continued their dialogue dating back almost five years.

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They agreed that the very fact of such a straightforward, honest, informal and in-depth exchange of opinions between representatives of very different states and social systems marks a fundamentally new stage in international relations.

Any upheavals and complications which may arise in relations between the two countries recede before the overriding significance of such dialogue.

It is especially important now that the world is going through very cardinal changes. The present generation of the leaders of states, especially such as the USSR and Britain, do not have the moral right to miss the chance to jointly ensure a peaceful period in the history of civilisation.

Getting together again after less than six months, Gorbachev and Thatcher were able to note the continued improvement of the international atmosphere: tension is lifting, trust is getting stronger and there are more possibilities to solve a number of major problems.

Gorbachev appreciated Thatcher's close interest in Soviet developments and her knowledge of how perestroika has been faring. In turn, her judgments attested to her understanding of the tremendous international significance of reforms in the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Gorbachev's analysis of the progress of economic and political reforms was accompanied by a lively discussion of ways to effect them within a socialist framework, through righting deformities linked to Stalin's policies and abolishing the administer-by-command system, dogmatic thinking and the underestimation of the

experience of other nations.

The focus was on the main aspects of the reforms — democratisation and decentralisation, which will lead to the desired goal only given the integrating role of the new mechanisms of power and administration and the party's new role.

The discussion also concerned the causes behind the special difficulties of the current transitional period and the plans and methods of tackling pressing problems, which are the most worrying to Soviet people.

Responding to various opinions about the present phase in perestroika, including those coming from the West, Gorbachev took issue, for example, with claims that there is no point in advancing on many fronts at the same time.

How can the economy be reformed without reforming the political system? Nothing will come of it, as already borne out by sad experience.

How can both the economy and politics be reformed without democratisation in society and without glasnost, which make people closely involved in public and political affairs?

How can healthy inter-ethnic relations be forecast and shaped in isolation from economic, political and general democratic changes throughout society?

How can perestroika as a whole be effected without updating the party?

But consistency, a step-by-step approach, balance, the absorption of experience, scientific validity, new thinking and accord between all sections and ethnic groups making up Soviet society are required in everything.

The nature and very theme of the discussion is

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Eduard Shevardnadze's press conference in Jackson, Wyoming

Jackson (Wyoming) September 24 TASS - By TASS special correspondents:

EDUARD Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State James Baker have concluded their talks here. Their results were summed up by Eduard Shevardnadze at a news conference.

He said:

I am glad to meet you in Wyoming. We have never met before in a place like Jackson Hole (the name of the valley where the meeting took place - TASS), in such conditions.

The talks which were held in Washington and here, at Jackson Hole, marked a new stage in the Soviet-US dialogue.

The past eight months were a period of mutual adaptation for us and the new American administration. It was a natural process of determining political priorities, elaborating and choosing variants, forming views on what is possible and feasible.

All this time Moscow and Washington have maintained contacts, including at summit level.

By the current round, the sides already communicated a great deal and realised that they could and should go further in developing their relations.

As you know, we conveyed Mikhail Gorbachev's message to President Bush. In the message the Soviet leader spoke in favour of starting to solve the issues on the Soviet-US agenda. Gorbachev set out new ideas and considerations, which enable us to find mutually acceptable approaches leading to accord and agreements on a number of major issues.

The conversation with President Bush showed that the US leadership also intends to work hard to get practical results in order to broaden the basis of Soviet-US cooperation in various fields.

The new positions of the sides, their intentions and political orientation put on the agenda the issue of holding a summit meeting as an effective means of ensuring breakthroughs in the main areas of Soviet-US relations.

It was agreed that Mikhail Gorbachev and President Bush would meet in late Spring/early Summer next year.

This agreement also reflects the sides' conviction in the possibility of attaining major agreements, marked progress as a whole, in relations between our two countries.

Above all, it applies to disarmament and security.

The talks with US Secretary of State Baker, with whom I have good businesslike relations, focused on the key aspects of nuclear and space armaments. The sides stated that, given the new compromise adjustments made by them into

their positions, it looks feasible to draft and sign a treaty on a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive weapons.

Let me now make a brief outline of the issues which were considered.

Disarmament - We devoted to it two rounds of talks, keynoted by the need for bold political decisions.

A number of outstanding issues, hindering their earliest successful completion, remain at the Geneva talks on nuclear and space weapons. Proceeding from this, Mikhail Gorbachev in his message to President Bush put forward a number of proposals which we discussed.

Major differences remained on the issue of ABMs and space. Considering that its examination ended in an impasse because of differences in the conceptual approaches of the sides, we said that we were prepared to sign and ratify the strategic offensive weapons treaty even if, by the time of its completion, no agreement will be reached on the ABM problem. However, this must be on condition that the sides would observe the ABM Treaty as it was signed in 1972. Naturally the provision on the right to withdraw from the treaty on strategic offensive weapons if the other side fails to comply with the ABM Treaty should be preserved.

Besides, it was proposed to elaborate a single understanding at the talks on nuclear and space weapons regarding the banned and permitted activities under the Treaty.

As you understand, the point at issue is untying the main knot holding back the talks on the basis of the Washington formula of 1987.

Another serious step involves the radar station at Krasnoyarsk: we decided to completely dismantle this facility. We hope that the American side will also allay our anxiety over the radar stations in Greenland and Britain.

We also put forward new proposals which, in our view, should help solve the problem of air- and sea-based long-range cruise missiles.

We were satisfied by the statement of the Secretary of State that the US withdraws its proposals on banning mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Having considered President Bush's idea on verification and stability measures prior to the conclusion of the treaty on strategic offensive weapons, we came to the conclusion that the implementation of such measures could be useful. During the meeting an agreement was signed, which lays down a good foundation for elaborating specific measures by the Soviet and US delegations at the Geneva talks.

An agreement was also signed on notification about major exercises involving strategic forces. **Nuclear Tests** - The task at the current stage is to prepare for ratification the Soviet-US treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon

tests and on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, signed in 1974 and 1976 respectively.

Serious steps to meet each other halfway were made here, and some complex technical issues of verification were coordinated. Thus it paved the way to putting into operation these two important treaties.

They can be signed at the summit.

Chemical Weapons - During the conversation with President Bush and talks with the Secretary of State we paid much attention to ways of prohibiting them. We have succeeded in making progress.

Mr Baker and I signed a memorandum of understanding on a chemical weapons data exchange and verification tests. The main goal is to speed up the development, signing and ratification of the convention. The USSR and USA will exchange in two stages the most exhaustive data on their military chemical potentials. The first stage involves exchanging visits to a number of facilities producing and storing chemical weapons, as well as civilian chemical plants. At the second stage the correctness of data will be checked by on-site inspections not only at declared sites but also with the help of challenge inspections. What is important is that the inspections will start before the convention is drafted.

We passed a special statement on the problem of chemical weapons, in which we stated our common resolve to work for the earliest conclusion of a convention.

Conventional Weapons - We discussed with President Bush and Secretary of State Baker the possibility of removing obstacles in the way of the earliest conclusion of the agreement on considerable cuts in troops and conventional weapons.

As is known, the President proposed to do it within six to twelve months. We took up this challenge.

We believe that some kind of strategy to accelerate the Vienna talks is needed today. We proposed to the US and NATO countries to hold a conference of heads of government of European countries, the US and Canada in the second half of 1990 to sign an agreement on conventional armed forces. It could be preceded by a meeting of foreign ministers.

I would like to draw your attention to our new position. It involves including in the Vienna

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a fundamentally new development in East-West relations, manifesting a desire to correctly understand the intentions and policies of everyone in the common interests of the world community.

The two leaders exchanged information about new developments in Soviet-American contacts on disarmament. They had a substantive discussion of problems of reducing conventional arms and armed forces ahead of the forthcoming resumption of the Vienna talks.

Naturally enough, the issue of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe was not ignored either.

Disagreements remain. But the detailed and candid discussion of contentious issues demonstrated that it is quite feasible to attain very serious agreements in the foreseeable future.

In the context of the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) process, Gorbachev and Thatcher reaffirmed that neither the USSR nor Britain has the slightest intention to act to the detriment of the security of either of them and that a policy allowing a departure from this principle in relations between any states is dangerous and hopeless.

But the CSCE process depends not only on the lowering of military confrontation and on the disarmament components of security. Its future is linked also to respect for freedom of choice, ruling out encroachments upon the sovereignty of other states under any pretext.

Gorbachev and Thatcher also discussed some pressing issues concerning bilateral economic relations.

VISIT of Mikhail GORBACHEV to CUBA

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Eduard Shevardnadze's meeting with President Bush

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who had arrived in Washington on an official visit, met US President George Bush on September 22. He conveyed to him a message from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The meeting, which had originally been planned for an hour, lasted for more than 90 minutes.

After the meeting with Bush, Shevardnadze answered journalists' questions.

"I had a very important conversation with the president," he said. "We discussed questions on a large scale, including Soviet-American relations, disarmament, arms control and other international issues. We made concrete suggestions on some matters. But, I would not like to go into details now, because all these issues will be discussed concretely in Wyoming. The conversation was very interesting, frank and open. I am very much satisfied with this meeting. Incidentally, that was not my first meeting with President Bush, and it is not surprising that it had been good and had passed in a good atmosphere," Shevardnadze said.

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talks all front-line (tactical) aircraft, i.e. bombers, fighter bombers, attack planes, front-line fighters, and setting a limit of 4,700 planes for each alliance. We also propose to establish a separate limit on interceptor fighters of air defence forces.

The pivot of modern European policy is not only reducing the huge stockpiles of conventional weapons which weigh heavily on the economy, ecology and social spheres of European life, but also ensuring a new system of relations, which would be marked by trust and cooperation. Therefore we introduce into the negotiation process an exchange of information on the numerical strength, structure and location of troops and armaments throughout Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, intrusive checks, including on-site inspections and stabilising measures which would monitor any large movements and concentrations of troops.

For the first time at such level we discussed President Bush's "open skies" proposal and expressed our positive response.

The implementation of this idea could become a part of the future global system to strengthen trust and scale down military threat. So far the American initiative has been formulated in the most general terms and talks will be needed to make it more specific. The Soviet Union is prepared to take part in a conference which could be convened to discuss the issue.

We believe that we should move towards having "open seas and oceans", "open land" and "open space". Glasnost here cannot be selective and limited, it should be everywhere.

Regional Problems — As it is, all regional problems were discussed. The exchange of views were constructive, aimed at finding points of contact.

A Central American settlement featured prominently in our talks with Mr Baker. Both sides expressed support for the agreements of Central American presidents and stated their readiness to render the necessary assistance in their implementation. We reaffirmed that the Soviet Union is refraining from arms supplies to Nicaragua.

When discussing the Afghan problem we raised the principled issue of observance of the Geneva Accords by the United States, which is one of the guarantors. It was agreed that the sides would set out their arguments in writing and then specially discuss the situation at a mee-

ting of their representatives. Asked whether he and Bush had set the date for a Soviet-American summit, Shevardnadze said: "no, we did not set the date, but I do not rule out that we may have something more definite to say on this question in Wyoming. We concluded that a summit is, undoubtedly, necessary, but the time for it should be discussed and specified. You, certainly, understand that such a summit should be prepared seriously and thoroughly."

Speaking about Mikhail Gorbachev's message to the US president, Shevardnadze said that it concerned "mainly arms control issues, the entire set of arms control problems, including the ABM Treaty, strategic offensive weapons, conventional arms, the Geneva and Vienna talks, chemical weapons, fissionable materials, nuclear tests, and the US president's idea of the 'open sky' which we had vigorously supported."

The next question to the Soviet Foreign Minister concerned his criticism of Bush for being too slow in advancing on some disarmament issues and whether he still felt like that after his meeting with the president.

"It is good you asked me this," Shevardnadze answered. "I did not say that the president was not fast enough. I expressed my dissatisfaction

with the state of affairs at the Geneva talks. They are stalling, there is no serious headway there. But now interesting proposals are in the offing from both parties. Which means that criticism helps".

Asked if any new and interesting ideas were put forward by the American side during the meeting, Shevardnadze said that "there are sensitive matters which are better not disclosed in passing, because they require serious discussion".

He noted that all the proposals will be discussed during talks with Secretary of State James Baker in Wyoming on September 22-23.

US Secretary of State James Baker told a briefing in the White House after his meeting with Shevardnadze that the talks had been productive.

He stated that the discussion touched on five subjects: the possibility of a summit, recent developments in the Soviet Union, regional conflicts, human rights, and the letter on arms control which Eduard Shevardnadze brought with him.

On the perspectives for a summit meeting, Baker said that the question was widely discus-

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ting of their representatives.

We also drew the attention of the American side to the Afghan settlement plan, proposed by President Najibullah at the non-aligned conference in Belgrade. We stressed that the plan testified to the serious striving of the Afghan government to look for ways out of the current situation.

In connection with our earlier request, the American side informed us of its measures to assist in securing the release of Soviet servicemen held by the Afghan opposition groups.

Our humanitarian cooperation has long ceased to be a one-way traffic lane.

We briefed the American side on the preparation in our country of new laws, in particular, on entry and exit, freedom of conscience, which correspond to high international standards and the Vienna agreements. The results of discussion on this issue are reflected in the joint statement.

Words "for the first time" can be used to describe a lot in modern Soviet-US relations.

For example, for the first time in the framework of considering global or transnational issues, agreements were reached on the joint elaboration of specific proposals to extend cooperation in the field of ecology, including preparations for the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992.

While tabling a number of our proposals, we support some new interesting ideas of the American side, especially regarding the comprehensive approach to changes in the biosphere.

We talked about using the market, introducing the economic methods of regulating the national economy and problems of regulating money circulation.

The Secretary of State provided interesting information on the American economy.

The Soviet-US intergovernmental documents, signed today, testify to the intensification of Soviet-US dialogue.

This is an agreement on mutual visits between the inhabitants of the Bering Strait area, a unique agreement with a considerable humanistic potential.

This is also an agreement on a regional commission of the Bering Strait, designed to promote regular cooperation between the border authorities and local bodies of the Chukchi autonomous district and Alaska state.

A joint statement of the USSR and USA was signed on interpreting international rules regulating the peaceful passage of ships.

Thus the number of operating intergovernmental agreements between the USSR and USA in the field of bilateral relations increased to 39. This means a lot.

One can say with all certainty that our fifth meeting with Secretary of State Baker was a definite success.

Here at Jackson Hole I recalled an Ernest Hemingway short story. It is a very sad tale about people divided by misunderstanding. They meet one another, talk, hunt and fish together, but every one of them lives his own life and does not want to get involved in someone else's.

I think that politicians can draw a serious lesson from this story: it is impossible to do anything for one's own or other countries if you do not wish or cannot understand one another.

Mr Baker made an excellent choice by proposing to hold the meeting in this area.

First, because it had a beautiful background. By its beauty and preserved nature Jackson Hole is an example of the world, which has been nearly lost elsewhere on the planet, which we should restore everywhere and preserve for the future. Second, we were surrounded here by surprisingly hospitable and friendly people, and their attitude towards us helped to clear the obstacles which still divide us. Finally, all this created an atmosphere which, disposed to candour, made one wish to overcome misunderstanding.

This has largely been achieved. We now understand each other better and, consequently, can implement the formula "from mutual understanding to interaction" with a greater degree of success.

This is the main outcome of the meeting near Grand-Teton. Permanently before our eyes, it reminded us of summits which we are yet to scale. Over these days several energetic steps have been made towards them.

I cordially thank everyone who helped us in this.

Agreement reached on summit meeting

Soviet-American joint statement

(Summary)

Washington September 24 TASS — Creating more stable, constructive and firmer relations in which openness and cooperation would replace mistrust and cooperation to a growing extent is the common objective of the USSR and the United States, as it was formulated in a joint statement by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State James Baker upon the completion of their meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, on September 22-23.

Building on the earlier arrangements reached by Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush, the sides agreed that the next Soviet-American summit will take place in the United States late in spring/early Summer, 1990, the statement said.

The Soviet Foreign Minister and his US counterpart examined the entire range of arms control and disarmament issues.

On anti-ballistic missile defence and space issues, the Soviet side proposed a new approach directed at resolving this major problem.

Both sides agreed that the Soviet approach paves the way for concluding a treaty on strategic offensive weapons without achieving a defence and space accord.

They agreed to abandon the approach connected with the non-withdrawal pledge, while continuing the discussion of ways to secure predictability in the development of a Soviet-American strategic balance in conditions of strategic stability with a view to reducing the risk of nuclear war.

The Soviet side stated that, guided by its long-standing goal of strengthening the ABM Treaty, it decided to dismantle the Krasnoyarsk radar, stressing the need for the removal of Soviet concerns over the American radars in Greenland and Great Britain.

In order to facilitate progress in the talks on strategic offensive weapons, the Secretary of State announced that the US side is lifting its ban on mobile ICBMs, contingent on congressional approval of funding for the US mobile ICBM programmes.

Both sides agreed that it is necessary further to elaborate proposals on effective measures to verify limits on mobile ICBMs and stressed the need to resolve issues of air launched cruise missiles and submarine-launched cruise missiles.

On the SLCM issue, the Soviet side raised the question of the possible solution of the SLCM problem within a broader context of naval arms.

As to the talks on nuclear and space armaments, it called on the American side to concentrate on the verification problem, and stated that in the context of the SLCM verification systems, these arms could be limited outside the framework of the treaty on strategic offensive weapons on the basis of reciprocal commitments.

The ministers reaffirmed the aim of reaching a comprehensive, verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons and signed a memorandum envisaging the exchange of data on Soviet and American chemical weapons stockpiles and inspections of chemical facilities.

The sides examined the state of affairs at the talks on nuclear testing. They agreed on including hydro-dynamic and seismic verification methods and on-site inspections in the verification protocol to the 1974 treaty limiting nuclear weapon tests, and on explosion yields above which these measurements will apply.

Shevardnadze and Baker approved of the work done at the Conventional Forces in Europe talks and favoured an early agreement.

They agreed in principle to the "open skies" concept advanced by President Bush last May, a concept that is capable of making a real contribution to greater openness and stronger trust.

The sides stressed the importance of joint Soviet-American efforts in preventing the proliferation of missiles and missile technology.

On regional issues, the Soviet and American officials reaffirmed their view that vigorous Soviet and US support for political decisions that are comprehensive in character and are based on broad national reconciliation could make it easier to reach a peaceful settlement of regional conflicts worldwide.

They observed that both sides have differences on certain aspects of arms deliveries and their influence on the possibility of political settlement.

The sides voiced support for the Central American countries' efforts to establish a lasting peace in that region on the basis of the Esquipulas Treaty and subsequent accords.

They agreed that a political settlement in Afghanistan should rest on national reconciliation and should secure its status as a peaceful, independent and non-aligned state.

The two parties reaffirmed their support for the invigoration of a peace process in the Middle East and exchanged views on the pace of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in this process.

In a separate statement they backed the plan of the League of Arab States' Committee of Three on a cease-fire in Lebanon, on the removal of the blockade and on a dialogue in Lebanon, directed at reaching political settlement.

The USSR and the United States condemned hostage-taking and favoured the immediate release of all hostages.

Shevardnadze and Baker favoured a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia and the continuation of the negotiating process to attain this settlement and agreed on the need to implement, fully and in time, the UN plan for Namibian independence, including the holding of free and fair elections.

They expressed their support for the process of national reconciliation in Angola and the ef-

forts towards securing peace and stability in Mozambique, and favoured a peaceful political solution of internal conflicts in Ethiopia and the start of negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front.

The ministers discussed a broad range of issues of human rights and humanitarian problems. Special attention was given to the exit and entry policy and individual cases, freedom of consciousness and penal practices.

It was agreed to start talks on the possible expansion of air links between the USSR and the United States. It was also decided to speed up the elaboration of proposals towards achieving a new agreement on cooperation in the field of power engineering.

It was agreed in principle to open Soviet and American cultural and information centres in Washington and Moscow respectively.

The sides expressed readiness to discuss new ideas on bilateral and international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and considered issues of combating international terrorism.

Special attention was given to the continuation and expansion of bilateral and international cooperation in environmental protection.

Shevardnadze and Baker stated the need to continue the search for new spheres of interaction directed at making qualitative changes in the bilateral and transnational areas of Soviet-American relations, the statement said.

VISIT of MIKHAIL GORBACHEV TO FRANCE June 12-15, 1989

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sed and "we hope to determine in general terms the time of the next summit meeting during the stay in Wyoming".

President Gorbachev's letter, Baker went on to say, is a reply to President Bush's letter sent three months ago. Gorbachev's letter is a circumstantial, technical reply to Bush's letter.

Baker said that US experts were scrupulously studying the letter's content, and he and Shevardnadze would discuss it in further detail in Wyoming.

President Gorbachev, he pointed out, shares President Bush's anxiety concerning the strengthening of strategic stability and securing survival.

He also agrees with that special attention which the US president attaches to upgrading control and verification procedures, Baker said.

In Wyoming, Baker said, we hope to make considerable headway in the field of control, verification and consolidating stability.

President Gorbachev agrees with President Bush also in the need to move ahead toward banning chemical weapons, the Secretary of State said.

In this connection, the memorandum on mu-

tual understanding in the field of data exchange on chemical arms to be signed in Wyoming looks like a serious step forward.

Baker stated that the Gorbachev letter is a positive response to president Bush's letter. He noted that, despite the complexity and intricacy of the present problems, the United States hoped for making headway at the talks in discussing the whole agenda on arms control.

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CPSU Central Committee Plenum

Mikhail Gorbachev's opening speech

Moscow September 19 TASS – SPEAKING at a Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee plenary meeting, which opened here today, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet, made the following remarks on the forthcoming 28th CPSU Congress:

Comrades,

You know that there is a sharp debate in the party about the convening of the Congress. Different opinions are being expressed on its date, nature and agenda.

Some people are calling for an extraordinary or even an emergency party congress, while others are in favour of moving up the date of the regular 28th CPSU Congress. Still others are arguing that nothing should be changed and the congress should be according to the standing schedule.

The great interest shown in society concerning this issue is convincing proof that our people realise the party's significance to the nation's fate. It is primarily with the party, with its political and practical activities that Soviet people link the success of further revolutionary reform along the lines of perestroika.

After seriously considering the present situation and the nature of problems that confront the country and need to be analysed, the Politburo has concluded that it is essential to reschedule the next party congress, moving up the date to the second half of October 1990.

Time has quickly passed. Perestroika, launched by the April 1985 Central Committee plenum and the 27th CPSU Congress, is today living through a crucial, I would say watershed, stage.

Society is going through impetuous revolutionary change. One distinctive feature of the moment is that in every area, perestroika has come directly in touch with life. Economic and political structures are being practically revamped and new forms and methods of economic management are being mastered.

We are right in saying that our society has come a long way in recent years. This is really so: the country has made a breakthrough to democracy, freedom and glasnost. Obsolete theoretical notions are being decisively updated and society is undergoing revolutionary renovation.

To sum up, the nation is quite different from what it was in the early 1980s.

It is another matter that we are still far from the ambitious goal we have set ourselves, that of fundamentally upgrading our society and achieving a new, humane and democratic image of socialism.

This requires deepening perestroika, implementing it and relying on its own foundation, on the experience gained by the party and people in the recent past.

The past period has been marked by a continuous quest in every area of our policy – economic, social, cultural and inter-ethnic.

But real life and perestroika have been proceeding at such a pace that we have often lagged behind.

Much of what previously seemed correct no longer satisfies us. However innovative decisions taken by the 27th CPSU Congress and the 19th Party Conference a little over a year ago have been, we now need to go even further and look for new approaches and solutions.

The dynamism of perestroika and the profundity of ongoing change are unprecedented and have provoked a vigorous reaction in the public mentality. This is only natural. And it could not have been otherwise.

Discussions are revealing mixed, sometimes clashing views of current processes and different opinions on how to practically tackle all the various tasks facing us.

These debates concern not some secondary matters but the central issues of society – socialism's paths of development, the refinement of our federal state, the character of power at this juncture in perestroika, the continued democratisation of every aspect of life, and the party's role in present-day conditions.

Public attention is focusing on the nature of socialist property, ways to realise its inherent potential, and the position of the person in socialist society.

Our country's role in a quickly changing world, currently at a turning point in its development, is also being keenly discussed.

So substantiating the need to start a creative discussion in the party is no longer necessary: the debate is already in full swing.

What is necessary is making sure that it will be as constructive as possible, helping to consolidate both the party itself and all other public forces supporting perestroika and overcome confusion and sometimes panicky sentiments.

The decision to convene the congress at an earlier date is dictated by the need to thoroughly update the party itself, with regard for its new role as political vanguard of society at the perestroika stage.

The party should act vigorously and imaginatively. The work of party bodies and organisations currently is in many ways fettered by old structures and outdated rules and instructions. The commitment of part of the cadre to old stereotypes also tells.

We cannot leave things as they are, especially since fundamental economic and social processes are unfolding and an ideological and political struggle is under way over key problems of social development. The party's words, position and organising and ideological work are now of exceptional significance.

Where the party is ahead and where it lags behind is a wide-ranging and complex question. I would not oversimplify it, as some people tend to.

Some are trying to create the impression that the revolutionary changes that marked these years occurred without the party's participation and to portray it as a conservative force.

Others regard our self-criticism as a sign of the party relinquishing its political and ideological positions and evade performing its political role.

I think we ought to make a definite statement on this account. The Communist Party initiated the revolutionary restructuring and democratisation of society, and it intends to stick firmly to this path.

It is precisely the party's responsibility to the working class and all our people that obliges it to be most exacting towards itself and confirm by deeds its right to be the vanguard of society.

It is necessary to admit honestly that the process of mastering the entire wealth of innovative ideas that were worked out in the course of perestroika under party guidance, and which set into motion the entire society, is going slowly in a number of party units, among some cadres and communists. In this, we lose a great deal.

At this moment, we vitally need initiative, a businesslike attitude and creativity in work. It is necessary to resolutely overcome the habit of waiting for instructions and recommendations on all issues from above, and to display independen-

dence in work.

We have major programme-setting decisions encompassing all aspects of perestroika. These are the very political guidelines that should activate all party links, party organisations and individual communists.

We regard the party as the vehicle of the programmatic goals of perestroika, as the rallying and consolidating force. Having advanced the ideas of the profound democratisation of society, the party is simply obliged to restructure its own activity on democratic principles and strengthen its ideological unity on the platform of perestroika.

Only this type of party, renovated and profoundly democratic in its essence, will be able to lead the masses in the future as well.

The current report-and-election campaign in the party is of great importance in this respect. It makes it possible to deeply analyse the burning issues of the country's life and the situation in the corresponding party organisation, specify tasks it has to handle, and name and give authority to people who are capable of advancing the cause of perestroika.

We proceed from the premise that preparations for the congress and the preceding report-and-election campaign will make it possible to inject fresh blood into party bodies at all levels.

This also applies to the Central Committee, the role of which for understandable reasons, is growing.

It should comprise the most creative forces of the party, the working class, farmers, intelligentsia and all sections of society, committed to the course of perestroika.

I think that in the process of preparations for the congress and at the congress itself it is necessary to discuss what kind of Central Committee we would like to have, how to start its formation and in what way it should operate to perform its responsible mission.

In view of this, in the opinion of the Politburo, the agenda of the congress could be as follows:

1. On the progress of perestroika and tasks of the party. Report by the party Central Committee.
2. Report by the party's Central Auditing Commission.
3. On party rules.
4. Election of the party's central bodies.

This agenda will make it possible to sum up the pre-congress discussion and adopt a programme of action for the near future.

Now about some specific issues relating to preparations for the congress. In order to invigorate the discussions around the issues that will be discussed, the CPSU Central Committee could draft a political platform and publish it in spring 1990. Following its discussion by the congress, the platform could then be presented as a programme of action for the near future.

Essentially, this answers a question which is often posed by communists, endorsing a new CPSU programme. We discussed this issue at the Politburo and agreed on the following. It is absolutely clear that we cannot limit ourselves to partial changes in the existing programme. To draft a new document of such a scope and importance, we need to accumulate theoretical knowledge and practical experience during the actual implementation of the perestroika policy. Therefore it is suggested that the congress endorse a policy document for the near future.

As for the rules, it is necessary to legalise measures, outlined by the 19th Party Conference, on the party's overall democratisation and to formalise a lot of what is now being practised by party organisations. We will also need major

(Continued from previous page)

innovations in regard to the party's make-up, the rights and obligations of communists, the status of various party structures, the principles of interaction between these structures and their interrelation with state and public organisations, giving wider rights to the communist parties of union republics.

As it is, we need new rules that will reflect the spirit of our revolutionary time, provide incentives for restructuring the party and ensure reliable guarantees of inner-party democracy.

These were some of the considerations I wanted to mention on this issue.

In conclusion, comrades, I would like to express confidence that preparations for the next congress will give a fresh impetus to the effort of party organisations to resolve the urgent problems facing society.

We should ensure as soon as possible a turn for the better, especially concerning living standards.

There are resolutions on this account by the Congress of People's Deputies, the Supreme Soviet and the government, but, in the Politburo's view, they are slow to materialise and there is a lack of consistency and responsibility. This applies to central, republican and local bodies, and to our leading cadres.

Does this mean that we ought to wait for the congress in order to resolve overdue problems? No. It is necessary to act now and without delay, and to act resolutely. Primarily, it is necessary to defuse tension in the supply of prime necessities, eliminate shortages and straighten things out in retail trade.

In conclusion I would like to draw your attention to the following. The congress is not too far away, and time is short in all respects. Along with the solution of practical tasks that I have

just mentioned, we face elections to republican and local government bodies, that will be a serious test for party organisations, and other major steps connected with the unfolding of economic and political reform.

A great deal of work is to be done by communists in connection with the implementation of a new nationalities policy that will be discussed as the second item of the plenum agenda.

As to specific dates for holding report-and-election campaigns, party conferences and congresses of republican communist parties, and norms of representation at the congress, the procedure of elections and all other organisational issues connected with the convocation of the next party congress, the drafting of proposals on these issues could be assigned to the Politburo and considered at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee.

Such is the scope of our work in the period prior to the congress. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's report to the 44th session of the U.N. General Assembly (Summary)

NEW YORK September 27 TASS — the newspaper *Pravda* publishes today a report delivered by the USSR Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze at the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly. He said in part: "the supremacy of universal human values and the observance of the universal rules of the world community are the imperative of our times. The objective requirements of the age we live in, its trends, character and circumstances, leave mankind no other choice but to reject the traditional polarisation."

"That axiom underlines both the concept and the practical policies of the new thinking," he added.

Speaking of the primacy of universal human values, we also imply a mature readiness of nations to accept it, the head of the Soviet delegation noted. Where that maturity has not yet been attained and where the national idea is being opposed to the common interest, domestic conflicts directly complement and impel global destructive processes.

Emphasising the importance of the Soviet-American dialogue, Shevardnadze said he is convinced that its importance goes far beyond the frontiers of the two states. He said in the view of the Soviet leadership this is not a kind of privilege, but a clearly understood responsibility vis-a-vis the world community.

Shevardnadze noted that his talks with President Bush and Secretary of State Baker had demonstrated the increasing awareness by both sides of the need to co-operate for the benefit of mankind, and the growing confidence that such co-operation is possible.

Shevardnadze said the agreement to hold a meeting of the top leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States shows that the sides have moved quite far ahead in solving a number of major bilateral and international problems.

The minister stated the view that by the time the summit is held next year the sides may have passed the last turn on the road toward a treaty reducing strategic offensive arms. The protocols to the 1974 and 1976 treaties on nuclear explosions could also be signed at the summit, so that they could enter into force shortly.

The head of the Soviet delegation also welcomed the proposal concerning chemical weapons put forward yesterday by President Bush.

Dwelling on nuclear weapons, Shevardnadze said that reliance on nuclear weapons does not serve anyone's national interests. Only the complete elimination of nuclear capabilities would help to attain real security, he said.

Then the minister dwelt on the problem of cessation and prohibition of nuclear tests. He said that guided by its obligation to the world community, the Soviet Union has revised its nuclear testing programme by reducing the number and yield of explosions. However, the efforts of one state are not sufficient for a comprehensive solution to this problem, he said.

Dwelling on the need to clear the European continent of excess quantities of arms, the head of the Soviet delegation noted that the groundwork for that is being prepared. Wherever negotiators sincerely want to strike a balance between their interests and those of their partners, progress is always achieved.

Shevardnadze said the problem of naval forces could be examined at special consultations to be attended by all states concerned and, above all, by the major naval powers, and emphasised the need urgently to start talks on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

He said that if the NATO countries agree to start talks on tactical nuclear weapons, the USSR will respond by further unilateral cuts in its tactical nuclear missiles in Europe.

Shevardnadze said that the problem of missile proliferation was also ripe for multilateral discussions. The USSR reaffirms its willingness to participate in the establishment of a United Nations register of sales and international transfers of weapons.

Having stressed the importance of the Soviet-American agreement on preventing dangerous military activities, a series of agreements with the United States, Great Britain, West Germany and France on the prevention of incidents on the high seas, and the agreement between the Soviet Union and China to start talks shortly on putting an end to their military stand-off, the Soviet Foreign Minister condemned the continuing encirclement of the Soviet Union with military bases.

He spoke highly of President Bush's idea of open skies. The Soviet Union also suggests that this initiative be spread to the lands, the waters and outer space. "Let us have open lands, open seas and open space," Shevardnadze said.

Touching upon settlements of regional conflicts, he pointed out that positive trends had not yet become irreversible in this field.

Shevardnadze expressed the Soviet Union's concern about the crisis situation in the world

economy and stressed the importance of urgent planetary decisions at the highest political level and the internationalisation of environmental efforts.

The Soviet Union considers disarmament, the economy and ecology as an integral whole. While participating in implementing conservation strategies, the Soviet Union has programmes for speeding up the integration of its economy, on an equal and mutually-beneficial basis, into the world economy, the modern international division of labour and international exchanges in science and technology. "To that end we would like to participate actively in the work of international economic organisations and to establish contacts with the IMF and the World Bank, being convinced that our co-operation with them, as well as with GATT and FAO, will be useful for the community as a whole."

Speaking about the situation in Poland, the Soviet Foreign Minister noted that the Soviet Union was not enthusiastic about the Polish communists' election setback. Nevertheless, he added that the Soviet Union saw nothing threatening in the fact that a coalition government had been formed in Poland in accordance with the will of the Polish people.

"We wish it every success and are ready to co-operate with it."

As for the current changes in the Soviet Union, Shevardnadze emphasised that restructuring in the Soviet Union was not just repainting the facade but rebuilding the entire structure, in which the rules of living together must and will be based on the supremacy of law, people's power, openness to the outside world, inter-ethnic harmony and friendship.

"Today, when some cassettes hasten to make gloomy predictions, we come up with our own forecast. We want its historical optimism to be shared by all those who understand that the destinies of the world are inseparable from the future of our perestroika," Shevardnadze said in conclusion. □

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CPSU Central Committee Plenum

Major reshuffle of Politburo

Moscow September 20 TASS — The two-day meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ended on Wednesday with a major reshuffle in the top party bodies.

Viktor Nikonov, Viktor Chebrikov and Vladimir Shcherbitsky retired and were relieved of their duties of Politburo members.

Nikonov and Chebrikov were also relieved of the duties of Central Committee secretaries.

Two candidate members of the Politburo, Yuri Solovoyov and Nikolai Talyzin, also retired.

Gorbachev warmly thanked Nikonov, Chebrikov, Shcherbitsky, Solovoyov and Talyzin for their many years of fruitful activity in party bodies.

The plenum elected Vladimir Kryuchkov, chairman of the State Security Committee, a full Politburo member.

The plenum promoted Yuri Maslyukov from candidate to full Politburo membership.

Yevgeny Primakov, chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Soviet of the Union, and Boris Pugo, chairman of the Central Committee's Party Control Committee, were elected candidate Politburo members.

In other organisational changes, Yegor Stroyev, first secretary of the Oryol regional party committee, Yuri Manayenkov, first secretary of the Lipetsk regional party committee, and Gumer Usmanov, first secretary of the Tatar regional party committee, were elected secretaries of the Central Committee.

The plenum promoted Andrei Girenko, first secretary of the Crimean regional committee of the Ukrainian communist party, from candidate to full membership of the Central Committee and elected him Central Committee secretary.

On Wednesday, the plenum continued the discussion of the party's draft platform on the

ethnic issue and party leader Mikhail Gorbachev's report on the party's nationalities policy in present-day conditions.

The plenum approved the draft platform, taking into account proposals and amendments made during the discussion, and adopted a resolution on the issue.

It heard a report by Prosecutor-General Alexander Sukharev, whose office had considered an application from Politburo member and Central Committee secretary Yegor Ligachev to the Central Committee and the prosecutor's office concerning accusations of bribery, brought against him by investigators Telman Gdyan and Nikolai Ivanov.

The prosecutor's office carried out an investigation which proved the accusations to be completely groundless.

The plenum adopted a resolution on this issue, which will be published in the press.

Gorbachev concluded the plenum with a speech. □

Soviet Foreign Minister's meetings in New York

NEW YORK September 27 TASS — Eduard Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State James Baker held a working meeting here to discuss some issues from the agenda of the Wyoming talks.

A friendly constructive conversation took place between Shevardnadze and Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes. The minister expressed satisfaction with the condition and dynamics of multifaceted Soviet-Czechoslovak ties. At the same time they stressed the need for a creative search for new areas and forms of co-operation both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty. It was noted that the closer interaction of socialist countries, far from being at variance with the movement toward a common European home, is part and parcel of the same process. Shevardnadze and Johanes exchanged views on the course of the 44th session of the UN General Assembly. The views of the USSR and Czechoslovakia coincided in regard to the huge potential of this organisation, designed to play a leading role in promoting a nuclear-free, non-violent world and fostering comprehensive security.

Shevardnadze's talk with his Mexican counterpart Fernando Solana was devoted to considering the condition and prospects of Soviet-Mexican relations, as well as a number of international issues. They stressed the friendly and stable relations between the Soviet Union and Mexico — relations based on mutual respect and marked by an effort towards greater mutual understanding. Soviet-Mexican relations have the potential to be fruitful. The ministers voiced the conviction that active reciprocal actions will help successfully implement the long-term programme for trade, economic, scientific and technological co-operation between the Soviet Union and Mexico, signed this June. The restructuring of the mechanism of foreign economic relations in the USSR and the process of economic modernisation in Mexico open new possibilities for improving the efficiency of bilateral ties in the above areas. When discussing international issues, Shevardnadze stressed that the Soviet Union appreciates Mexico's consistent efforts to rid mankind of the nuclear threat, to eliminate nuclear, chemical and other types of weapons of

mass destruction and to strengthen international law, order and trust. The ministers gave a positive assessment of the efforts of Nicaragua and other central American countries to find a political settlement to the region's problems, and voiced their hope for the successful implementation of agreements on specific steps in this area.

Shevardnadze and his Peruvian counterpart Guillermo Larco Cox exchanged views on the main issues on the agenda of the 44th session of the UN General Assembly. Having expressed support for the growing positive trends in international affairs, the ministers stated with satisfaction that on a number of issues regarding ways to strengthen peace and international security, curb the arms race and promote disarmament, the positions of the Soviet Union and Peru are close or similar. Cox appreciated the Soviet Union's innovative contribution to solving the cardinal problems of our day and noted the positive influence of Soviet perestroika on the international situation.

Both sides stressed the need to internationalise efforts to promote the establishment of a new international economic order — one that would democratise the world economic ties and find a just solution to the foreign debt problem of developing countries. Much attention was devoted to bilateral relations. The two ministers stressed their countries' readiness to extend their political dialogue and to deepen mutually advantageous trade and economic co-operation.

Shevardnadze and Danish foreign minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen stressed that all European states share the responsibility for strengthening European security, maintaining stability and enhancing trust. In the current favourable conditions the potential of Soviet-Danish relations — which have a centuries-old history and have contributed greatly to the European experience — can unfold in a new way. The ministers mapped out some specific steps to develop and entire complex of bilateral relations, particularly in the economic sphere. The question of preparing an official visit for the Danish foreign minister to the USSR was considered.

Shevardnadze also received Donald Kendall, a prominent businessman and director of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council. They discussed prospects for the further development of mutually advantageous cooperation between the Soviet economy and the American business community. □

CPSU platform on nationalities policy published

MOSCOW September 23 TASS — the Communist Party platform "The Party's Nationalities Policy in Modern Conditions" was published here today following a month of wide public discussion.

The document was adopted by the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee Plenum on September 20.

Ethnic issues have become vitally important in the Soviet Union in recent times and solving ethnic problems is crucial for perestroika and the future of the country.

As a result, an integral economic complex took shape, the social fabric of society changed for the better and opportunities to preserve and develop unique ethnic cultures were created.

New legal acts based on this political platform will impart a new quality of the Soviet federative state and will provide conditions for the free development of all the peoples of the USSR, their further convergence, the strengthening of friendship, mutual help and co-operation between them, the platform says.

The full text of the platform will be published in the next issue of Soviet News (No. 6495).

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CPSU Central Committee Plenum

Mikhail Gorbachev's closing remarks

Moscow September 21 TASS – Here follows the text of the concluding remarks made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, President of the USSR Supreme Soviet at the CPSU Central Committee's plenary meeting on September 20:

Allow me to briefly sum up the results of the discussion of matters submitted for the current plenum of the party's Central Committee.

I think you would agree that this plenum, by the nature of the questions discussed and by the atmosphere that was reigning here these two days, deserves to be appraised as a milestone in pursuing the policy of perestroika, in the implementation of this political course. I am sure that for these reasons it will play an important role in our history, in consolidating the party.

First of all, it is gratifying to note that the plenum of the Central Committee on the whole endorsed the new policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the nationalities question. This is a major event. Our progress to it was prolonged and not easy, but we now have a clear-cut programme of actions in this complex area of social development. It affects the entire people and all nations of the country.

The programme, which clearly met with broad support of the party and the people, can provide a good basis for renewal of the nationalities policy, for the renewal of the federation in the interests of all our peoples.

I believe it is important that the programme, far from rejecting, organically comprises all that has been created by the peoples over decades along the road of socialist transformations in the framework of the Soviet Union.

It is also important that this is an innovatory programme. It takes into account realities and suits our current needs. In this lies its scientific nature and viability. Therefore it met with broad support, and, I am sure, will yield during its implementation the fruits we hope to get.

Now that we have a programme, the party has vast work ahead. We cannot expect perestroika to succeed in our multi-ethnic country unless we tackle matters of inter-ethnic relations, development and perfection of the federation on a substantive basis every day.

In the same way, all problems of the federation can be resolved successfully only through perestroika, democratisation, glasnost, renewal of our socialist society. There is an organic vital link between this, and we should take this into consideration in our work.

We realise that the delay in solving these matters has already started negatively affecting practical actions for the implementation of the perestroika policies. We are aware of the complexity of the situation in the country and the need to take decisive measures to ensure normalisation of the situation wherever there is tension in inter-ethnic relations and normal pace of work has been disrupted.

Everyone agrees that there is a need to act decisively. But it seems to me, and, allow me to dwell on this a little longer, we do not all understand in the same way what decisiveness means. Sometimes this word is used in an old sense, when to "act decisively" means to attack something at one swoop.

But now, in conditions of perestroika, deci-

veness presupposes above all a consistent implementation of everything that we envisage.

This requires of all of us huge effort, wisdom and courage, if you like. For we are now at the most responsible stage of perestroika when the interests of the entire society are affected and people are anxious that the situation might worsen, and, let's admit it, there are real reasons for such views.

But radical revolutionary changes cannot be achieved unless we act consistently, by democratic methods, push ahead step-by-step, without deviating to any side, without slowing the pace, without halting.

This is the main thing everyone who considers himself or herself a supporter of perestroika, of the renewal of socialist society should bear in mind.

What follows from this has already been mentioned in the report: all matters should now be tackled in the atmosphere of democracy, contacts with people should be formed, and they should apply themselves to goals of the party in the interests of resolving practical tasks.

There can be no other road in the approach to inter-ethnic problems. Political methods, organisational work, a new style with the reliance on the participation and contribution of people – this is, comrades, what we should learn.

And finally, I would like to say it again – and the communists, all working people should know this – we should renew the party so that the prestige it won by proclaiming the policy of perestroika, and now also by constructive work to unite society, to resolve practical tasks, should be strengthened.

The slogan of "raze to the ground" does not suit us. The present-day tasks of the revolutionary renewal of society should be tackled in a different way. Likewise, it won't do for us in forging ahead to look back all the time, to fear complications and difficulties on the road we have taken, to regard ourselves as all but lost.

We must consolidate the Central Committee, the party, the entire society on the tasks of perestroika, renewal of society and should decisively forge ahead, yielding neither to those who would like to leave us in the past, who are dragging us to the back track, nor to those who suggest adventurist concepts instead of policy and serious undertakings.

The present plenum shows that the Central Committee is aware of its role at the stage of radical changes in society. I wish to commend this as an important achievement, for it largely depends on the stand of the Central Committee and what is taking place in it how things will stand in the party and entire society.

And open and direct talk took place here. One can agree with some things and disagree with others. The posing of some problems of regional development seemed to smack of sponging. But I would like to consider everything that was said here.

An open exchange of opinions about lapses at the political level, in the activity of government and managerial bodies, at the level of republics and regions makes it possible to see clearer what we should get rid of.

This offers an opportunity to appraise a real picture and I think it is precisely in this atmosphere that we could adopt the platform of the party on the nationalities question, a platform of which it can justly be said that it is a new development in matters of the nationalities policy and that it engenders creative thoughts in the policy of perestroika in the vitally important area of inter-ethnic relations.

It should be noted that we have reached accord on key questions of the nationalities policy. We realise that all the matters that have accumulated in inter-ethnic relations can be resolved in

the framework of the further development of our federation, through using everything that has been created by giving real meaning to sovereignty of a republic, by expanding the rights of autonomous formations and developing possibilities and rights of all regions of the country.

We have enriched the notion of self-determination. Some try to exploit this theme for unsavoury purposes, do not give an opportunity to people to find its bearing in the essence of the matter, push them to a wrong road.

That we have openly and honestly stated our position before the people of our country and the whole world is, to my mind, a great achievement of the plenum.

In the interests of all the nations of the country we declared for the consolidation of sovereignty of the republics and the widening of the rights of all national formations, for adding real substance to Soviet federalism.

At the same time everybody unanimously declared for unity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, fully in accordance with the ideas of Lenin who was for the federation of nations, for alliance of states, but who utterly rejected federalism in the party's structure and functioning.

To my mind, the plenum and the preceding debate made it possible to grasp better the dialectic connection involved.

Widening political and economic rights, independence of republics, regions and autonomous formations, calling forth processes of decentralisation to enlist the energy and efforts of people, of all nations to speed up the socio-economic development of the country we also proceed from the view that the party should perform in a still greater degree the consolidating role, rallying all the peoples in the effort of perestroika.

With all the variety of opinions as regards the position of the communist parties of republics, of party organisations in the Russian Federation, a clear answer to arising questions has been given.

So we should act proceeding from the decisions adopted, and we should concentrate on unresolved matters during the preparation for the 28th CPSU Congress.

The plenum has firmly and clearly stated our view on the fundamental matter: we declare for the equality of nations and people of every nationality, no matter where they live and work. And the decision adopted about the role of the Russian language is important in this respect.

We have sensed and expressed the attitudes dominant in society, and this decision will have a stabilising effect, I would say.

I believe, comrades, we acted rightly when we honestly told the people that now that we take the road of profound transformations of the federation it is important to do this without getting involved in any recarvings of frontiers, without changing outlines of national formations.

It is now important to add real substance to their rights. Following that, apparently, there will be no less debating ahead. I have already told the editorial commission: let us take our chance of living in a real federation, with all its merits, which is something that we have never done before.

And then, I think, all or most of our anxieties – life will still be posing problems – will ease. If we got involved in that matter now, and someone is pushing us to that road, we would have buried the platform from the outset and would have put society in a state where it would not be a matter of restructuring, but of how to live at all.

And that the plenum has assumed an unambiguous, firm and clear-cut stand on this matter does it credit.

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We now enter upon a new stage when political provisions will be considered by legislative bodies. I see the task of party organisations, personnel, communists in firmly adhering to the stance of the CPSU platform and translating it into reality, acting by methods that are characteristic of our party – political, ideological, organisational, correct personnel policy.

Now about the plenum decision to convene the next party congress at an earlier date. It was dictated by the desire to find expeditious solutions to the pressing issues of the party's own development and renewal, and at the same time the need to sum up the results of perestroika and work out a programme of action for the next few years.

Our comrades have said here, and I think they are right, that the pre-congress period begins for us straight away. It will include the major decisions that the session of the Supreme Soviet and the second Congress of USSR People's Deputies will adopt.

It will include the preparation for, and the conduct of elections to republican and local bodies of authority. It will naturally involve the entire party not only in drafting documents but in mobilising all its forces and its full potential for an effective performance of its political vanguard mission.

The Politburo thinks it possible to support the proposal from numerous party committees to

reconsider the earlier adopted resolutions concerning the report-back election meetings in view of the fact that the CPSU is entering a pre-congress period filled with major concerns and not to hold this year's report-back meetings at the party committee and bureau levels where it is not envisaged by the party rules.

This will enable concentration on practical work to accomplish economic policy tasks and mount major political campaigns.

We should proceed from an understanding that congress preparation must invigorate the processes in the party, promote perestroika, consolidate society and rally all pro-perestroika forces, the entire nation.

I say this with confidence because people link the realisation of their plans for life with perestroika. Except for a few people motivated by their own ambitious drives, the Soviet people are interested in accomplishing perestroika and expect that we should make more constructive efforts to ensure speedy results.

This is how we must act combining concern for the perspective which must mobilise society at this decisive phase of perestroika and concern for a prompt solution to numerous pressing problems relating to people's day-to-day life. This, comrades, is what we must secure by all means.

I hope that the plenum will impart a new impulse to the activity of party bodies and all communists in this significant period of preparation for the next party congress.

Resolution on report of the USSR Procurator General

A resolution of the plenum of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee that ended here on September 20 was circulated in Moscow on September 21. The resolution says the following:

1. The plenum of the Central Committee takes note of the report by Procurator-General of the USSR Alexander Sukharev about the examination of a statement addressed to the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee and USSR Procurator's Office by Yegor Ligachev, a member of the Politburo and a Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee. The investigation conducted by the USSR Procurator's Office in accordance with the law into assertions about Ligachev taking bribes, made by investigators Telman Gdlyan and Nikolai Ivanov, proved their utter groundlessness. The USSR Procurator's Office concluded that the bribe-taking did not take place.

2. The plenum of the Central Committee instructs the Moscow City Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to consider the responsibility before the Party of Telman Gdlyan and Nikolai Ivanov in accordance with the conclusions of the USSR Procurator's Office.

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irreconcilable attitude to any forms of national oppression.

These goals can and should be reached by the joint efforts of working people of all nationalities. These are the Leninist dialectics of the international and the national.

Following the October Revolution the party was confronted with the need to find specific ways and forms of realising its nationalities policy.

The Soviet system of government inherited a grave legacy from tsarism: the country was torn apart by inter-ethnic contradictions and peoples inhabiting it were at different economic and cultural development levels, apart from being without rights.

In those conditions the problem of a state arrangement acquired vital significance. Many then advocated autonomisation or even a unitary state.

All the greater credit then goes to Lenin who was able to correctly catch the mood of the masses and the pressing needs of societal development and work out an optimum party strategy on the national issue.

This is how the idea of a state federation of a historically new type emerged to become one of the principal motive forces behind the dynamic progress of the entire country and of each ethnic group in it.

The impulse provided by the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics determined the main avenue of the development of our multinational society, although Stalin and his entourage were later still able, without directly encroaching on the federal form of statehood, to translate their idea of autonomisation into reality.

Deformities in inter-ethnic relations, the baneful effects of excessive centralisation and bureaucratic administration, and injustices done to a number of peoples have recently come under extensive and harsh criticism.

The critique has been justified. More than that, it has been essential. There must be not a single "blank spot" left in the Soviet state's history. Society should have full and exhaustive information about all its episodes, no matter how bitter.

But while continuing and even deepening the analysis and criticism of the distortions of Lenin's nationalities policy, we should not allow some untruths or semi-truths to be replaced by others.

We should view the history of how the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – a unique phenomenon in human history – came into being and developed from a strictly objective standpoint.

Attempts to idealise the past and present it in rosy colours alone are futile and unacceptable. This, as we have seen, does not serve the interests of the working people, the cause of socialism. But it would be equally wrong to approach the past from nihilist positions – not only because it represents the experience of the struggle of many generations for a new society, for new relationships among peoples, but because it gives us the right to speak of huge historical achievements.

In spite of the deformations and errors that have occurred we must see the crux of the Soviet state's development. We have no right to forget that we are evaluating the life and destiny, thoughts and deeds of those who have built up this state, who bore the brunt of the efforts to overcome the country's economic backwardness, who defended our homeland shoulder to shoulder during the Great Patriotic War, who raised it from ruins in the post-war years.

We have all grown up in a social atmosphere literally permeated with internationalism. Friendship of the peoples was not an abstract slogan for us, but an everyday reality. Can we forget about it? Can we renounce the internationalist legacy of our Revolution?

We must not allow the difficulties and problems that overwhelm us today to eclipse the fundamental values, created during the years of Soviet power, on which our multinational country now rests. I shall put it in the following way: any attempts to distort and belittle the true achievements in the sphere of national relations is an outrage against the memory of several generations of Soviet people. These attempts hold no water when compared to the actual facts of our life.

If somebody today claims that in terms of national development and inter-ethnic relationships Soviet power has not wrought essential changes as compared to the situation in pre-revolutionary Russia, he is engaged in dishonest distortion of reality intended to whip up nationalist passions and to motivate various extremist demands.

Carried away by nationalism, some people go to such lengths as to claim that internationalism and friendship of the peoples are meaningless propagandistic slogans, myths that do not reflect the actual state of affairs. But this holds no

water.

The life of our society is constantly marked by manifestations of fraternal assistance, co-operation, concern and care for each other's affairs. Nevertheless, as I have already said, today we are confronted with serious conflicts and problems that have accumulated in inter-ethnic relations.

What the CPSU nationalities policy and the development of the Soviet federation have brought to our peoples is a question of fundamental significance. Let us consider the issue in its three main dimensions: political, economic and intellectual.

That the peoples of Russia acquired various forms of national statehood is one of the most important political results of the socialist revolution and subsequent socialist transformations.

Comrades, it is worth recalling that tsarist Russia did not have the Ukraine, Byelorussia or Georgia, but only provinces of the Russian Empire. Their peoples were not regarded as whole nations but only as the subjects of "His Majesty the Emperor". The same is true of other peoples of Transcaucasia, the peoples of the Baltic region and Moldavia. In Central Asia the situation was even worse, as the remnants of feudal theocratic despotism formed the basis of the administrative set-up.

After the Revolution complex processes involving the consolidation of the nation, the formation of their socialist statehood and, at the same time, the development of interaction and the membership in the federation intertwined. The year 1922, when a treaty on the formation of the USSR was concluded, and 1924, when the first constitution was passed, became landmarks in this respect.

In 1940 the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was formed in the USSR. In the same year the USSR was joined by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. This took place in a complex historical period when the Second World War had broken out and fascism was capturing one country after another. The peoples of the Baltic region also faced the real threat of enslavement.

Keen discussions are currently being held on events during that period. Much has yet to be analysed and evaluated. But there are no grounds to question the decision by the Baltic republics to join the USSR and the choice made by their peoples.

It is also clear that the Soviet leadership, taking a variety of measures to strengthen the

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country's security in the face of the Nazi threat, committed gross violations of the Leninist principles of foreign policy which rejects division into spheres of influence. We resolutely condemn this.

Generally speaking, comrades, we are for fully restoring historical truth. History cannot be rewritten in order to suit subjective views and political calculations, or giving in to the passions and ambitions of the present. The course of events cannot be reversed. One can go forward, only relying on historical truth and the reality of the modern world.

As a result of historical, even in contradictory, developments, a single federal socialist state took shape, inhabited by more than 100 ethnic groups.

It has a complex structure, with union and autonomous republics and autonomous regions and districts and with corresponding bodies of representative power and administration and other political and social institutions providing the peoples with possibilities to share in the process of historical creativity.

But the functioning of this system and consequently the fulfilment of the diverse interests of the peoples inhabiting our country was severely hamstrung by unitarism and administer-by-command methods of management, which circumscribed the rights of republics and other national entities, emasculated the real substance of the federation and held back the progress of our entire society.

I must also mention injustices and lawless acts against some ethnic groups in the past, especially during and immediately after the war.

Although political decisions have already been taken and assessments of principle made on this score, it should be said again today, once we are dealing with nationalities policy, that the outrages against ethnic groups and their banishment from their native parts during the Great Patriotic War (World War II) must be condemned.

We should do everything to restore the flouted rights of the Soviet Germans, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Kalmyks, Balkars, Karachais, Chechens, Ingushes, Greeks, Koreans and Kurds.

The issue is not simple and it is also painful in many respects. But regardless of the difficulties involved, we have only one way out, that of painstakingly searching for solutions that will be acceptable to all and take account of existing realities.

Now let's discuss the economic side of the matter.

As a result of the policy of expediting the progress of former ethnic outlying areas, all union republics during the years of Soviet government were able to create multibranch industries of their own and their social and economic development levels were evened out.

Whereas in 1926 the maximum industrial production per capita of old industrial regions exceeded that of the ethnic outskirts by 38 times, in 1941 the ratio shrank to 4.1 times and now stands at only 2.3 times.

While way back in the late 1950s workers outnumbered other social groups only in the Russian Federation, Estonia and Latvia, in the end of the 1970s this was true of practically every republic.

Whereas before the way many ethnic groups did not have qualified personnel of their own, now the situation has changed dramatically and all of them have such personnel, including specialists of the highest qualification.

During the first decades of Soviet government there could be no question of equivalent economic exchanges between different republics. The economically more developed regions, primarily the Russian Federation and the Ukraine, bore the brunt of efforts to even out development levels in the country.

But it was not always the European part of the

country that gave material and technical aid to the Asian part.

Suffice it to recall post-war economic rehabilitation. The entire federation then contributed to overcoming dislocation in the war-ravaged regions of Russia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldavia, and assisting industry and agriculture in the Baltic republics to find their feet.

To put it in a nutshell, great wealth has been created over the years of Soviet power by the pooled efforts of all our peoples. Each ethnic group is entitled to see it as incorporating its work as well, to view it as also belonging to it, as being common property.

As a result of many years of developing on the basis of plans, the Soviet economy has become highly integrated and is now a single national economic complex.

I have in mind not merely the sum total of production capacities, but the single economic organism, separate parts of which cannot exist without the already formed and steadily deepening relationships within the national economy as a whole.

In noting these achievements, I am far from claiming that we have reached the limit in ensuring the harmonious interaction of all elements of our national economy. Unfortunately, we lag behind here in many ways, and further deepening of labour co-operation is an important reserve in our development. But even then the attained density of economic interaction revolts, literally speaking, against any attempts to disrupt it. We must all realise this in full measure so as not to make mistakes in the decisions we make and will go on making in the course of perestroika.

I wish to furnish some figures characterising inter-republican relationships through the balance of inter-sectoral exchanges. In 1987 the share of industrial production imported by the republics from other parts of the country amounted to 18 per cent in the Russian Federation, 26 per cent in the Ukraine, 39 per cent in Byelorussia, 33 per cent in Kazakhstan, 33-40 per cent in the Transcaucasian republics, 39-42 per cent in the Baltic republics, 37-47 per cent in Central Asia, 44 per cent in Moldavia.

Russia's powerful oil and gas complex ensures most of the power requirements in all the republics. The Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan supply all the country with metal and account for 90 per cent of grain production. Central Asia, apart from many other goods, supplies cotton. Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia manufacture precision machinery and goods of the light industry, and are major suppliers of meat, milk and potatoes. The Transcaucasian republics and Moldavia also have a similar economic profile. Analysis shows that practically no republic could build up by itself the potential it now possesses. Not one of them could ensure the latter's normal operation and effective use. Such are the results achieved by pooling the efforts of the peoples.

The actual reality is that the Latvian republic, for instance, satisfies 96 per cent of its requirements in fuel, 50 per cent of its requirements in power, 90 per cent of its requirements in ferrous metals, 100 per cent of its requirements in non-ferrous metals, 80 per cent of its requirements in raw chemical materials and 63 per cent of the machine-building production it needs by importing them from other parts of the country.

About 1.5 million tonnes of grain are annually brought from other parts of the country for the needs of the republic's livestock — more than a half of the concentrated fodder used there.

The picture is similar in other republics. Armenia, let us say, imports from other parts of the country 100 per cent of all its consumed fuel, 93 per cent of its ferrous metal, 56 per cent of its chemical and petrochemical goods, 32 per cent of its machine-building and metal-working production, 37 per cent of meat and more than 64 per cent of the dairy products it consumes. The Uzbek republic satisfies in this way 50 per cent of its requirements in petroleum and gas indus-

try products, 56 per cent of its requirement in coal, 80 per cent in ferrous metallurgy products and 48 per cent in non-ferrous metallurgy goods.

One of the most important prerequisites for the normal functioning of any economy is the existence of a developed market. We know how acute now is competitive struggle in the world market. And a major advantage of all our republics and regions is without doubt the existence of a practically unlimited all-union market.

Here is an example. Lithuania supplies other republics with computer, television and sound-recording equipment, machine-tools, products of electrical engineering, the light and food industries, and takes delivery of technological equipment, cars, tractors, combine-harvesters and oil products from the Russian Federation, metal and coal from the Ukraine, potash fertiliser from Byelorussia, cotton from Central Asia, non-ferrous metals and wool from Kazakhstan, and fruits from Moldavia and Transcaucasia.

The understanding and conclusions based on the analysis of the established economic realities are of fundamental significance for elaborating an up-to-date nationalities policy.

It goes without saying that one should not ignore the negative processes that have emerged as a consequence of the irrational allocation of productive forces and have led to outbreaks of ecological and demographic problems.

Some regions suffer labour shortages, and existing plant is not fully used, which inflicts heavy economic losses.

Other regions, primarily the republics of Central Asia and to some extent Transcaucasia and Moldavia have excessive manpower resources.

This is turning out to be one of the sources of social tension and the flare-up of conflict situations, including in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. There has been more than ample evidence of that lately.

The causes of the existing situation must be adequately studied. All these questions should be thoroughly analysed within the framework of the continuing work on the concept of economic restructuring.

There are proposals from Uzbekistan. Other republics are also drafting them.

This work should be continued so that the first drastic steps towards improving the situation can be made in the 13th five-year period.

This is what I would like to tell you, comrades, in this connection. We now speak, and this is quite right, about the baneful effect of excessive centralisation, diktat and arbitrariness of departments in the development of various economic branches.

But I could show you today a volume summarising requests that arrived from the union republics in the past ten years for the construction of new enterprises and the establishment of new industries.

Much for what the centre is now being blamed emerged as a result of persistent, repeated requests from republican and local bodies.

Look at verbatim reports of the USSR Supreme Soviet's sessions and you will see they are full of unending requests of this kind. And how many memorandums have been sent to the party Central Committee?

In a bid to secure one or another prestigious project, local authorities often agreed to the harshest of conditions demanded by central departments, while the allocation of funds for social development was maintained at the minimum level and people's needs were virtually ignored.

These problems are universal in character, but in our country they have acquired an ethnic hue.

In general, there is a foundation in our economy on which we can rely, but there is also much work to be done.

In assessing the situation in the intellectual sphere of our multi-ethnic country's life, it is necessary to give credit to the large-scale work of historic dimensions, both in terms of volume and importance, that has made it possible to save from complete extinction or revive and

reintroduce many unique traditions and give a strong impulse to the culture of all peoples.

The phrase that some ethnic groups first had their written language under Soviet government has become trite. But what does this mean? Take away from a person the ability to speak and write in his native language and to know the history and legends of his people, and he will lose his sense of kinship and therefore spirituality, even if he is quite well off materially.

The Leninist policy of the cultural revolution in this country has produced impressive results despite all the deformations that occurred.

Today every nation has its own scientific and artistic intelligentsia, the carrier of its culture, through which it gains access to the values of other Soviet nations, to the world's treasures of knowledge and artistic classics. Each republic has scientific centres, universities and institutes, a wide network of public education, its own theatres. National cinema, painting and architecture are developing. But it is known that many areas of scientific and artistic creative endeavour cannot develop without all-round state support, the care and attention of society. Soviet power took charge of all this, and this is its greatest humanistic mission.

Speaking about the results of our intellectual development, it is impossible to ignore the growing interaction of national cultures. Joint life and our peoples' advance along the socialist road resulted in the formation of a Soviet culture, marked by the rich diversity of national peculiarities and traditions.

These are also the worthy fruits of cooperation between fraternal nations. And we take pride in them.

But it is all the more intolerable that along with the bright manifestations of the socialist way of life, acute problems have accumulated in this sphere. Thousands of successful national regions, as well as settlement and village Soviets, created in the 1920s, were unjustifiably eliminated. Problems arose in satisfying the national requirements of the people of various nationalities who, owing to natural processes, found themselves resettled in all regions of the country.

The problems involved in the development of languages and everything that is language-related — education, publishing and use in various spheres of state and public life — have acquired an especially acute character. Under the influence of economic, social and demographic factors the sphere of usage of national languages was reduced, a process that was interpreted as proof of former theories on the forced merger of nations, which were raised to the level of programme-setting principles.

Although these processes caused legitimate anxiety and concern in society, sensible attempts to find a rational solution were often regarded as nationalism with all the consequences stemming from this. As a result, the role of national languages, of some peoples was diminished. Their wish to preserve and develop the mother tongue, to multiply the values of their culture are quite understandable.

It is extremely important to work out a clear position on this vital problem which has acquired a political nature and affects the interests of the whole of the country's population, a position taking account of all equitable aspirations and based on general consensus.

Such are the main results of the development of our multinational country, such are the realities of Soviet society, naturally, in the most general outline, from which we should proceed when elaborating national policy in modern conditions.

II

Comrades, the draft CPSU platform, submitted for discussion by the plenary meeting naturally sets out the general approach towards the outstanding problems, because taking specific decisions is the prerogative of the supreme bodies of state power of the USSR and union republics.

The platform aroused great interest in the party, in every section of society, among members of all ethnic groups inhabiting the country. Its fundamental points met with broad support.

Many opinions and interesting proposals were made. Some provisions came under criticism, we should admit this.

The party platform was closely studied abroad as well. This is due both to keen interest in Soviet perestroika and to the fact that inter-ethnic issues today are pressing in many countries and are, I would say, of a global nature.

As you examined the draft platform, you must have noticed that its entire contents are mostly directly connected with the package of tasks addressed in the framework of perestroika and political and economic reform.

This is only natural, revealing the effective dialectic link that must be considered by us in both politics and practical activities.

We have set the task of restructuring and updating society on the basis of Lenin's ideas and principles. But all our experience, both in the past and now, demonstrates that we cannot count on success with perestroika unless we solve the problems of inter-ethnic relations.

Likewise, we cannot solve these problems and promote the development of the Soviet federation unless we carry perestroika further and democratise and humanise socialist society.

I would also like to note it is not by chance that we stress the need to update the nationalities policy. We do not mean, however, to reject what has been done so far.

Now that society has changed dramatically, it is vital to work out a nationalities policy that will ensure the resolution of urgent problems in the country's development and correspond to today's realities.

These are the attitudes underlying the platform. Its deeper philosophical meaning, if you like, consists in determining the optimum correlations between the international and the national optimum ways to apply this Marxist-Leninist idea today.

In practical and political terms, it means ensuring conditions for the free and comprehensive development of every ethnic group and the consolidation of our union, which is the source of well being for all our peoples.

The central issue that deserves special attention is the manner in which to realise Lenin's principle of the self-determination of nations today.

Many aberrations were in evidence in this respect in past decades. They have also struck root, regrettably, in the public mentality. This is why we should clear up the issue of fundamental significance to our theory and policy.

First of all, it ought to be emphasised that the party will consistently pursue a Leninist nationalities policy, including such a basic principle as the right of nations to self-determination.

Claims that the self-determination of the USSR's peoples has not been effected in reality and attempts to reduce self-determination just to secession and thereby impair this universal principle of solving the national question are futile and should be denounced.

All our experience as well as the experience of others demonstrates the need to view self-determination not only as a one-off act connected with the exercise of the right to secede.

It is a complicated, many-sided process of affirming national dignity, developing language and culture, consolidating political independence, and advancing economic and social progress.

From this point of view, the gamut of measures effected as part of perestroika means a new and landmark stage in implementing nations' rights to self-determination.

In present-day conditions the principle is best reflected in self-management, protecting ethnic identity and the right of each ethnic group to enjoy all the fruits of sovereignty and to decide all issues of its development — economic, political and cultural — as it sees fit.

At the same time self-management presupposes the voluntary association of republics and national entities in the name of grappling with needs common to all, and their organic involvement in the advance of the whole country.

The current phase in the self-determination of nations makes it imperative to markedly broaden the rights of republics and decisively remove the distortions and deformities of the past, whose adverse effects are still being felt in various areas of society's life.

What is suggested in the first place is a package of measures to consolidate the political independence of union republics and give real substance to their sovereignty.

The clear delimiting of the powers of central and republican bodies of power will enable the latter to decide all issues of their life on their own, except issues which they will voluntarily delegate for decision-making by the union and in the resolution of which they will, incidentally, take part as well through respective political mechanisms.

While the union will retain the powers needed to perform the common tasks of the federation, it is proposed to make fundamental changes in earlier procedures whereby the union had the right to take up and decide virtually any issue, making the competence and sovereignty of republican authorities in many ways a mere formality. In this way, the problem of prioritising federal law or republican law will be resolved.

The new character of the relations in the federation should find its legal guarantees in the USSR constitution.

Elaborating on an idea I have already mentioned, I would like to say that broader rights for republics and their stronger sovereignty should be reflected in their substantially increased influence on the affairs of the country as a whole.

The new structures of state power created in the course of political reform contain many elements to ensure this.

These elements include the make-up of the USSR Supreme Soviet and its presidium and planned working procedures for the Constitutional Compliance Committee. It is now suggested to go further, furnishing not only legal but also political conditions for broader and more active participation by republics when dealing with issues facing the country as a whole.

Such an approach must find reflection in personnel policy. We must ensure the participation of representatives of all our peoples in federal, state and public bodies, in the administrative apparatus. This must be done with due account for their professional standards, of course.

Urgent questions of the Russian Federation's development must be considered in the context of problems linked with our federation's restructuring, and the further expansion of the rights and consolidation of the sovereignty of union republics. They were spotlighted during recent discussions both in the Russian Federation and the country as a whole.

The Russian Federation is the most complicated national-political and cultural-ethnic system both in respect to its position in the union and its internal structure. The powerful revolutionary shifts, started by the 1917 October Revolution, have radically changed the image of Russia. The role played by Russia and the Russian people in the country's adoption of revolutionary reforms, in surmounting the economic and cultural backwardness of many peoples, in defending the October achievements, is well known.

However, the deformations committed have had a negative effect on Russia, just as on all the other union republics. This is borne out by unfavourable demographic trends, numerous facts testifying to the irrational exploitation of natural resources and their squandering, obvious neglect of such truly Russian lands as the Non-Black Earth Zone and several other regions.

An acute ecological situation has developed in the Kuzbas, the Urals, the Volga regions, on Lake Baikal, and in the northern regions due to

grave miscalculations in the location and development of production forces. Many territories, regions and autonomous formations are obviously lagging behind in their social development. There is legitimate concern about the preservation and restoration of priceless ancient monuments with which the history and culture of the Russian and other peoples of the republic are inseparably linked. Public opinion in Russia and throughout the country is seriously troubled by the lot of the small nationalities inhabiting the country's North, Siberia and the Far East. A solution to all of these problems calls for thorough and far-reaching measures, both organisational and political. In keeping with numerous proposals, the platform maps out ways to improve the state structure of the Russian Federation, its standing in the union. These proposals were broadly discussed and approved both in the Russian Federation and in the union as a whole. We note this with satisfaction. I think the plenary meeting of the Central Committee will support these proposals. As to the formation of republican party structures, we can already address these questions.

In response to the platform, the part that deals with the long-term transition to management by the regions, concern is voiced over the fact that this transition may lead to weaker links between them. I should say that this concern is groundless. On the contrary, perfecting economic management at territorial level will not only facilitate the solution of social, ecological and other tasks at the local level, but will also promote co-operation between all parts of Russia, the dynamic development of the Russian Federation as an integrated economic and political body in the interests of all peoples populating it.

Giving a new status to Soviet autonomy has great significance in efforts aimed at transforming the Soviet federation. This is the essence of the proposals of the platform relating to the extension of the rights of autonomous republics in all fields of state, economic and cultural development, and to the strengthening of their economic independence. The same goal is pursued by giving broader rights to the autonomous regions and territories, by granting the possibility to create national regions in places where a population is dominated by a particular nationality, and by forming nationwide Soviets of citizens belonging to large nations, which do not have their own territorial autonomy.

You possibly noticed that proposals have been made that would transform one type of autonomy into another and wishes have been expressed that would change some autonomous republics into union ones.

Comrades, it should be said with all certainty: if we are realists and take account of the situation in which we find ourselves at present, the most important point is that the rights of peoples who have gained self-determination in such a form should be significantly extended and dependably guaranteed.

I will raise another issue of principle. Responses to the platform contain proposals on territorial changes, on redrawing the borders of national, state and administrative entities. Various arguments are cited to prove this. The plenary meeting should work out a firm and clear-cut position on this score. We proceed from the fact that the current national-territorial division presents no obstacles in that people of all nationalities are able to live normally anywhere in the country. Efforts should be primarily aimed at creating the appropriate conditions. To embark now on recarving the country's administrative and territorial map would mean only complicating what is already a difficult situation, to delay indefinitely the attainment of the real goals of perestroika, which aim to improve the life of Soviet people, all nations.

Our new nationalities policy is designed to provide broad possibilities for meeting the specific interests of every nation and at the same time strengthening the guarantees of citizens' rights, irrespective of their nationality. The platform

names a number of measures aimed at attaining this goal. I would add that they wholly correspond to the obligations which we took in the international arena. Implementing them, we at the same time tackle important issues of forming a rule-of-law socialist state in the USSR.

It should be borne in mind that more than 60 million people live outside their national republics as a result of economic, social and demographical processes and inter-ethnic migration. Naturally it is impossible to solve any problems without taking into account the legitimate interests and rights of these fellow citizens. Any discrimination here is impermissible.

Protecting the rights and freedoms of man, citizen or individual, is one of the most vital conditions for the development of modern civilisation. At the recent meeting in Vienna of the representatives of signatories of the Helsinki agreement, the USSR signed its final document.

I recall this, in particular, because in the conditions of a really functioning federal state, the task of renewing legislation on citizens' rights becomes multifaceted.

I refer not to the union laws alone. The republics also are obliged to observe all international pacts, signed on behalf of the Soviet Union and, consequently, on behalf of all republics which make it up.

It is necessary to strengthen the protection of the rights of Soviet citizens everywhere. It is all the more important since cases of discrimination against people on an ethnic basis are multiplying. We encounter ever increasing attempts by enemies of perestroika, anti-social elements and groups to play "the nationalist card", to channel people's displeasure, which has accumulated over decades, into the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. Any manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism, or the instigation of enmity to any nation, are unacceptable to us.

We have and will steer a firm course towards the democratic development of society. But one should differentiate between peaceful demonstrations and meetings, held in the framework of the constitution, and extremist rallies which provoke inter-ethnic clashes and terrorise and intimidate people of other nationalities. With regard to such people and groups, spinelessness and indulgence are simply pernicious and at times criminal. The events in Transcaucasia, the Fergana region and Novy Uzen seem to leave little doubts on this score.

Soviet laws envisage punishment for instigating national strife and law-enforcement bodies should ensure their unconditional observance. We cannot reconcile ourselves with the fact that many crimes on a national basis actually remain unpunished due to failings in the mechanism of justice. The time has also come to talk with the clear and forcible language of law, about conditions under which nationalist, chauvinistic and other extremist organisations can and should be banned and disbanded by the courts. I will say definitely: we should not veer from the road of solving all problems by political methods, but where the acuteness of the situation dictates, where the threat to the safety and life of people arises, we will move decisively using the whole force of Soviet laws.

In this connection I would like to dwell on the current situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict here has become protracted and extremely acute. Comrades know that from the very beginning we sought to settle it by political means to prevent complications in the normal life and work of the population of the autonomous region and both republics.

Numerous meetings were held at the CPSU Central Committee with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, deputies of the Supreme Soviets of the republics and representatives of workers. The USSR Council of Ministers endorsed a large-scale resolution, aimed at solving the region's social problems. Later a committee of special administration in Nagorno-Karabakh was set up. High-powered commissions were

sent there on many occasions, including from the Congress of People's Deputies.

Unfortunately all these measures did not bring the expected results. National strife has flared up to such a degree that the development of the situation can have unpredictable consequences. Tens of thousands of people, who fled their homeland, disrupted transport, interminable strikes and direct clashes — such is the situation today. I will put it bluntly: we stand before the need to take resolute measures, we cannot allow anarchy, let alone bloodshed. We are obliged to exert every effort to foster normal conditions for the life of the people, to ensure confidence in the future.

I think that we should appeal on behalf of the plenary meeting to the leadership and working people of Armenia and Azerbaijan to stop, to realise that further instigation of the conflict will bring pernicious consequences for the two nations who had lived as neighbours for centuries and should continue to live in this way.

Comrades, work to ensure radical transformations of the federation is inseparably linked with perfecting economic relations and management.

These problems were sufficiently fully covered in the platform. Without anticipating the results of its discussion, I would like to express some views on this score.

First of all, we should not be misled by the current difficulties in the elaboration of principled economic solutions. These solutions should take account of both the objective requirements in developing integration on the basis of the division of labour and the need for economic independence.

In modern conditions tendencies towards autarchy and attempts by relatively prosperous republics and regions to isolate themselves and fence themselves off would be extremely dangerous. This can bring fairly negative consequences for those who embark upon this road.

We need at this plenary meeting to say this once again in the face of all peoples of the Soviet Union so that they do not give in to demagogues, who conceal what the implementation of their slogans, serviced under the "pleasant sauce" of independence, secession, etc., may lead to. This is irresponsible gambling with the destinies of the people. Who will ever undertake to divide, recarve the current intertwined society bound up by all economic, political, social, spiritual, human and family links? Only adventurists can make such calls.

Today the basis of scientific, technological, economic and social progress is the rational division of labour, integration, the use of the potential accumulated by the whole of society. This is illustrated not only by our experience but also by that of the world.

In our conditions the more organic inclusion of all the republics and regions into the nationwide division of labour has fundamental significance for their effective development. True, some comrades, complain that we have problems with the division of labour and pricing, that the discipline of meeting contractual obligations is low. All this is true. But is it possible today when we set long-term economic goals to base our projections only on the statement of the failings of the system, which we inherited from the past?

These can and should be rectified as economic reform makes headway, and we are busy making sure that it does.

This is what should be the subject of discussion in the first place — how to carry out reform in order to remove all concerns and everything that has harmed the economic development of both the country as a whole and its individual regions.

We know well that within the thoroughly centralised administer-by-command system, funds were siphoned off for no good reason not only from go-ahead enterprises to laggards but also from some economic regions to others.

To put it bluntly, the bungled management and idleness of some were financed at the ex-

pense of others. This was obviously at odds with the basic principle of socialism and engendered parasitic attitudes.

The implementation of measures outlined in the platform will make it possible to abolish these abnormalities sapping motivation in the results of economic activity.

We have already embarked upon this path, by supporting the relevant initiatives of Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Similar proposals are being prepared for other republics and regions.

This approach will enable everyone to display enterprise, and stimulate economic efficiency. There will be growth in funds left to republican and local governing bodies, which can be used to meet social needs.

The economic position of a republic or a region will depend on its own economic results.

While stressing the high significance of the principle of economic independence, we should view it in organic connection with the change-over of enterprises to complete cost-accounting. This is especially vital to understand for all of us, comrades, because there is still a lot of confusion on the issue.

It should be said openly that real independence cannot be achieved without completing this central task. All the more so, centralised dictates may not be allowed to just shift from one level to another.

In this case, the federal market, which we want to upgrade and which should have cost-accounting enterprises as its key figures, would be divided by regional fences.

But is this what we seek? Issues arising in this case will have to be resolved not in a single centre but in 15 or hundreds of centres.

We recently met with comrades from the Baltic region and the issue of the RAF mini-bus factory was brought up.

A good enterprise, it builds needed vehicles which are used domestically and are also exported. It receives components from several hundred other factories across the country. If RAF decides to upgrade the model, all of these factories will have to be involved.

As a result, the cost-accounting of enterprises has become the central issue of economic independence. Both the republic and local governing councils are going to benefit from it, as they will receive deductions from enterprises at standard rates.

In other words, we vitally need far-reaching decentralisation in the economy. It is just as vital to fulfil federal programmes connected with developing basic industries, the production infrastructure and fundamental research, maintaining the country's reliable defence capability, solving major ecological problems, dealing with the effects of natural disasters, and with the nation's involvement in the international economy and politics.

Despite the impressive results of the policy to even the economic development levels of different republics, serious problems still remain in this field.

I would like to ask: should we not set up, when switching over to regional cost-accounting, a system of economic levers and incentives that will enable us, by effectively using funds from the state budget, to consistently resolve the pressing problems of the regions that lag behind?

I believe that the government ought to be given this task right away. This work is closely connected with the granting of economic independence to republics.

Issues of property almost invariably end up at the centre of debates on economic aspects of inter-ethnic relations.

Refining socialist property is the key issue of perestroika. Let us be blunt: without changes that are long overdue in this area, we shall not be able to overcome the alienation of working people from the means of production, fully restore interest in worthy and conscientious work, and encourage economic initiative and resourcefulness.

The fact that the issue remains unresolved affects practical matters, including the need to delimit the functions of federal, republican and local governing councils in an optimum way.

We shall have a broad-based discussion of this problem. For now, I would like to say the following: the change-over to regional cost-accounting and economic independence emphasises the question of how to use the economic potential accumulated in the country rationally and to the greatest effect.

Discussions now underway in society sometimes produce proposals which, if accepted as the basis of policy, may push us from one extreme to another.

We want to break from excessive centralisation and departmental arbitrariness in relation to republics and regions. We are looking for solutions that will make them economically independent and help throw off the shackles that hamper efficient work. This is a natural reaction to the sway of central ministries and agencies that continue to make all republics and regions groan, even today.

This sway is the bedrock of the administer-by-command system of management, which, it is now clear to everyone, has outlived itself.

But it is important to realise that, when adopting new forms of economic endeavour, we should make full use of everything positive that has been achieved during the development of the Soviet federation as an integral state.

We have a comprehensively interconnected power grid and an energy supply system. They are the foundation of our economy, the basis for both the confident work of production collectives and the resolution of social issues in all republics.

The transport and communications system, and other important parts of the production infrastructure have also been developed along the same principles, keeping in mind national and regional needs.

So, comrades, should we destroy all this now? This suggestion reminds me of the "revolutionary" slogan calling for the dismantling of the tsar-built railway between Moscow and Petersburg.

It is necessary to analyse thoroughly the concepts suggested and to foresee, above all, the consequence of their implementation.

In working out a new economic policy that will meet the tasks and goals of perestroika and the development of the federation and in filling this policy with new content, we ought to do everything in a well-considered way, a cool-headed manner, rather than on the basis of emotions, ambitions and abstract notions.

This is an extremely important undertaking that involves peoples' vital interests and we should not fall into confusion or make hasty decisions. This would have irreparable consequences.

And in no case should we adopt decisions to the accompaniments of foot stamping and hand clapping that is masterminded by certain groups.

If we see only errors and miscalculations in the past and do not see the realities that were formed over decades, can we speak of serious politics?

This is not a university department where one can say whatever one chooses - anything goes. I would not like this to be viewed as a manifestation of a negative attitude towards scientists, for that is not the case.

Without science and its responsible contribution, we would not be able to do anything, nor would we be able to understand anything. But I do not like incompetent people to impose political concepts on us by foot stamping.

In other words, I would like to stress that all of our approaches and decisions should display a high degree of competence and an equally high degree of responsibility.

Naturally, we ought to take into account the radically changing situation in connection with economic restructuring in the country.

At present laws on ownership, on land, on lease and lease relations, on the economic inde-

pendence of republics, on local economy and self-management, and on the uniform taxation system will be submitted for discussion to the Supreme Soviet on a top-priority basis.

Altogether, these laws mean a drastic change in the relations of production. I would say, comrades, that the point at issue is a new stage in our revolution.

Under these conditions, it is impossible to view the nationalities issue separately from the profound social and economic processes unfolding in the country.

We are on the correct path and we should be firm in defending the chief directions of the policy of perestroika. It is being claimed that we are unable to resolve problems facing the country without introducing capitalism into the economy.

On the other hand, I would say from the right, it is being claimed that the entire policy of perestroika was imposed on us by the West. This is nonsense.

Let us not be nervous but build on the main direction of perestroika by tapping the potential of socialism and democracy, the potential of the federation, by freeing the spiritual and intellectual potential of our society and by reinvigorating socialism. This is the point at issue.

In this way, economic as well as political factors convincingly speak in favour of the transformation and further development of the Soviet federation on the basis of the maximum consolidation of the republics' economic independence on the one hand, and the strengthening of the common economic complex on the other.

In considering the entire range of issues related to the further tapping of the Soviet federation's potential, we should be especially attentive and considerate with regard to everything related in the intellectual sphere. This applies to science, culture, traditions and many other things that make our peoples rich.

But today I would like to mention the language problem that has become very acute. What should our policy be like?

First of all, we proceed from the premise that the indigenous inhabitants of all republics have undoubtedly the full right to establish their tongue as the state language or, in other words, to create legal conditions for its preservation and development.

But this, comrades, is not merely a legal issue. This is a political issue related to the well being of our peoples and their understandable aspiration to preserve their national integrity.

At the same time, all peoples of our country are vitally interested in having a means of inter-ethnic communication, which the Russian language has become in our conditions, for objective reasons.

The reality is that thanks to this language, all Soviet people are able to apply their energies and knowledge much more extensively and gain access to achievements in Soviet and world science and culture.

You can judge from the material distributed to you that many comrades who have participated in discussing the platform and represent different ethnic groups think it expedient to give the Russian language the status of common state language across the USSR.

We regard this proposal as deserving the attention and support of the higher bodies of power. Its implementation will in no way infringe upon the rights of any ethnic group, while providing a serious legal basis for promoting economic, political and cultural contacts between different peoples in our multinational country, their joint creative activities and close involvement in international affairs.

We can now see imbalances in some regions, and just look at what they have led to. Disregarding realities is clearly irresponsible in relation to people.

Why does Switzerland have three state languages? Why does Finland, with just a few per cent of its population Swedes, have Swedish as its second state language? Why is English the

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech to new session of USSR Supreme Soviet

THE second session of the USSR Supreme Soviet opened in the Kremlin on September 25 with a joint meeting of the Soviet and the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet, chaired the morning sitting. As he greeted the deputies in his opening remarks, Mikhail Gorbachev voiced the following considerations:

"First of all, we approach our work at this session taking account of the real situation in society and the country. I think there is no need now to describe it in detail. And not only because you know it well. During the past few days, including on the eve of this session, I have had more than one occasion to speak about it.

It would be fair to say that opinions formulated by the Supreme Soviet about the situation in the country at the closing phase of the first session are still valid. Moreover, we can say that the situation has in some respects grown even more complicated.

"There has been active debate on the nature and mission of the Autumn session. The subject

moved into the foreground in discussions both among the deputies themselves and in the press and society.

"If we disregard extreme judgments which are short on substance, while being too sharp and sometimes even simply disrespectful towards the Supreme Soviet, I should say that high and sometimes even exceptional importance is attached to this session in society.

"People expect it to produce significant results, answers to many vital questions, and major decisions, the need for which was stressed at the closing stage of the spring session.

"The expectations are justified and stem from the situation I mentioned, with its need for urgent measures both to lift social tension and to decisively advance perestroika in every area, most notably the social and economic ones.

"I believe, and this was also the opinion of all members of the Supreme Soviet Presidium without exception when they discussed issues facing the session, that the suggested agenda offers the possibility to get down right away to working out the measures expected by society.

"The choice of items for the agenda and their order are not accidental. Comrade Lukyanov will dwell on this in greater detail, to explain why some or other item is on the agenda, whereas I would like to draw your attention to the following.

"First of all I would like to emphasise the discussion and adoption of a plan of social and economic development for 1990.

"Some might think it a routine matter, one that the supreme government bodies have dealt with every year. But I believe the drafting of the plan in the present situation when we should

decide many problems, including those which cannot be put off, is a matter of extreme importance.

"We cannot delegate this responsible work to somebody else. We must take the decision after considering the entire range of questions over which society is anxious. And this can be done in the framework of discussing the draft plan of social and economic development for next year.

"Any decision must be well-substantiated, balanced and responsible. It must be clear to Soviet people why we decide some or other matter in each specific way.

"The plan should first of all envisage measures for normalising the situation in the consumer market. And this presupposes measures to fill the market with goods and at the same time to prevent the unjustifiable growth of money incomes.

"The plan for 1990 should continue enhancing the social orientation of our economy. Next year is also the time for important decisions aimed at financial normalisation.

"Working out and adopting all these difficult decisions, we must convince our people why they are necessary and show them what consequences they will have in the near future, and what we shall face if these decisions are not made.

"And another important thing. The Supreme Soviet should firmly determine its stand and make decisions about the work of transport, the attitude to strikes, putting trade and the work of cooperatives in order, and in preparation for the winter.

"All these are matters having a direct bearing on the life of people, and they must be central to

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state language in India?

This is all because there are relevant requirements common to all ethnic groups there. Historically, it has so happened that the same role in our country is played by the Russian language.

We should only get rid of everything that in the past impeded the development of the languages and cultures of different ethnic groups.

Continuing the examination of language problems, we have to acknowledge the right of all national minorities to use their native languages. This applies to people of dozens of ethnic groups living in different republics.

We recently saw with alarm and pain how language problems separated and divided people in some regions, provoking rallies, demonstrations and strikes that lasted for many days and badly affected the economy and living standards.

Party and social organisations, state agencies, unions of cultural workers and all those vested with power and exercising influence on public opinion are duty-bound to do everything possible to put an end to this dangerous whirlwind of mutual recriminations, grievances and ultimatums.

Permit me to voice confidence that these problems will be settled and all languages spoken in our multinational motherland will be given full scope for development on the suggested basis, which meets all democratic traditions and legal norms in the world.

The role of the church in inter-ethnic relations is an issue that affects the problem we are discussing today. It is known that in the past major clashes, hostility and strife between members of different ethnic groups largely resulted from religious intolerance.

This factor frequently makes itself felt today

as well. We appreciate the fact that the Russian Orthodox, Islamic and other churches hold peace-making positions, and hope that they will use their influence and their possibilities to help avert and overcome inter-ethnic conflicts.

The churches today can pursue their activities in normal social conditions fully in keeping with constitutional principles. This can be seen most strikingly in the fact that some of their prominent representatives have been elected to the Congress of People's Deputies.

A law on freedom of conscience, which is being drafted, should regulate the entire range of problems connected with the position and activities of religious organisations.

Comrades, I hope that everything I have said promotes a better understanding of the meaning and significance of the proposed party platform on the national question. Our party favours a major and strong federal state, as it is convinced that this meets the interests of all ethnic groups united in the Soviet Union.

This was Lenin's position and this is the position we abide by today as well.

It is important to have a clear view of all economic, political, intellectual and, if you want, moral foundations for strengthening and developing our union. Let's put the question in this way: what does it give to the republics?

First of all, being part of one of the most powerful states, which possesses huge natural resources, a developed economic complex, an arsenal of scientific knowledge, technical possibilities and rich culture, capable of reliably defending its security. Each ethnic group in the USSR gets the possibility of taking part in the formation and development of common intellectual values, to have access to them and reassert itself on a nationwide and world scale through them. The union enables all peoples to take part

in international relations, actively affect the course of world events. The mechanism of implementing the rights of union republics, as regards their participation in international activity, should be worked out with a view to current conditions.

These are permanent factors. But there is a factor connected with the current historical moment. The revolutionary renewal of Soviet socialist society is the main argument in favour of strengthening our union. It was perestroika that led us to transforming the Soviet federation as an important constituent part of the processes of democratisation and renewal of the country. Only on the road of perestroika, I am convinced of this, can all acute and difficult problems of the development of peoples and national relations on the whole be successfully tackled.

Finally, comrades, I will dwell on the CPSU's role in the conditions of renewal of our federation. The fate of our multinational state largely depends on how the party will act in the new situation.

From the very beginning our party was built as an organisation of co-thinkers, inspired by the ideas of proletarian internationalism. The process of its establishment was far from simple. Under Lenin's guidance the party was formed as a single organisation with a single programme and rules, mandatory for all members, built on the basis of democratic centralism.

At the same time it should be stressed that internationalist beginnings in the party did not mean at all any disregard to the interests and peculiarities of one national group or another. This was achieved thanks to the correct interpretation of the principles of democratic centralism. Subsequently, however, it began to be distorted, which led to heavy reliance on centralism, to the

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the work of the committees and commissions, chambers and of the session of the Supreme Soviet as a whole.

"On all these questions the government should draft and make proposals without delay in interaction with republics, commissions and committees of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

"Moreover, in view of the need for the decisive progress of the economic and political reforms, and the easing of tension in inter-ethnic relations, we should take up where we left off at the spring session of the USSR Supreme Soviet and discuss as a priority the draft laws on property, on land, lease contracts and lease relations, taxation system, etc.

"It is also necessary to discuss the question of changes in the Constitution of the USSR with a view to the forthcoming elections to republican and local Soviets and to adopt a number of legislative acts on questions related to ethnic affairs.

"In view of the number of items on the agenda, it can be said that we have a huge volume of work in store. This presupposes a different character of work as compared with the first session — a high degree of organisation, efficiency and rational use of time. Let us cooperate in this direction. Society expects precisely this approach to matters on the agenda.

"Comrades, I would like to dwell on one more problem. We are all aware of the need to tighten discipline, and strengthen state and public order in the country. At the end of the first session of the USSR Supreme Soviet we adopted virtually unanimously a decree to step up efforts to combat crime.

"Work on this basis is unfolding and it is already beginning to bear fruit although so far, of course, insignificant. One cannot fail to see that although law enforcement bodies have begun to operate more boldly and actively, and the public has begun to support them more, it is early to speak of a turnaround, crime is still on the rise.

"What is of special concern? The normal func-

tioning of enterprises and institutions, work and daily conditions of life, personal well-being and even personal security are not infrequently jeopardised as a result of public disorders connected with inter-ethnic conflicts, with attempts to achieve satisfaction of particular demands, albeit well-founded, through power pressure and all kinds of ultimatums.

"There is no need to say that this is an extremely undesirable and dangerous phenomenon which seriously holds back the restructuring processes and causes an extremely negative reaction. I could once again see this for myself talking a few days ago with workers and peasants — members of the party Central Committee.

"It is important that our society understands that intolerance and force are not methods for solving problems. In this way one can, on the contrary, only move from the solving of any issue, and complicate it.

"In the conditions of a democratic and rule-of-law state we strive for, there cannot and must not be another method of political action except reliance on law and desire to solve any questions above all through consensus. That is why at present, alongside the development of new laws, the very strengthening of legality is assuming increasing importance.

"No law, even the best, will be worth anything, if it remains only on paper, if the state fails to ensure its consistent implementation, if the citizens do not comply with it consciously.

"The Supreme Soviet and the union government, the bodies of power in the republics and locally, all those who are constitutionally vested with the execution of the adopted laws ought to give attention to this aspect of the matter.

"I shall speak specifically about the issue of greatest concern at the moment. I am referring to the situation in Azerbaijan and Armenia in connection with Nagorno-Karabakh.

"I already referred to the present extremely tense situation there in my report to the recent

Central Committee plenum. In the days that followed, the tight knot of problems, especially in relation to what was happening on the rail network there, could not be undone, in spite of all the efforts made.

"In was only tonight that freight trains began running and carried more freight than is usually transported in daytime. It appears, according to reports from Comrade Voronin and other comrades who represent union ministries acting in conjunction with republican agencies there, that certain changes for the better are expected.

"Nevertheless, it is impossible to let things rest there. If the situation does not grow more stable, the Soviet government, jointly with republican agencies, must, I think, submit to the USSR Supreme Soviet concrete proposals for exhaustive measures to untie that knot. We shall wait and see a day or two, but let the government be prepared, if the need arises, to report on its proposals.

"I want to stress once again, comrades, that we shall be able to cope with the tasks set before our session only if we work with a full load, conscious of our responsibility for the results of our activity, which are impatiently awaited across the country.

"To put it in a nutshell, efficiency is the word that might serve as a motto of this autumn session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Efficiency is just what we need now, when the country is looking to the supreme bodies of state authority for specific and effective resolutions.

"If they instead hear calls that are inconsistent with the present situation and people's expectations, then, I think, society will be largely disappointed in the Supreme Soviet and the government.

"Permit me to express confidence, comrades, that our joint and responsible efforts will enable us to resolve the complex problems facing the country and ensure conditions for the further progression of perestroika and the renewal of Soviet society." □

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prejudice of democracy, and inevitably affected the position and practical activity of party organisations, including in the republics and other national entities.

Today we should fully restore Lenin's understanding of the principle of democratic centralism which envisages the vigorous activity of all party organisations, their real independence in matters of organisation, personnel policy and in other spheres.

It implies unity of action based on the elaboration of common political and ideological positions, rather than barracks-style discipline and unconditional obedience.

The platform sets out some practical steps to expand the independence of republican party organisations, including their right to handle issues of their organisation, determine the structure of party bodies and adopt political decisions.

The enrichment of the federal structure inevitably affects the role of the republican party organisations. They should be given an opportunity to adopt their programmes of action within the framework of the party programme.

We have decided to convene the next (28th) party congress, the agenda of which includes the elaboration and adoption of new party rules. Obviously, issues of the activity of the republican communist parties will be properly reflected in the rules with due account for reorganisation in the federation.

While adopting all these overdue measures, we should resolutely reject the federalisation of the party. I will put it bluntly: this would mean the end of our party as it was founded by Lenin and would inflict irreparable damage to perestroika and the entire cause of socialism. The one who followed this path would assume most grave

responsibility before the party and the people.

Among the proposals that deserve support I will single out the establishment of a Central Committee commission on the nationalities policy and inter-ethnic relations and similar commissions at the central committees of the republican party organisations, regional and city party committees — where this is, naturally, dictated by the composition of the population and the need to keep nationalities problems in view.

Comrades who think that one of the CPSU Central Committee secretaries should be assigned exclusively to handle these issues are probably right.

The restructuring of the party, of which the 28th Congress will become a major milestone, will make it possible to fulfil the extraordinary crucial tasks that have emerged at the current stage of our society's development.

And, of course, comrades, the stance of party members is acquiring huge importance. Developments in various regions have shown that some of them have yielded to the excitement of national emotions, do not oppose nationalist tendencies or, what is worse, are being drawn into them.

The party and its organisations neither can nor should put up with this. Internationalism has been and remains a major element of our outlook and part of the ideological credo of communists.

In conclusion I would like to say the following. We all understand the complexity of the nationalities issue and that acute problems it involves. This is a delicate and fine issue that demands respect, patience and restraint.

We have come to the plenum to discuss precisely in this spirit the outstanding issues and, with due account for the views and sentiments of our

CUTS IN SOVIET MILITARY SPENDING IN 1990

THE Soviet Union will cut its military spending to 70.9 billion roubles in 1990, Soviet Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov said on September 25.

In his report on the draft of the Soviet state budget for 1990, Pavlov emphasised that reductions in military expenditure had been made possible by the Soviet Union's realistic and constructive foreign policy.

The cuts in military spending envisaged by the draft will ensure the implementation of the proposals to reduce military spending by 14 per cent in 1991, advanced by the first Congress of the USSR People's Deputies.

Reductions in the Soviet armed forces, and a more rational spending in operating military hardware, make it possible to cut the costs of maintaining the army and the navy from 20.2 to 19.0 billion roubles.

Spending on development of military science will be reduced by 2.2 billion roubles in 1990, and expenditure on military construction by 15 per cent.

Soviet military expenditure is estimated at 77.3 billion roubles in 1989. □

peoples and the entire society, to find an optimal solution to the difficult problems of inter-ethnic relations.

Everything must be done to make our plenum a turning point, so that it creates conditions for improving the situation in the country and further developing our federation in the interests of all ethnic groups of the USSR. □

USSR Supreme Soviet Draft State Development Plan for 1990

A DRAFT state plan for the Soviet Union's social and economic development for 1990 provides for a large-scale transition of the economy to the solution of social problems, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Lev Voronin told the second session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on September 25. He said that the economic situation in the country is now more difficult than a year ago.

"The dynamism of the economy this year has been steadily falling in many major areas. Social tension has increased, and the national economy has been losing its balance," he said. "Against the background of these trends, deficits on the consumer market and in production have grown."

Voronin said that the draft plan for 1990, above all, set the tasks of reversing the negative tendencies, stabilising the economy, increasing its social orientation, beginning its financial improvement, meeting urgent requirements of the working people, and starting to stabilise the internal market.

The draft plan proposes reducing the share of resources for extended reproduction from more than 16 per cent in 1989 to 14 per cent in 1990.

The share of resources for current consumption and non-industrial construction is planned to be increased to 86 per cent.

The draft plan provides for the accelerated growth of retail trade turnover by 40 billion

roubles.

Under the plan, the output of industrial consumer goods will grow by 20.3 per cent as against this year, while the production of light industry goods will rise by 11 per cent.

The conversion of defence industries will also be fully subordinated to the task of social re-orientation of the economy, Voronin went on.

In 1990, the output of non-food consumer goods by defence industries will grow by almost 35 per cent to reach some 40 billion roubles.

Voronin said that the defence industries will markedly reduce supplies of tanks, as compared with the initial figures for 1986-1990, as well as supplies of combat planes and helicopters.

In the agro-industrial complex, it is envisaged to increase the output of foodstuffs by 18 billion roubles as against 1988, when 137 roubles worth of foodstuffs were produced.

This year, per capita meat consumption is expected to amount to 66 kilogrammes, next year it is planned to reach 68 kilogrammes. Investments in this branch are, in fact, to be increased.

Foreign economic policy is to be substantially reoriented. Currency reserves will be mainly directed to purchase consumer goods, raw and other materials for light industry, medical equipment and preparations, foodstuffs and grain.

On the whole, characterising the structure of Soviet foreign trade, the speaker pointed out such drawbacks as considerable volumes of imported grain, fodder, metal and raw materials for light industry, all commodities which the country must produce domestically.

In the coming year, the speaker pointed out,

there will be cuts in purchases of machinery and equipment, metal products, some chemical and other goods.

Voronin pointed out the need for strict state control over the release of paper money into circulation. He said that the income of the population will grow by at least 9 per cent in 1990, whereas its average annual growth rate in previous years amounted to 5.6 per cent.

The speaker acknowledged the impossibility of meeting total demand based on current incomes. Retail trade turnover for 1990 is estimated at 435 billion roubles, more than 40 billion roubles up on the present year's total.

For all that, commodity turnover will not cover the projected money incomes of the population. The government has submitted the draft plan for 1990 envisaging a release of 10 billion roubles into circulation, which is nearly 40 per cent less than the release expected in 1989.

Among measures to stabilise the economy, Voronin named cuts in defence spending in 1990 by more than 12 billion roubles as compared with the five-year plan period's average, and by 6.4 billion roubles as against the current year.

At the same time, emergency measures, the consequences of which are far from uniform, have not made it possible to overcome the financial deficit in the plan and the budget for 1990. The remaining volume of the deficit amounts to 60 billion roubles. But this volume is 50 per cent less than the one in the 1989 plan.

If this tendency prevails, Voronin said, the actual end to financial imbalances in the Soviet economy will be within reach. □

Mikhail Gorbachev and Georges Marchais hold wide-ranging discussions

MIKHAIL Gorbachev met French Party leader Georges Marchais at the Soviet Communist Party central Committee in Moscow on September 22.

In his detailed analysis of Soviet perestroika, Gorbachev said its distinctive feature lies in the fact that it does not destroy the groundwork laid down by this country's first, great revolution in October 1917.

He described perestroika as a process of dialectic negation and revival of everything in the vast potential inherited from that revolution.

"We are open to taking in the achievements of other social systems — but only in order to bring out the potentialities of socialism more fully, and prove it to be essential and indispensable to the overall progress of humanity," Gorbachev said.

On behalf of the French communists, Marchais declared solid, unwavering backing for revolutionary perestroika. The French Communist Party is working for a socialism in "French colours", which will take account of the country's peculiarities, and is interested in perestroika's success, he said.

Gorbachev and Marchais stressed the importance of theoretical, including joint, work by communists to understand the past and present and draw lessons from the diverse experience of revolutions, the working-class movement, and socialist society.

The fact that the atmosphere needed for such a frank and creative exchange of opinions between communist parties was lacking for a long time, has harmed both the socialist countries and the communist parties of other countries, it has harmed the entire communist movement. By way of self-criticism, the Soviet

Communist Party, Gorbachev said, should assume its share of responsibility for everything having been judged from the standpoint of a "single model" and for any other quest having been perceived as "revisionism" and "a departure from principle". The present atmosphere in relations between communist parties attests to the fact that the communist movement is gaining its capacity for self-development.

A broad exchange of opinions on the content of common human values took place. It was noted that the misunderstanding in some parties concerning the new thinking is apparently connected with the underestimation of radical changes that took place in the development of civilisation.

These values determine the main imperatives of world politics today.

Marchais noted that common human values comprise justice and freedom.

So it is ever more important that socialism proclaimed its adherence to these values and realises their primacy, Gorbachev said.

Socialism is thus assuming a new look, becoming associated with disarmament, the renunciation of power politics, the democratisation of international relations, human rights, environmental protection, national independence, and the struggle to eliminate poverty in the world.

Much attention was given to problems of international relations, above all Soviet-French relations, Soviet-American relations, questions of the European process and integration, and the settlement of regional conflicts.

The theme of relations between socialist countries was also considered. The principles of relations between socialist countries, just as between communist parties, have been determined clearly and permanently. They are based upon complete independence, absolutely no in-

terference, comradely exchange of opinions, regular contacts, confidence in each other, and solidarity. □

Details of Soviet foreign debt revealed

THE Soviet Union's foreign debt at the beginning of 1989 amounted to 33.6 billion roubles, including 28.1 billion roubles in freely convertible currencies, the Russian-language *Government Herald* weekly revealed on September 22.

Liabilities in agreement currencies added up to 1.9 billion roubles, and those in transferable roubles to 3.6 billion roubles, including 0.5 billion roubles owed to Bulgaria, 0.4 billion to both Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, 0.2 billion to Poland, 0.6 billion to Romania and 1.5 billion to Czechoslovakia. □

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of
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