

## Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at GDR anniversary celebrations in Berlin

*Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet, made the following speech at a dinner in the Palace of the Republic on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the formation of the German Democratic Republic:*

Dear Comrade Erich Honecker,  
Dear Comrades,  
Friends,

On the memorable date of the 40th anniversary of the formation of the German Democratic Republic, our friend and ally, I convey the Soviet people's heartfelt greetings and ardent congratulations to the citizens of the GDR.

We marched through the entire post-war period together, relying on each other's co-operation and support. A lot of difficulties had to be overcome along the way. There were both advances and dramatic turns. But nothing — and I am much gratified to say this — has ever destroyed the mutual trust and solidarity which have been established in relations between our fraternal parties, countries and peoples.

Today I want to tell you dear comrades: we value our friendship, are true to the ideals of socialism and peace which brought us together and are fully resolved to continue to develop all-round co-operation between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. Comrades,

The occasion we are marking today is of great political importance. The emergence of a state of working people in the eastern part of Germany had a substantial impact on the entire post-war history of Europe and on the course of world affairs.

The bloody war which ended with the utter defeat of the Third Reich delayed for long, it seemed at the time, the possibility of socialist transformations in Germany.

The ravages of war, from which the eastern part of Germany suffered to a greater extent, and particularly the spiritual void and the poisonous traces of militarist, imperial and Nazi ideology in people's minds — inevitably prompted doubts about the realistic nature of such prospects.

This is why nowadays one cannot but express genuine admiration with the exploit of the 'acti-

vists of the first hour' who braved any difficulties to convince their compatriots of the need for a socialist choice and, as Karl Marx put it, launched an assault on the skies.

In this courageous work for the future they could rely on all-round Soviet assistance.

Our many war veterans point out in their reminiscences that Soviet servicemen when they entered German territory regarded the Germans not only as a defeated enemy but also as a great people driven into deadlock by unjust criminal authorities. They found themselves on the verge of an abyss and in need of help to stand up again and regain the feeling of human and national dignity.

It is very important to understand that the policy of all-round support for the GDR was prompted not only by political calculations and our country's understandable desire to have a strong ally as represented by the socialist German republic.

Behind that policy was also an ardent desire of Soviet people to have the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia of the new Germany as reliable and staunch comrades-in-arms on their historical road.

Forty years later we can say that these hopes were justified.

Within a relatively short period of time thorough socio-economic transformations have been carried out in the GDR under the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

Demilitarisation, denazification and democratisation prepared the ground for the assertion of socialist values in society. Simultaneously with these processes, factories and industrial plants were being rebuilt at a rapid pace. Basic industry branches which did not exist here were being brought into being, and cities were rising from the ruins.

Already by the end of the sixties the GDR was one of the ten most developed industrial countries of the world and since then its economy has been steadily growing.

As far as the life of people, their working and living conditions, the provision of housing, the protection of health and public education are concerned, the achievements of our German comrades are well known.

Of course, the GDR, like any other country, has its problems of development, which need to be thought over and solved. They were brought about by internal requirements for society's progress and by the general process of modernisation in the socialist world.

All countries are being involved in integration processes and the restructuring of the international economic and political order. No-one can remain indifferent to global problems and the requirements of the scientific and technical revolution.

We have no doubt that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, with its intellectual potential, rich experience and political prestige, will be able together with all public forces to find the answers to questions raised by the country's development and worrying its citizens.

Strictly speaking, this concerns primarily tapping potentialities inherent in the socialist system, the system of workers and people's government.

The Soviet Union is most sincerely interested in the German Democratic Republic's growth and development.

We wish you success as friends and business partners. Over the four decades, economic relations between our countries have covered practically all industries and grown dramatically in scale.

Suffice it to say that practically every second worker in the GDR and, accordingly, millions of Soviet people are engaged in scientific, technical, production and cultural co-operation.

The more diverse our economic ties the more opportunities there are for their further progress and the stronger the need to improve them.

During our previous meetings with the republic's leaders we had concrete discussions on this subject. The agreements reached have already begun to yield results.

These include direct ties between enterprises and scientific institutions, the organisation of the first joint ventures and interaction in training qualified managerial personnel.

We think that there are prerequisites for adding a new quality to our economic co-operation in the near future. Acting on a bilateral basis and together with other countries, grouped in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), we could step up the creation of advanced technologies to meet the needs of our countries and to enter the world market.

I'd like to lay emphasis on the following. The socialist world and all modern civilisation are characterised by the growing diversity of forms of organising production, social structures and political institutions.

Lenin's forecast that every nation will introduce its own features into forms of democracy and paces of socialist transformation, is beginning to come true.

Attempts at unifying and standardising social development, at copying or imposing some 'mandatory' models, are dying out. The range of creative abilities is growing, and the very idea of socialism is acquiring a far richer content.

The choice of forms of development is a sovereign affair of every nation. But the more diverse and specific these forms are, the stronger the need to exchange experience and discuss theoretical and practical problems, and, of course, the need for joint efforts.

In other words, diversity, far from being an obstacle, is a weighty additional argument in favour of the development of co-operation.

Such is the stand of our Party, on the basis of which we seek to build our relations with socialist countries.

Equality, independence and solidarity — this is what determines the content of our relations. Comrades,

The 40th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic is a historic landmark, which not

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only offers an occasion, but also obliges one, to think over a major present-day international problems.

We all remember how difficult and long the struggle for the GDR's international legal recognition was. We all remember dramatic episodes connected with attempts to destabilise the republic, which brought about crisis situations of a European and even world scale.

On the other hand, everyone understands that the beneficial all European process has become possible only due to the realism displayed by participants on both sides.

The way to Helsinki was opened after the conclusion by the Soviet Union and then the GDR and other socialist countries of treaties with the Federal Republic of Germany and the quadripartite agreement on West Berlin.

The 50th anniversary of the beginning of World War II invigorated discussions and disputes, and prompted a historical search for the answers to contemporary problems.

Regrettably, in history also, some look for answers they want to find. I have in mind attempts to blame the USSR and its allies for the division of Europe into opposing military blocks.

Every now and again, we are urged to take measures to close the split. One has to hear also this kind of appeal: let the USSR tear down the Berlin wall and we shall then finally believe in its peaceful intentions.

In the FRG calls have been made recently to restore Germany's 1937 borders and some have begun to speak again of Polish Silesia.

Apparently, some politicians are tempted to take advantage of reforms in the Soviet Union and a number of other socialist countries in order to revive their long-standing territorial claims.

Things even went as far as a dubious interpretation of the Soviet-West German statement signed in Bonn in June.

These issues are of exceptional significance for the future of European nations and universal peace. This is why we need total clarity here.

First of all, our Western partners ought to proceed from the fact that issues concerning the GDR are solved not in Moscow but in Berlin. The GDR is a sovereign state and it independently takes measures regarding this or that task of protecting its interests or shaping its domestic and foreign policies.

The Soviet Union, of course, does not relieve itself of responsibility for the resolution of European problems, a responsibility based on international treaties and determined by the role played by the victorious powers in the Second World War.

If recent public opinion polls are to be trusted, many young people in the FRG believe it was the Soviet Union that favoured the partition of Germany after the war. I have to remind them that the USSR's position was exactly the opposite: it was for preserving the unity of Germany.

Different proposals were hatched by our Western allies. One of their ideas was for dragging the country back to 18th century, dividing it into principalities.

It also needs to be recalled that first the FRG was created and only then in the east of Germany did they decide to create their own workers'

and farmers' state.

Finally, one should not forget that the North Atlantic Alliance was formed first and only six years later, after the admission of the FRG into NATO, did the USSR and several East European states sign the Warsaw Treaty.

It's true that once started, the confrontation acquired its own logic. But this makes it all the more inadmissible to forget the sequence of events.

Now about the order that has come to exist in Europe. We do not idealise it. But the kernel of the matter is that to this day it is recognition of post-war realities that has ensured peace on the continent.

Moreover, born inside this order was the Helsinki Process whose evolution promises further positive changes in the entire European situation and the construction of a common European home.

In a word, the realities on the continent, including such a linchpin component as the frontiers of sovereign states, do not bar the way to progress in international relations.

Every time the West aimed to redraw the post-war map of Europe, this led to another flare-up of international tension, increased the risk of a nuclear conflict, while doing absolutely nothing towards removing urgent problems affecting popular interests.

By contrast, realistic policies yielded appreciable positive results in terms of a generally healthier European climate, better relations between the two German states and broader people-to-people contacts.

The remarkable poet Fyodor Tyutchev worked for a number of years with the Russian diplomatic mission in Bavaria in the last century. Responding to Bismarck's programme, he wrote:

"'Unity,' the oracle of our time declared,  
'Can only be forged with iron and blood. . .'

But we shall try and forge it with love —  
Let us see which is the stronger."

Tyutchev, a lyrical poet, expressed with the word 'love' everything that, at the end of the 20th Century, we mean by the notions of accord, co-operation, interaction and people-to-people contacts as applied to Europe.

It is a realistic policy that has made it possible, to mutual benefit and satisfaction, to make marked progress in our relations with the FRG and sign a number of mutually advantageous agreements.

One would like to hope that this approach will continue to prevail. All the continent's nations are interested in this. The wholesome process of drawing East and West closer together, during which all the walls of hostility, estrangement and mistrust between European peoples will fall, is possible only along these lines.

We believe that our joint work recently on the basis of approaches dictated by new political thinking has laid a solid foundation for the near and distant future.

This concerns prospects for disarmament, most notably the success of talks between representatives of the two military-political groups in Vienna.

This concerns co-operation in tackling ecological problems which are so pressing in Europe.

This also applies to mutually beneficial co-operative arrangements in the economy.

I shall put it this way: if all projects now planned are realised, this will signify the final break with the cold war era and the beginning of a truly peaceful period in European history.

The Soviet Union is concerned lest this unique chance for European nations and all humanity is passed up. I think we have proved the sincerity of our intentions by our practical actions — perestroika inside the country and new policies in the international area.

I would like to stress the important role played by the German Democratic Republic in ensuring the stable and peaceful development of the continent.

Actively sharing in collective efforts by War-

saw Treaty countries, German comrades have also put forward a number of their own foreign policy ideas whose fulfilment will, in our opinion, help strengthen security in Central Europe.

We are optimistic in viewing prospects for the situation in Europe and the world as a whole. After talks with President Francois Mitterrand of France, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and other statesmen, I am only confirmed in this view.

Understandings reached recently in Wyoming are good news for the world. Speaking at the current United Nations General Assembly session, President Bush expressed readiness to develop joint efforts with us on a wide range of urgent international problems. I welcome this statement and attach much importance to the forthcoming Soviet American summit.

There are signs that the policy of reason and realism in international affairs is becoming a common one for parties and movements of a very broad spectrum — communists, socialists, christian democrats, liberals and greens.

There indeed is nothing more important than two fundamental truths gained by mankind in the 20th Century at a high cost.

One is that in the nuclear age, when humanity is facing the task of struggling to survive, the sharpest problems of the times can be solved only by joint efforts and peacefully, by the use of political means. There is no other way, since a different path would be ruinous for all.

The second truth is that history has its own regularities and its own tempo and rhythm, determined by the ripening objective and subjective factors of development. To ignore this is to invite further problems.

Comrades, we are aware of extensive interest in the GDR in our affairs and radical changes pursued in the Soviet Union.

Perestroika is a job of the highest complexity, requiring that the Party and the people exert their physical, spiritual and moral strength to the utmost. But it vitally needs to be done and it, we firmly believe, will take our country to further heights and make it possible to bring out the great potential of socialism.

Democratisation, glasnost, a socialist rule-of-law state, free development of all peoples and their equal participation in the common affairs of the country, worthy living conditions for the entire population, guaranteed human rights, and broad possibilities for everyone to engage in creative activity — this is what we seek to ensure, this is our goal.

Our Party and people are fully resolved to carry reforms to successful completion and radically update Soviet society.

Permit me in conclusion to wish the communists, members of other democratic parties, working class, farmers, intellectuals, veterans and young people of the German Democratic Republic fresh achievements in the economy and culture, in creating ever more favourable living and working conditions, unfolding socialist democracy and bringing about great accomplishments in every field of life.

Long live the German Democratic Republic.  
May the friendship of the peoples of the USSR and the GDR grow stronger. □

(Berlin, October 6)

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# Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Erich Honecker

SOVIET leader Mikhail Gorbachev on October 7 met Erich Honecker, leader of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SUPG) and Chairman of the State Council of the German Democratic Republic, and candidate and full members of the Political Bureau of the SUPG Central Committee.

Gorbachev congratulated them on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the GDR.

"I understand what the communists and working people of the republic, who built the first socialist state on German soil and who made an immense contribution to the development of its economy and culture, are feeling on these days," he said.

"Your achievements over the four decades have compensated by far for the difficulties and inevitable losses you had.

"The GDR is our strategic ally and partner. This underlies our policy of co-operation with the republic, our attitude to its people, and the close relations between our parties," Gorbachev noted.

Honecker and other German officials pointed to the major importance of the friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union have for the GDR.

"The invariable support from the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet people helped us overcome difficulties on our historical way and achieve international recognition of the GDR," the GDR leader said.

He added that this support "is a source of confidence for the stable prospects of the GDR's further development as a socialist state."

During the talks, both sides reiterated their intention to deepen political co-operation and develop relations between the two countries' party, state, public, scientific and cultural organisations and individuals.

The cordial welcome, extended to Gorbachev during his visit to Berlin, and his meetings with people, especially young people, manifested clearly that these intentions enjoy wide popular support.

The sides extensively discussed concrete issues of economic co-operation between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic.

They positively assessed the achievements in this sphere and pointed to untapped reserves in it.

Implementation of the programme of economic, scientific and technical co-operation between the two countries, signed last February, is of major importance for tapping these reserves.

The two countries will continue deepening specialisation and co-operation in production.

Much attention was paid to the changes taking

place under the impact of internal and international processes.

The matter at issue is requirements of social and economic progress, the development of socialist democracy and the use of achievements of the scientific and technical revolution.

"Life is setting ever new tasks, and the main thing for communists is to respond to topical social needs and sentiments of the masses," it was said at the talks.

Gorbachev said that socialism now "needs its second wind. We are confident of the huge potentialities of our social system and now can see its prospects much better.

"But merely saying this is not enough. Things don't change automatically. Intense activity by the Party and the people is needed."

The Soviet leader informed the German side about perestroika in his country.

"Perestroika has now entered what may be its most important stage, when new forms of life are being established in practice in entire society: in the economy — through the revealing of the potential of socialist ownership, in the Party — through democratisation and the development of new, political methods of work, in the state — through sovereignty of Soviets (local councils)," Gorbachev said.

"This, perhaps, is the most important thing. The meaning and objectives of perestroika, started by the Party, were not immediately understood by the working people. Now the working class, peasants and the intelligentsia are joining in the implementation of reforms and becoming their driving force.

"We can say with good reason that the matter at issue is a new revolution. This is a revolution in the revolution, and not the negation of the values, slogans and ideals of the October Revolution.

"This is the revealing of these ideals in the new situation, on the basis of what has been achieved. Society should shake off its fetters and stride vigorously forward."

Honecker said that people in the GDR highly assess perestroika in the Soviet Union.

"The communists and working people of the republic whole-heartedly wish it success, as it will be of major importance for the GDR, too," he said.

The SUPG leadership followed with much interest the September plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, the decisions of which created the necessary theoretical and political basis for transforming the Soviet federation and solving ethnic problems in the USSR."

The German officials spoke about life in the GDR and the tasks facing their party. Over the four decades, the GDR has done much to solve social and economic problems, develop the infrastructure, the industrial and agrarian sectors of the economy, they said.

The country has qualified specialists and workers. All this enables it to move further, strengthening its economic potential and ensuring stable growth in the living standards.

Honecker said "we have discussed the situation in the country and will continue such discussions with the participation of communists and working people.

"It is clear that there are possibilities of and the need for strengthening social structures through involving the population in the implementation of reforms on a larger scale.

"During the already started preparations for the 12th Congress of the SUPG we'll have to strengthen ideological work and seek co-ordination of efforts of the parties, grouped in the national front, and other organisations. Our common guiding principle is continuity and renovation," the GDR leader said.

The sides exchanged views on international problems. They had a common view on processes taking place in Europe. It was emphasised that there are now real prerequisites for the successful conclusion of the Vienna talks on reductions in conventional armed forces and armaments in Europe.

The Warsaw Treaty countries have made a valuable contribution to the development of the all-European process by taking unilateral moves in military detente, it was pointed out. Reply steps from NATO would help to considerably relax military confrontation.

The sides reiterated the intention of their countries to actively promote the development of co-operation of all countries on the continent.

At the same time, they pointed to the inadmissibility of attempts to interfere in internal affairs of sovereign countries and encroach on the postwar realities, which remain to be an important guarantee of peace and security in Europe.

The Soviet side reiterated its support for the GDR's proposal for creating a nuclear-free corridor, a zone free from chemical weapons and a zone of confidence and security in Central Europe.

The German officials thanked Gorbachev for his participation in the republic's jubilee and for the congratulatory message, sent to them by the CPSU Central Committee, the Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Government.

The talks were held in a friendly atmosphere, traditional for the two parties. □

## Azerbaijan: law on sovereignty published

THE law on Azerbaijan's Sovereignty was published in this Soviet Transcaucasian Republic on October 5.

The law, promulgated by the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, at the end of September, stresses that Azerbaijan is a sovereign socialist state within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Azerbaijan's sovereignty is effective on its entire territory including the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region.

The territory of the republic, the law lays down, cannot be changed without its consent, expressed by a referendum conducted in keeping with the decision of the Republican Supreme Soviet among the entire population.

The borders with other union republics can be altered only under a mutual agreement.

According to the law, independent resolution of all political, economic, social and cultural issues, as well as matters relating to the administrative-territorial structure are an inalienable right of the republic.

Azerbaijan's powers are restricted only in matters voluntarily delegated by the Republic to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Azerbaijan retains the right of free secession from the USSR based on a referendum involving the entire population of the republic.

The land, minerals, forests, waters and other natural resources are property of the republic.

Azerbaijani is proclaimed the state language. At the same time, free use and development is ensured for Russian and other languages spoken by the population.

In accordance with the law, Azerbaijan is entitled to establish direct links with other states, conclude treaties and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them, and to participate in the activity of international organisations. □

## PERESTROIKA as seen by an ECONOMIST

By Ruslan Hasbulatov

at 30p from:

*Soviet Booklets (SN9),  
3 Rosary Gardens,  
London SW7 4NW.*



# Eduard Shevardnadze's address to Foreign Policy Association

*Here follows the full text of the address made by Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, to the Foreign Policy Association, in New York on October 2, 1989*

Mr Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been told that the Foreign Policy Association was established soon after the revolution in Russia and that it was due to the Americans' rapidly growing interest in international affairs.

If this is so, then our meeting acquires a special dimension since it is taking place at a time when the United States is following closely the revolutionary developments in the Soviet Union.

Perestroika means our opening to the world, and also our discovery of the world.

As I see it, our discussion today not only gives me an opportunity to say something to you but is also a chance for me to hear and understand a number of things.

I would like to speak about my country and the world we live in.

I believe that today their destinies are intertwined. As never before.

Hence the keen interest in what is happening in the Soviet Union, in how we address our problems and whether we are capable of solving them at all.

There are many people in this country who have doubts in this regard. Pessimism is growing. This is understandable because the state of the Soviet economy and some developments in our country do give rise to concern.

However, national economy, especially the economy of a country as vast as ours, is a living and complex, I would even say nervous organism. At a time when it is going through a readjustment, its health cannot be measured by statistics or some other objective indicators alone. And forecasting, in my view, is a task not only for economists but also for social psychologists and politicians. So long as there is the will, the understanding of the situation and the determination to change things for the better – and we certainly have them – the economy can remedy its ills. This is true of any economy, and doubly true of the Soviet economy, given its potential and resources.

In other respects, the movement is generally following the direction set by perestroika. Perhaps its pace is faster than expected. There is some overheat in political activity but that has been generated by the processes of renewal and democratisation of public life. This does create problems, but in our situation a slower pace would probably create even bigger problems.

I do not want to oversimplify the situation, but neither should it be overdramatised. Unfortunately, there is a lot of sensationalism in writings about perestroika. Indeed, there are some sensations, but they are probably not the most important part of what is happening.

I am sure that in a few years from now, recalling perestroika's arduous path, people will be saying that "toward the end of 1989 serious misgivings arose about its future". So perhaps it would be a good idea for me to speak here again in two or three years to discuss with you the past and the future.

Today, too, permit me to begin with the past. Let me recall historical precedents and draw some parallels between, for example, the current situation in our economy and the great American depression.

In 1929, a powerful and confident state took an economic nosedive. There were bread lines in

New York's Times Square and tents of the jobless huddled along Riverside Drive. In Washington troops were fighting the bonus army that had invaded the capital. People were dying in demonstrations, strikes and riots.

On October 7, 1931 *Business Week* magazine reported that Amtorg had received 100,000 requests from Americans who wanted to emigrate to work and live in the Soviet Union.

It is well known that in those years there were widespread expectations in left-wing circles that the severe crisis of the world capitalist system would finally bring about the world revolution. And long after that it was still believed that only the world war helped that system to stand up and survive.

On a theoretical level, critics of imperialism drew two conclusions which left an imprint on subsequent relations between the two social systems.

**Number one:** In its development capitalism had reached the last stage, it was doomed and could prolong its existence only through militarisation.

**Number two:** Recurring economic crisis would inevitably push it toward aggression and wars for it would have no other option.

Critics of communism took a similar view of the Soviet Union's development. They too made gloomy assumptions that communism could survive only through militarisation and aggression.

The result was that both systems launched a massive effort to arm themselves.

By the way, much of what was then happening in politics was related to the theoretical prediction of the inevitable "historic clash" of the two systems. Preparations were being made for it both materially and ideologically, by waging a struggle on the "domestic front". In the Soviet Union the target was "cosmopolitanism". In the United States McCarthyism reigned supreme.

Today we speak of US achievements with respect. However, there was a time when such recognition was regarded in our country as subservience to the West. When I was young, perhaps the most popular slogan was that of catching up with America and surpassing it in per capita production. Militant ideology extended its grip even to dairy farms. In fact, there was no great distance between the tongue-in-cheek slogan "watch out, Iowa cow" and the grim warning "we shall bury you".

An equally sinister and primitive perception of social phenomena prevailed in your country people were expelled from corporations, guilds or universities. The "witch-hunt" swept this nation like an epidemic.

It took decades for more realistic assessments of both sides' intentions, capabilities and possibilities to supplant those crude perceptions.

Nevertheless, each time either of the two systems ran into difficulties, there were recurrences of primitive ideologised thinking. There were predictions of the other side's imminent collapse, of its being consigned to the ash heap of history.

Alas, theoretical cannibalism was for too long present in the confrontation between the two systems. It does no credit to either of them, for it is contrary to the logic of mankind's development, to the historical dynamics of the emergence and existence of different social and political systems, and to man's eternal yearning to choose a proper system of social organisation.

Without trying to convert anyone, let me tell you that the socialist idea emerged as a response to a profound need for society's development –

the need to achieve equality among people and social justice.

You may accept or reject socialism, but you have to admit that in many countries, including capitalist countries, current conditions of people's life and work, and a certain social and legal protection that they enjoy, bear a strong imprint of the socialist ideal, the socialist view of the world.

The influence of socialism was a factor, and not the least important one, that prompted the capitalist state to assume responsibility for the people's well-being and for some redistribution of benefits in the interests of the poor and needy.

Socialism offered an alternative path of social development, a new interpretation of the problems of social justice, human rights and many others.

You may point out that this is exactly what we now have in short supply. If that is so, if we failed to achieve something, let us pause to think why it happened.

We have become more open and candid than anyone else in denouncing our own mistakes, errors and distortions. We are doing it because we need it. We need it to begin a new life for ourselves.

The accumulation of enormous power in the hands of the so-called supreme leaders brought misfortunes to many people. Centralism at the level of personality gave rise to the leaders' uncontrolled subjectivism. Today we denounce that rigid centralisation and are dismantling the hyper-inflated administrative command system. The times have changed, and the future of our country and people can no longer be entrusted to such a system. But let's face it – there was a time when centralism was necessary for objective reasons.

Remember the intervention and the blockade imposed on my country. Remember World War II, when in just a few months we moved our industries across the Urals, and in a few years rebuilt the country from ruins. Without that centralised will, the country would have been over run by the Nazi war machine and would not have been able to save world civilisation in that battle.

Without that will, our country would perhaps not have survived after the war in the face of atomic blackmail and later the nuclear threat.

There is no denying the fact of the Munich collusion and of plans to topple the Soviet Government. In this country few people expected the Soviets to survive for long. Could this be the reason why it took America fifteen years to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union?

Action from outside generates counteraction from the inside. There were many such actions.

On a subjective level centralised will oppressed the individual but objectively it was brought into being largely by the force of external factors.

Here we come to the problem of our common responsibility. We have denounced our predecessors' errors publicly. We are filling the blank spots in our history with truth. But there are still blank spots in our common history. There is one dark spot, left by the first explosion of the A-bomb. I think that historians, political scientists and researchers have not yet said their final word on it.

Self-criticism is not humiliating to any nation. This standard is universal, and it does not apply to us only.



I am proud of my country's contribution to mankind's progress.

I am proud that my country put an end to the nuclear monopoly and is now laying the groundwork for a nuclear-free world.

I am proud that through perestroika and new thinking it is opening up new vistas for itself and for the world.

One sometimes hears people say that our new thinking is a fantasy, that no such thing is possible. New thinking, it is said, calls for new brains which we do not have, since the architects of perestroika were born by the old system and their primary concern is how to save it.

Well, it is true that our new thinking originated within the old system. But it emerged as a protest against its ugly deformities, as an effort to rid the country and the people of those deformities and to give the people a prospect of a decent life in their own country and in the world community. Long before April 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev articulated the credo of perestroika, he and many people who shared his views had been nurturing the idea. Now that it has been translated into policy and has set the country in motion and changed so many things in the country and in the world, saving the system is not what matters most.

Indeed, much of our country's past is painful to recall. But rather than disavowing it, we believe we are duty bound, as our nation's sons, to rebuild our society according to the original socialist concept.

We are changing what was built in contravention to the socialist ideals and human laws according to the whims of time-serving architects.

Any analogues and comparisons have limited value. But I would still say that to a certain extent our economic problems today are similar to the problems the United States faced in the early 1930s. Then, uncontrolled rugged individualism upset the balance in your economy, whose major components were quite sound and efficient. As one of our countrymen, said, there was too much focus on production and too little on distribution and consumption.

In our country rigid regimentation at a certain stage stifled our economy, which, similarly, suffered from an overemphasis on production for the sake of production.

Today we are being criticised for introducing capitalist market elements, allegedly undermining our state-owned enterprises and thus, socialism.

But actually our economic system is undergoing an adjustment, a change in its trajectory. Something similar happened in the United States 60 years ago. But even then it took years and two new deal programmes to stabilise the economy.

And, ironically, President Roosevelt was then accused of "sovietising" America and of ruining free enterprise.

It is appropriate to recall some views that were debated in American society in those years. According to the noted economic historian George Soule, during the early years of the great depression there was a lot of talk about the likelihood of revolution in America and the desirability of some form of communism in the country. One can read about all that in the August 1932 issue of *Harper's* magazine.

I would suggest that you read the press of those years. Then, perhaps, you might consider some articles in our magazines from a different perspective.

And, of course, powerful forces sought to slow down Roosevelt's reforms. Just remember how often the Supreme Court ruled that his regulatory economic measures were unconstitutional. The business community openly sabotaged them.

And I will just mention the radical opposition and populists as exemplified by Huey Long, who fought privileges and proposed dividing all the wealth equally among everybody.

Our perestroika, the course of economic reforms, various forecasts and alternative posi-

tions must be examined in comparative context. Changes on the scale of a country life ours always give rise to debate, arguments and predictions of imminent misfortunes and even disaster.

I am convinced that one can only argue about how fast the Soviet economy can switch over to a new mode of operation rather than about its ability to readjust.

I am sure that the turning point will be marked by the Second Congress of People's Deputies and the fall session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, which has begun to draft new legislation designed to put our economy on a new track.

At the same time, the reform of our political system will be completed. Elections of people's deputies to local soviets will be held in our republics, territories, regions, cities and districts. The elections will be absolutely free and democratic. As a result we expect the local soviets to become effective bodies of popular government, a government which itself initiated and is spearheading perestroika, renewal and democratisation.

We see, recognise and say that our Party has not been able to keep pace with perestroika, democratisation and renewal in our society. That too, should not be overdramatised for we should bear in mind that the Party continues to operate mostly within its old pre-perestroika structures. We need a new Party constitution. It will be adopted at the 28th Party Congress. At the next stage a new Party programme will be worked out.

Discussions in Party organisations demonstrate that the Party is aware of its tasks and of the imperatives of our time, and that it is willing to undergo a radical and comprehensive renewal.

The problem of inter-ethnic relations has become of extremely grave concern to us. In fairness, one has to say that it always had some sharp edges, which were sometimes blunted by propaganda or forcibly suppressed. Now that propaganda no longer lies and force is not a factor, hurt national feelings have come to the surface. But the paradox is that the national energy that has been given free rein by perestroika is harmful to perestroika when it assumes radical exaggerated forms.

Nevertheless, both the centre and the national entities share a common desire to affirm fully-fledged sovereignty and autonomy for every nation within the framework of the Soviet federation. The centre fully encourages the self-expression of nations, the development of national institutions and cultures, and greater economic independence of national entities.

Both at the national and local levels one common challenge must be addressed, that of harmonising the interests and rights of various groups. A solution to the nationalities problem must be found at the level of federation, but it also must be addressed in each territorial entity, seeking agreement among all nationalities living, for example, in an individual republic, as well as agreement with neighbouring republics.

We make no secret of the problems existing in relations among the republics, autonomous regions and the centre. However, they are political problems and, in principle, they can be resolved with the help of the centre.

The problems of ethnic relations that engender separatism are much harder to solve.

It should be obvious that separatist trends are dangerous precisely because they can lead to the breakup and even disintegration of national entities themselves, cause a sharp deterioration in relations between nationalities and pose a threat to the autonomy, independence and sovereignty of the republics.

I believe that through dialogue at the level of federation, republics and other national entities, a dialogue which must be calm, respectful and constructive and rule out any force, we can resolve many inter-ethnic problems, including the most acute ones. We do resolve them on the basis of the new nationalities policy and our

Party's new nationalities platform.

As conceived, perestroika must result in uniting our nations on a fundamentally new basis.

I am convinced that many tensions will be removed or at least eased by an expanding economy, stronger economic independence of the republics, better legislation, and a genuine rule of law.

Paradoxical as it may seem, in our over-regulated society the regulating mechanism has turned out to be weak. I am, of course, referring to legal regulation.

The political reform, for the first time in the history of our state, enables us to draft and adopt laws reflecting the will and interests of the people and relying on our society's political and national consensus.

We expect that perestroika will receive a powerful impetus from the work of the Second Congress of People's Deputies and the second session of the USSR Supreme Soviet and other truly new bodies of local self-government.

I am speaking about our domestic problems in such great detail because today forecasting the future of perestroika is the necessary context for considering the prospects of international development, including the future of Soviet-US relations.

In the United States today much thought is being given to the factors that determine the dynamics of international developments. What are the opportunities that must be exploited and the risks to be neutralised, in other words, what will the world of the third millennium look like? We, too, are thinking about that. It would seem that for all the differences in our view of today's world, we share the recognition that it is a crucial juncture. Politically the world has entered a new phase - it is moving out of the cold war into a period of peace.

And here we have to note that the world of politics is lagging far and dangerously behind the real world. The material unity of the world and its interdependence prompt the need for a common and coherent policy.

Models of society somehow resemble different models of computers. They may differ in speed, memory or appearance, but they use essentially the same components and compatible language and programs. Compatibility of technological systems is a requirement of the economy, compatibility of policies is the necessary condition for the survival of mankind.

Today it is faced with dozens of global challenges each potentially deadly. We can meet those challenges only if we work together.

We no longer live in the time when some states or even an important group of states could decide everything in the world. Today we need a consensus, an international approach to global problems - not because it is a moral imperative, but for objective reasons, because the world is a single and interdependent whole, in which the so-called Third World is already playing and will continue to play an increasingly greater role.

Let me again draw an analogy with America's past. Are we not acting like those politicians who did not see great danger in the 1929 crisis and hoped that it would pass by itself?

Right before our eyes the world is sliding into a deep economic depression. The debt of the Third World countries, the interest they have to pay and the pace of their economic development - are these not the signs of an impending catastrophe? The response, however, has been most adequate. The measures taken thus far can only temporarily mitigate or slow down some trends. They do not offer a way out or a solution. Radical bold steps are needed, a kind of new deal, a transition to a policy that would draw the developing countries into the scientific, technological and informative revolution. It will be necessary to overcome a certain psychological barrier, to go beyond national concerns and to start thinking in global terms.

In an case, politics must urgently address ways

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of saving the world from an economic catastrophe.

One can well imagine a situation where a government would attack a conventional electric power station in a neighbouring country to prevent the poisoning of its people with sulphurous emissions.

If we do not come to grips with environmental problems, this scenario may prove realistic.

We could one day begin competing not for political supremacy or spheres of influence but for access to water, fresh air and even a green lawn.

Such conflicts could be caused by demographic problems, hunger and poverty among part of the world's population, or by epidemics of infectious disease.

Take the problems we discussed at the Wyoming meeting. Among other so-called minor issues we agreed to co-operate in human genetic mapping and in studying pollution from area sources. We discussed transnational problems with President Bush. Those talks were serious and constructive.

Given all this, can there be any doubt that we need new thinking? An average diplomat today has to know as much as a Ph.D. knew one or two generations ago.

We were, indeed, late in adopting new thinking. Enormous efforts will be needed to make up for the lost time. And this is no easy thing to do.

Decades, of the cold war, unfortunately, did not pass without a trace. We are still confronted with the grave heritage of the receding era. The incredible burden of amassed weapons weighs heavily upon our shoulders. We have yet to rid ourselves from intolerance toward the views of others, from mutual mistrust and from attempts to continue the dangerous game of one-upmanship.

We have yet to free ourselves from that burden and at the same time to build a modern structure and a new machinery for managing relations among nations.

New political thinking is an attempt to understand the realities, to be bold enough to abandon approaches that have become a brake on society's development.

We in the Soviet Union are trying to work on the basis of that understanding. We do not impose our convictions on anyone. We just invite others to think together, to undertake a sober and objective analysis of the processes now underway in the world.

They are bound to affect relations between any states, above all such as the Soviet Union and the United States. Today they have to be different from what they were yesterday. They should be brought back to a normal state, one that corresponds to universal human standards and interests.

To accomplish that, we think it is necessary first of all to identify what is slowing down the development of our relations.

It is my conviction that the first thing we should reject and abandon is the total and pervasive ideological grip on our relations.

We shall remain different, each with our own interests and our own realities. At first glance, our sets of concepts are incompatible. However, if some of their upper layers are removed, it may well turn out that we are talking about the same things — freedom, equality, and justice. This makes it possible to formulate a broad international consensus based on the notions of universal human solidarity, the rights and freedoms of the individual, and a concern for peace and for man's natural and spiritual environment.

Mutual nuclear deterrence is another source of tensions.

Let us not oversimplify our attitude towards it, although, I must admit, we ourselves are often guilty of such oversimplification.

We give due credit to that doctrine, recognizing that for a fairly long period of time it was of some use in maintaining peace. The point is,

however, that the new times call for a new policy, because nuclear deterrence inevitably perpetuates the totality of confrontational relations among states.

We are convinced that nuclear weapons must be abolished. Indeed, we need to do some thinking about where we are going and what the realistic ideal of our coexistence should be. We know well the code of confrontation and the limits of escalation, but we have little knowledge of the rules of joint action and cooperation. Is this not the time to begin to fill in that gap? For, if we have a future, it can only be based on a positive option in developing our relations.

The Soviet Union is now adopting a defensive doctrine. We are convinced that it opens up real prospects for radically reducing the level of military confrontation — both through unilateral cuts and through the conclusion of agreements.

The Soviet concept of moving toward a future without weapons of mass destruction was set forth by Mikhail Gorbachev in his statement of January 15, 1986. The ascent toward this model of security will probably be a long step-by-step process. All its twists and turns are hard to foresee, but it has already started.

The Soviet Union and the United States have concluded the INF Treaty and are now successfully implementing it. A 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms is to be the next step. We spoke about this both with the President and the Secretary of State. The agreed basic parameters of the post-reduction structure of strategic offensive forces may not be fully consistent with ideal notions of strategic stability. But I see in that another argument for further stabilising reductions. Such reductions will, of course, require finding some sort of a common denominator in both sides' views of strategic stability.

It is no exaggeration to say that mankind's struggle for survival has a second front now, namely, preserving the environment. Without releasing substantial funds and resources through reductions in the military effort, no solution can be found to the environmental problem.

Environmental protection is part of the new "basket" of transnational problems in the Soviet-US dialogue, alongside efforts to combat international terrorism and narcobusiness. The weight of that "basket" grows from one meeting to another.

The third set of issues requiring our attention is Soviet-US co-operation in the economic field. We favour major efforts to develop such co-operation as part of the process of integrating the Soviet Union into the international economic system.

To those who continue to ponder the problem of whether or not to help perestroika I would like to say that if they think in terms of charity, they are mistaken. We are not asking for that. Co-operation between us has to be mutually beneficial, equitable, meeting the interests of both sides.

We are now taking strong measures, including legislative action, to make our business activity compatible with yours. It is not smooth sailing. Problems are likely to arise, in particular because of the non-convertibility of the rouble.

Our economic links could be of key importance in rebuilding today's fragile world order along democratic lines. Otherwise we will not avoid new contradictions emerging in the form of customs barriers or conflicting policies regarding oil or technology transfers.

Quite a few economic projects are now under discussion but they are very slow in getting off the ground. There is a need for unorthodox forms of co-operation, which would make it possible to establish wide-ranging and efficient links between the Soviet and US economies on a long-term and reliable basis.

We welcome the Bush Administration's declared willingness to make regional politics free from elements of rivalry between the USSR and the United States, between the East and the West. Such "disengagement" has already star-

ted, producing practical results in a number of regions. Propaganda contests are gradually giving way to painstaking negotiations, persistent mediation, and greater restraint and responsibility in practical policies.

I would be less than sincere if I said that the results thus far are fully satisfactory. They are not. Conflicts continue, and our efforts are not always consistent and sometimes fail to produce desired results. Serious contradictions also remain.

But a start has been made, and we should build upon the balance of interests created through the efforts of both sides.

There is yet another important point here. In pursuing non-confrontational policies in various regions, we are providing strong incentives for third countries to behave in a responsible manner. Let them rely upon our diplomatic advice and support rather than on Soviet or American weapons.

Human rights is the area where great and, for many people, surprising progress has been achieved. Here we have made a quantum leap to a new level of understanding and tolerance.

And yet, we cannot afford to be complacent. Indeed, we have to be always aware that we are late, that we are behind. For, while the talks are in progress, while we are seeking solutions and compromises, life does not stand still. There is a continuing arms race and a growing danger of further proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and of missile technology. Nuclear testing and the production of weapon-grade fissionable materials also continue.

Conventional armed forces continue to be maintained at high numerical levels, while naval forces are not even discussed.

During our talks in Washington and in Wyoming we are able to move ahead substantially in a number of important areas. But the problems themselves remain, still awaiting solution. We must not miss the opportunities available to us now.

The next Soviet-US summit should be productive. It should bring real progress in curbing the arms race. Let us not forget that other countries are watching the Soviet Union and the United States, and the other great powers. If we set a good example by showing our sincerity in disarmament and in co-operating for peace, third countries will follow suit. That would strengthen the global trend toward lessening tensions and assuring international security through political means.

This would be in the interest of all, certainly in the interest of our nations, the USSR and the United States.

Of course, this short review of the long road covered over the past years in Soviet-US relations may make it seem easy. Believe me, it was not easy at all. Each step was difficult, and it took an arduous effort to bring together often conflicting interests. It took perseverance and courage on the part of the leaders of the USSR and the United States. Without their vision of "new horizons" it would not have been possible to move aside the mountain of man-made prejudice and overcome the real inherent contradictions.

Yesterday I had a very interesting meeting with former US Secretary of State George Shultz. We recalled our work together. Were moments which I would describe as dramatic, were considerable difficulties, but there was also the will to find solutions, achieve new landmarks, impart a new quality to Soviet-American relations. To a certain degree, our understanding and personal contacts helped achieve this goal.

I am greatly pleased that business-like, serious and constructive relations are being established with the current Secretary of State James Baker. I hope that these relations will help us overcome the objective difficulties our countries encounter.

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# Eduard Shevardnadze's statement at news conference in Nicaragua

THE consolidation of peace in Nicaragua was high on the agenda of talks between Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Shevardnadze said at a news conference in Managua on October 4 after the talks.

He said that the USSR and Nicaragua have established a very fruitful and constructive political dialogue which revealed similar approaches to most world problems. This was promoted by regular contacts between president Mikhail Gorbachev and Daniel Ortega and constant consultations between the foreign offices of the two countries.

Nicaragua is now pulling out of the war imposed on it and is approaching elections, Shevardnadze said. "We are sure that, at long last, peace will come to Nicaragua. "We have to streamline our economic exchanges in an appropriate way in order to reorient them mostly towards the country's social and economic development."

On agreement with the Nicaraguan leadership, Shevardnadze noted, the Soviet Union had temporarily suspended arms supplies to the Ni-

caraguan Government. It now faces other problems, and it has some other needs.

"Therefore, we gave much attention at our talks to new requirements of Nicaragua. We arrived at a full understanding on the entire range of questions."

"On the eve of our trip to the United States for talks with President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, we exchanged opinions with our Nicaraguan friends concerning the development of the situation in Central America.

"We held talks in the United States, mindful of the opinion of our Nicaraguan friends. Discussions in the United States were useful on the whole. We got the impression that the consistent, flexible and constructive policy of Nicaragua for a political settlement is a sound argument.

"We are in agreement with our Nicaraguan friends that the five Central American states should hold talks on the outstanding questions of co-operation in Central America, which concern security, verification and control, as is provided for by the Guatemalan Agreement.

"We share the opinion on the need to establish a permanent negotiating mechanism to

examine the countries of the region, dismantle foreign military bases here and withdraw foreign military advisers as well as drafting strict and all-embracing measures of confidence and control over the obligations of the sides.

"Stability in the region necessitates the maintenance of the balance of forces, under which each Central America country would have armed forces sufficient only for its defence."

"It seems to me," Shevardnadze went to say, "that in this question the USSR and the United States could assist the countries of the region in defining the notion of sufficiency and, what is the main thing, in observance of possible future understandings. There is also a possibility that the two powers could act a guarantor of a regional agreement on the balance of forces."

"We believe," the minister noted, "that the time is now ripe for the Soviet Union to establish diplomatic relations with all Central American countries. We are ready to do so with each country if it so wishes."

"During our talks with President Ortega, we discussed the Panama situation and expressed our firm opposition to any interference in the domestic affairs of that country in any form, no matter from where it emanates," Shevardnadze noted. □

## Soviet Foreign Minister's visit to Cuba

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze made a brief working visit to Cuba on October 4-5.

He had a meeting with Cuban leader Fidel Castro and had detailed talks with him.

Shevardnadze conveyed cordial comradely greetings and wishes of every success to Fidel Castro from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

It was emphasised during the substantive talks which covered a wide range of international problems and matters concerning bilateral relations that the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's recent visit to Cuba and his talks with Fidel Castro are a solid foundation for versatile Soviet-Cuban interaction and co-operation.

Shevardnadze and Castro had a lively exchange of information on the realisation of the Soviet Communist Party's revolutionary restructuring policy in the Soviet Union and on the implementation of a rectification programme by the Communist Party of Cuba.

The Soviet side pointed out Cuba's great successes in the building of socialism and achievements in the social field, education, health care and the development of culture.

Castro showed much interest in the course of perestroika in the Soviet Union, in the functioning of new political structures, in plans in the economic field and ways to solve specific problems and overcome difficulties.

He emphasised that all socialist countries, non-aligned states and other nations are interested in the success of Soviet perestroika.

The interlocutors pointed out that headway along the road chartered in the two countries opens up fresh opportunities for the refinement of socialism, for further development of Soviet-Cuban relations in the economic sphere, science and technology, and in the field of culture and sports, and for making them more effective resultant of the utilisation of new advanced forms of co-operation. The main trends in the present-day world, the role and place of socialism in it were considered widely.

The state of affairs in the developing world

was discussed in the same key, and the need to combine the efforts of all countries in shaping democratic international relations in the coming third millennium was emphasised.

Shevardnadze and Castro expressed a common view about the importance of promotion of the principles of new thinking in world politics and a transition from confrontation to co-operation and interaction.

The Soviet Foreign Minister described the results of Soviet-American talks in Wyoming, shared his impressions of numerous talks and contacts in New York and spoke of the initial stage of the work of the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It was pointed out with satisfaction that the world political process increasingly acquires positive elements directed towards the constructive goals of solving complex global talks that have arisen before mankind at this historical stage. The improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States plays a considerable role in this context.

The state of Cuban-US relations, the present level of which is by no means resultant on the Cuban leadership's policy, looks like an obvious anachronism in the present conditions.

Enhanced attention was devoted to an analysis of the situation in Central America. Shevardnadze was genuinely gratified to inform Castro of talks which he recently held in Managua with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and other Nicaraguan leaders.

The two sides emphasised the unchanged nature of the Soviet Union's and Cuba's principled approach to a solution to the Central American conflict, a solution based on taking into account the balance of interests of all the parties involved in the conflict, on excluding any interference from outside and recognising the right of every people to choose their own way of development.

The Soviet Union and Cuba support Central American countries' efforts towards a peaceful political settlement of the situation in the region. The Nicaraguan leadership's contribution to the process which recently produced reassuring results was praised.

A new illustration of the Sandinistas' goodwill is provided by their initiatives contained in the Nicaraguan Government's statement adopted in connection with the Soviet Foreign Minister's visit to Managua.

Touching upon the situation which has developed over Panama, the sides firmly declared respect for the country's sovereignty and emphasised the unacceptability of any attempts at interfering in its internal affairs, and still less at using force.

In the light of the results of the non-aligned countries' meeting in September, the two sides highly appreciated the world policy of the movement in which Cuba has been playing a prominent role for many years.

The talks between Fidel Castro and Eduard Shevardnadze again illustrated the depth and cordiality of relations which bring Soviet and Cuban peoples together. □

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# Politburo discusses plenum and preparations for Party Congress

THE recent plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee was a major landmark in implementing perestroika, Politburo members stated at a meeting on October 4 to discuss the results of the September plenum.

Participants in the discussion, attended by first secretaries of the central committees of the union republics' communist parties, noted that the plenum came out for the consolidation of the Party and all of society on the basis of implementing common tasks of renewal and stressed the need for vigorous actions and constructive work.

The Politburo observed that preparations for the 28th Party Congress is the cause of the entire Party. Attention was drawn to the need to conduct a great amount of theoretical work to draft documents for the congress, above all the Party's political platform and new rules.

The Politburo assigned the Central Committee Secretariat to the Party's platform 'The Nationalities Policy of the Party in Present-day Conditions'.

Assessing the social and political situation in the country in the light of the decisions of the recent plenum, the Politburo stressed the need for vigorous actions in all sectors of the socio-economic sphere and for enhanced personal responsibility of the employees for the state of affairs.

The Politburo discussed the progress of the

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The fact that it was so difficult to lay the ground work for our co-operation gives good reason to hope that the foundation is solid. For any great structure can be really solid if it is anchored in national or simply human interests. If those interests are supported by genuine feeling and thought. If they are backed up by the will to protect the results of the work done.

The new developments in the world should be viewed, not as part of the struggle for survival between capitalism and socialism, but in terms of real problems. The confrontation is between common sense and extremism, between political dialogue and military pressures, between democracy and totalitarianism.

This view of the situation in the world underlies our thinking as we propose to the international community a comprehensive programme for global co-operation encompassing the totality of issues on its agenda. A detailed blueprint for such co-operation was set out in Mikhail Gorbachev's address to the United Nations General Assembly last December.

As for the question of which of the two existing social systems will, in the process of such global interaction, prove to be the best in giving people greater freedom and well-being, let us leave it for future generations to decide. Most probably the exemplary social structure of the third millennium will synthesise all positive experience accumulated by mankind.

To conclude, let me emphasise my conviction that courage is the most important thing in today's politics. Today, it is not enough to be a realist who perceives life as it is. In addition, what is needed is vision and even idealism and a keen sense of novelty. Let us look ahead to the future rather than keep turning back to the past. *Then Shevardnadze answered questions.* □

work being carried out to eliminate the consequences of last December's earthquake in Armenia. The construction industry set up in the republic to restore quake-hit cities, villages and enterprises was seen as sufficient for the high-pace construction effort.

The Politburo approved the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's convention and talks with Indonesian President Suharto. It was stressed that the Soviet-Indonesian meeting and the accords reached at the summit add new qualitative parameters to relations between the two countries.

A new step has been made to determine their long term development on all directions. The Politburo stressed the great importance of the summit statement on principles of friendly relations between the USSR and Indonesia.

The Gorbachev-Suharto exchange of opinions not only meets the interests of the Soviet Union and Indonesia, but also corresponds to the tasks of improving the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole.

After considering the account of Gorbachev's meeting with French Communist Party chief George Marchais, the Politburo noted with satisfaction that the traditional dialogue between the two parties is broadening and acquiring a creative character to match processes taking place in the world.

The dialogue relies on the two parties' identical views on topical international issues and interest in the further development of Soviet-French relations.

The Politburo discussed the results of Gorbachev's meeting with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The talks were useful and constructive. They advanced the Soviet-British dialogue on key issues of international politics and bilateral relations.

While the sides have a number of substantially differing views, their policies show a trend towards taking into account each other's approaches to European and world affairs. Both sides demonstrate an aspiration to pursue policies that do not infringe upon the security interest of other states and that help form a peaceful period in international relations.

The Politburo examined and approved of the work conducted by a Party delegation led by Vadim Medvedev at the recent Berlin meeting of secretaries of the central committees of the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries on ideology.

The Politburo heard Alexander Yakovlev's report about the meeting of secretaries of the central committees of communist and workers' parties of socialist countries on international issues, and approved of the Soviet Communist Party delegation's activity. □

## Soviet Parliament adopts law on strikes

A LAW on strikes, adopted on October 9 by the National Parliament, is the first legal act in the history of Soviet legislation to regulate the procedures for settling collective labour disputes (conflicts) and legalise the right to strike.

It took the deputies one full working day to discuss the draft and vote on each article.

The need for the law became apparent after the miners' strike last summer. The dispute spread practically to all Soviet coal basins.

The new law provides for a five-day term to consider disputes in a conciliatory commission set up on a parity basis from representatives of the conflicting parties.

If no agreement is reached, the parties have the right to appeal to labour arbitration which is to decide on the case within seven days.

If the differences remain, the work collective has the right to resort to strike action.

The law does not recognise strikes motivated by demands for the violent overthrow or change of the state or social system or demands leading to the violation of ethnic or racial equality.

Strikes announced in violation of the fixed procedure are unlawful, too.

The law bans strikes threatening the life or health of people, as well as labour actions at enterprises of the railway and city public transport, civil aviation, communications, power engineering and defence industries, state bodies and organisations assigned to ensure defence capability, law and order and national security, as well as production lines.

At these enterprises and organisations the work collectives have the right to appeal to the supreme soviets of the USSR or of a union republic.

To extend assistance to strikers, the work collective may set up a fund with voluntary contributions and donations or organise a special insurance fund.

Only the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or the corresponding legislature in a union republic have the right to postpone a strike or suspend it for a period of up to two months. □

### Estonian election law

THE Estonian Supreme Soviet began its 13th session in Tallin on October 5.

In his report President Arnold Ruutel proposed that the session to adopt a draft resolution revoking residence requirements for elections to local councils scheduled for December 10, as originally envisaged by the Estonian election law.

The draft also proposes adopting legislation on citizenship and then updating the Estonian law to match the citizenship law.

The deputies voted for the resolution by a majority of votes (172 to 71).

The August 16, 1989, decree by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet described as unconstitutional some provisions in the Estonian laws 'On Changes and Amendments to the Estonian Constitution' and 'On Elections to Local Soviets of People's Deputies of Estonia'.

The introduction of the residence requirements would have infringed upon the rights of the Russian-speaking population and other groups of the republic's residents. □