

Mikhail Gorbachev's television speech

The following is the full text of the speech by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, on Soviet television on October 22, 1986:

Good Evening, Dear Comrades,

We are meeting with you again, and the subject is again the same—Reykjavik. This question is too serious. The outcome of the meeting with the US President has stirred the entire world. Many new data have emerged over the past days demanding assessments which I would like to share with you today.

I told a press conference in Reykjavik, you remember, that we shall yet return more than once to the meeting between the leaders of the USSR and the US. I'm convinced that we have not as yet realised the entire significance of what has happened. But we are sure to realise it. If not now, then tomorrow, but we will understand the entire significance of Reykjavik and will do justice both to accomplishments and gains, and to missed opportunities and losses.

Dramatic as the course of the talks and their results were, the Reykjavik meeting greatly facilitated, probably for the first time in many decades, our search for nuclear disarmament. I believe that now, as a result of the meeting, we have risen to a higher level not only in analysing the situation but also in determining the objectives and framework of possible accords on nuclear disarmament. Having found ourselves a few steps from the practical agreement on such a difficult and vitally important problem, we all grew to understand to a far greater extent the danger facing the world, to feel more strongly the need for immediate solutions and, what is most important, we know at present that it is realistic and possible to avert the nuclear threat.

At this point, I would like to note that the Soviet programme for eliminating nuclear arms by the year 2000 was described until recently by many pundits of world politics as illusory, as an unrealisable dream.

Indeed, this is the case when past experience is neither wealth nor counsel, but a burden that makes the search for solutions more difficult.

Reykjavik generated not hopes alone. Reykjavik also highlighted the hardships along the road towards a nuclear-free world.

Without understanding this fact, it is impossible to assess correctly the results of the Icelandic meeting.

The forces opposed to the trend towards disarmament are great. We felt that both during the meeting and at present. Much is being said now about Reykjavik.

Realistically-minded people assess the meeting in Iceland as a major political event. They welcome the fact that it has resulted in the advance to new qualitative levels in the fight against nuclear weapons. The results of Reykjavik, as they are viewed by the Soviet leadership, encourage all who want a turn for the better.

Interesting assessments are being made within state, public and scientific circles of most countries. The opportunities that have become apparent are being characterised as corresponding to universal human aspirations.

It is the common view that the meeting has raised to a new level both the Soviet-American dialogue and the East-West dialogue as a whole. It has been taken out of the plane of technical estimates and numerical comparisons to new

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parameters and dimensions.

This height reveals new prospects in the solution of the current acute problems. I mean security, nuclear disarmament, prevention of new spirals of the arms race, and the new realisation of the opportunities that have opened up before mankind.

The debate on the results of the meeting is, one may say, only beginning. I believe, let me say more—I am confident—that it will be mounting. So will, as we believe, the general efforts of people, political and public quarters with the aim of making use of the possibilities that opened up in Reykjavik. What was outlined there is the route to be followed toward resolving vitally important problems on which the very fate of mankind depends.

However, the time that has passed since Reykjavik has demonstrated something else. Quarters linked with militarism, with profits coming from the arms race, are clearly scared. They are doing their utmost to cope with the new situation and, coordinating their actions, are trying in every way to mislead the people, to place under control the sentiments of broad sections of the world public, to suppress their quest for peace, to hinder governments from taking a clear-cut position at this decisive moment in history. These quarters have at their disposal political power, economic leverage, and powerful mass media. Of course, one should not overestimate their strength, but one should not underestimate it either.

All indications are that the battle will be a difficult one. A new re-grouping of forces has begun in the camp of the enemies of detente and disarmament. Feverish efforts are being made to put up such obstacles so as to check the process which received its momentum in Reykjavik. In such circumstances, I consider it necessary to return to the acute issues which appeared on the order of the day in connection with the meeting in Iceland.

Our point of view, which I set forth one hour after the meeting, has not changed. I consider it necessary to state that not only in order to reiterate the appraisals made earlier.

I am doing this in order to draw your attention to the word-juggling and dissonance which we are observing. This might be the effect of confusion, perplexity, but it might be a pre-planned campaign to cheat ordinary people. Different explanations are being given to the aims which were set before the meeting. From the initial curses of the Reykjavik meeting a prompt and concerted turn was made to words of praise. A hectic campaign was started to misappropriate the other side's proposals. The main forces were brought in to defend the SDI that was held up to shame in Reykjavik. Generally speaking, Washington is now living through some hectic days.

But what is this? A pre-election game which needs to picture Reykjavik as a success? Or are we dealing with an unpredictable policy for years to come? This phenomenon needs serious study.

It certainly did not escape our attention how and where certain political quarters are trying to steer the discussion of the results of the meeting. The key elements of that campaign are worth mentioning. Efforts are being made in a bid to whitewash the destructive position of the US Administration which came to the meeting unprepared. I would say once again, with the old baggage. But when there was no escaping, and the situation demanded clear answers, it blasted the possibility for crowning the meeting with accords. Efforts are being made, in the new situation that has taken shape after Reykjavik, to compel the USSR to go back to the old approaches, to pull it back to fruitless numbers debates, to walking in circles in conditions of deadlock.

Evidently there is a no small number of politicians in the West whom the Geneva talks suit as a screen, not as a forum for seeking accords.

What was being thoroughly disguised previously is now becoming more clear: among the US and West European ruling circles, there are powerful forces which seek to frustrate the process of nuclear disarmament. Some people have begun to assert again that nuclear weapons are almost a boon.

A half of the truth is the most dangerous lie, as the saying goes. It is very disquieting that not only mass media of rightist trend but ranking figures of the US Administration as well have taken such a stand, at times a stand of downright deception, too.

I have already had an opportunity to relate how matters stood in Reykjavik. We had arrived for the meeting with constructive arms reduction proposals, the most radical in the entire history of Soviet-US negotiations. The proposals take into account the interests of both sides.

Upon arriving in Iceland I said this, on the eve of the meeting, in a conversation with the leaders of that country. In the middle of the first conversation with the President of the United States, the proposals were handed over to him.

Far-reaching and interconnected, they constitute an integrated package and are based on the programme, announced on January 15, for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

The first proposal is to cut down by half all strategic arms without exception.

The second proposal is completely to eliminate Soviet and US medium-range missiles in Europe and immediately to set about talks on missiles of this type in Asia, as well as on missiles with a range of less than a thousand kilometres. We suggested freezing the number of such missiles immediately.

The third proposal is to consolidate the regime of the ABM Treaty and to start full-scale talks on a total ban on nuclear tests.

It was on the basis of the Soviet proposals that discussions in Reykjavik began, which I described in detail in my previous speeches.

As a result of laborious efforts and acute arguments, the two sides' positions drew reassuringly closer together in two out of three directions.

The logic of the talks brought the sides to determining concrete periods for the elimination of strategic offensive arms. Together with

President Ronald Reagan we agreed that such arms of the USSR and the USA can and must be fully eliminated by the year 1996.

An accord was also reached on complete elimination of US and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe and on a radical cut in the missiles of this class in Asia.

We attach fundamental importance to these accords between the USSR and the United States: they have shown that nuclear disarmament is possible. Such is the first half of the truth about the Reykjavik meeting.

But there is also the other half and it consists in the fact, as I have already said, that the US side frustrated an agreement which, it seemed, was quite near at hand.

The US Administration is now trying in every way to convince people that a possible major success in reaching concrete agreements was not achieved owing to the unyieldingness of the Soviet side over the programme of the so-called 'Strategic Defense Initiative' (SDI).

It is even being asserted that we allegedly lured the President into a trap by putting forward "breathtaking" proposals on cutting down strategic offensive arms and medium-range missiles, and that later on we ostensibly demanded in ultimatum form that the SDI be renounced.

But the essence of our stand and of our proposals is as follows: we are for reduction and then complete elimination of nuclear weapons and are firmly against a new stage of the arms race and against its transfer to outer space.

Hence we are against the SDI and are for the consolidation of the ABM Treaty.

It is clear to every sober-minded person that if we embark upon the road of deep cuts and then complete elimination of nuclear weapons, it is essential to rule out any possibility which could be used by either the Soviet or the US side for gaining unilateral military superiority.

We perceive the main danger of the SDI precisely in a transfer of the arms race to a new sphere, and in endeavours to go out to outer space with offensive arms and thereby to achieve military superiority.

The SDI has become an obstacle to ending the arms race, to getting rid of nuclear weapons, and is the main obstacle to a nuclear-free world.

When Mr Shultz, US Secretary of State, tells the American people that the SDI is a sort of "insurance policy" for America, this is, to say the least, an attempt at misleading the American people.

In actual fact, the SDI does not strengthen America's security but, by opening up a new stage of the arms race, destabilises the military-political situation and thereby weakens both United States security and universal security.

The Americans should know this.

They should also know that the US stand on the SDI, announced in Reykjavik, basically contradicts the ABM Treaty.

Article 15 of the Treaty does allow a party to withdraw from the treaty but only under certain circumstances, namely, "if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this treaty have jeopardised its (the party to the treaty's) supreme interests".

There have not been and are no such extraordinary events. It is understandable that the elimination of nuclear weapons, if started, would make the emergence of such extraordinary events still less probable.

This is logical. Article 13 of the ABM Treaty also stipulates that the sides should "consider, as appropriate, possible proposals for further increasing the viability of this treaty." The US, on the contrary, is seeking to depreciate the treaty, deprive it of its meaning.

These are all quotations from the document signed by the top representative of the United States.

Many a tale has been invented to raise the SDI's prestige. One of them is that the Russians are terribly afraid of it. Another is that it is SDI which brought the Russians to the talks in Geneva and then to Reykjavik. A third is that SDI alone will save America from the "Soviet threat". A fourth is that SDI will give the United States a great technological lead compared with the Soviet Union and other countries, and so on and so forth.

Knowing the problem, I can say now only one thing: the continuation of the SDI programme will sweep the world into a new stage of the arms race and would destabilise the strategic situation.

The rest that is being ascribed to SDI is rather dubious in many respects and is being done in order to sell this suspicious and dangerous commodity in an attractive wrapping.

The President, in upholding his position that thwarted the reaching of agreement in Reykjavik, asks rhetorical questions: why do the Russians so stubbornly demand that America for ever remain vulnerable to a Soviet missile strike? Why does the Soviet Union insist that we remain defenceless for ever?

I'm surprised by such questions. I must say. They have the air of indicating that the American President has an opportunity of making his country invulnerable, to give it secure protection against a nuclear strike.

As long as there exist nuclear weapons and the arms race is continuing, he does not have such an opportunity. The same, naturally, applies to ourselves.

If the President counts on SDI in this respect, it is in vain. The system would be effective only if all missiles were eliminated. But then, one might ask, why the anti-missile defence altogether? Why build it? I don't mention the money wasted, the cost of the system—according to some estimates, it will run into several trillion dollars.

So far, we have been trying to persuade America to give up the dangerous undertaking. We are urging the American Administration to look for invulnerability and for protection along another way—along the way of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and establishment of a comprehensive system of international security that would preclude any wars—nuclear or conventional.

The SDI programme remains so far an integral part of the US military doctrine.

The now operating defence directive for 1984-1988, produced at the Pentagon at the beginning of Reagan's term in office, directly provides for developing space-based systems, including means to destroy Soviet satellites, and boosting systems of the anti-missile defence of US territory with the possible US pull-out from the ABM Treaty.

That document emphasised that military rivalry with the USSR should be channelled into new areas so as to make senseless all previous Soviet expenditures on defence and make all Soviet weapons obsolete. Once again, as you can see, there is the hunt for the ghost, as former President Nixon put it, once again there are calculations to wear out the Soviet Union. It is hard for the current administration to learn lessons.

Is this not the answer to the question why its commitment to SDI is so stubborn? The 'Star Wars' plans have become the chief obstacle to an agreement on averting the nuclear threat. It is in vain that Washington is now claiming that we are moving towards an agreement.

To eliminate nuclear weapons as a means of deterring American aggression, and to get a threat from outer space in return—only politically naive people can accept that. There are none in the Soviet leadership.

It is hard to reconcile oneself to the loss of the unique chance—that of saving mankind from the nuclear threat. Bearing precisely this in mind, I told the press conference in Reykjavik that we

did not regard the dialogue as closed and hoped that President Reagan, on returning home, would consult the US Congress and the American people and adopt decisions logically necessitated by what had been achieved in Reykjavik.

Quite a different thing has happened. Besides distorting the entire picture of the Reykjavik negotiations—I will speak about that later—they have adopted in recent days actions that look simply wild in the normal human view after such an important meeting between the two countries' top leaders.

I mean the expulsion of another fifty-five Soviet embassy and consular staff from the United States. We will adopt measures in response, of course, very tough measures on an equal footing, so to speak. We are not going to put up with such outrageous practices. But now, I would like to say the following.

What kind of government is this, what can one expect from it in other affairs in the international arena? To what limits does the unpredictability of its actions go?

It turns out that it has no constructive proposals on key matters of disarmament and that it does not even have a desire to maintain the atmosphere which is essential for a normal continuation of the dialogue. It appears that Washington is not prepared for any of this.

A conclusion suggests itself. It is confirmed by the considerable experience which has already been gained by now. Every time a gleam of hope appears in approaches to big matters of Soviet-American relations and to a settlement of issues involving the interests of the whole of mankind, a provocation is immediately staged with an eye to frustrating the possibility of a positive solution and to poisoning the atmosphere.

Where is the true visage of the US Administration? Is it for a search for unravelment and solutions or does it finally want to destroy everything that may serve as a basis for headway and deliberately rule out any normalisation?

Coming into view is quite an unattractive portrait of the administration of a great country, an administration which is quick in taking disruptive actions. Either the President is unable to cope with the entourage which literally breathes hatred for the Soviet Union and for everything that may lead international affairs into a calm channel or he himself wants this. At all events, there is no keeping the "hawks" in the White House in check. And this is very dangerous.

As far as informing the Americans about the Reykjavik meeting is concerned, the following has taken place, quite in the spirit of the above-mentioned: facts have been concealed from them. They were told the half-truth which I spoke of earlier. Matters were portrayed so as to show that the United States, acting from a position of strength, almost wrested consent from the Soviet Union to reach agreement on US terms.

And the day is not far off when the United States will ostensibly attain its goal: it is essential, they say, not to slacken the pace of military preparations, to speed up the 'Star Wars' programme and to increase pressure in all directions.

These days have witnessed a great cause being drowned in petty politicking, and the vital interests of the American people, allies and international security as a whole being sacrificed to the arms manufacturers.

A good deal has been said about the openness of American society, freedom of information, the pluralism of opinions, and that everyone can both see and hear what he or she wants.

In Reykjavik, when pointing out the difference between our two systems, the President told me: "We recognise the freedom of the press and the right to listen to any point of view." I am quoting his words. But how do things stand in actual fact?

Here is the most fresh fact.

I have been told that our public organisation, the Novosti Press Agency, has published in English the texts of my press conference in Reykjavik and my speeches on Soviet television, and has sent them out to many countries, including the United States.

Well, I can tell you that the pamphlet with these texts has been detained at the US customs house for several days now. It is being prevented from reaching the American reader. That's a nice "right to hear any point of view"!

Or take this example: when touching upon humanitarian affairs I told the President: take, for example, cinematography. A great number of American films are shown on the Soviet screen. Soviet people have an opportunity through them to get an idea of both the way of life and the way of thinking of Americans.

Whereas Soviet films are practically not shown in "free America". The President evaded an answer and, as usual in such cases, pleaded free enterprise under which everyone does whatever one wants.

I also told him about the publication of American books in this country and of our books in the United States: the ratio is approximately twenty to one.

I put the question of radio information before the President as well. I said: "In this field, too, we are in an unequal position. You have surrounded the Soviet Union with a network of radio transmitters and around the clock you broadcast what you like in many languages of the Soviet Union, from the territories of other countries."

"America itself, availing itself of the fact that we are not close neighbours, has separated itself from our radio information by the medium waveband—receivers in America are only of that kind." The President could not say anything to that either.

Then I suggested to him: "Let us do it this way: we cease jamming the 'Voice of America' broadcasts while you give us an opportunity to set up radio broadcasts beamed at the United States in US territory or somewhere nearby, so that the broadcasts would reach the population of your country." The President promised to think about it.

It appears that the United States is becoming an increasingly closed society. People over there are being isolated from objective information in a cunning and effective way. This is a dangerous process.

The American people should know the truth about what takes place in the Soviet Union, about the true content of Soviet foreign policy, about our real intentions, and the truth about the state of affairs in the world as a whole, too.

At the present stage, I would say, this acquires exceptional importance.

Now a few words about the way the outcome of the Reykjavik meeting is being presented in the United States. It took only several hours or days, at the outside, for everything that was spoken of in Reykjavik to begin to plunge into the fog of inventions and fantasies. Endeavours are being made to ruin the grains of trust before they germinate.

The President stated recently that only ballistic missiles had been the subject of accord while his assistants said straightforwardly that bombers and all cruise missiles remained untouched.

The Secretary of State set forth another version—that our accord dealt with all strategic arms.

By the way, he was present during my conversations with the President, just like our Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze.

Mr Speakes, the White House spokesman, stated that Ronald Reagan had possibly been misunderstood and that the President had never agreed to the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Things went as far as outright misrepresentations.

It is alleged, for example, that during the past meeting the US President did not agree to the Soviet proposal on a complete elimination of all strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the US by 1996, and that a single point of view on our proposal was not achieved.

With all responsibility as a participant in the talks I state: the President did, albeit without special enthusiasm, consent to the elimination of all strategic offensive arms—I emphasise all, not just certain individual ones. To be destroyed precisely over ten years, in two stages.

The interpretations given to the discussion of the problem of nuclear testing are a far cry from truth, too. The unilateral approach to that issue on the part of the US is pictured in such a way as to lead one to believe that the Soviet Union gave its full consent to it. This did not happen, nor could it happen.

The issue of the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe is being presented in a distorted perspective as well. To say nothing of the fact that it is taken out of the package proposed by the Soviet side.

But our consent to freeze the number of missiles with a range of under 1,000 kilometres, too, is being pictured as a "recognition" by the Soviet Union of the US "right" to deploy American missiles of the same class in Western Europe.

Given such interpretations I myself will soon be in doubt as to what we spoke of in Reykjavik—of removing the nuclear threat, reducing and eliminating nuclear arms? Or of how to keep this threat growing further, how to diversify the nuclear arsenals and make not only this entire planet but also outer space, the universe, an arena of military confrontation? This is what's happening, comrades.

The prospect for possible Soviet-American mutual understanding has scared someone so that certain people began putting up absolutely inconceivable obstacles beforehand and inventing "preconditions".

A presidential assistant went so far as to say that before embarking on nuclear disarmament the US should see changes in the political climate in the Soviet Union.

All this is just not serious, not serious at all.

When similar claims were made 70 or 40 years ago there was still a chance to regard them as the inability to think things out, or as historical blindness. Nowadays—it is a demonstration of a complete lack of understanding of realities.

The issue of conventional arms is also mentioned as one of the "pre-conditions". It is sufficiently serious in and of itself.

To this date an oft-used thesis in the West has been the allegation concerning the "superiority" of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty states in conventional armaments. It is this that allegedly is compelling NATO to build up its nuclear potential incessantly.

Of course, there is no imbalance of any kind. After Reykjavik this fact was for the first time publicly recognised by Mr Shultz and Mr Regan. But the crux of the problem does not lie in the maintenance of parity. We don't want the arms race to go from sphere of nuclear arms into the sphere of conventional ones.

Let me remind you that our proposals on the elimination of nuclear weapons before the end of the century included also the provision on the elimination of chemical weapons and on deep-running reductions in conventional armaments.

We have returned to that issue more than once since January. The proposals of the Warsaw Treaty countries were formulated at their fullest last summer in Budapest. We sent them to the other side. I mean the NATO member-countries.

No answer has been received so far.

Every day passing since Reykjavik is making clearer that the meeting in Iceland was that

touchstone which tests the real value of the words and declarations by political figures.

So much has been said of the need for getting rid of the nuclear nightmare, and of how easy it will be to breathe in a nuclear-free world, if only the USSR and the US get things in motion.

But hardly had a ray of hope appeared when many of those who were cursing nuclear weapons, and affirming their allegiance to the idea of a nuclear-free world, disappeared in the bush.

Certain voices in Western Europe even maintain that it is difficult to part with the American nuclear weapons, with the American missiles.

Evidently the matter is that the policy-makers in the West are thinking of nuclear weapons not in terms of defence at all. Otherwise, it is difficult to imagine why pretexts are being sought out now for keeping the missiles in place or why support for the SDI programme is being expressed at government level.

Here is something to ponder over, both for us and the Western European public.

Alongside frontal attacks more subtle manoeuvres are being made. Isn't it possible to take from the negotiating table something that is better, while ignoring what does not suit one's taste for one or other reason?

They say that the difficulties appeared in Reykjavik allegedly because we, the Soviet side, put forward our cardinal proposals in a package. But the package is a balance of interests and concessions, a balance of concerns removed, an interdependence of security interests. Here everything is as if on scales and the pans of the scales should be balanced.

That is why, evidently, they in the West want to scatter this logically substantiated and just variant of an overall accord into parts, while doing nothing to restore the balance of compromises.

All our proposals made in Reykjavik are objectively connected with the central strategic weapons systems. Our concessions are also a part of the package. No package—no concessions.

It is a reality of our national security. But such an approach ensures the security of the US and all other countries as well.

That is why we are attaching such significance to the strengthening of the ABM Treaty. We are making no attempts of any kind on it. On the contrary, we are opposed to its being revised, supplemented and so forth, and we are opposed even more to its replacement with something else, as the President said in Reykjavik, or perhaps it was a slip of the tongue.

Let me put it frankly, I was very much surprised when during the meeting he started persuading the Soviet side and me personally not to regard the ABM Treaty as a "gospel". What, then, should one's attitude to treaties be like? Should they be treated as pieces of paper?

Without the strict observance of treaties, and especially of such a fundamental one, it is impossible to ensure international order and elementary stability. Otherwise, the world will be under the reign of arbitrary rule and chaos.

Let me say once again: when the SDI is preferred to nuclear disarmament only one conclusion is possible: with the help of that military programme, efforts are being made to disprove the axiom of international relations of our epoch which exists in the simple and clear-cut words under which the US President and me put our signatures last year. Here are these words: Nuclear war must not be fought and it cannot be won.

Let me say in conclusion: the Soviet Union has put the maximum of goodwill into its proposals. We are not removing these proposals, they still stand! Everything that has been said by way of their substantiation and development remains in force.

Good night, comrades, all the best. □

Mikhail Gorbachev replies to international writers

HERE follows the full text of the reply made on Monday, October 27, by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, to the question "What is your Vision of the Future of the World, Mankind and Civilisation?" asked by the organisers of the 6th International Meeting of Writers in Sofia:

The question you asked me is, perhaps, the key question today. The very fact that it has been asked is a sign of optimism. We, too, are confident that there will be a future.

The best minds of mankind have always believed in the ultimate triumph of reason as an essential condition of normal human life in a community. It is a great spiritual force which enables us Soviet people, too, to be social optimists.

But the future should first and foremost be reliable for all. The only path to follow, as I see it, is to broaden the room for trust between peoples and countries. This calls for a new political thinking, oriented to the solution of the global problems of mankind rather than the arms race, to the peaceful uses of the resources and creative energies at the disposal of mankind.

The motto of your meetings is 'Peace is the Hope of the Planet'. I like very much its noble meaning.

It is this striving that pervades the Soviet concept of security for all, which calls primarily for arms reductions and disarmament. We have called for the abolition of all weapons of mass annihilation on Earth by the year 2000. We have been refraining from nuclear explosions for more

than a year now.

At the recent meeting with the US President, Mr Reagan, in Reykjavik, the Soviet side put on the table a package of interlinked proposals which were carefully balanced from the point of view of the interests of the participants in the talks and the entire world community of states. We made concessions to the West in many ways in the hope that it would reciprocate. The main proposals of ours were 50 per cent cuts in strategic weapons, the elimination of all medium-range missiles in Europe, the strengthening of the ABM Treaty and a nuclear test ban. If the American side had accepted the package, a real process of the elimination of nuclear weapons would have got under way.

The situation after the Reykjavik meeting, in spite of the well known provocative actions of the US Administration and the gross misrepresentation of what came to pass at the Iceland meeting, still offers opportunities for a search for solutions. It is also a signal to all those who can and must play a role to promote detente and disarmament. Our programme of disarmament benefits all.

So what is our vision of the future? We have our ideal to which we are aspiring. We are building communism, in the words of Karl Marx a "truly human" society. We are confident that we will be able to translate into reality the great humanitarian principle proclaimed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism: the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. This is what the programme of our Party says. Everything we are doing in the economy, politics and spiritual life is orientated to this social and humanitarian goal.

We know that, with the existence of different social systems, there are those who take exception to our ideals and concepts of the

future. Views of social values can also differ. But these problems should be discussed without hypocrisy or speculation, without attempts to impose one's views on others, and with the understanding that the world is many-faceted and controversial and that everyone—a state, a people, society—has the right to choose independently and to have this choice respected by others.

The Soviet Union attaches most serious importance to questions of the comprehensive development of the individual and of ensuring his rights. We are doing everything possible to make the life of our people culturally and intellectually richer, more full-blooded and meaningful.

People sometimes ask: what can literature and the arts do in our thermonuclear age? A great deal, I think. The main thing is to contribute to the creation of a moral atmosphere in which the arms race and the fanning of war psychosis will be considered a crime against man's right to live.

Do not such questions as the preservation of the everlasting values of the past by common efforts, the protection of culture from emaciation under the onslaught of commercialism and the cult of violence and from infiltration by the degrading ideas of racism and obscurantism, the promotion of comprehensive cultural exchanges and contacts and the assertion of the ideas of peace and friendship by means of the arts, deserve the closest possible attention? A writer can do a good deal if he is armed with honest and sincere words which care for his fellow human beings.

The time has come for bold and responsible action in the interests of the world as a whole. It has come for all the peoples and all the continents.

I use this occasion to convey my best wishes to the participants in the meeting. □

Mikhail Gorbachev welcomes Kim Il Sung

"SOVIET-KOREAN co-operation has risen to a new high in all areas. It has faithfully served the goal of drawing our peoples and states even closer together, and the cause of socialism," Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, stated. He made a speech on October 24 at a Kremlin dinner for Kim Il Sung, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Speaking about the outcome of the talks which had taken place, the Soviet leader said that they have borne out once again a shared desire to develop co-operation and exchanges of experience in the building of socialism in every way, and to interact in efforts to improve the situation in Asia and the Pacific basin and avert a nuclear catastrophe towards which imperialists are pushing mankind with their aggressive and dangerous policies.

"Korea's split, caused by reactionary forces of the south and American imperialists, has continued for four decades now," Mikhail Gorbachev said. "The Soviet people support

the Korean people's rightful cause—the reunification of their homeland—with all their hearts.

"It is clear enough that the road to reunification lies not only through the Korean peninsula. It is linked inseparably with common efforts against imperialist policy in Asia and the Pacific, real improvements in the entire situation there, and the development of good-neighbourly relations."

Speaking about the situation in the Far East and the Asian-Pacific region, Mikhail Gorbachev said that there is on station there one of the largest American contingents, which numbers 360,000 men. "There are 32 American military bases in Japan and another 40 in South Korea. One should add here plans to forge a bloc of Washington, Tokyo and Seoul with the involvement also of other states. Judging by all appearances, it is to be a kind of 'eastern NATO'. This indeed poses a real threat to the USSR and the DPRK and to many other countries, and to the cause of peace.

"The Soviet position has been set forth plainly and in detail at Vladivostok.

"The meaning, content and thrust of the Soviet initiatives is in making sure that the opinions and interests of all states in that region be taken into account and ensured in practice. The interests of all Asian states, we are certain, are common in that there must be no neo-globalism and great-power attitudes and no coercion of peoples into

joining military groups. No one has the right to command, foist his will on others, or delineate the world into zones of influence and interest."

Touching upon the outcome of the Icelandic meeting with the US President, the Soviet leader said it could only be regretted that in Reykjavik it had not proved possible to reach agreement on binding accords on the key problems of bringing about disarmament and eliminating the nuclear threat.

"Although a unique chance has been passed up, an agreement meeting the vital interests of the entire world community is attainable. We believe in the common sense of the peoples, including the American people. The Reykjavik meeting has confirmed that work has got to be kept up and the maximum of political courage and goodwill displayed."

"When we say that it is time to act, we certainly have in mind also the vital problems of Asia and the Pacific basin," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

"Our constructive proposals for sizable cuts in medium-range nuclear missiles deployed there offer new opportunities for detente. We think that the implementation of these proposals could help substantially the Korean people's efforts to lower tension, strengthen peace in the Korean peninsula and make it a nuclear-free zone. In the final analysis, this will be conducive to favourable conditions for achieving the country's peaceful reunification." □

Meeting of Political Bureau of CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee at its meeting on October 23 approved the results of the regular meeting of the Committee of the Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries which had taken place in Bucharest on October 14-15.

The Political Bureau expressed satisfaction with the unconditional support given by the allied socialist states to the Soviet stand at the Soviet-US Reykjavik meeting. Emphasis was laid on the need, in the existing situation, to step up the joint efforts of the fraternal countries in the struggle for nuclear disarmament and for the establishment of an all-embracing system of international security and peace.

Having reviewed the results of Nikolai Ryzhkov's official visit of friendship to the Polish People's Republic, the Political Bureau approved his talks with Polish leaders, which had given a fresh impetus to diverse economic, scientific and technological co-operation between the two countries. The Political Bureau noted the special importance of the development of new, advanced forms of economic co-operation and direct links between enterprises, amalgamations

and scientific research centres of the Soviet Union and Poland.

The question of training and retraining personnel to master new technology and processes was discussed. A resolution passed by the CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on this question defines measures substantially to improve the planning and organisation of the training and retraining of personnel involved with new technology and processes, and also measures to promote advanced training and improve training methods.

The Political Bureau approved the proposals prepared by the government on the conversion of all the amalgamations and enterprises of the Ministry of the Automotive Industry of the USSR to full-scale economic accounting and self-financing in 1987. It is planned to take a series of measures to improve the cost-benefit methods of management and the organisation of planning, to broaden the rights and independence of enterprises and amalgamations and increase their responsibility. It is envisioned that the modernisation of production, research and other work involving imported equipment and materials will be financed from hard currency revenue earned by work collectives. Priority will

be given to economic contacts with socialist countries.

The Political Bureau discussed pressing questions of the development of various forms of the population's activity in the urban and rural areas, for a better application of their socially useful potential.

Proposals on forming women's councils, worked out in accordance with the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress, were discussed. It is intended to create a broad nation-wide system, based on women's councils in work collectives and in localities. Their activity will be based on the creative initiative of women in all spheres of production, in social and political life, in managing the affairs of state and society, in the solution of social and other questions. An important task of women's organisations of the Soviet Union is vigorous participation in the international women's movement, in the struggle for peace and friendship among nations.

Some questions of the development of co-operation with socialist countries, of the consolidation of peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems, and of ensuring world peace were also discussed at the meeting. □

Foreign Ministry briefing on some aspects of Reykjavik talks

SINCE the Reykjavik meeting, the more time passes the more openly the right-wing oriented mass media and figures of the US Administration are distorting the picture of what happened in the capital of Iceland, and are trying to present it after the event in a new light. A statement to this effect has been made by Alexander Bessmertnykh, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister. He was addressing a briefing held in Moscow on Saturday for Soviet and foreign journalists.

"It is alarming", Alexander Bessmertnykh said, "that attempts are being made in the USA to give an absolutely wrong interpretation of the accords reached. While at the first stages a fussy campaign was started there to lay prior claim to the proposals aimed at ensuring non-nuclear peace, which were not made by them, now they have started completely disassociating themselves, as it were, from the fact that these proposals were discussed and agreed upon.

"The latest example of this is the official paper issued the other day for the guidance of government officials, who are instructed to come out from positions distorting what really took place at the meeting between the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the US President.

"Thus, in particular, the document issued by the US Administration claims that at Reykjavik President Reagan only noted the Soviet Union's stand that, by the end of the ten year period of reducing strategic weapons, all strategic offensive weapons shall be eliminated. The point at issue at the discussions, they claim, was chiefly the original American plan, which envisaged that the second five-year phase should eliminate only ballistic missiles—unlike the first five-year phase when, under the Soviet proposal, all three elements of both sides' strategic triad were to be

reduced by fifty per cent. By claiming this, the USA would like to leave unaffected heavy bombers with cruise missiles and other nuclear weapons on board.

"Yet in actual fact things were as follows. At the beginning of the talks the American side advanced the above-mentioned proposal. Yet after concrete arguments put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev in favour of a radical settlement of the strategic weapons problem, which would not leave outside their framework the elimination of other dangerous types of nuclear weapons apart from ballistic missiles, President Reagan agreed with such a statement of the matter. He made the following statement: 'Apparently we misunderstood you, but if that's what you want, all right.'

"Characteristically, later in the course of the conversation President Reagan did not object to a broader approach, he made it clear that he was not against abolishing all military nuclear devices, including bombs, battlefield weapons, cruise missiles, submarine-carried and medium-range weapons by the end of the two five-year periods. Moreover, the President made the following statement: 'If we agree that by the end of the ten-year period, all nuclear arms are to be eliminated, we can refer this to our delegations in Geneva to prepare an agreement which you could sign during your visit to the United States.'

"The consent of the American side—placed on record in that statement by President Reagan—to such a radical settlement of the nuclear weapons problem put forward in the Soviet programme of January 15, 1986 enabled us to reach at Reykjavik a mutually acceptable agreement on strategic offensive arms."

Alexander Bessmertnykh added that in discussing this problem, the US President, it could be said, had in the long run displayed the necessary sense of responsibility. "Unfortunately, this did not happen in discussing the SDI question. Yet that is another question. Its essence was most fully revealed by Mikhail Gorbachev in his addresses to the Soviet people," he noted.

"Now some people in Washington are trying to depart from the positions on which agreement was reached between the Soviet and American leaders at Reykjavik, and whether they wish it or not have cast a shadow on the President. The above-mentioned document and other evidence of this kind indicate an invigoration of the forces unhappy about the accords reached at Reykjavik, accords that open the way to radical cuts in the strategic arsenals of the USA and the USSR, and to non-nuclear peace.

"That is precisely why efforts are being made to confuse people. The ultimate aim of those who are trying to put into the mouth of the President words he did not say and make him go back on the things he did say is obviously to halt the mounting movement towards nuclear disarmament, in which all peoples of the world have a stake," the USSR Deputy Foreign Minister stressed. □

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Foreign Ministry statement

GENNADI GERASIMOV, head of the Information Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made the following statement at a press conference in Moscow on October 22:

On October 21, the US Administration resorted to yet another anti-Soviet action. It unfoundedly declared five staff members of Soviet diplomatic missions in Washington and San Francisco *personae non gratae*.

Besides this, the US authorities announced a cutback of 50 persons in the staff of the Embassy and the Consulate-General of the USSR in the USA.

Washington is trying to justify this step, which is of an obviously situation-determined and provocative character, by allusions to an alleged disproportion in the number of persons who work at Soviet and US missions in the United States and the USSR respectively.

It should be pointed out that it was not yesterday that the US authorities began to pursue this discriminatory line with regard to the staff of Soviet institutions in the United States.

Several years ago they established a "quota" for the number of Soviet staff working in the United States.

In the middle of September this year the US Government demanded that 25 Soviet staff members at the United Nations Organisation leave the United States ahead of time.

This action totally contradicts—and this has been confirmed by appropriate UN officials—the agreement which the United States concluded with the United Nations on the UN headquarters in New York. The action was obviously designed to frustrate the meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers, which was being prepared at that time.

The US side was officially warned by us that this US step would inevitably lead to appropriate reply measures on the part of the USSR. Such measures were actually prepared.

However, they were not taken only because the leaders of the two countries were due to meet in Reykjavik.

Under the current conditions, we cannot remain indifferent to the US Administration's unlawful actions which require the most resolute reply. And we are giving it.

First of all, it is essential to introduce clarity into the far-fetched question of "disproportion" in the number of personnel at Soviet and US institutions in Washington, San Francisco, Moscow and Leningrad.

The US Administration is misleading the US and the international public by asserting that fewer people allegedly work at US missions than at ours.

How do matters stand in actual fact?

Only Soviet citizens, as a rule, work at Soviet embassies abroad. Staff members from among citizens of the host country are also employed at US embassies to fill non-diplomatic jobs. This is why there were, actually, more staff members at the US Embassy in Moscow than at the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

About 460 people now work at the US Embassy in Moscow and at the Consulate-General in Leningrad, whereas the number of staff both at the Embassy of the USSR in Washington and the Consulate-General in San Francisco is about 300.

Besides—and this important circumstance is being thoroughly concealed by the Americans—up to 500 staff annually arrived at US diplomatic missions in the USSR on a so-called temporary basis—for a period of up to one year.

Therefore at any time many more people

performed some or other functions at US diplomatic missions than at Soviet institutions in the United States.

We have now decided to liquidate this imbalance.

The Soviet Government has taken the following measures in reply to the US provocative actions.

1. In view of the ongoing use of official US missions in the USSR by US secret services for conducting impermissible activities against the Soviet Union, the following staff members of the US Embassy and the Consulate-General are being declared *personae non gratae*:

Naval Attaché of the Embassy Thomas Holme.

Army Attaché of the Embassy Richard Naab.

Second Secretary of the Embassy Michael Morgan.

Third Secretary of the Embassy Michael Matera.

and Vice-Consul of the Consulate-General Daniel Grossman.

They should leave the Soviet Union by November 1 this year.

2. The number of US citizens who are sent to the US Embassy in Moscow and to the Consulate-General in Leningrad on a temporary basis (for a period of up to one year) is being brought strictly into line with the number of Soviet citizens of the same category sent to the United States. Thereby the channel for employing several hundreds of people to work at US diplomatic missions every year is being cut off to a considerable extent.

3. The personnel of the Embassy and Consulate-General of the USA in the USSR should not at any time exceed the number of personnel at the Embassy of the USSR in Washington and

the Consulate-General of the USSR in San Francisco.

4. The entry of US citizens into the USSR as guests of the US Ambassador and those of the staff of the Embassy and the Consulate-General of the United States is being sharply limited. About 200 Americans used to arrive in the Soviet Union every year in this capacity and were used in this or that way in the work of the US institutions in the USSR.

5. The US Embassy in Moscow and the US Consulate-General in Leningrad are deprived of all locally hired staff—about 260 people. At the same time they are forbidden to hire staff from among citizens of third countries.

Thus, as a result of the measures taken by us, a full quantitative balance as regards the personnel of the two countries' missions is being established.

The Soviet side will demand from the USA strict observance of the principle of reciprocity and equality in all these questions.

If Washington intends to continue the discriminatory practice with regard to Soviet institutions and citizens in the United States, additional adequate measures will be taken on our part.

This provocative step by Washington, to which we now have to respond, was taken at a time when reassuring tendencies in the development of the international situation had begun to grow stronger following the meeting in Reykjavik, and when prospects have opened up for improving Soviet-American relations and for solving the fundamental questions of nuclear and space weaponry.

In these conditions, those forces in the United States who oppose all this have resorted, as has happened before, to their old tried method—to an attempt to wreck the possibility of progress through provocations and political sabotage. This cannot but cause concern among the entire international public. □

Lev Tolkunov: on Vienna meeting

"THE Helsinki process is a unique phenomenon in the development of post-war Europe and, moreover, the post-war world," said Lev Tolkunov, Chairman of the Soviet Committee for European Security and Co-operation and Chairman of the Soviet of the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet, in an interview last Friday on Soviet television, in the programme 'In the Run-up to the Vienna Meeting'.

"The essence of this process is that general principles of relationships among states with different social systems were formulated on the experience of post-war Europe," he continued.

"In spite of the resistance of certain forces, the new phenomena put down roots and survived," he stressed. "The impact of Reykjavik will make itself felt in the Austrian capital. Europe was not an impassive observer: the meeting provoked interest in all the European nations."

"It is symptomatic that the European Parliament said in a resolution on the eve of the Reykjavik meeting that it was necessary to reduce all arms arsenals, primarily nuclear armaments, to prevent the introduction of weapons in outer space and to put an end to nuclear weapon tests. They called for the withdrawal of Soviet and American medium-range nuclear missiles from Europe. It was the will of the parliamentarians who spoke for their voters. The West Europeans are worried that the United States may sacrifice the vital interests of its allies," Lev Tolkunov said. "At the same time a desire is growing in Western Europe to work energetically for compromises and agreements."

"The past few years have seen the

accumulation of valuable experience of co-operation among the states of the continent in every field," he said in conclusion. "The core of this process is military detente. The West has piled up quite a few obstacles to that process, which makes the results of the recent Stockholm Conference all the more important. They contain a complex of measures meant to promote military detente and lessen the risk of war in Europe. The way forward exists for a search for sensible compromises: everything depends on political will." □

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PRAVDA:

The return of Soviet regiments from DRA

SIX Soviet regiments—one armoured, two motorised rifle and three anti-aircraft regiments along with their organic equipment and armaments—will be brought home from Afghanistan by the end of 1986.

"This was a highly serious decision," says *Pravda* for October 26. "Our country notified the countries concerned, including Pakistan, of this decision in advance."

"In so doing the Soviet leadership proceeded from the assumption that those who organise and carry out the armed intervention against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) will understand correctly and duly assess this step."

"The Soviet Union's decision expedites a political settlement of the problem and gives it yet another impulse. And it is quite legitimate to expect as a reply to it a curtailment of interference from the outside in the affairs of the DRA."

"This decision is now being carried into life," the newspaper goes on. "The whole world is witnessing the manifestation of the Soviet Union's goodwill. The Soviet servicemen-internationalists are returning home to the areas of the permanent location of their units in the Soviet Union."

"As soon as a political settlement is worked out finally, the return of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan may be expedited accordingly. Both the timings and stages of their return have been coordinated with the Afghan leadership."

"As for those who organise, finance and encourage the undeclared war against Afghanistan and those from whose territory it is being conducted, they should know: if the intervention against Afghanistan is continued, the Soviet Union will not leave its neighbour in need."

"Our internationalist solidarity with the Afghan people, just as the security interests of our country, will be decisive factors in this matter," the newspaper's international review emphasises.

* * *

The people of the city of Kunduz, Afghanistan, bid a ceremonial farewell on Monday to the last of the six Soviet regiments being returned home in keeping with a joint decision by the governments of the USSR and Afghanistan.

The send-off rally was attended by Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and

Communications Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, Mir Sahib Karwal, a Secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, and other officials.

The CPSU Central Committee's message of greeting to the internationalist troops returning back home from Afghanistan was read out.

Watanjar thanked the Soviet troops warmly for the tremendous assistance they had given to the Afghan people.

"The decision to return part of the limited Soviet military contingent home", he said, "attested to a real wish by the governments of the USSR and Afghanistan that the situation around Afghanistan should return to normal."

Describing this decision as an event of great historical significance, Watanjar said the exploits performed by the internationalist troops would remain a symbol of Afghan-Soviet friendship for ever.

Lieutenant-Colonel V Sokolov, commander of the anti-aircraft regiment, was handed an honorary banner of the PDPA Central Committee, the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers of Afghanistan and a sculpture entitled 'Brotherhood-in-Arms'.

A large group of Soviet anti-aircraft gunners were presented with Soviet and Afghan awards. □

Round table discussion on security

"IT has become even clearer since the Reykjavik meeting that the world has reached a point when the further continuation of the arms race could even lead to strategic parity ceasing to be a factor of restraint," *Pravda's* political news analyst Vsevolod Ovchinnikov said during a 'round table' discussion at the newspaper's editorial office.

Pravda carries an account of the discussion in its October 28 issue. "The problem of security", Ovchinnikov continued, "cannot be resolved through the endless improvement of the sword and the shield. What we need is not superweapons but a superpolicy."

"New thinking is the key to human survival in the nuclear space age," he went on. "The world, divided by contradictions, should realise that it is one. New thinking should be backed by a new mode of action. The Soviet Union is demonstrating this in practice, both by its moratorium on nuclear explosions and by its package of proposals at Reykjavik."

All those participating in the meeting noted the danger posed to the world by the nuclear arms race. "Everyone would like to get rid of the burden of nuclear weapons," James Jackson, chief of the Moscow bureau of *Time* magazine (USA) said. "But caution should be displayed so that peace and security should not become vulnerable to conventional weapons, which can

be as formidable as nuclear ones. Both nuclear and conventional warfare should be avoided." The American journalist noted that a good deal had been done in Reykjavik and that the Soviet Union had made major concessions but that the SDI programme had proved an insurmountable barrier.

Raja Mohan, from India's Defence Research and Analysis Institute, pointed out that until recently global problems of war and peace had been the domain of the great powers. "I think", he continued, "that participation of developing countries in debates on these matters should be welcomed. Third world countries cannot and will not remain onlookers. India has always been in the forefront of the efforts for nuclear disarmament and advocated a nuclear test ban. The initiatives of the 'Delhi Six' have evoked broad responses and it is a good thing that the Soviet Union responded to their appeal and extended its moratorium."

"A better account of the situation in Western Europe should be taken in the Soviet-American dialogue," said Eva Karnoffski, a news analyst for the newspaper *Vorwärts* (West Germany). "As a German, I represent that German soil from where war could break out. Chemical weapons and medium-range nuclear weapons pose a special threat to us. We all need new thinking."

Yasuo Suzuki, a deputy chief of the International Department of the newspaper *Yomiuri* (Japan), said that the West should appreciate Moscow's initiatives and respond to them. He believed that talks will take off from the point reached in Reykjavik. It will be a hard dialogue but one would like to hope for progress.

"The work done in Reykjavik should not be wasted," *Pravda's* political news analyst Yuri Zhukov agreed. "The meeting showed that the sides agreed totally to abolish their strategic nuclear weapons by the year 1996."

"I think that the task of the mass media is to contribute to this goal becoming reality," Zhukov concluded. □

Soviet delegation in Bonn

A DELEGATION from the USSR Supreme Soviet, now visiting the Federal Republic of Germany at the invitation of the Bundestag, met Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Deputy Federal Chancellor and Foreign Minister of the FRG, in Bonn on October 24. The Soviet delegation is led by Yuri Batalin, a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet and Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers.

The outcome of the Soviet-US meeting in Reykjavik was in the focus of attention during the conversation, which passed in an open and business-like atmosphere. The sides unanimously expressed the opinion that the meeting opened opportunities suiting the aspirations of the whole of humanity, and brought to a new level both the Soviet-American dialogue and East-West dialogue as a whole.

The leader of the Soviet delegation set out in detail the assessment of the Reykjavik meeting made in the speeches by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev, specifically that on Soviet television on October 22, 1986. It was noted that the Soviet side had advanced in Reykjavik far-reaching and inter-related proposals which form a whole package and which are based on the Soviet Union's programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

The participants in the conversation pointed to the complexity of the international situation in which a constructive, effective dialogue between the West and the East is greatly needed, just as a strict observance of the existing treaties, above all the SALT and ABM treaties.

The sides confirmed the adherence of their states to the 1970 Moscow Treaty and the Helsinki Final Act, which are at the basis of Soviet-West German relations and their participation in the European process. Its continuation requires equal attention to all aspects: political, military, economic and humanitarian. □

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SDI AND THE GAS MASK

By Konstantin Georgiyev

ANY sane person would wonder what the gas mask has to do with the American 'Star Wars' programme. But it is well known that Washington has invented many stories to advertise SDI.

In one of them, a space-based missile defence, which is being developed under the SDI programme, was compared to a gas mask. The comparison took President Reagan's fancy and in his nationally televised address the day after the end of the Reykjavik meeting the President, telling the Americans about his efforts to convince Mikhail Gorbachev that it was sensible and necessary to have a space-based missile defence system even if all offensive ballistic missiles were eliminated, said: "I likened it to our keeping our gas masks even though the nations of the world had outlawed poison gas after World War One".

Let's probe the meaning of this statement without bias. What if it reveals the truth?

Before discussing whether it is possible to compare such incomparable things as space weapons and the gas mask, let us first see whether the President was right when he said that the

nations of the world had outlawed poison gas.

Unfortunately, poison gas as well as other types of chemical weapons have not yet been banned. The 1925 Geneva Protocol, which the President apparently had in mind, only prohibits their use, but does not ban the stockpiling or production of chemical weapons.

It would be appropriate to recall here that unlike the Soviet Union and most other countries, the United States ratified the Geneva Protocol only 50 years after its signing and 30 years after World War Two, not World War One. The United States used chemical weapons widely in its aggression against Vietnam. Little wonder people prefer to keep their gas masks.

The United States is also to blame for the absence of an international convention that would ban chemical weapons and ensure the elimination of their stockpiles and the industrial base for the production of this weapon of mass destruction. Then, as a matter of fact, there would be no point in keeping the gas masks. The draft of such a convention was submitted by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to the Geneva Committee on Disarmament in 1972. That apparently urged the United States to let off steam and at least ratify the Geneva Protocol

of 1925.

However, since then the United States has been blocking for years the efforts to work out a convention on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. Moreover, it is developing at a fast pace new and even more lethal types of these weapons, against which no gas mask would protect. It was only thanks to the persistent efforts of the Soviet Union, which has made far-reaching proposals in this area, that signs of progress have appeared at the talks to ban chemical weapons.

That is how matters stand with poison gas and gas masks. So the whole story on which the effort to liken SDI to the gas mask rests is false.

The main question, however, is this: how can any rational person compare the gas mask, with which you cannot kill a single person, even if you hit him on the head with it, to a colossal space-based system which could be used as both an offensive weapon and a shield, from behind which one could deliver a first nuclear strike.

Things must really be hard for Washington if it resorts to such comparisons. □

(Pravda, October 27. In full.)

Reykjavik: international assessment continues

BETTINO CRAXI, the Italian Prime Minister, has reiterated the great importance of the Soviet-American summit meeting at Reykjavik.

In an interview with *La Stampa* at the weekend, he said the great scope for accord revealed at the meeting was undoubtedly its most promising result. "It would be impossible now to go back and ignore the defined drafts of agreements, which should form an important basis for subsequent talks," he said.

One should not underestimate the path yet to be traversed, Bettino Craxi observed, "but I think that the progress already achieved and the possibilities defined can inspire sensible optimism."

"I hope that the continuing contacts between the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly in the sphere of disarmament, will eventually result in concluding a multilateral treaty on complete prohibition of nuclear weapons tests," Sweden's Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson stressed in an interview in *Pravda* on Monday.

He said that in Sweden's opinion such a treaty would effectively block the continuing development of nuclear weapons and pave the way to real reductions.

He said that in a situation when the accumulated nuclear weapons, if used, could destroy the world's population many times over, there was no other way forward but to do everything possible for actual disarmament. Complete elimination of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction was therefore a real goal.

The Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security met last weekend. The commission, founded by Sweden's Olof Palme and comprising prominent international political figures, adopted a document on problems of reducing and eliminating nuclear arms in the light of the Soviet proposals advanced in Reykjavik.

It pointed out that no agreements had been reached primarily due to the US stance on the

so-called 'Strategic Defense Initiative'. The commission said that it was necessary to take advantage of the existing opportunities.

It recommended strict compliance with the ABM Treaty and reiterated the need for a total ban on all nuclear tests, calling for immediate talks on this last issue. It stressed that all work connected with placing weapons in outer space should be stopped during such talks.

"Ever since the Second World War there has not been, I think, an event which in its importance and consequences for the world community comes close to the recent Reykjavik meeting," Egon Bahr, a prominent West German public and political figure, said on Monday. He was addressing an international symposium in Sofia on the subject 'Nuclear Weapon-free Zones in Europe'.

"The results of Reykjavik give grounds for disappointment but at the same time leave room for hope too.

"For the first time the great powers agreed on deep cuts in strategic nuclear arms," Egon Bahr emphasised. "The talks led to a number of concrete basic accords but did not result in agreement with regard to the 'Strategic Defense Initiative'.

"The international situation since Reykjavik has changed substantially. Mankind saw for the first time that disarmament was really possible and that the sides could agree on these complex issues.

"However, if one side seeks to achieve superiority over the other side by developing SDI, this has proved enough to annul already-specified agreements. SDI has proved that the pursuit of military superiority can be deadly for the destiny of peace.

"Only mutual security can be counterposed to mutual destruction. Reykjavik calls for going through with what turned out to be possible."

The Christian Peace Conference, meeting in Hannover, has pointed out the need to set up a firm barrier against the implementation of 'Star Wars'. Attending were representatives of countries involved in the Helsinki process.

A statement adopted at the weekend, entitled 'Our Tasks after the Reykjavik Meeting',

condemns US plans to speed up the arms race.

The statement says that Reykjavik has shown that accord on all aspects of disarmament is possible. However, owing to the stubborn US insistence on developing 'Star Wars' a real chance to secure a fundamental turn for the better in international affairs has been missed.

The city of Linz, a major industrial centre and the capital city of Upper Austria, has been proclaimed a "Peace City".

The declaration unanimously approved by the city council stressed that the militarisation of outer space and the constant nuclear arms build-up "were factors jeopardising the very existence of humankind".

"We welcome and support the Soviet Union's efforts for ending the arms race, specifically its decision to establish and extend a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions," stated President of Peru Alan Garcia at a meeting last week in Lima.

Assessing the results of Reykjavik, he deplored the fact that the US had not heeded the Soviet proposals. "The Soviet Union's peaceful policy meets the interests of developing countries, and helps them in the efforts to eliminate famine, poverty and backwardness, in the efforts to avert the threat of nuclear catastrophe," he emphasised.

"Reykjavik has demonstrated that the arms race can be halted by political means. Rapid progress in this field can be achieved if the leaders of both superpowers are determined to stop the arms race and begin disarmament," declared Leonard Johnson, a retired major-general in the Canadian Army, in an interview yesterday.

"The task of the world public now", he stressed, "is to press for the accords to which the Soviet and US leaders came so close at Reykjavik to be translated into practical actions."

Leonard Johnson emphasised that SDI was the main obstacle, saying that it posed a threat to the Soviet Union as a possible component of the US offensive capability. □