

Mikhail Gorbachev's statement on the elimination of medium-range missiles in Europe

Here follows the text of the Statement made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, on February 28. It says:

ON January 15, 1986, the Soviet Union put forward an historic programme, that of stage-by-stage elimination of nuclear weapons. When suggesting it we proceeded from the firm conviction that future security would be a nuclear-free one.

The Soviet leadership, and the country's Defence Council, which I am instructed to head, constantly keep the problems of the security of the country, that of our allies, and of universal security at the centre of attention. We do not have the slightest doubt that the security of the world and the survival of humanity should be ensured by joint efforts and political means, and not by weapons.

The common sense of the peoples, an overwhelming majority of parties and movements, and the natural instinct of self-preservation decline to accept the logic of humanity's suicide.

Guided by the awareness of high responsibility to the world, the Soviet Union comes out in favour of finding mutually acceptable solutions in the interest of a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

At the recent forum in Moscow we once again felt the expectations, concerns and intense quest by the outstanding scientists and personalities in the field of culture, politics and religions and again became keenly aware of the crucial nature of our times.

The Reykjavik meeting showed that nuclear disarmament is a quite realistic policy. In the capital of Iceland we were one step away from an accord on a whole range of such decisions which in their aggregate would have signified a deep breakthrough in face of the nuclear danger.

Herein is the greatness and tragedy of the Reykjavik meeting. Its greatness was in the fact that an attainable prospect of a nuclear-free world opened up. Its tragedy lay in the fact that powerful forces, being held captive by nuclear-strength mentality, opposed accords.

It is a matter of common knowledge what has happened after the Reykjavik meeting. The US Administration backed away from what was achieved.

The Soviet-US talks, notwithstanding our efforts to give dynamism and specific character to them, are being again deliberately blocked.

The same officials who regarded it as logical to consider in Reykjavik the entire package of proposals covering strategic offensive arms, medium-range missiles, space weaponry, and nuclear tests, are now preoccupied with sabotaging accords in each of the areas by pleading that the Soviet Union insists on solving them as a package.

In actual fact the talks are being blocked by narrow selfish interests and by unwillingness to give up counting on military and technological superiority and by illusory expectations to get ahead, first of all, via outer space.

To us, this approach is alien, and more than that — it is unacceptable. Our principled course is tirelessly to look for solutions which would open up a way to mutually acceptable accords and to equal security.

The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, upon having recently considered the package of issues connected with the implementation of the programme for a nuclear-free world, decided to make yet another big step in this direction.

Today, on behalf of the Soviet leadership, I am announcing our decision which is as follows.

The Soviet Union suggests that the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe be singled out from the package of issues, and that a separate agreement be concluded on it, and without delay.

There is actually a ready accord, and not just a basis, for such a step. It was agreed in Reykjavik that the Soviet Union and the United States would eliminate all their medium-range missiles (MRM) in Europe within the next five years. Within the same period the number of Soviet MRM's in the Asian part of our territory would be cut down to a hundred warheads on the understanding that the United States could leave the same number of MRM warheads in its national territory.

As soon as an agreement on eliminating Soviet and US medium-range missiles in Europe is signed, the Soviet Union will withdraw longer range theatre missiles from the German Demo-

cratic Republic and Czechoslovakia by agreement with the governments of those countries, the missiles which had been deployed there as measures in reply to the deployment of Pershing-II and cruise missiles in Western Europe.

As far as other theatre missiles are concerned, we are prepared to begin talks immediately with a view to reducing and fully eliminating them.

So, there is a real opportunity to free our common European home from a considerable portion of the nuclear burden within the shortest possible time. That would be a real and big step towards the complete deliverance of Europe from nuclear arms. We are putting our proposals on the table of negotiations with the United States in Geneva.

We were assured more than once that if the USSR singles out the issue of medium-range missiles from the Reykjavik package, there would be no difficulty to agree to their elimination in Europe. A good opportunity is now being offered to prove that in practice. This is being awaited by the Europeans and by the peoples of other continents. This is required by the interests of the present and the future.

By singling out the issue of medium-range missiles in Europe now, the Soviet Government still considers it highly important to reach agreement on substantial limitation and then elimination of strategic arms.

Of course, the conclusion of such an agreement, as has been repeatedly emphasised, should be conditioned by a decision on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space, in view of the organic interconnection of these issues.

Despite all the difficulties and artificial obstructions, the Soviet Union is again showing its will to resolve the nuclear disarmament issue.

The new way of thinking means an ability to listen to the voice of the public, the European and the world public, to understand the concerns and interests of other peoples, and not to separate one's own security from the security of neighbours in our interconnected world.

The historic chance should not be missed! We are awaiting a speedy and positive reply. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev's statement on the elimination of medium-range missiles in Europe	p. 73
Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the 18th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions	p. 74
Soviet Trade Unions Congress addresses the working people and trade unions of the world	p. 79
USSR Foreign Ministry's statement on arms limitation treaties	p. 83

Press conference on Geneva talks

THE Soviet Union makes certain compromises, including taking unilateral steps, in the struggle for the elimination of the nuclear threat, Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergei Akhromeyev, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defence of the USSR, said at a press conference in Moscow on March 2.

Other speakers at the press conference, devoted to the Geneva talks on nuclear and space weapons, included Alexander Bessmertnykh, a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and Viktor Karpov, chief of the Arms Limitation and Disarmament Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Soviet Union, Marshal Akhromeyev continued, had been observing a moratorium on nuclear explosions for a year and a half, removed part of its SS-20 missiles from combat alert and
(Continued on Page 81)

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the 18th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions

Here follows the full text of the speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, on February 25 at the 18th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions:

Comrades,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) I greet your Congress and in your person all the working people of the land of Soviets.

Exactly a year ago, on February 25, the 27th Congress of the CPSU began its work here in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. The congress has proved a turning point in the destiny of our homeland and for the future of socialism. It broadly and boldly reviewed the experience gained in building a new society and worked out a mobilising policy for accelerated countrywide socio-economic development and for work toward the ideals of peace and humanism.

Great undertakings

A month ago we had the January plenary meeting of the Party's Central Committee. That plenum substantially deepened our awareness of the situation that has developed, specified the tasks in reorganising all the political activities of the Party and the people, elaborated a detailed concept for the democratisation of social life, and gave a powerful impetus to the process of throwing off everything that still hampers revolutionary transformations.

A meeting with the participants in the forum. For a Nuclear Weapon-Free World. For the Survival of Humanity was held in the Kremlin slightly more than a week ago.

As you know, the political and ethical principles of the foreign-policy strategy of the Soviet Union and its approach to the global problems of mankind, notably the priority of preserving life on Earth, were set out before an authoritative and widely-representative audience.

These events reflect the mighty rhythm of our times — a period of great undertakings, re-evaluation and growing hopes, social enthusiasm and uncompromising struggle between the new and the old. This is a difficult time but an unusually interesting one, a time when society is gaining confidence in its strength, a time of civil maturation and patriotic non-complacency of people.

We are confident that the practical work of your Congress and the decisions taken by it will be likewise imbued with the spirit of our times.

A year is on the whole a brief period but the year past saw very much from the viewpoint of social meaningfulness. And at the same time we now realise: only the very first steps have been made.

The main thing, and hence the most difficult, still lies ahead. Up to now we have been mostly preparing for reorganisation: we were working out its strategy, mapping out the main ways,

identifying everything that was a hindrance and called for adjustment, and determining positions of departure.

It is now time to get the reorganisation actually moving. The year 1987 will be determinant in many respects, for the fate of the reorganisation is effectively being decided now and the foundation for acceleration is being laid.

The reorganisation, as was emphasised at the January plenum of the Central Committee, is reality, and not an idea any longer. It is getting hold of the minds of people and that means it works. It works for socialism, for the renewal of our society.

October revolution

We are building not from scratch, and one cannot build anything worthwhile starting from scratch. We have got something to be proud of and to rely upon. We have got great values which we place above everything else.

Behind us we have the greatest of revolutions, one which abruptly changed the course of events in our country and in the world and made an indelible imprint on the destinies of mankind.

Behind us we have a vast and diverse experience which has not yet been assessed to the full, in building socialism in practice, experience which one must constantly turn to, learning to solve in the Leninist way problems as they arise.

Behind us we have tremendous economic, scientific, technical and intellectual potentials created and multiplied by the energies and talents of all peoples of our great country.

Yes, comrades, we have traversed a long path, a difficult and heroic one.

But through all the ordeals we have carried the revolutionary spirit of the people, faith in socialism and its supreme justice.

We have coped with and overcome everything. We have managed unprecedented advance from the wooden plough and the light-giving flint to space flights, and we have experienced an incomparable joy — the joy of great accomplishments.

The indissoluble connection between work and civic concern for the common weal, which brings together all generations of Soviet people, our patriotism, working-class pride, labour enthusiasm, and the sacred feeling of belonging to the great cause of the October Revolution — all these are the mammoth gains of our system without which it is simply inconceivable.

It is precisely the working-man and first of all the working class with its devotion to revolutionary traditions that is the principal motive force in today's transformations.

Industriousness has always been the supreme ethical value of our people, and mastery has invariably belonged to the man's chief virtues.

Today, too, we have got true experts, people to look up to and to live up to. These are the likes of Vladimir Matveyevich Gvozdev, team leader at the Raspadskaya mine of the Yuzhkuzbassugol Association of Kemerovo Region, Nina Nikolayevna Shcherbakova, a weaver at Moscow's

Tryokhgornaya Manufaktura cotton mill, Vajno Alexandrovich Saar, team leader at the Tallinnstroj Building Trust, Razifa Salikhanovna Khanova, a milkmaid at the Karl Marx Collective Farm in the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Valeri Makarovich Kolesnikov, a rolling-mill operator at the Kuznetsk Metallurgical Complex, and Yevgeni Petrovich Razmyatov, leader of a multi-skill team at the Petropavlosk-Kamchatsky commercial port.

These and thousands of other names have been brought forth by our times of revolutionary acceleration. The country refers to them as Stakhanovites of reorganisation, and fair enough, I should say. We have such people everywhere, in many work collectives.

It is essential to secure that the number of those working for the renewal of society, for the reorganisation, and do so through innovatory and conscientious labour rather than by means of words and assurances, swells with every passing day.

Labour ethics

Of course, we all want changes for the better the sooner. The lofty goals which the Party has put forward and the growing changes in the economy, social and political spheres have resulted in what may be termed a "revolution of expectations".

Many want a speedy social and material return. I can judge this from recent meetings with the working people of Latvia and Estonia.

Let us be frank, comrades. We can achieve acceleration and better quality for our entire life in only one way: through effective and highly productive work.

No mechanisms of distribution or redistribution create anything by themselves.

Yes, we need to refine much in the national economic management system, in the social, political and ideological spheres.

Such work, as you know, is being conducted and will be conducted in the future as well. But there has to be more emphasis on labour ethics as a whole.

The January plenary meeting of the Central Committee directly mentioned the responsibility of the Party and of its leading bodies for the state of affairs in the country.

But, for sure, this is only one aspect of the matter, although a very important one. Yet there is another aspect, too.

It is no secret to anyone that many were content and some still remain happy to work in a slipshod manner, with unearned pay, undeserved bonuses, with a mutually undemanding atmosphere, with lack of control, and with irresponsibility.

It must be clear: time, efforts and practical actions are needed for our legitimate material and social expectations to come true.

Reorganisation implies an increase in everyone's efficiency in one's work, be it worker, collective farmer, office personnel, engineer, scientist, teacher, government minister or Party

official. By no means everywhere and always do things stand in precisely this way.

When evaluating at the January plenary meeting of the Central Committee the positive changes achieved last year, we said that they reflected the Soviet people's powerful support for Party policy and for the Party's course towards reorganisation.

But the beginning of the year has shown that the positive changes have not become a steady tendency of economic development.

Difficulties in metallurgy, the chemical and electronic industries grew from the second half of the last year but that was not given proper attention in ministries, in the USSR State Planning Committee and the USSR State Committee for Material and Technical Supply. The workers at many enterprises in these sectors did not set about correcting the situation in time.

The results of January showed that both in the centre and provinces many people did not prepare themselves properly for work in the conditions of enhanced demands on the activity of enterprises and amalgamations given full-scale transition to new methods of economic management.

The situation is being rectified now, but the process is slow. The Central Committee of the Party counts on understanding from the working class and all working people of the significance of the moment, of the importance of successful implementation of the projected plans for the cause of acceleration, and on the growing contribution to economic development.

April plenum

We want today to radically alter the atmosphere in society, for we cannot be pleased with how we lived and worked previously.

Nothing will come of it if we do not fully break the forces of inertia and deceleration which are dangerous in their ability to draw the country back again into stagnation and dormancy and the menacing congealment of society and social corrosion.

Here, I would like once again to touch upon the report of the January plenum.

We had an April plenary meeting in 1985 and of course it was not a fortuitous phenomenon. That plenum succeeded in expressing what was being thought and welling up in the country. It critically analysed the state of affairs in society and called for the elaboration of a concept of acceleration.

When we saw the reaction by the Party and by the people to the ideas of the April plenum, we became convinced that we had taken the correct path.

Following the April plenum, we held a large-scale meeting in June on matters concerning scientific and technological progress. As a result

of that meeting, we worked out important programmes for machine-building and a number of other branches of the national economy, and planned out measures to refine the management machinery, including those for running groups of interconnected sectors of the economy.

All that was the starting point for giving shape, on the basis of the April plenum, to the concept outlined by the 27th Congress. The concept is known to you, comrades.

Following the Congress, there arose the task of putting the strategic line towards the acceleration of the country's socio-economic development on the plane of practical work. Previously, as you know, quite a number of good decisions aimed at advancing the economy had been taken, but they often remained unfulfilled.

The Central Committee of the CPSU was aware that there would be no acceleration if we did not start to reorganise societal life and make healthier the entire atmosphere in the Party and community.

Reorganisation

It was at that time that there arose a question of preparing a plenary meeting of the Central Committee to work out a theory of reorganisation and determine the tasks of the personnel policy at the new stage.

Such was the main thrust of the January plenum.

To prepare it proved a difficult matter. Suffice it to say that we postponed the start of the plenum three times, for we could not hold it without having a clear idea of the main issues.

We were to deepen the analysis of the situation which had preceded the April plenary meeting and to draw lessons from it.

The most important thing was to suggest what should be done for the reorganisation to proceed vigorously and not peter out.

If we at the plenum had limited ourselves only to statement of deficiencies and difficulties and had not suggested specific directions for reorganisation, such a plenum would have been of little benefit.

We must provide an answer to the main question which is uppermost in the minds of people: how we are to make the reorganisation irreversible and to secure that errors are not repeated.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee arrived at an unambiguous conclusion: the reorganisation would get stuck if the main character — the people — do not join it thoroughly in all the spheres — economic, social, political, spiritual and in the sphere of management.

Everything should be placed under the control of the people so as to make the reorganisation irreversible and to prevent a repetition of what happened in the past. There is only one way to resolve these tasks, namely through broad democratisation of Soviet society.

Prior to the January plenum everyone asked the question: will not this process come to a stop?

The January plenum strengthened the conviction within society that reorganisation is assuming an irreversible character. This has greatly invigorated the attitudes of many sections of the population. There were quite a few people who stuck to a wait-and-see policy. Now they are joining the ranks of activists. But this process is not easy, is not without pain.

What is the matter? Until now we were at the stage of developing a concept of social and economic development — the April plenum, the 27th Congress and the June plenum. At present, the process of reorganisation has started to move deeper, into practice, and it turned out that it was affecting the interests of many: in one case — through product acceptance by state-appointed inspectors, in a second — through

self-repayment and self-financing, in a third — through election, in a fourth — through control, openness, criticism and so on.

Nothing is surprising here. The process of reorganisation affects increasingly new spheres of societal life and the interests of all social groups. And typically of truly revolutionary changes, reorganisation encourages and lends fresh vigour to some, others are perplexed, still others simply do not like the ongoing changes. These changes are particularly against the liking of those who got used to working without much effort, to do everything on the off-chance, who are indifferent and inert. These changes are also not to the liking of those who until now ran the affairs of an enterprise, district, city or laboratory as if it were his own patrimony, with least regard for the opinion of the collective, of the workforce. Among them are also people who used the atmosphere of total licence for embezzlement and gain, cynically disregarding our laws and morality. Here lie the sources of resistance to reorganisation, sluggishness and the desire to wait things out.

I will say again: in principle, this is no surprise. On the contrary, it would be strange if the reorganisation suited all — honest and dishonest, hard-working and lazy people, activists, principled persons and high-handed functionaries. This would mean that something in our policy had not been well-considered, that something did not work, was faulty. There is here a political nuance which should not be disregarded. I mentioned selfish opponents of the reorganisation. There is, however, dramatism in the situation when selfless, honest people who so far remain captives of outdated notions are among its opponents. These are people who have not realised the acuity and critical character of the problems facing society.

Socialism's potential

We ought to persuade them and win their confidence through the correctness of our cause, through success of the reorganisation. It is our duty to help such people understand their true interests and find their place within the common ranks.

In general, the reorganisation is affecting all: Political Bureau members, Central Committee secretaries, government members, workers, farmers and intellectuals. It is affecting the whole of society, the interests of all and everyone. At this point I want to recall Lenin's instruction concerning the need to distinguish between short-term and vital interests of the working class.

Yes, indeed, the reorganisation is affecting our short-time interests. But it meets the vital long-term interests of the working people. We ought to understand that. This understanding is of principled significance.

This is a very important provision.

The reorganisation ought to reveal socialism's potential, advance society to new frontiers, ensure a new quality of life in all spheres — economic, social and intellectual — and consolidate socialism. As I have already said it meets the vital interests of the working people. And if it is affecting us in some way today, we should consider everything calmly, objectively assess the situation and adopt practical measures to abate outstanding problems.

We possess necessary political experience and theoretical potential to resolve the tasks facing society. One thing is clear: we should advance without fail along the path of reorganisation. If the reorganisation peters out, the consequences will be far more serious for society on the whole and for every Soviet person in particular.

Our choice of the path is correct. We are not moving away from socialism. Through reorganisation, we are developing the potential of the socialist system. We are moving not away

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from democracy, but towards unfolding democracy in the working people's interests.

So, shall we abandon all that? Abandon reorganisation to oblige those whom it affects and whom it compels to think, act and live in a new way? This would be no policy. This would be serving someone's interests and ambitions. The CPSU Central Committee and the Government shall not agree to that. I want to assure you of that, your Congress and in your person the country's working people of that.

We are convinced that this view is shared by the delegates to the Trade Unions Congress and all Soviet people. This is what we take into account in our activity.

I will make one point anew. We must consistently and perseveringly broaden socialist democracy. The Soviet people have immense social and political experience. A great intellectual potential has been built in the country. The generations which are in action today and which are taking upon themselves responsibility are generations who were born and have grown up under socialism.

Socialism is a system of the working people. Everything taking place in the socialist state is a cause of the people. That is why we stand for openness. It should be the norm rather than a campaign. We stand for criticism and self-criticism, which also should be norm in our life. We need such forceful forms of democracy as openness, criticism and self-criticism radically to change every field of social life.

Complete clarity

This is a guarantee against repetition of the errors of the past, and hence a guarantee that the reorganisation process is irreversible.

Greater democratisation might prompt some people to ask if we are not disorganising society, if we shall not weaken management, lower standards for discipline, order and responsibility.

This is an extremely important question, and we must have complete clarity on it.

I will put it bluntly: those who have doubts about the expediency of further democratisation apparently suffer from one serious drawback which is of great political significance and meaning — they do not believe in our people. They claim that democracy will be used by our people to disorganise society and undermine discipline, to undermine the strength of the system. I think that we cannot agree to that.

Democracy is not the opposite of order. It is the order of a greater degree, based not on implicit obedience, mindless execution of instructions, but on fully-fledged, active participation by all the community in all society's affairs.

Democracy is not the opposite of discipline. It is a conscious discipline and organisation of working people based on a sense of really being master of the country, on collectivism, and solidarity of interests and efforts by all citizens.

Democracy is not the antithesis of responsibility. It means no absence of control, no mentality that everything goes.

Democracy means rather self-control by society, confidence in the civic maturity and awareness of social duty in Soviet people. Democracy is unity of rights and duties.

The deepening of democracy is, certainly, no easy matter. And there is no need to fear should not everything proceed smoothly at once, should there be potholes, if not gullies.

But our society is mature, our Party strong. The socialist system relies on the firmest foundation of the people's support and draws strength precisely from democratism of our lifestyle.

The more democracy we have, the faster we shall advance along the road of reorganisation and social renewal, and the more order and

discipline we shall have in our socialist home.

So, it is either democracy or social inertia and conservatism.

There is no third way, comrades.

I have already said recently that we need democracy not to show off and not to play democracy. We need democracy to rearrange many things in our life, to give greater scope to creativity of people, to new ideas and initiative.

Comrades, reorganisation opens up new prospects, advances new tasks to be handled by the Soviet Trade Unions.

What is the view of the priority tasks of trade unions in this connection? As far as I can see, precisely this question, central to your debate, was raised in Stepan Shalayev's report.

Let me express some opinions, too.

These tasks and the ways of working toward them lie in two interconnected routes.

One of them is the place of trade unions in society as a whole, their constitutional rights and obligations, relationship with the Party, with the state and its agencies, the ministries and departments and with other public organisations.

Vigorously participate

The other route is the activity of trade unions directly in work collectives, their daily varied ties with the masses, with individuals.

The new conditions in which the country lives and acts, and the tasks we are working toward, make us re-evaluate also the role of trade unions in the life of society.

I see the new role of trade unions in conditions of reorganisation above all in their becoming a counter-balance to technocratic aspirations in economy that, one should say, have become widespread recently, and in pressing for the enhancement of the social trend of the economic decisions taken.

And this means that trade unions must vigorously participate in working out social sections of the plan and advance their own alternatives when necessary.

More than that, trade unions must vigorously act on a nation-wide scale to prevent a gap in the solution of production tasks and development of the social sphere. This has happened in our country, this still causes us great losses, and immense effort is required to rectify the situation.

This work must be joined actively, comrades.

And if there are problems that need to be solved legislatively, well, there are no blocks for trade unions there either.

The proposals made by trade unions on this score invariably receive the most sincere attention and interested support of the Party and state leadership. Well, I will say straightforwardly that we have an interest in the more active work of the trade unions. But if some trade union officials may have been offended or stung by my criticism — and you must remember that I said while visiting the Kuban area that some trade union officials were dancing cheek to cheek with economic managers — I think you understood the message of that criticism: one has to have one's own firm stand and firmly pursue a line of protecting the interests of the working people.

I believe many useful and valuable things can be learned also by studying the experience of the work of trade unions in the fraternal socialist countries and of international trade union organisations.

The main thing here is the aims to which this work, its ultimate result, and its usefulness to people and society, will be subordinate.

The scope of trade union concerns is actually the life of people with all its joys and concerns.

This means that in solving vital questions of the work, health, daily life, rest and recreation of people, the trade unions should act energetically,

efficiently and in a business-like manner.

Take, for instance, one of the most burning of our problems — housing.

It is known that the Party has set the very important social task of providing in effect every family with an apartment or house to itself by the year 2000.

We are building up efforts along all lines, involving both the state and the work collectives. In 1986 we built 5.2 million more square metres of housing than in 1985 and that increment is not the limit.

Housing complexes are being made for young people and enterprise housing investment is being expanded.

The state has decided to grant privileges to workers who want to build houses with their own money. It has been said at your Congress, for instance, that house-builders in the Far East have decided to increase by 50 per cent their ready-made construction parts without expanding production areas.

Such an initiative can only be welcomed and the builders in the Far East should be wished success in going about this initiative.

As you know I visited the Far East last summer and saw with my own eyes the acuteness of the housing situation there.

Housing is just as urgent an issue in other regions of the country as well. And this came home once again during my visit to the Baltic area.

National issue

The main thing here is not so much money as the capacity of building organisations, the provision of housing construction with the necessary material resources.

Local bodies should do a lot here. And this already is being done in a number of republics, regions, towns and districts.

Housing is a national issue and it should be tackled accordingly.

All the work collectives should act as energetically as the auto-workers in Gorky and Minsk, the chemical workers in Voskresensk and the steel workers in Kuibyshev. The trade unions jointly with economic management bodies should unfold this public initiative broadly throughout the country. It is an immense reserve, comrades, and people understand that all the efforts of the country should be pooled to tackle this task as speedily as possible.

Putting the concrete individual in the focus of attention, the trade unions are called upon to take more care about their most valuable asset, human health, about efficient health care and safety at work.

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Efforts to combat drunkenness must not be slackened either. This fight has brought about substantial positive change, primarily as regards public health and order in our society. But there still are many problems.

For the time being, losses of worktime through temporary disability are "conscientiously" put on record from one year to the next. In industry alone they have been more than 10 times those caused by absenteeism, idle time, and absences with official permission.

Important decisions have now been prepared on these matters. The trade unions should make a contribution to this matter of importance to the state. A complex of resolutions have been drawn up on further improvements in health care in the country.

One more point. We have already talked a good deal about formalism in socialist competition, but there is almost no change.

Yet today we need emulation first of all to develop worker creativity, initiative, competitiveness of mind and talent, the art of organisation and the mastering of front-ranking experience.

Paper motor

It is time to actually do something we have been talking about for years — reorienting the system of socialist emulation to indices of quality, resource saving and strict fulfilment of contracts. These are the three whales, so to speak, on which socialist competition should be based first and foremost. It is precisely that area in which the priority role of the trade unions is beyond doubt. No special instructions to this effect should be waited for. Every precondition has been provided. Now tackle these matters and you will bear the most responsibility for them.

Since this is so, I must say at once that the trade unions have grown accustomed to an absence of genuine competitiveness, to eyewash, to abundant forms of emulation which are so confused that a normal person simply fails to understand what this is all about.

At times one even begins to think that some "paper motor" has been put into the sphere of emulation with the help of trade unions and revolves regardless of whether anybody is emulating drive or not.

It is time to bring socialist emulation back down to Earth, to the production shops and teams, to subordinate it to real pressing tasks, to make it a matter of the working people themselves who are interested in mastering the best experience, in perfecting their work and themselves.

In short, comrades, you have more than enough concerns. In conditions of consistent democratisation of society, the role of trade unions will steadily rise, as will their responsibility for the economic and social policies. Their cultural and educational targets will become more complex and diverse.

Continuing the theme of what the role of trade unions should be in the present conditions, I would like to say the following. The fate of the restructuring is being decided not in offices but by the actual deeds of work collectives.

The work collective is the central cell in the restructuring effort and everything in the long run depends on attitudes in this cell, on the new way work develops.

In effect this is a problem of a person's real position in his collective and thereby in our society as a whole.

How is his work organised? How productive is it and how is it remunerated? In what measure are a person's performance at work and satisfaction of his needs interconnected? How are the relations between allied trades, between accessory manufacturers, between officials and subordinates at all levels built?

Healthier climate

Here the dependence is simple and clear: as things go in the work collectives, so shall they go in the whole of society. If we manage to organise highly productive work and ensure a high quality of output, then the country's economy as a whole will advance.

If there is order and organisation in the collectives, there will be order and organisation everywhere in society.

If we learn all together to build normal human relations in the collective and if we make the moral and psychological climate healthier, the entire social atmosphere in the country will be just as healthy.

The Party's Central Committee attaches much importance to the law on the state enterprise (Amalgamation). A draft has been submitted for nation-wide discussion.

In effect, the draft law is invested with a new ideology for economic management. We do not think that it is truth in the last instance, that it is a finalised document. If we approached it in this way there would be no need to put it to a countrywide discussion. We think that this document provides a good basis for a broad discussion in our society, for a thorough analysis of all the views and remarks and for the writing of a good law on the state enterprise.

The law is called upon to change cardinally the conditions and methods of economic activity in the main link of the economy, to formalise juridically combination in the performance of enterprises of planning and full cost-accounting, independence and responsibility, to legalise new forms of self-management.

I will name such measures of a fundamental nature as the creation of the first twenty inter-branch scientific-technical complexes, the introduction of new principles for increasing remuneration of work in the productive branches, the introduction of state quality control of output at 1,500 leading enterprises, second and third shifts in a number of production collectives, the extensive development of co-operative forms in the spheres of production services, and the spread of the system of collective and family contracts.

And this list could be continued.

As you see, the reforms are proceeding extensively and steadily. Yet the work in a new way is actually only beginning.

If we take the production life of a work collective I believe the most important changes there will be determined by the transformation of the economic mechanism that has been started, by the transition to cost-accounting, self-financing, self-repayment and self-management.

But these measures, comrades, will really begin to work only when each work collective will take them as something that is their own, as close and vital to them and not something from above.

Generally speaking, who needs

cost-accounting and who stands to gain from it? Those who work honestly. It is needed by the country and in the final analysis by every working family, by every working man and woman.

To whom does cost-accounting pose a danger? To the windbag because it immediately exposes his untenability. To the idler and shoddy worker because it hits out at the very mainstays of their parasitical wellbeing achieved at the expense of society and of all honest working people.

We must all approach in a new way the role of the work collective both in society, including in the economic sphere, and in the life of every Soviet citizen.

Who besides the work collective can really discern the social countenance of every person, determine the measure of social justice not in general and on the whole but, so to say, on a roll-call basis?

Who knows best where possibilities have been exhausted and where considerable reserves remain untapped?

Who has done everything and where, and where has work in a slipshod manner become a norm?

Finally, where can a man exercise his rights and fulfil his obligations of really being in charge if not in his own collective, right in his workplace?

Personal need

It appears that the experience of recent times has demonstrated with the utmost clarity — one's renunciation of an active stance in life costs dearly both society as a whole and every person.

And let me tell you straight, we will not be able to change that situation until everyone feels a personal need for it, personal responsibility. Until he feels that he is in charge.

Comrades, I would like to emphasise specially the following aspect. In the current "cost accounting" situation the work collectives and trade unions are becoming a strong partner of the state in furthering social programmes.

I should think that the AUCCTU and the republican trade union councils could make a broader use of the right of legislative initiative in the interests of the working people and, when and where necessary, oppose more forcefully attempts by economic bodies to infringe on the prerogatives of the work collectives.

It is wrong when production plans are changed without the consent of the trade unions, when money is taken from the economic incentive funds and when other violations are tolerated. The trade unions must not put up with such a situation. And we shall support them.

Evidently attention should be devoted to the AUCCTU's proposal on giving the trade unions the right to suspend any decisions taken without their knowledge where such decisions affect terms of payment for work, and the work-rest relationship, and to be actively involved in shaping policy for pricing diverse goods and services.

They should have the possibility to act as resolutely where social welfare establishments and environmental protection facilities are omitted at enterprises under construction.

Speaking about that, one must not neglect the following phenomenon — many trade unions as yet remain in the second echelon of the reorganisation, as it were, and that holds for such a vital matter as protection of the interests of the working people and upholding social justice.

Take the matter of pay. We have started a serious reorganisation in that sphere. And it should be said that the matter at hand is not a campaign or some once-only undertaking, but a principled policy line toward eliminating levelling.

This is a serious political matter, comrades. Work and work alone should be the criterion for determining man's value, his social prestige and his material status.

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It should be noted that in the conditions of cost accounting, self-financing and self-profitability the sources of payment for work and the provision of financial incentives depend on the profit of an enterprise, on the funds earned, and the work collective in essence takes charge in distributing them.

But let us ponder the following matter: are trade unions doing everything they can to actively influence the policy of payment for work? You know better than I — certain enterprises are still in no hurry to part with wage levelling.

The management is in no hurry because it is a bothersome matter that requires changes in the organisation of production and calls for good order in work quota setting; and a trade union committee, too, often wants to go on living without treating anyone badly.

No, comrades, it is high time we did away with this kind of "timidity". Some will have to be treated badly, the slacker, the drunkard and the slovenly. Let them take no offence: they are getting what they deserve.

And we will elevate — both materially and morally — the diligent man, the one who is working tooth and nail. And the trade unions should defend his interests might and main.

I must say that the trade unions have as yet not joined in earnest in the important undertaking of getting two- and three-shift rotas.

This is a badly needed and economically important matter — in our industry alone fixed production assets worth 100 billion roubles are not loaded properly and in essence are idling.

Release funds

The trouble is, however, that at many enterprises the introduction of work in many shifts has often been approached in a bureaucratic fashion, without due regard for production organisation, catering, public transport, or many other vitally important problems.

I had many meetings in Latvia and Estonia. And among the issues raised the problem of getting two- and three-shift rotas was one of the main problems taken everywhere. In Yurmula, where working people from practically all over the country from Sakhalin to the western regions are vacationing, those questions were also put before me. What did people say? There are enterprises where one shift is divided into two just to fulfil an order from either the respective branch ministry or from local authorities. Fifty per cent work during the first shift. And 50 per cent during the second. So, it turns out that during the first shift 50 per cent of the equipment is used and the other 50 — during the second. But this is a mockery of common sense and of an undertaking of state significance. For the Leningraders' plan approved by the political bureau was to concentrate two or three shifts on the advanced and progressive equipment and to get a maximum return from it, to improve labour productivity and at the same time to accomplish the planned tasks, to remove the old equipment and to open up the road for speeding up the modernisation.

At the same time this enables an enterprise to do without expansion, without building new premises, to release funds and channel them into building housing, social and cultural establishments. Such is the major plan of state significance contained in that idea. Instead, some managers just go through the motions and profanate that very important undertaking.

Trade unions should pay special attention to this. If one enterprise changes, it is unlikely that the entire city will alter its normal rhythm in the sphere of transport, organisation of trade, education and work of pre-school centres, and consumer services. Therefore, the transition should be carried out by the city or basically by the entire city.

This seems to be so clear that no discussion is required. Nevertheless transition to two- and three-shift rotas is often carried out without restructuring the operation of city services which I have just mentioned. This is a mistake. This is done in haste that no one needs and which discredits the important state undertaking.

We said this recently in a resolution of the Central Committee and the Government. We made a first analysis of the work in this direction and defined a number of major measures of which you already know. Anyway, we decided to provide incentive for those working on second and especially third shifts. This, I think, is correct. We ought to do that. This is an extremely important state task that is to be resolved.

I think that in the conditions of growing economic independence, work collectives will demand from trade union activists that they be more principled and energetic in using the rights enjoyed by the trade unions. You have these rights. The Soviet trade unions possess great and material force. These are the right to monitor how the administration fulfils its agreements and contracts and the right to criticise economic managers for actions contradicting the legitimate interests of the working people.

Legitimate rights

Naturally, in putting higher demands on trade union functionaries, it is necessary to display maximum attention and tact and extend support for them.

Trade union committees should become a genuine, I would say, rather than a convenient in many ways partner of the administration and consistently defend workers' interests. To be frank, substandard working conditions at many enterprises, insufficient health care and inadequate rest rooms are something that trade union organisations have got used to in many places.

This still occurs very often. The legitimate rights and interests of working people imply using boldly the trade unions' great potentialities and acting, as necessary, to have wrong decisions corrected.

In closing my remarks on domestic affairs, I want to remind you of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's words: "We must see to it that literally every member of the trade unions stands to gain from production, and remembers that only by increasing production and raising labour productivity will Soviet Russia be in a state to win."

This is the way Vladimir Ilyich Lenin put the question in 1920, this is the way we put it today in the conditions of new revolutionary changes.

A time has come when unprecedented opportunities are opening up for better work, for greater results and for vigorous endeavour to build a better future with due account for all our rich experience and with all our considerable potentialities being tapped.

Let us act, comrades, in this direction.

And now to international affairs, since enough has been said lately on this account, I hope. Such issues are directly linked to the course of our domestic development.

These affairs take much effort, while the world situation, as you are aware, has remained complex over the past years.

What is most essential is that imperialism and reactionary forces are doing their utmost to hinder, come what may, our onward development and compel us to remain on the tracks of military confrontation.

The 27th Congress emphasised that the Party saw its principal internationalist duty in leading the country successfully on along the trail blazed by the October Revolution.

Such is the strict criterion by which we ought to measure each step, such is the viewpoint from which we should assess the tasks that are being

advanced and the choice of policy, both inside the country and in the international arena.

The words "perestroika" (reorganisation) and "glasnost" (openness) are viewed everywhere abroad, especially since the January meeting of the Central Committee, as synonymous with "progress" and "peace".

Naturally, some — our allies, friends and democratically minded people — are following with hope, confidence and great expectations the changes in our society, the style and atmosphere of our everyday life.

Others — political and ideological opponents — are watching these processes not without certain apprehension and at times even hostility.

Characteristically, despite these differences, the main thing has been correctly noticed abroad: the new way of thinking which the Party has placed as the basis of its policy is the CPSU's response to the challenge of the time, a challenge calling for a fundamentally new approach to the tasks that have come before mankind at the end of the second millennium.

There are in fact two fundamental tasks, that of saving the world from nuclear catastrophe and that of placing at man's service the immense potential of knowledge, material and spiritual possibilities he possesses.

They are, indeed, immense, urgent and closely interrelated. The Party, in working out its strategy for acceleration and reorganisation, has set an example by approaching them from humanist Marxist-Leninist positions.

The Soviet proposals aimed at eliminating weapons of mass destruction and establishing a comprehensive security system have evoked a special response.

More dynamic

Some of them are already "working" — they have become the subject of dialogues and negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral.

Properly speaking, we have tried to give an impetus to the reorganisation of interstate relations as well, to make them align with the real tasks and requirements of our times.

As a result international life has become more dynamic, and the tendencies toward the search for forms and means of deepening co-operation political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural have grown stronger.

True, sometimes we can hear such an opinion: all this is correct, we do support the Party's foreign policy, but the world is still an intranquil place, the arms race goes on and on, the nuclear threat remains a reality and American imperialism is not only unwilling to disarm, but is also building up its offensive capability.

Such an assessment of the situation is on the whole correct. But, I believe, it is still incomplete.

Yes, the situation on the international scene is dangerous, the Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear arms limitations are making no headway through the fault of the US rulers and acute conflicts in various regions of this planet are fraught with grave complications.

One should not disregard another aspect either.

A dramatic change in the very atmosphere of international relations, in public sentiment, in the attitude of both ordinary people and many statesmen to the choice of stance on the principal question of today — the question of war or peace — has made itself felt and is becoming ever more pronounced.

This had been manifestly confirmed by the Moscow Forum For A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity.

It was a very representative meeting of authoritative scientists, writers, artists, musicians, businessmen, public and religious

(Continued on next page)

Soviet Trade Unions Congress addresses the working people and trade unions of the world

Here follows the full text of an address from the 18th Congress of Soviet Trade Unions to the working people and trade unions of the world, made on February 26:

EXPRESSING the will of the 140 million members of the Soviet Trade Unions, the delegates to the Congress make this address to the working people and trade unions of all continents, to labour under different social systems.

The continued nuclear weapon testing in Nevada arouses the anger and indignation of millions of honourable people the world over. The nuclear maniacs have not been brought to their senses by the USSR's boldly and profoundly humane step — a unilateral moratorium that lasted for over eighteen months.

In the present-day complex world there can be different judgements and ideas on human values. While remaining faithful to certain ideological concepts and political systems, religious or atheistic convictions, and national traditions, we working people and trade unions, cannot but be aware, however, of one global reality which is common to us all: we need peace.

Peace for protecting life itself.

Peace for improving the position of the working people.

Peace for strengthening the rights of, and social and economic guarantees for, all people on Earth.

The working people in the USSR do not want another war. The 70 years that have passed since the Great October Revolution have all formed a chronicle of the Soviet people's tireless efforts for the ideals of peace, co-operation, humanism and progress.

We need a lasting peace today for effecting

(Continued from previous page)

figures from very many countries.

A meeting of people who mostly are far from a socialist world outlook and even people holding conservative views on major political and social issues. It is also a fact, and quite meaningful.

However, the people brought together by the one conviction: only affirmation of a new mode of thinking in international relations can put up an obstacle to nuclear war, can make peace not only possible but inevitable.

The forum has been an important event in international life. I would say a barometer of the sentiment of world public opinion. And the needle of that barometer is pointing firmly and plainly to peace.

There have been debates, heated ones, too, as to how to proceed in that direction, how to resolve certain problems, and substantial differences in approaching them have cropped up.

Well, debates, criticisms and comparison of views are all quite natural and the surest of roads to the truth. And the truth, that is, the need to avert a catastrophe, to survive and to learn how to live in a manner befitting human beings, has never, as far as I know, been called into question by any of the participants in the Moscow meeting.

It seems to me that the results of the forum demonstrate that a new, very broad, heterogeneous and yet momentous movement — the movement for the survival of humanity — is taking shape in the world.

This is a good, favourable sign. It gives rise to

what is essentially revolutionary change, for constructive work to reorganise all spheres of our life, and for bringing out socialism's potential more fully.

Standing on the other side of the abyss are the forces of militarism and aggression and the military-industrial complex, which are prompted to develop ever more lethal kinds of weapons of mass destruction by their greedy pursuit of extra profits and of military superiority over the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

These goals are being served most overtly by Washington's "Strategic Defense Initiative" (SDI) — the deadly "Star Wars" programme.

The plans for militarising outer space are a most dangerous threat to peace and to the very existence of mankind. SDI, the costliest arms programme ever, will inevitably mean for the working people in the West further tax rises and greater unemployment in civilian industries and bury the hope of millions of people in Asian, African and Latin American countries for doing away with hunger and poverty.

A new spiral in the arms race, unleashed by the "Strategic Defense Initiative", would mean diversion of enormous resources that are so badly needed to solve the global problems of mankind and fulfil the far-reaching goals of social development, including in the socialist countries.

Fully supporting the USSR's programme for building a nuclear-weapon-free world and a comprehensive system of international security and its concrete initiatives for reducing and eliminating nuclear and conventional arms and preventing the militarisation of outer space, the Soviet Trade Unions are deeply satisfied that these practical steps meet the fundamental

confidence in the victory of the forces of reason over the forces of war and militarism.

Trade union organisations in different countries are becoming even more active in combating the nuclear threat. The trade union movement is a major force in the contemporary world and one of the most important components of the movement for the survival of humanity.

The coupling of the fight for the interests of the working people with the fight for peace and disarmament means that the masses' awareness of the danger looming dark over humankind is ever more clear and profound. This is why it is so important that the trade unions join in that fight.

I am glad at the chance to greet at your congress here numerous envoys and representatives of trade unions from different countries, of their international associations.

I am convinced that the right to live and work in peace is a primary and inalienable right of every man. Nothing can set working people at odds with their like. The arms race and war bring workers neither profits nor dividends. Peace, co-operation and work provide the conditions for worker well-being and social progress.

The peace and security of a country is not the concern of diplomats and politicians alone. Peace and security for the homeland is the concern of every one of us, of all Soviet people.

Comrades, I would like to make this a point. Peace is to be achieved, primarily by our everyday work at the factory, in the field, and at the research institute.

The better and more successfully we cope with our tasks at home, the louder and more forcefully

interests of the working people of the entire world and help realise the hopes of all nations for radical improvements in the world situation — political, economic and social.

This innovative approach, based on new political thinking which reflects universally shared moral norms, is essential for solving also such global problems, which are the common concern of the world trade union movement, as the threat of an ecological crisis, the social aspects of the scientific and technological revolution, the forming of fair international economic relations, and world energy and transport policies.

Working people and trade unions in all continents.

We are one of the motive forces of the times. What path mankind will take as it enters the third millennium depends on us all in many ways.

Let us create a broad alliance of working people for a nuclear-free world without wars and violence and for co-operation rather than "Star Wars", in outer space.

Let us direct the material resources and intellectual energies of mankind to ensuring a peaceful future for our children and grandchildren rather than to preparing for a nuclear Armageddon.

Let us issue a decisive rebuff to our common enemy — the forces of militarism, reaction and monopolistic capital.

Let us close our ranks in efforts for general progress, social justice and the happiness of all nations.

Peace is our common objective, and the fight against the threat of war is our common duty. □

will resound the voice of the Soviet Union in defence of peace internationally.

Comrades, today we know and understand full well that the all-out offensive — economic, political, psychological and militarist — launched by the forces of reaction at the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s was dictated, among other things, by our internal state of affairs.

Today, the enemy's stake on our lagging behind having suffered a serious setback, imperialism is shifting the emphasis to prevent us from enacting the plans for reform, to hamper, slow down and frustrate them through the arms race.

To this end they exert every effort to keep up international tension and preserve conditions in the world in which to continue to describe the USSR as a source of all evils and misfortunes.

All this is as outdated as imperialism itself. There is nothing unexpected as principally new in such behaviour by the reactionaries. Our answer is clear.

We have been and will keep doing everything necessary to absolutely guarantee our security and the security of our friends and allies, so that no one is tempted to test out our borders. But we shall not make a single step in excess of the demands and requirements of sensible, sufficient defence.

Let us not repeat — without thinking and automatically — what imperialism is seeking to impose on us in the arms race.

We are keeping and will continue to keep all

(continued on page 84)

Mikhail Gorbachev receives Giulio Andreotti

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV received in the Kremlin on February 27 the Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti.

A detailed exchange of views on key issues of European and international security, in which the Soviet-Italian dialogue holds an important place, was conducted in a frank and well-wishing atmosphere.

What international relations now lack are positive, bold steps, especially joint steps, Mikhail Gorbachev said. In this connection the question of Europe's role was raised on a major plane. Lately it appeared to be displaying a desire to make its contribution, the Soviet leader went on. The Europeans are making an effort and have already accomplished something, first of all in Stockholm. But these are only the very first steps to utilise Europe's wealth of experience in accordance with the requirements of the times.

Mikhail Gorbachev again refuted the still widespread suspicions that the USSR supposedly wants to wreck the Atlantic Alliance and wrest Western Europe from America. We are realists here in the Kremlin, Mikhail Gorbachev went on, but at the same time we proceed from the premise that in world affairs nobody can substitute for Europe.

Noting again the deep connection between the Soviet Union's present home and foreign policy, between the restructuring in the USSR and its striving for improved international relations, Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that "we would like to be predictable, we are conducting our affairs constructively and with a sense of responsibility. But if somebody wants to draw from this the conclusion that the USSR is more interested in disarmament than the West, nothing will come out of this and again a chance to start this process will be lost.

"The task objectively exists for placing East-West relations on the soil of reality and, on ridding ourselves of the status of nuclear hostages, of solving a multitude of problems —

economic, ecological and humanitarian. There are more than a hundred new states in the world now which are searching for their road and they have a hundred times more problems than the states which have centuries behind them. Account should also be taken of these problems both in relations between the developed and the developing worlds and in East-West relations," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

In other words, politics should be nurtured by present-day realities, Mikhail Gorbachev said. The Soviet Union has no intention whatsoever to encroach on ties between various regions of the world. We treat with understanding the interests that Western countries have in the east and in the south. But we disagree with the policy according to which these interests should be satisfied at the expense of those whose resources this concerns. Both encroachments on historically formed ties and refusal to take into account the lawful rights of the new states are equally fraught with explosive situations.

A difficult process is under way — from understanding what policy is needed by the world today to formulating this policy as such, Mikhail Gorbachev said further. We are now exactly at this stage. And it is important therefore to meet each other half way. The USSR is prepared to co-operate with the West in the search for the best balance of interests.

In this context the interlocutors spoke highly of the recent forum in Moscow For a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, For Survival of Humanity. They agreed that the entire significance of what had happened was yet to be realised — what sort of an event this was and what follows from it.

Giulio Andreotti said that in his entire activities he proceeded from the conviction that the world should become wiser. That is one of the reasons why he welcomes what is now happening in the Soviet Union and which, he said, "is very important for all of us".

During the conversation much attention was given to the Soviet-American talks in Geneva. Both agreed that there are influential forces in

the United States which want resultative talks and the attainment of accords.

Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that the Soviet Union approaches with all seriousness the development of relations with the United States. The Soviet Union is for developing contacts, for continuing disarmament talks, not formal talks but substantive ones. It does not see, however, an adequate reply reaction, Gorbachev went on. The United States leadership is retreating from Reykjavik and has already reached a line when the ABM Treaty, which is a fundamental importance, is being put in question. The "broader interpretation" of the treaty is not a routine, transient element at the talks, it is a matter of principle.

In this connection Mikhail Gorbachev said that the main thing at present is to prevent the wrecking of the ABM Treaty. Otherwise the talks will be depreciated, the arms race will escape control, instability will become critical, mistrust and suspicion will grow. That would be a blow to the East-West political dialogue which is only beginning to pick up pace and would have grave psychological consequences for the entire world. A shadow will be cast over everything. To put it briefly, this would be a great political mistake.

For its part, Mikhail Gorbachev said, the Soviet Union will do everything to prevent such a turn of events. But there must be understanding of the importance of this issue by everybody. Giulio Andreotti assured his interlocutor that intentions to abandon the ABM Treaty are not shared either in Italy or in other West European countries.

Problems of eliminating and reducing nuclear arms of various classes in Europe, as well as of conventional arms and armed forces, were studied. Giulio Andreotti remarked that the terms proportion and disproportion should be sorted out. Mikhail Gorbachev showed understanding of Giulio Andreotti's considerations.

The main problem and the main obstacles on the road to disarmament are of a political nature, Mikhail Gorbachev said in this connection. This is a question of political will, a question of intent.

Principled moments of a Middle East settlement were discussed in connection with the declaration by the EEC countries stating a favourable attitude to the Soviet proposal to work for an international conference on the Middle East. The two agreed that what is being meant, to use Giulio Andreotti's words, is "preparation to prepare" a conference with most thorough account taken for the interests of all the interested sides and without attendant preliminary conditions.

In conclusion Mikhail Gorbachev said that Soviet foreign policy reflects among other things feelings of great respect and friendship for the Italian people. This, too, is a reality of the present European and international situation, he said, it is in this spirit that the visit by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee to Italy this year will be prepared.

Eduard Shevardnadze, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, the Italian Ambassador in the USSR, Sergio Romano, and the Secretary General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Renato Rugiero, were present at the conversation. □

Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee discussed and approved Mikhail Gorbachev's report on the results of his trip to Latvia and Estonia (Soviet republics in the Baltic region), his meetings with Party activists and conversations with the working people.

The exchange of views that took place in work collectives and primary Party organisations on topical questions pertaining to reorganisation, said a report about the Political Bureau's meeting, are of major importance for the realisation of the decisions of the January (1987) plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and for a fuller utilisation of the material, technical, cultural and intellectual potential created in those republics.

The state and economic bodies concerned were instructed to consider questions of renovating fixed production assets in industry, scaling-up output and improving the quality of consumer goods, developing the social service sphere, improving the material and technical supply to enterprises based in Latvia and Estonia, and to take the relevant measures for this.

The Political Bureau studied the question of preparations for the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The reso-

lution of the CPSU Central Committee on this matter says that the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution is a great holiday of the Soviet people and a review of socialism's historic accomplishments. At the same time it is also a landmark and from this crest it is necessary to analyse the results and lessons of the road traversed, the changes taking place in the world, the new tasks facing Soviet society at the present stage which is of exceptional importance for its development.

The Political Bureau approved an address by the CPSU Central Committee to the Soviet people in connection with the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It will be published in the press.

The resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers on measures to improve the functioning of collective-farm markets has been adopted. It is planned to consolidate substantially their material base, to increase the supply and sales of farm produce at the markets and also to implement some other measures aimed at the improvement of the population's supply and exerting effective economic influence at lower market prices.

The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee also discussed some other questions of the home policy and the foreign policy activity of the CPSU and the Soviet State. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev's answer to Swedish newspaper

THE Swedish trade union newspaper Aftonbladet on March 1 brought out a special issue in memory of Olof Palme, prominent statesman and politician, and Prime Minister of Sweden. The special issue is published in connection with the anniversary of his tragic death.

The newspaper carries materials and articles under the common heading Olof Palme's Legacy to Sweden and the Whole World. These materials include the answer by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev to the Editor-in-Chief of Aftonbladet Rolf Alsing. The Soviet leader responded to the newspaper's request and answered the following questions: How should Olof Palme's role be appraised? Had his ideas and personality an impact? What does his death mean to you and the whole world?

Mikhail Gorbachev's answer, published in Russian and Swedish, is as follows:

Esteemed Mr Alsing,

The questions the *Aftonbladet* editorial board put to me are interrelated. Therefore I shall try to answer all the three questions in their relationship.

The role of any personality, any politician is determined most precisely by history. Time is the best judge, and as time passes, some ideas and actions fade from the memory of people, while others become immortal. Olof Palme's name is widely known in various countries, in all continents. It cannot and must not be forgotten.

His vigour, ardour, conviction with which he was upholding his ideas, be it mediation in

settling local conflicts, or the activity in the framework of the Delhi Six, or his work as Chairman of the Commission on Disarmament and Security, earned him the profound esteem of the international public.

Olof Palme had not failed to respond to any major international event in recent years. We were in correspondence, and I learned from it that he welcomed the Soviet Union's programme for the elimination of nuclear arms, our moratorium on nuclear explosions, that he was prepared to discuss these and other questions of arms reductions. He emphasised more than once that questions of peace assumed unique importance in the present century when our entire civilisation could be wiped out as a result of man's mindless actions.

The bullet of an assassin killed a selfless fighter, the man whose opinion we and many others in the world respected, who was an objective partner in talks, who shared an interest in how to make life on Earth safer, who was a convinced supporter of the development of good-neighbourly relations between Sweden and the USSR.

True, we communists and social democrats, quite often hold different, at times contradictory stands in ideology and politics. But the Soviet Communists at their 27th Congress paid homage to the memory of the social democrat, an ally in the struggle for mankind's peaceful future, with silence in which grief and indignation mingled.

No task is now of greater importance than the consolidation of world peace. The Soviet Union is doing its utmost to avert the threat of the nuclear catastrophe looming over humanity, to establish an atmosphere of confidence and

mutual understanding among nations. We were striving for this precisely in Geneva and Reykjavik. Therefore, we confirm our readiness to achieve agreements on all aspects of disarmament.

On the day of the first anniversary of Olof Palme's death the Soviet people, together with the Swedish people, with all who are concerned over the destinies of the world, pay tribute of respect to Olof Palme.

Mikhail Gorbachev.

Many statesmen, politicians and public figures of a number of countries write in the newspaper about the great contribution of the late head of the Swedish Government to the consolidation of international peace and mutual understanding, to the struggle against the nuclear menace, violence, racial oppression and about his outstanding qualities as a politician and man. Among those who contributed to the newspaper are India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Olof Palme's associate in the Delhi Six, Finland's President Mauno Koivisto, the world famous Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, American Senator Edward Kennedy, who was linked by friendship with the late Prime Minister over many years. The common thought they expressed in the newspaper is that the struggle for peace, for international security, for the prevention of a world thermonuclear catastrophe, against racism and violence in any manifestations, the struggle to which Olof Palme devoted so much effort, should be continued. And this will be the best tribute to the memory of the prominent Swedish statesman and politician. □

(Continued from Page 73)

displayed flexibility at the Geneva talks. In other words, it is demonstrating its goodwill in practice and hoping for Washington's reciprocal steps. But the US Administration keeps escalating the arms race instead of taking reciprocal positive steps.

Answering questions from journalists, Marshal Akhromeyev said that after an agreement had been achieved, the medium-range missiles of the Soviet Union and the United States would be destroyed. If the American Pershing and cruise missiles are dismantled, the Soviet side will dismantle 243 SS-20 missiles in Europe. There will be left in Asia 100 warheads and the United States will have as many warheads on similar missiles in its national territory.

Furthermore, Marshal Akhromeyev stressed that the Soviet Union wanted most efficient verification, including on-site inspections by the sides.

The United States and its NATO allies, Marshal Akhromeyev said, were worried by missiles with a range of less than 1,000 kilometres. The USSR is prepared to immediately conduct talks on this problem as well. But we are worried, too, because even now the West claims that the problem of medium-range missiles cannot be resolved unless the question of conventional weapons is settled. The Warsaw Treaty countries have long tabled their proposals on this score. But the West has not replied to them. Meanwhile, there is a numerical balance in conventional weapons and armed forces in Europe, though there are some differences between certain types of armaments.

NATO has in Europe far more anti-tank weapons and attack aviation and the Warsaw Treaty countries have more tanks and interceptors. But if we collate these figures, there

will be rough parity. The Soviet Union is willing to table at the talks concrete figures. But the NATO countries do not yet agree even to begin such talks.

As regards a possible Soviet-American summit meeting, Alexander Bessmertnykh said that the possibility of a summit depended on progress towards agreement on both medium-range missiles and other questions on the agenda of the Geneva talks. It would be premature to reply to this question today, he said. It is very important to create a proper basis for a summit. The main efforts should now be concentrated on the solution of problems of principle that are being discussed by the sides.

Answering a question about the influence of the Soviet proposal on the problem of the strategic nuclear forces, Viktor Karpov said that agreement of principle had been reached in Reykjavik on 50 per cent cuts in such forces at the first stage, and it was also agreed that the sides would seek their total elimination. It was that approach that was taken by the Soviet side to Geneva. But as for the American side, it is trying to retreat from Reykjavik and to take a different stand in Geneva. The Americans would like to confine the problem to 50 per cent cuts and have advanced a number of sublevels for the first stage, clearly hoping to achieve one-sided advantage. Recently the US delegation suggested a "broad" interpretation of the ABM Treaty, which is at odds with the letter and the spirit of that most important document. The purpose of the US is to legalise the SDI programme.

The USSR does not link the problem of eliminating American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe to the French and British nuclear forces of that class. Marshal Akhromeyev said. However, the US and the USSR cannot take part in the process of nuclear

arms reductions indefinitely only between themselves. At some point Britain and France will have to join that process — and we do not yet say at what point.

Answering the question about the motives of the Soviet Union in detaching the problem of medium-range missiles from the "package" of problems discussed in Reykjavik, Alexander Bessmertnykh said that the logic of the relationship of these questions was still working. However, there recently emerged a number of circumstances and the Soviet leadership took them into consideration. For instance, the Moscow International Forum strongly advocated a solution to that problem, while the situation in Geneva seems to be heading for deadlock once again. The problem of medium-range missiles lends itself to solution easier than the other three problems raised in Reykjavik because agreement was virtually achieved on its parameters. □

Warsaw Treaty New Initiatives

Documents of Meeting of Political Consultative Committee of Member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, Budapest, June 10-11, 1986 (includes Address to NATO Member States, All European Countries with Programme of Reducing Armed Forces and Conventional Armaments in Europe)

Price 20p

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

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Prime Minister of Iceland

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV received in the Kremlin on March 2 the Prime Minister of Iceland, Steingrimur Hermannsson.

"It is symbolic that your visit coincides with a new important step in the spirit of Reykjavik — our proposal on nuclear missiles in Europe," Mikhail Gorbachev said when welcoming the guest. "Reykjavik lives. It has shown to all that there exists a possibility to reach agreement on major problems on which mankind's survival hinges. That was a major breakthrough and we did everything to retain the height that was scaled there. Reykjavik has taken its place firmly in international life. And in Geneva we will firmly resist attempts to drag us away from it."

Mikhail Gorbachev again thanked the Government and the people of Iceland for responding to the request for holding the Soviet-US meeting in their capital and for doing their best for its success.

The interlocutors agreed that following the Reykjavik meeting it was possible to go only further and, as Steingrimur Hermannsson put it, to work so that it could continue to play its role in Soviet-US relations, in relations between East and West, North and South, and in general in relations between people.

"That we really intend to look for solutions in the spirit of the Reykjavik meeting," Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised. "is also evidenced by our proposal on Euromissiles. Thereby we are again inviting the US Administration to continue the quest, proceeding from the results of the Reykjavik meeting."

Greater trust

The Moscow Forum For a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity played a big role in that decision of ours. We keenly felt the sentiment of the world public, its apprehension and concern caused by the reaction of certain quarters to Reykjavik and the fact that nuclear testing has not been stopped, that SALT-2 has been undermined and that the ABM Treaty is in jeopardy.

We thought everything over very seriously and decided to take one more step that could lead to a serious shift. If an agreement was reached on medium-range missiles — and I am confident that it is possible — this would be of tremendous political significance, for until now only the process of armament was under way, but in this case disarmament would start. It would create an atmosphere of greater trust. It is substantial on the purely military plane, because a considerable

portion of an entire class of nuclear weapons would be eliminated and an entire continent would be freed from them.

We would like the agreement on medium-range missiles to stimulate talks on strategic arms reduction linked with non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, to prompt the opening of talks on conventional armaments and armed forces and to speed up progress in the elimination of chemical weapons. It would also improve psychologically the prospect of settling regional conflicts.

We do not put off the quest for joint solutions to other problems of international politics and global problems. But the first real step in the sphere of disarmament is important.

There are an abundance of problems in the world, and a vigorous policy from both sides is needed. I am confident that the objectively ripe requirements will make their impact on politics in one way or another. This would be promoting the involvement in politics of people capable of tackling problems. More and more people would realise in earnest the need for new thinking. The awareness of long-term interests common to entire humanity will be increasingly gaining the upper hand in world politics and there will be less and less circumstantial, election-governed considerations, subjugation of major problems to the vicissitudes of rivalry between parties.

Mikhail Gorbachev underlined the role of small and medium countries in the overall process of ameliorating the international situation. This applies, among others, to the idea of a nuclear-free zone in the north of Europe, whose establishment would become an important factor of scaling down general tension.

At the request of his interlocutor, Mikhail Gorbachev dwelt on problems of reorganisation in Soviet society. Our plan is simple: to utilise the economic, political, spiritual and all other potentialities of socialism to lend to society the dynamism for which it has matured and which it needs. The change is sweeping. The effort encounters difficulties. But this is necessary. The alternative is stagnation with which our people cannot and does not wish to put up with.

Society took the idea of reorganisation not on trust but following a serious discussion within the framework of that same "glasnost" which you pronounce in Russian. Our society is being remelted in this boiler of stormy public opinion and innovative creativity. Thus, it will acquire new equality in the years to come. But this will be an upgraded quality of socialism and not anything else.

We do not have the answers to all questions. We gain experience, draw lessons from what we have already accomplished. But the key direction

(continued on next page)

Statement on Soviet nuclear test

MAJOR-GENERAL Gely Batenin, a spokesman for the USSR Defence Ministry, made a statement on February 26 at a briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists at the Press Centre of the USSR Foreign Ministry. He said:

The Soviet Union today had to explode its first nuclear device after more than 18 months of silence at its testing ranges. The step could not have come as a surprise to anybody because the Soviet Union had declared openly as long ago as December 18 last year that it would not be able to observe unilateral restraint in that matter forever.

It is most regrettable that the incumbent US Administration, on which it depended whether the moratorium would be extended and become bilateral, has found it impossible other than to press on with its nuclear testing programme and has already carried out two nuclear blasts this year. It has thus completely ignored world public demands contained in the resolution of the UN General Assembly, the call of the Non-Aligned Movement, the proposals of the leaders of the Delhi Six, the opinions of parliaments and the world public. Washington's irresponsible policy has placed before us the need to terminate the unilateral moratorium. An historic chance for ending nuclear tests once and for all has been missed at this stage.

The first nuclear explosion was announced today in a TASS report. It was set off at the testing range in the area of Semipalatinsk. Its yield was under 20 kilotons.

The aim was to test the results of research in the field of nuclear explosion physics. I want to stress once more that the termination of the moratorium was a forced measure dictated by security interests only. In its test programme the Soviet Union will proceed exclusively from the minimum needed for fundamental research, for the aims of the national economy, for testing technical facilities and armaments for their resistance to nuclear explosions, including resistance to means which are being devel-

oped under the American SDI programme. In doing so the Soviet Union has no intention of copying the nuclear programme of the USA which is aimed at developing new types of armaments, including those within the SDI framework.

Only a minimum number of tests will be held with the purpose of developing munitions for maintaining strategic parity with the USA as regards nuclear armaments. The resumption of nuclear explosions by the Soviet Union does not mean that it has abandoned its resolute struggle for the complete cessation of such tests. Our principled attitude to the task of banning nuclear tests remains unchanged: we continue to regard its solution as a top-priority measure on the way to scaling down nuclear armaments and their subsequent complete elimination, and we shall support the efforts of all states going in this direction.

All the Soviet proposals for ending nuclear tests remain in force. To solve without delay the problem of a comprehensive nuclear test ban we suggest beginning full-scale talks, which the USSR is ready to conduct in any composition and at any forum, but, of course, with the participation of the USA. In the process of such talks it would be possible to reach agreement also on a stage-by-stage solution of this task, having in view ratification of the Soviet-American treaties of 1974 and 1976 and imposition of intermediate limitations on the number and yield of nuclear explosions. We are leaving the door open also on the question of the moratorium. The Soviet Union is ready to get back to it any day and month when the United States announces the termination of its nuclear tests. Despite all this we do not lose hope that Washington will heed the calls of the world community and reconsider its destructive attitude to this problem.

The Soviet Union will not miss a single opportunity for stepping up international efforts in the matter of banning nuclear tests. It is convinced that its position on this issue will meet with appropriate understanding and support from all peace forces of our planet. □

ON REYKJAVIK

Documents and materials on the Soviet-US summit:

**Mikhail Gorbachev:
The Results and Lessons of Reykjavik**
Price 10p.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:
Once More on Reykjavik:
People are Entitled to Know the Truth**
Price 35p.

USSR Foreign Ministry's statement on arms limitation treaties

A spokesman for the USSR Foreign Ministry made the following statement on February 26 in Moscow:

The US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency several days ago issued a report on US compliance with arms limitation treaties.

It is an attempt to justify the American side's violations of existing agreements on arms limitation and reduction. It is an attempt to cover up its unseemly activities undercutting the system of treaties in this field and opening the gates to an uncontrolled arms race.

This policy of the US Administration has manifested itself openly in its long-planned and systematically-executed practical steps to destroy the SALT-2 Treaty sealing military parity between the USSR and the United States and limiting the strategic offensive arms race.

The Administration of President Reagan decided against seeking the Treaty's ratification and embarked on an unprecedented strategic arms build-up programme.

The United States began developing new generations of intercontinental ballistic missiles, strategic bombers and nuclear-powered missile submarines.

The SALT-2 Treaty proved a serious obstacle

to this programme and the United States decided to give it up for lost.

Late last year it stopped honouring its commitments under this Treaty altogether.

The United States is now planting a mine under the ABM Treaty which it regards as an impediment to SDI, a programme for creating a large-scale and partially space-based missile defence.

As SDI-related work has been stepped up, it has increasingly been in contradiction with that Treaty.

The American side began looking for bogus juridical excuses to circumvent the Treaty and came up with the so-called "broad interpretation" of the Treaty, which, it is hoped in Washington, would enable it to continue any kind of work under the SDI programme including that in outer space, while formally remaining a party to the Treaty.

The US "broad interpretation", if practically applied, would lift all constraints on the creation of a space-based ABM defence, emasculate the essence of the Treaty and foil the nuclear arms reduction process.

Plans to develop new kinds of nuclear weapons and nuclear devices for ABM defence purposes under the SDI programme underlie Washing-

ton's negative stand on the issue of ending nuclear testing.

The United States prefers keeping silent on the commitments it has made in the 1963 treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty of 1969, which set the goal of a general and complete end to nuclear testing.

The United States has openly declared its intention to continue nuclear explosions for as long as nuclear weapons exist.

The nuclear component of the SDI programme also threatens to scuttle the 1967 treaty on the principles governing the activities of states in the exploration of outer space, which prohibits orbiting any objects with nuclear weapons or otherwise deploying them in outer space.

Facts testify that the United States is on its way to opening the floodgates to a runaway arms race and breaking the agreements that form the basis of strategic stability, the spokesman for the USSR Foreign Ministry stressed.

The Soviet Union, a consistent advocate of strict compliance with the obligations assumed to limit and reduce arms, strongly denounces this policy of the US Administration. □

Boris Yeltsin's statement in Nicaragua

BORIS YELTSIN, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, member of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and First Secretary of the Moscow Party Committee, made a statement at Managua Airport on March 3. He is heading a delegation

(Continued from previous page)

has been chosen and it was accepted by the party and the people.

Under discussion were some humanitarian issues, prospects for wider contacts between the citizens of various countries with respect for the values which are cherished by each of them, and possibilities for regular and competent international discussions on the topical problems of our times.

Mikhail Gorbachev asked the Prime Minister to convey kindly greetings to the Icelandic people, cordial feelings for whom have eminently grown in the Soviet Union in connection with the Reykjavik meeting. He expressed satisfaction with the mutual understanding which, as was the case in Reykjavik, again manifested itself during the conversation.

Steingrimur Hermannsson spoke of the great interest being shown in the West and in Iceland for everything that is now taking place in the USSR, and wished the Soviet leadership success.

"This inspires hope in all of us," he said. "for the world has become too pessimistic and glum. It needs the stimuli of optimism. You in the USSR are creating such a stimulus by reorganising your country and by counting on a dialogue which the world is in need of in order to get out of the hard situation and on to the road of co-operation." □

of the USSR Supreme Soviet which arrived in Nicaragua on March 2 for an official friendly visit at the invitation of the Republic's National Assembly.

He said, among other things, that the Soviet people strongly denounced the interventionist policy pursued by the more aggressive imperialist circles with regard to Nicaragua and demanded that an end be put to their criminal policy of state terrorism. The Soviet Union is a staunch supporter of a just political settlement in Central America which should be achieved by the Latin American countries themselves.

Boris Yeltsin said: "Our visit is a new step in the consolidation of parliamentary ties with friendly Latin American countries which have already become traditional. In present-day conditions parliaments are playing an especially important part in the struggle for the saving of humanity from a nuclear catastrophe, for the elimination of hotbeds of hostility and military conflicts, for the building of a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

"There is no doubt that the visit will be a continuation of the development of Soviet-Nicaraguan relations based on equality, mutual respect and fraternal solidarity. We are sure that a further consolidation of friendship and co-operation between our countries meets the basic interests of the people of the two countries and promotes the cause of peace."

Answering questions from journalists, Yeltsin said that in the February 28 statement of Mikhail Gorbachev another step had been made towards the lessening of world tension within the framework of the Soviet global programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. We hope, he pointed out, that all the peoples of the world will meet with satisfaction the new decision of the Soviet leadership. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's statement in Canberra

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, made the following statement upon arrival in Canberra on March 3:

"We have travelled half way round the world to pledge our commitment to one simple but great idea. As presented by Mikhail Gorbachev, it says: all the states and peoples of the world must contribute to the establishment of an all-embracing system of international security and peace and the word of all to this effect should be listened to and accepted with the utmost attention. We have arrived in Australia to exchange views on the possibilities and ways for transition to a nuclear-free and non-violent world, for achieving tranquility and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and promoting co-operation between our states." □

On Soviet foreign policy

The following booklets are available at the prices shown:

- The Main Soviet Proposals on Disarmament**40p
- Our Aim: Universal International Security, by Vadim Zagladin**40p
- The USSR in the World Economic Structure**30p
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International reaction to new Soviet initiative on elimination of missiles

SWEDISH Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson spoke highly of the fresh Soviet peace initiative that an agreement be immediately concluded on eliminating American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe which was set forth by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Speaking at a rally at Linköping University held on March 1 in tribute to the memory of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, he pointed out that this Soviet step is a source of hope for a resolute turnabout. "I hope that this can lead to a specific dialogue between the USSR and the USA and above all to specific results," the Swedish Prime Minister stressed.

Canadian Foreign Minister Joseph Clark acclaims the proposal contained in the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev, to single out the issue of medium-range missiles in Europe and to conclude immediately a separate agreement on it. A statement by the minister circulated on March 1 contains a call on the Soviet Union and the USA to conduct negotiations on this proposal in a "constructive spirit". In Clark's opinion, the achievement of an agreement without delay on Euro-missiles and the revival of the process of top-level meetings would help improve East-West relations and would give an important impetus to other arms control negotiations.

The Norwegian Government received with satisfaction the new Soviet peace proposal. The Soviet initiative is inspiring, Norway's Defence Minister John Jorgen Holst, who is also acting Foreign Minister, said in an interview to a Norwegian news agency. He said the conclusion of an agreement on the elimination of all medium-range missiles in Europe is fully in keeping with the Norwegian Government's stand in the situation taking shape. "It is also

(continued from page 79)

doors open for any honest steps to limit and reduce arms, to secure dependable verification over this process and to strengthen international mutual security.

Our every step along the path of socialist renewal is both a victory for the forces of peace and progress and a setback for the forces of aggression and militarism.

This is, comrades, how the issues we are advancing in domestic policy merge with the matters to be resolved in the international arena.

The tasks of acceleration, reorganisation of socialist society, prevention of nuclear catastrophe, demilitarisation of the world and humanisation of international relations form the core of the strategic course of the 27th CPSU Congress, a course confirmed and particularised by the January plenum of the Central Committee.

Let me assure you, comrades, that the Party shall not depart from the course it has taken.

Relying on your support, on the support of the workers, farmers and intellectuals: all Soviet people, the Party shall advance — resolutely, boldly and purposefully — along the path started 70 years ago by the Great October Socialist Revolution.

I wish the Congress successful work, and the delegates and guests big new accomplishments, health and vigour. □

heartening that the USSR has singled out the problem of medium-range missiles from the range of questions on which the talks are conducted in Geneva, and we hope for an early conclusion of the agreement."

President Reagan has now an opportunity to conclude a history-making agreement in the field of arms control not only as regards medium-range weapons, but also as regards strategic weapons, said Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee. Speaking in a CBS television interview, he pointed out that, in his opinion, the USSR's proposal that a separate treaty be concluded on medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe is a highly positive one. Nunn noted that, in his opinion, much progress could be made in that field. Everything necessary for that is there, and it only takes serious talks.

On March 1 Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone of Japan declared in support of the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev, in which it is suggested that the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe be singled out from the package of issues and that a separate agreement be concluded on it.

Addressing journalists in Tokyo, Nakasone said that he welcomed the initiative in the whole, the Kyodo Tsushin News Agency reports.

The Prime Minister of Japan emphasised that a dialogue should begin, first of all, with issues that could be agreed upon.

Hans van den Broek, the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, has welcomed the fresh proposals in the field of disarmament put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev, a spokesman for the Dutch Foreign Ministry said. Hans van den Broek pointed out that the Soviet proposals would influence the cause of the disarmament talks in Geneva.

Austria welcomes the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev on eliminating Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe, said Alois Mock, Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister of Austria. The safety of the world, the survival of humanity should be ensured through joint efforts and political means, not by weapons.

"The population of our neutral state in the centre of Europe is particularly interested in eliminating the nuclear weapons which are deployed in direct proximity to Austria," he stressed.

Australia's Foreign Minister William Hayden stated that he welcomed the Soviet Union's readiness, announced by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev, to attain a separate agreement with the United States on eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe.

In a statement for the Press the minister expressed the hope that all remaining problems in connection with the agreement on medium-range missiles would be successfully resolved in the course of the negotiations and that this would

lead to further progress at the Geneva negotiations.

The proposal to conclude a separate agreement on medium-range missiles in Europe, advanced by Mikhail Gorbachev, cleared the way for reaching agreement on the complete elimination and destruction of all Soviet and American medium-range nuclear missiles, FRG Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said. This also meets the aspirations of the FRG Government, he went on.

The Soviet Union's readiness to embark subsequently on talks on theatre missiles meets the interests of European security. It can be hoped that this will have a positive effect also on talks on other aspects of disarmament. The FRG Government will be contributing to this, the Minister said. Its striving for the broadest of co-operation and intensive dialogue with the Soviet Union will be promoting a successful course of the talks on disarmament. The FRG Government also hopes that the existing agreements in the sphere of arms limitation will be observed.

Belgian External Relations Minister Leo Tindemans hailed the new Soviet peace initiative as an important and positive measure.

Speaking on Radio Brussels on March 1, he stressed that the proposal by Mikhail Gorbachev that the issue of medium-range missiles in Europe be singled out from the package of issues and a separate agreement be immediately concluded on it was consistent with Belgium's wishes.

The minister said that this proposal, once realised, could promote progress in other areas in which talks were still very difficult, and create a climate of confidence.

Niels Helveg Petersson, a Deputy to the Danish Parliament and leader of the Radical Venstre Party, called the Soviet proposal on withdrawing medium-range missiles from Europe an historic chance. The Soviet proposal is constructive and is in strict conformity with understandings reached between the Soviet Union and the USA in Reykjavik, he said. The prominent political leader heavily censured arguments by opponents of the Soviet proposal, emphasising the incompatibility of their mode of thinking with imperatives of the present time.

Spain acclaims the proposal put forth by Mikhail Gorbachev on singling out the Euro-missile issue from the nuclear disarmament package and on the immediate conclusion of a new agreement on this type of weapon as "positive and of interest for Europe". Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordóñez told the EFE Agency. Touching on the "Star Wars" programme, Fernandez Ordóñez pointed out that explorations under the SDI programme should be in "strict observance with the ABM Treaty".

(N.B. The cross-heads in this bulletin were inserted by Soviet News—Ed.)