

AT THE 28th CONGRESS OF THE CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev meets secretaries of primary Party cells

THE democratisation of the Party, the setting of the Party's priorities, the degree of the subordination of communists to resolutions adopted by a Party meeting or a conference, as well as other burning problems were discussed at a meeting Mikhail Gorbachev had with secretaries of primary Party organisations — delegates to the 28th Party Congress (there are about 500 of them at the Congress). The meeting took place on July 6.

The delegates set the tone of the conversation. It was pointed out that many delegates have not decided so far what position to assume and are closely following resolutions put forward by Gorbachev. They trust them and check their own stands with them. The General Secretary was asked to approve the versions of resolutions which are expected by representatives of primary Party organisations, not by officials from the Central Committee apparatus. Gorbachev answered: "Previously, at a Supreme Soviet session, I was criticised for participating in a discussion. This time the opposite remark was made. I believe that one should always act depending on a concrete situation."

Speaking about the Party's democratisation which, judging by statements of the delegates, is the central idea at the Congress, Gorbachev stressed that it would be put into practice through the transfer of power to rank-and-file Party members, to primary Party organisations.

There are no problems that communists cannot resolve on their own. The idea that democratisation boils down to the right to admit new members or to expel people from the Party is just groundless.

Problems of the Party's personnel policy evoked a special and natural interest. Responding to the question about the reason for a shortage of bright personalities in the Party, Gorbachev said: "I think, there will be enough of them in the near future." His statement that more representatives of primary Party organisations will be elected to the Central Committee were welcomed by the audience.

The question was asked at the meeting whether consolidation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin was possible and on what terms. Gorbachev said that Yeltsin's speech at the Congress puzzled him. He put forward some unacceptable ideas, specifically, depoliticisation, the transfer of the Party's property and so on. "And still I believe that we shall find ways for agreement with Boris Yeltsin. The destiny of the Party, the country and perestroika, on which people are pinning their hopes, comes first with me. This is beyond any personal differences for me." □



Gorbachev and Ryzhkov meet delegates

SOVIET Communist Party leader Mikhail Gorbachev assured Soviet workers that the working class would continue to be the "foundation" of the Party. Together with Prime Minister Nikolai

Ryzhkov he had a meeting in the Kremlin on July 8 with workers and peasants who are taking part in the 28th Party Congress.

Much hope was pinned on the meeting. Before and during the Congress anxiety was expressed on more than one occasion that the working class and the peasants were being moved to the background of political life in the course of perestroika. Some delegates pointed to the reduction of their share among the authorities at all levels. The percentage of workers at the current Congress is smaller than at any time in the past.

The Party is guilty before workers, and proper conclusions will be drawn from it, Gorbachev assured them.

Speaking about the meeting in a TV interview broadcast the same night, Gorbachev said that the main conclusion he made at the meeting was that workers and peasants hold dear the destiny of the Party, that they favour the speeding up of the Party's rejuvenation.

According to Gorbachev and Ryzhkov, they also discussed at the meeting the intention of some coalminers' collectives to hold a political strike on July 11. Gorbachev believes that the idea of the strike did not emerge inside the working class, that someone is stirring the workers. He expressed hope that the miners would display commonsense. Today we need practical work, not ultimatums, Gorbachev remarked.

The meeting was another in a series of such meetings. Last week Gorbachev met with secretaries of primary Party organisations, who are taking part in the Congress, with heads of regional and city Party committees. □

Party leaders report to Congress

PARTY leaders continued to make reports at the 28th Party Congress. After the report of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee delivered on July 2 by Party chief Mikhail Gorbachev, on July 3 reports were made by members of the Soviet Communist Party Politburo Nikolai Ryzhkov, Vadim Medvedev and Alexander Yakovlev.

Politburo member and Secretary of the Central Committee Lev Zaikov was the first to take the floor. He said that in the Politburo he was instructed to supervise the work of the defence industries, the implementation of the armaments programme and the military-technological aspects of international politics.

Zaikov said that "the Politburo coordinated

and rigidly controlled all the problems of the country's defences." He said this applied to the design and production of military equipment, military construction and the working out of the basic principles of Soviet foreign policy. The Politburo was the centre that formulated proposals for arms reduction talks, and that coordinated the activity of the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry, the General Staff and the other agencies.

Gorbachev re-elected

Mikhail Gorbachev was re-elected General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee at the 28th Congress on July 10.

Zaikov said that a special commission was formed at the Politburo for the purpose. It dealt with military-technological aspects of international politics, including preparations for arms negotiations.

Zaikov was instructed to head the commission, which included Alexander Yakovlev, Eduard Shevardnadze, senior officials of the Defence Ministry, the KGB and other agencies. "Until recently the commission's work was not mentioned," Zaikov said.

He said that the chief result of the commission's work was to put an end to the Afghan war and the overall improvement of the international climate.

A move away from excessive secrecy, the publication of the defence budget and unilateral

measures for arms reduction have become additional arguments in favour of the active foreign policy of the USSR.

"Not only politicians but peoples of the world came to believe the Soviet Union. The USSR ceased to be regarded as 'the evil empire'," Zaikov said.

Regarding assertions that the Soviet Union makes too many concessions to the West, above all to the United States, Zaikov said: "it is characteristic that American conservatives face President Bush with the same reasoning."

"There can be no talks without mutual concessions," Zaikov said, "but never have our concessions jeopardised the national interests of the Soviet State. When concessions were made, they stemmed from the historic asymmetry of the Soviet and American armed forces."

Zaikov suggested that an effective mechanism of inter-departmental discussion of military-political issues be used in the Defence Council of the Soviet President.

He said that in conditions when functions of Party and government bodies are separated, the Party should not avoid responsibility for most important security matters. Meanwhile, the burden of decision-making should be shifted towards the President and the Supreme Soviet.

Reporting about his work, Politburo member Yegor Ligachev said he had been in charge of the Central Committee Secretariat until September 1988, when he was appointed Chairman of the Soviet Communist Party Central Commit-

(continued on next page)

IN THIS ISSUE

Eduard Shevardnadze's report to Congress p226

Policy group's discussions. Economic policy section/Agarian policy/Foreign policy p227

Yakovlev faces sharp criticism at Congress p228

Soviet Foreign Minister outlines foreign policy p229

Eduard Shevardnadze's report to Congress

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said he was content not to run for the Soviet Communist Party's top bodies.

Speaking at the Party's 28th Congress on July 3, Shevardnadze, who is a Politburo member, said: "I think that a minister need not be member of the Politburo, the Presidential Council, the Defence Council or various international bodies."

"If the goal of these reports is to determine our positions, I have never concealed mine: I have supported, and will continue to support, perestroika, the Gorbachev policy - as it is described in this country and the rest of the world, the renovation of society, a rule-of-law state and full democratisation."

Shevardnadze said that the developments in the world in the last quarter of the century had no longer been marked by struggle between the two opposing systems or determined exclusively by "conflict-class interests".

He denounced dogmatism and ideological stereotypes and said that he had "actively defended" and been implementing the idea of the "priority of common human values over class, group or other interests."

Shevardnadze said that an analysis of Soviet Foreign Ministry materials had brought him to

the conclusion that the ideological confrontation with the West over the past two decades had cost the Soviet Union 700 billion roubles in military spending in addition to what was needed to achieve parity.

Shevardnadze rejected criticism levelled at Soviet foreign policy and at himself personally in connection with "concessions in the security area." He said: "I am firmly convinced that our country needs strong armed forces. But this is not everything. One can arm oneself to the teeth and still fear an attack, and one can be confident that there will not be an attack. Policy can provide such conditions when a country will not have enemies."

Dwelling on the principle of defence sufficiency, Shevardnadze emphasised: "squandering a quarter of our budget on military expenditures we have ruined the country. We shall have no need for defence, as a ruined country and impoverished people have no need for an army."

Shevardnadze said, specifically, that besides loss of life, the Afghan war cost the Soviet Union 60 billion roubles.

He said that the creation of a military infrastructure on the border with the People's Republic of China entailed the expenditure of 200 billion roubles.

Shevardnadze believes there is only one way

out: politics should assume the task of creating a reserve of security while defence expenditures are being cut.

Shevardnadze gave much attention to the situation in Eastern Europe. He said that "Soviet diplomacy has not set, nor could it set the aim of opposing the elimination in other countries of the administrative-command systems and totalitarian regimes that had been imposed on them and are alien to them."

Shevardnadze emphasised that it would be impossible to interfere in the internal affairs of those countries "even if events taking place in Eastern Europe were opposite to our interests". "Today we really recognise, and not just pay lip service to the equality of nations, sovereignty of peoples, non-interference in their affairs, their right to freedom of choice."

"I believe Soviet diplomacy and our entire policy have played a definite role in the fact that in this dangerous turn in the destinies of our allies we have kept together and continue advancing together."

Regarding German unity, the Soviet Foreign Minister said that the division of Germany which had existed for many decades was "artificial and unnatural." He expressed confidence that the Soviet Union will be co-operating on a large scale and to mutual advantage with a united Germany in politics, in economics and in other areas. □

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tee Commission on agrarian policy at a Central Committee plenum.

After the setting up of Central Committee commissions, the Secretariat did not work for a long time, and then only convened occasionally, Ligachev said.

This was a time of wasted opportunities in the Secretariat's work, he said.

Commenting on agriculture, Ligachev said the agrarian sector was a shambles in many parts of the country.

The agrarian commission of the CPSU Central Committee has failed to convince the government, the Supreme Soviet and the country's leadership of the expediency and the need to prioritise agricultural development, Ligachev said.

Commenting on the concept of a market economy, Ligachev said he was not convinced by "the introduction of a new notion - labour private property." The type of property ownership is a strategic, rather than tactical issue, he said.

A class approach in composing local legislatures has been illegitimately abolished, he said. This leads to an underestimation of the workers' and peasants' movement.

Lashing out at the anti-alcohol campaign begun in the country in 1985, Ligachev stressed that alcohol abuse is a social tragedy, "a slow Chernobyl for the entire country." The fight against alcohol abuse is not yet over, he said.

Certain forces in the country are struggling against the socialist system and the Communist Party, he said. "These forces act energetically, assertively and have strong influence in certain news organisations."

"My open and uncompromising stand on genuine socialism and the Party's role are the reason why I was put in the centre of political struggle, portrayed as a conservative and almost anti-perestroika figure," he said.

"I belong neither to the conservatives, nor radicals. I am simply a realist. Blinkered radicalism and improvised dashing to and fro have produced little in the five years of perestroika," he said.

Reforms should be implemented "consistently, gradually, but unswervingly, from one stage to another," he said. □

Yuri Maslyukov on new economic methods

YURI MASLYUKOV, Chairman of the USSR State Planning Committee and Politburo member, told the Congress on July 3 that "comprehensive development of economic methods of management" could take the country out of crisis.

Maslyukov said "the 'dead zone', where the old management system is already not functioning and the new one has yet to begin operation should be overcome with the minimum of losses." At the same time he criticised the "shock therapy" variant of a transition to the market and said that "one cannot impose on people what they are not prepared for. It is necessary for them to feel the inevitability and expediency of every subsequent step towards the market economy."

In the next two to three months, Maslyukov said, the government will draft urgent measures to facilitate the transition to the market, including specific methods and scale of denationalisation, fundamental anti-monopoly legislation, and the legal framework for creating the market infrastructure. Together with constituent republics, a more definite attitude should be worked out with regard to price reform and problems of social security in market conditions, a framework laid for a new credit-financial policy, and cardinal changes in foreign economic activity.

Among the causes behind the current economic crisis, Maslyukov named "the purely mechanical attitude towards the acceleration of the economy, the overly hasty dismantling of existing systems of management of public production, the election of senior managerial staff while relevant economic regulators and the general economic culture of market relations were missing, and the prohibitive anti-alcohol campaign." The slogan "everything that is not prohibited by law is allowed" also had a negative effect compounded by the lack of normative acts and economic laws.

As a result, Maslyukov noted, "state management structures have practically lost control over many important aspects of economic development, including the regulation of the population's monetary incomes."

As a result also, "some rates of development have slowed down, the output of some products has been reduced absolutely and, the gravest consequence, there is unheard-of tension on the consumer goods market."

Speaking about his vision of the centre's role after the conclusion of the treaty of union, Maslyukov said that "state regulation must ensure the fulfilment of the more important inter-republican programmes, the rational organisation of economic ties, and the formation of an all-union market as the basis of economic stability in the country with the interests of all republics and the USSR as a whole taken into account."

The speaker said that the USSR State Planning Committee has begun to draft plans for 1991 which must "ensure the transition of the economy to market relations." □

THE SOVIET ECONOMY

At the Crossroads of Perestroika

by Leonid Korenev

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Policy groups' discussions

Economic policy section

THE Communist Party's prestige in society will depend mainly on the social and economic programme it sets forth. The recognition of this thesis, formulated by Soviet economist Pavel Bunich, set the tone for the discussion of the economic policy of the Party during the July 5 session of the Congress.

Nearly 800 delegates to the 28th Soviet Party Congress assembled at one working group to debate the proposed policy and suggest alternative programmes for economic reform and ways to overcome the country's deep economic crisis.

Many speakers stressed that the old economic management mechanism has been fully dismantled during perestroika years, while a new mechanism has yet to be created.

"Society", Uzbek metallurgist Anatoli Anokhin said, "is facing a dilemma: whether to go back to centralised diktat, or to speed up the transition to a market — there is no third option."

Despite strong anti-market sentiments among many delegates — some of them even called on the government to "denounce the market as incompatible with Marxism-Leninism" — the majority favoured the second variant, focusing on ways to make the transition shorter and less painful.

One of the most interesting proposals was made by Lev Golyas, a car worker from Togliatti. He proposed creating for the duration of the transition "a two-tier economy." The first tier will combine the state order, funds and stable prices, the second — which must gradually expand, according to Golyas, — free prices and entrepreneurship.

Chairman of the State Committee for Science and Technology Nikolai Laverov said that proceeding from the experience of "new industrialised countries" success can be reached only by concentrating on the creation of "tomorrow's technologies." There is no sense in imitating Western economies of the eighties, he insisted, or else the country may find itself bringing up the rear of civilisation.

Delegates were very near unanimous in their critical attitude towards the government's attempts to stabilise the economy and overcome the crisis.

"The credit of confidence in the country's leadership is almost fully exhausted," said Vyacheslav Serov, head of the Assembly Trust from Udmurtia (a central Russian autonomous republic). The government's plan for the transition to market, he said, "boils down to spiraling prices under the smoke screen of the yet-unused slogan 'Forward to the Market', or else testifies to the fact that the Council of Ministers does not know what to do, and hence offers only what it has on hand."

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The atmosphere at the session somewhat calmed down after delegates talked with Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin in the lobby: Abalkin's circumstantial and patient explanations and replies on interminable queries clarified many issues.

The working group was addressed by Central Committee secretaries Alexandra Biryukova and Oleg Baklanov. □



Agarian policy

PARTICIPANTS in the discussions on July 5 at the 'Agrarian Policy' working group at the 28th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party emphasised the "great importance attached by the CPSU to the agrarian policy."

Mikhail Gorbachev and Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov took part in the discussions.

Gorbachev said that the resolution of food shortages "will eliminate two-thirds of the country's social and economic problems."

He emphasised the importance of the "correct determination of farmers' role, of relations between the city and the village, and the need for equivalent exchanges between them." He also pointed to the need to "reveal the potential of collective farms."

Gorbachev urged delegates from the countryside "not to yield to appeals by left-wing adventurists and by those who want the past to return."

He called for the "unification of society's sound forces, both left-wingers intent on achieving changes for the better and sensible conservatives preventing us from embarking on the road of adventurism, in the main area of perestroika."

The Party leader welcomed statements by agrarians during the discussion that the CPSU "can rely on farmers' support" and that they "do not feel the need to unite in an individual, farmers' party."

Prime Minister Ryzhkov told delegates that the food problem "should be solved through the social transformation of the countryside and the development of the processing industry."

He supported a proposal for setting up a ministry of agriculture and said the government would submit this issue to parliament.

Ryzhkov expressed conviction that agriculture needed a market economy, but added that the transition to this economy "should be gradual."

He proposed preserving the centralised distribution of 40 per cent of material resources for the countryside for next year. This, he said, would "protect major agricultural industries until new economic ties are established there."

The discussions, which lasted for several hours, reflected the acuteness of the food problem and the economic and social position of 40 million farmers in the country.

Many speakers said that the priority development of the agrarian sector, which is supported by all sections of society, "has so far been only declared."

The material and technical basis of agriculture and the processing industry is not being developed and strengthened. The quality of farm machinery supplied to collective and state farms remains low, which negatively affects production.

Delegates criticised the optimistic speech by Ivan Skiba, head of the Agrarian Department of the Central Committee. One delegate said: "One has the impression that the Central Committee has no control of the situation in the

country."

However, speeches contained a few constructive proposals for radically improving the situation in agriculture. Many speakers focused on local issues. □



Foreign policy debated

THE Congress's working group 'Soviet Foreign Policy Through the Eyes of Delegates to the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress' focused on high priority issues in foreign policy, mistakes in dealing with them and ways to rectify errors.

The section's work began with a report from Presidential Council member Yevgeni Primakov, a non-voting Politburo member. He told delegates that "the Party's international policy during the period under discussion was not only correct but also truly triumphant. It helped overcome the universal fear of the holocaust and total annihilation. It spelled victory over confrontation, which led nowhere."

Many delegates disagreed with Primakov. Thirty delegates discussed a wide array of issues — from securing peace in the world to the living conditions of Soviet specialists working in other countries.

The tone was very sharp in the speech by Military Council member General Ivan Mikulin, chief of the Political Department of the Southern Army Group. "Where do you see improvement in the international situation?" he queried. "Is it in our loss of allies in Europe?" The general charged Soviet diplomats with "looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses" and stressed that "the West is building up its own security exclusively at our expense."

Crimean writer Oleg Kirillov echoed some of the general's statements and said "the success of Soviet foreign policy was largely accounted for by the ability to give in."

General Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, foiled many invectives when he said that the Soviet position in all disarmament talks is formed with due account taken of the country's defence sufficiency.

Many delegates raised the issue of East European developments and the Soviet Communist Party's attitude to these developments. The range of assessments was extremely broad: Party chief of Soviet offices in Mongolia Mikhail Nazarov insisted that "Eastern Europe must provide our outlet into an integrated Europe." Admiral Khvatov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Pacific Fleet stated that "we have lost allies in the West, we have no allies in the East, and as a result we have returned to the 1939 situation."

Participants paid great attention to speeches by career diplomats, including Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Kvitsinsky, who stressed that "the peace offensive of our country in the international arena after April 1985 deprived the West of the possibility of painting our country as the enemy of peace."

Head of the Central Committee International Department Valentin Falin responded to numerous questions from delegates. Speaking about developments in Eastern Europe he denied that the changes in the political landscape there were the direct consequence of perestroika. He said it was rather "the Stalinist model disintegrating."

Georgian Communist Party leader Givi Gumbardidze, who chaired the discussion, told TASS, summing up the results, that the main message of the discussion was a call "to make our international policy still more effective." □

Yakovlev faces sharp criticism at Congress

SOVIET Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Alexander Yakovlev, who is also a Politburo member, informed the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress of his intention to quit the Party political leadership.

Yakovlev had to answer questions in a very tense political atmosphere in the hall. A delegate accused his colleagues that they "submitted to Alexander Yakovlev's public speaker talent and took his account too warmly." Yakovlev accounted for his work on the second day of the Congress.

Yakovlev said the majority of questions he received were critical. Delegates who earlier refused to discuss Party responsibility for "stagnation leaders" Grishin, Kunayev and Aliyev, accused Yakovlev, an architect of perestroika, of "connivance to separatism in the Baltic republics," "disorganisation of the CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty," "loss of Eastern Europe" and even "hypocrisy and dishonesty."

Recalling the statements against separatism and nationalism he made during his visits to the Baltics, Yakovlev said to normalise the situation in the region "the sides should display restraint and responsibility, hold a political dialogue. The rapid progress of perestroika and a new union treaty are needed. The recent actions in Moscow and Vilnius are moves in the right direction."

Yakovlev agreed with a proposal by his critics to set up a commission to investigate his activities during his visits to the Baltics. The commission should determine his responsibility. At the same time, Yakovlev noted that "responsibility should be mutual" and if the commission fails to find anything wrong, the initiators of the campaign against Yakovlev should be punished.

Speaking of the processes going on in Eastern

Europe, Yakovlev said "if the peoples turn their backs on communist parties," this shows that "they do not consider these parties' policy as their own and this cannot be explained only by actions of anti-socialist forces."

You cannot do anything with life, Yakovlev said. "A Central Committee decision cannot annul the fact that the industrial production in South Korea is ten-fold greater than in North Korea and the standard of living in West Germany is much higher than in East Germany," Yakovlev said.

As for a German unification, the issue has been "raised by life itself," Yakovlev said. He said he hoped "a new peaceful period in the life of humanity has begun and the construction of a civilisation of a new type without wars and arms is being started." □

(Moscow, July 7)

Abalkin urges Congress to opt for market economy

DEPUTY Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin in his speech on July 3 urged the landmark Communist Party Congress to come out in favour of a regulated market economy.

Academician Abalkin, one of the architect's of the government plan to phase in such an economy, was speaking at the end of the convention's afternoon session.

"For any mass movement, it is important to identify the thrust of progressive changes in society and assist them in every way. A party attempting to interfere with them and challenge the logic of social progress will inevitably be pushed out of the arena of historical struggle and

be defeated," he argued.

He blamed the current crisis in the Party on the fact that the socialist idea "has begun to lose its appeal for the populace and is no longer an idea that bring people together."

However, he said the fate of socialism cannot be linked to just one or even several countries. From the moment of its inception, the socialist movement has been a global movement, bringing about prodigious changes in most countries, Abalkin asserted.

He argued against linking the fate of socialism to any one model of socialism. The crash of any such model, for example, one based on the wholesale nationalisation of the economy and the rejection of a market, does not at all mean the collapse of the idea of socialism, Abalkin said.

He insisted that socialism in the USSR "has not been built, and we have not yet lived under socialism."

He also predicted that the Party's future will hinge on its ability to spearhead efforts to build socialism and use the drive to stimulate social stability and cohesion.

Abalkin dismissed as "dogma" and "myth" claims about the possibility of a prosperous economy without a transitional period and without the costs involved in the transition.

He also ridiculed contentions that it is possible to change over to a market economy, while preserving administrative controls over prices and leaving the pricing system intact. □

Medvedev on ideology

ANSWERING delegates' questions, Party ideology chief Vadim Medvedev said that he received a total 750 questions. Many delegates, he said, expressed the view that allegedly ideology in the Party had crumbled and ask what made it possible to bring the ideological work in the Party down to such a level.

Medvedev says that his assessment of the ideological work can plunge one into a false situation. In the past, "when hypocrisy and lies, fossilized thinking and dogmatism reigned in ideology, when there was a vast gap between word and deed and openness shamelessly limited, ideology, 'flourished'," Medvedev said and asked whether "ideology had crumbled now that we are shedding all this and have embarked on the path of renewal."

He questioned arguments put by several delegates that a single person was capable of eroding ideology. Admitting serious omissions in this work, Medvedev dismissed as "a stereotype of public consciousness" the position, according to which "the CPSU does not have an ideology of perestroika."

"Without abdicating in any measure the responsibility from the ideological front, I consider that the ideology and the theory of perestroika, our notions about the humane, democratic socialism can be forged only in practical, revolutionary activity, they can only be the fruit of collective efforts," Medvedev stressed.

Many questions dealt with the mass media, Medvedev said. The overwhelming majority of the notes passionately call for "squeezing" the news media. Medvedev believes that "as conditions of work for the Soviet press are being drastically changed, methods of their guidance should also be changed. They need to rely on law. Certainly, they also need to rely on the journalist's Party and civic conscience," Medvedev emphasised.

(continued on page 230)

Yeltsin calls for Party name change

CONSERVATIVE forces in the Soviet Union who were on the defensive at the initial stage of perestroika, have now launched an offensive, President of the Russian Supreme Soviet Boris Yeltsin said on July 6 from the rostrum of the 28th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

Yeltsin said: "Recent years have shown that the actions of conservative forces in the Party have not been neutralised. Quite the contrary, too much was said to the effect that we are all in the same boat, on the same side of the barricades, in one line, and share the same thinking."

Such a stand "ensured the security" of the conservative forces in the Soviet Communist Party, and strengthened their confidence that "they can get revenge," Yeltsin said. He believes that the same was shown also by the constituent Congress of the Russian Communist Party.

Yeltsin believes that only the 28th Congress can decide the destiny of the Party, to be more precise, the question of the top echelons of the Party is being decided.

"It is an illusion to think that after all the dissenters, all who do not wish to be drive belts and cogs of the apparat, quit the Party, it will retain all the property of the Soviet Communist Party and associated authority," Yeltsin said. "This will not be so. If this is the case, which is what the conservatives seem to seek, the people

will start struggling for the full nationalisation of the property of the Party. The Party will be bankrupt, obliged to repay its duties to the people if only by its property."

Yeltsin warned that "an effort might be made to prosecute Party leaders at every level for the damage they personally have inflicted on the Party and the people."

Yeltsin set out a brief programme for overcoming the crisis of the Party. He believes that in order to modernise the Party it is necessary to register the platforms existing in the Soviet Communist Party and to give every communist time to decide on his or her affiliation. He suggested that the Soviet Communist Party be renamed the Party of Democratic Socialism.

He believes that it is too early adopt the programme statement and party rules. He believes the Congress should limit itself to a general declaration about the Party's transformation and to elect a new leadership capable of preparing a new congress, to be held in six months or a year.

Yeltsin supported the idea of banning primary Party organisations in the Army, in the security forces and state institutions.

"Either the apparat will achieve their version of the Soviet Communist Party with the associated split, and the Party will lose its position as a real political force in the country, or else, there will be a renewed Party, which can be transformed into an alliance of democratic forces and will remain an active participant of perestroika," he said. □

Soviet Foreign Minister outlines foreign policy to Congress

DEVELOPMENTS in Eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany were mentioned in most of the questions put to Politburo member and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze by delegates to the Congress during the session of the Congress on July 7.

Shevardnadze explained that all decisions dealing with problems of Eastern Europe were made at the level of top political leadership of this country. Speaking about the reunification of Germany, he stressed that the USSR had chosen a course towards reaching agreement within the framework of the two-plus-four mechanism, that would promote the security of the Soviet Union and stability in Europe in general. He emphatically refuted the hints that some "bar-

gaining" over the German problem allegedly had taken place and that someone had "given the GDR as a present" to Bonn and had decided its destiny in this way. "Its destiny is being decided by the people of the GDR themselves," he stressed.

Shevardnadze described developments in Eastern Europe as a "crucial and complicated issue". "It is not the socialist system that has collapsed, but the system of distorted notions of socialism. Socialist countries existed and continue to exist in the world, and they will develop. I have no doubt about it," the Soviet Foreign Minister said.

Responding to the question about responsibility "for the disintegration of the Warsaw Treaty and the socialist community in general," he pointed out: "A bloc that should be kept from disintegration by force was not and cannot provide reliable support in serious matters." According to Shevardnadze, it would be better for the Soviet Union's security to "rely in the future on an alliance based on common interests."

Responding to a written question on whether the Soviet Foreign Ministry was indifferent to the destiny of communists in East European countries, Shevardnadze said that "if it comes to persecution, the diplomats can and will raise the question about the attitude to communists in all countries in the context of human rights, within the framework of commitments assumed by those countries in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act, the Vienna Accords and the universal declaration of human rights. It is not only our right, but also our obligation. We shall follow

developments in this sphere and take necessary measures."

Shevardnadze described as serious the decisions taken at the session of the NATO Council that ended in London on July 6. They show, he continued, that NATO is also taking to the path of transformation and is lessening its emphasis on purely military aspects. "The positions of NATO and the USSR with regard to the institutionalisation of the all-European process and the creation of security structures are identical in many respects. So, these are serious steps aimed at meeting us halfway, important measures that will create a new military-political situation in Europe and new relations between the alliances."

Shevardnadze pointed out that the USSR regarded the London declaration as a "serious and important political step. An opportunity is emerging to make substantial progress in consolidating stability and confidence in Europe and the world in general."

Touching upon statements of some delegates who describe the idea of an all-European home as a "myth and an illusion," Shevardnadze said: "To think like this means not to notice what is taking place around us, to close one's eyes on real facts and on the already developing processes aimed at creating our common home and all-European medium in general."

After Shevardnadze's speech, delegates to the Congress voted, at Gorbachev's suggestion, for ending the hearing of reports for Party leaders. It was decided to give a general assessment of the performance of the Central Committee and the Politburo. □

Republican Party leaders address Congress

ON THE third day of the Soviet Communist Party Congress, delegates began a general discussion, focusing on Party building and the independence of union republics' communist parties.

Georgian Communist Party leader Givi Gumbaridze spoke for "republican communist parties' real independence and uniqueness." He disagreed with "allegations that centralism consolidates, while independence and sovereignty divide." Communist parties' true independence can be guaranteed only by parity during the formation of leading bodies and decision making.

He confirmed his party's support for the radical democratic renovation of society and the Party. He said communists can now choose — "either to develop within the main course of world civilisation without losing their uniqueness, historic ties and memory, or to hit an impasse again, which will lead to false dogmas, untenable myths and deformed economy."

Ukrainian Communist Party leader Stanislav Gurenko supported strengthening republican communist parties' independence within the Soviet Communist Party. At the same time, he favours parting with "those who are openly hostile to the Soviet Communist Party and the socialist choice of the people."

The leader of Kazakhstan's Communist Party Nursultan Nazarbayev said it is expedient "to resolve the problem of the sovereignty of union republics immediately" in order to avoid the "disintegration" of the Soviet Communist Party.

If the Party had taken a firm line to maximum independence of union republics from the beginning of perestroika, it could have avoided many problems, he said. Nazarbayev said that a split in the Soviet Communist Party must be prevented, saying a "political compromise is a basic necessity today."

Byelorussian Communist Party Leader Yefrem Sokolov said it is necessary to retain the integrity of the Soviet Communist Party. Speaking of the republic's problems, he focused on the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster which he described as the "ceaseless pain and festering wound" of the Byelorussian people.

Over two million people live in the disaster zone, Sokolov said. He sharply criticised the Soviet Parliament which, he said, pays too little attention to cleaning up the aftermath. He proposed assessing the activities of the Politburo and the Soviet Government, which, Sokolov believes, have not taken all necessary measures to save people in the contaminated zone. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov interviewed by Novosti

SOVIET Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov touched upon a wide range of problems in his interview with a Novosti correspondent on completion of the second day of the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress.

Ryzhkov said the present Soviet leadership has little time at its disposal to resolve the urgent issues. Great social tensions in the USSR must not be ignored. A number of serious reforms are needed to lessen these tensions. Soviet society can no longer remain in its present state and should be consolidated. For this purpose it is vital to produce positive results in the economic spheres, noted Ryzhkov.

Ryzhkov remains a consistent advocate of the charted shifts despite sharp public criticism of the switchover to market relations and the suggested pricing reforms. "The present government may become popular some day because it took unpopular measures," he stressed. "I think that this will be appreciated sooner or later." The Soviet Premier stressed the need to shift to market relations as soon as possible. "The next generation will realise this need if we don't do this today," he noted. "But it will have to pay a higher price for it."

Ryzhkov said the Soviet leaders must also urgently take steps to ease political tensions. "Soviet society should also be calmed down and consolidated in the political sphere," he pointed out. In his view, present-day attitudes to political leadership are inadmissible.

"The present team has taken resolute decisions," he noted. "It assumed the responsibility and went forward. We realised that we were facing difficulties and making mistakes. But we continued our movement. I would

like the next team to be also resolute and infused with more fresh blood. People marching forward and overcoming difficulties should be treated with more respect."

Asked about combining posts at different levels, Ryzhkov said that at the present stage the posts of Soviet President and General Secretary should be held by one person. "It's not that Gorbachev needs it," stressed the Soviet Premier. "For Gorbachev this is a terrible burden. It's the Party who needs it today. Great damage will be done to the Party if it breaks off direct ties with the President." But Ryzhkov finds it possible to abandon the old approaches as far as combining government posts with Politburo membership is concerned.

Asked about his relations with Gorbachev and whether the President hinders him in the implementation of government decisions, Ryzhkov noted:

"Gorbachev and I are fellow workers. But we often tell each other lots of unpleasant things and openly express our opinions while discussing fundamental problems. Our conversations are at times very tough. But Gorbachev can listen to his colleagues and appreciate his stand, which does him credit. We hold common views on key strategic issues but have differences on some tactical problems. But this hasn't prevented us from resolving them. So we're largely complementing each other." □

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Congress debates Party reform

IVAN MELNIKOV, Secretary of the Moscow State University Party Committee, sums up the results of the Congress's working group on Party reform:

The heated debates in the working group once again demonstrated that the question of Party reform is at the heart of the political issues being discussed at the Congress.

One of the questions that generated most interest was how to put the concept of the power of the rank-and-file membership into effect. Many proposals were made concerning upgrading the role of Party congresses, conferences and assemblies as guiding bodies. Also, it was mentioned that primary organisations are independent in organising their working procedures and that their decisions are final within the framework of the Party programme and rules.

It was stressed that there is a need to draw up provisions on conducting referenda in the Party at various levels, thus creating an environment in which differing viewpoints, especially when expressed in the form of differing platforms, can be identified and taken into account. Also noted was the importance of providing in the rules for the rights of minority views, for opportunities to criticise decisions taken, increased democracy in elections and holding mainly direct elections in Party constituencies.

Two views surfaced during the discussion on the relationship between republican communist parties and the CPSU itself. According to the first, the current structure is inviable, especially as republican parties are becoming more independent. The second states that the CPSU is turning into a loose union of republican parties.

Views also differed as to the social base of the Party, with many speakers casting doubt on the theory that the CPSU is a party of all the people and emphasising that it should state clearly that first and foremost it upholds the interests of the working class and the peasantry – the working people.

Nursultan Nazarbayev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party and that republic's President, said at a press conference:

"The Communist Party of Kazakhstan should enjoy full independence within the framework of the CPSU. Given the existence of a single platform, uniform Party rules and membership cards, the republic's Party should be able to draw up its own policies, decide personnel and organisational issues, and forge relationships with the communist parties of other republics and with Marxist-Leninist parties of other countries."

Valentin Kuptsov, head of the CPSU Central Committee's department for liaison with socio-political organisations, sums up the results of the Congress's working group on the Party, the so-

viets and socio-political organisations and movements:

"The CPSU should employ all its influence and experience in order to ensure that the establishment of a new political system takes place without confrontation and turmoil in society. The Party is rejecting command methods as regards the soviets, and intends to adhere strictly to the constitution of the USSR and Soviet legislation. Also, communists are now faced with the difficult task of learning to participate in the new parliamentary structures, and at the same time draw the necessary lessons from setbacks."

A particularly controversial issue was the occupation by one person of the posts of secretary of a Party committee and chairmanship of a soviet, consensus on this was not achieved. Evidently, events themselves and the way the soviets and Party committees work together will provide the answer.

The multi-party system has become a fact, but it still lacks a basis in law. Therefore the participants in the debate consider that the adoption of a law on public associations would be an important step towards regulating the real political situation. The foundation of the Communist Party's relationship with other socio-political movements should be competition on equal terms between all political forces, the rejection of coercion as a method of political campaign, and the recognition of the choice of the people as the sole source of power. □

Congress on the country's social and economic problems and ways to solve them

STANISLAV GURENKO (First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party), Chairman at the Social and Economic Policy Section, in a report on its work:

Participants in the section described the present state of the country's economy as being critical. They see a way out of the crisis not in a return to a more "perfect" model of socialism, but in advancement. The majority stands for a transition to market relations. Market is needed as a means to overcome the cost-no-object approach, expand enterprise autonomy, promote effective ties between the producer and the consumer, strengthen discipline and improve the country's prestige on the world market.

Fears were voiced that some forces are anxious to lead society through a market economy to capitalism. The government concept of a transition to market was sharply criticised for its vagueness and incomprehensibility to the broad masses. It was proposed to write into Congress documents that the CPSU should not support any measures to get the economy out of the crisis if they entail mass unemployment and a decline in the people's living standards.

Vasili Starodubtsev, Chairman of the Farmers' Union of the USSR, on the work of the CPSU Agrarian Policy Section:

(continued from page 228)

Medvedev said that he had not abandoned the thought of retiring during his long period of work in the Politburo. But "a sense of responsibility for what was happening, for the stability of the country's political leadership" kept him from taking this step.

"Now that the Congress is opening a new, very complex and very difficult stage in our development, I do not shirk from work, but I consider that the Party also needs younger and more energetic people," Medvedev said. □

Most of the participants in the discussion have expressed the firm belief that rural Party committees should abandon the administrative-command methods of work as soon as possible and go over to political ones. The roots of the crisis in agricultural production are old and deep. Production's overall socialisation has led to an absence of personal responsibility in property matters, having turned everything into no man's and the peasant into an indifferent hireling. Socialised farms, as a rule, have become an unfailing mechanism for the pumping of the results of the peasants' work into other spheres of the economy.

The ruination of the countryside is continuing. An ageing village with backward machinery, techniques and processing industry cannot normally feed the country. In order to carry out a social restructuring of the countryside, it is necessary not just to allocate more budgetary funds but also to establish privileges for the construction of housing, roads and processing facilities. To ensure competent management of the agrarian sector it is necessary to restore the ministry of agriculture of the USSR. Representatives of the peasantry spoke against strikes and called the workers to prudence.

Nikolai Ryzhkov, member of the Politburo and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, responding to questions from delegates that came in after his report as a member of the top Party leadership:

On increasing capital investments in the agro-industrial sector there was no unanimous opinion (in the Politburo – ed.). I believe that it is necessary to give agriculture priority, but everything will depend on how volumes and proportions will form in the national economy for the next five-year period. Initially, for example, 80 billion roubles was planned to be directed into the development of the countryside's social sphere, but it appears that we shall now be able to allocate 120 billion roubles. As for fundamental differences in this matter among Politbureau members, there's none.

Yegor Ligachev, member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee replies to delegates' questions:

According to statistical data, 51 billion roubles on average has been annually invested in agriculture over the past five years. But if this sum had been twice as high, the food question in the country would look somewhat different. The chief thing now is a price parity between town and countryside. I am not for any thoughtless pumping of money into agriculture. I want the peasant really to become the master of the soil and the results of his work. For him to voluntarily choose the form of economic activity – a collective farm, a state farm or the creation of an individual peasant farm. Promoting co-operation between collective, state and individual farms is now the order of the day.

I am for a socialist perestroika, for the renovation of society along socialist lines, for a true scientific socialism as Lenin saw it. And I do not accept when people say that Lenin at the end of his life decided to change his point of view on socialism. I am against private property, because I believe that it will throw us back in the political and social regard. I am decisively against mass unemployment. Let he who is pushing the country towards free market relations become the first soviet unemployed. □

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Discussion of draft resolutions

PARTICIPANTS in the 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which has been in session in Moscow for more than a week now, on July 9 began a discussion on a package of draft resolutions.

A draft resolution on the political report of the Central Committee was the first to be accepted as a basis for discussion. Its final text will be voted upon later because there were a large number of suggested amendments.

Since the document is expected to evaluate the activities of the CPSU Central Committee, a number of delegates requested the floor. The critical attitude of many participants in the Congress was expressed by a representative of the Kemerovo regional organisation of the CPSU, who read out a telegram censuring the Central Committee of the Party for "the low rate of perestroika inside the Party and in society as a whole" and stressing "the inadmissibility of combining the posts of the General Secretary of the Central Committee and the President of the USSR."

A speech by a delegate from the Magadan regional organisation was also sharply-worded. He suggested that the Central Committee's activities be appraised negatively.

Then delegates' questions were answered by Alla Nizovtseva, deputy head of the Central Auditing Commission of the CPSU, and Nikolai Kruchina, business manager of the CPSU Central Committee.

One deputy asked how the work of leaders holding positions in the Politburo and in the state hierarchy was paid for.

Nizovtseva explained that they get a salary only from the CPSU Central Committee. An exception is now made for members and alternate members of the Politburo who also sit on the Presidential Council and will receive their salary as staff members of the Presidential Council.

The delegates asked the business manager of the CPSU Central Committee about expenditure for the maintenance of the Central Committee staff, catering for the top leadership of the Party and the financing of the Party from state sources.

In response to a question whether the Party or its leaders have foreign exchange accounts in foreign banks, Kruchina said: "The CPSU has no bank deposits or property abroad." All rumours and speculation about foreign exchange accounts of Politburo members, he said, "bear no relation on any member of the political leadership."

Draft resolutions on these two reports were also accepted as a basis for discussion.

Then the Congress adopted a resolution on the main guidelines of the CPSU's military policy. The resolution says in particular that a military threat to the Soviet Union persists as long as there are no guarantees of the irreversibility of positive changes in the military and political situation.

Under these conditions the Congress considers it one of major tasks of all people, the Party and the state to strengthen and maintain the defence capacity and security of the country at the level of reliable, reasonable sufficiency.

The Congress also adopted a resolution in defence of democratic rights, against persecution of communists. The resolution speaks of the

inadmissibility of intolerance and vengeance with regard to communists and expresses solidarity with communists and all people who are subjected to political persecution and moral terror whatever the area.

The resolution points out that democracy is incompatible with humiliating human dignity or attempts under various pretexts to outlaw communist parties and the public movements of socialist orientation and all their members and supporters.

Politburo member and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Alexander Yakovlev requested the floor to deny an account that appeared in the lobby of the Congress – a "report" on his meeting with young communists who are members of the Democratic Platform and the Marxist Platform.

With transcript of the meeting in hand, he refuted accusations levelled at him, bitterly remarking that "the political struggle at the Congress assumes disgusting forms over some issues."

Having read out the genuine text of his answers at the meeting, Yakovlev asked the delegates to the congress to uphold his request to the secretariat to inquire into the incident. The proposal was seconded.

At the end of the morning session, those present were addressed by KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov who answered numerous questions from delegates.

He also touched upon the revelations made by former KGB General Oleg Kalugin in the foreign and Soviet press recently (a summary of Kryuchkov's remarks will be circulated as a separate news item). □

Congress on nationalities policy

Andrei Girenko, CPSU Central Committee Secretary, sums up the results of the nationalities policy working group:

SPEAKERS at the group's sessions subjected the Central Committee, Politburo and federal authorities to stiff criticism for half-heartedness and procrastination in implementing their own decisions, for the gulf between word and deed.

The wording of the statement in the Party's new programme that the rights of individuals should take precedence over those of peoples caused particular controversy.

Taking account of the various opinions expressed, the following version might be proposed: "The CPSU, recognising the value of national forms of public life and defending the rights of nations, places the rights of the individual above all others." Many delegates were of the opinion that the Party should in fact express the national interests of all the Soviet peoples and overcome past distortions in nationalities policy, backing up its position with practical deeds. Anxiety over the Party's declaration on the illegal and criminal nature of

past persecution of entire peoples and forcible resettlement was much in evidence.

Public opinion is dissatisfied with legislative acts on autonomous entities' rights, and the multi-tiered system of national-state and national-territorial entities is regarded as unfair. As if that wasn't enough, the situation took a turn for the worse with the declaration of sovereignty adopted by the Russian Federation's First Congress of People's Deputies. One of the working group's participants reported that a number of autonomous republics might follow suit with their own declarations as early as September. Also a cause for concern is the state of affairs regarding the drafting of a new union treaty, plus a whole range of problems on how to revitalise the federal state structure. The opinion was voiced that the country's President should immediately assume leadership of the negotiations.

Rafik Nishanov, Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet, was interviewed by the newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossiya* at the Congress on July 8, during which he said:

"There is an obvious need to draw up a new union treaty that would represent an agreement between sovereign socialist states or republics, depending on how we call them, this treaty must have an entirely different content. That is, there must be real decentralisation of power, but with republics entrusting certain powers to the federal authorities. Without federal authorities everything will fall apart and all our achievements of the past will be rendered meaningless. Therefore, anyone who believes that republican sovereignty can be guaranteed by way of destroying federal sovereignty is sadly mistaken.

"Negotiations could be organised – and this is my own personal opinion – along the following lines: fifteen plus one or one plus fifteen (meaning the number of union republics – ed). Let me

stress again, however, that it is an extremely complex issue, the entire concept should reflect the opinions of all the republics and all those party to the new union treaty.

"The declaration to be adopted by the Congress will feature a section on nationalities policy, which will also be the subject of a declaration or proclamation to be endorsed separately. The principles contained within it will be taken into account later by a working group during detailed drafting of the treaty. Only after this has been done will the draft be submitted to the union republics' supreme soviets. It will be up to the republics to decide whether or not to hold a referendum, endorse it at their supreme soviets or publish it in the press for public discussion."

Yegor Ligachev, Politburo member and CPSU Central Committee Secretary, said in response to a question from one of the participants:

"I am against organising the Party along the lines of a confederation. I am for a united Party, incorporating the union republics' parties. If the reverse comes about, the CPSU will cease to be a political force and the Soviet federation will collapse." □

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Soviet Foreign Minister replies to questions from the German weekly *Bild am Sonntag*

Eduard Shevardnadze replies to questions put by the West German newspaper Bild am Sonntag:

BILD AM SONNTAG: What does the Soviet Union expect from the meeting of "the Seven" in Houston?

SHEVARDNADZE: As you know, the Soviet Union and "the Seven" established contact a year ago when 'the Seven' met in Paris. Mikhail Gorbachev sent it a message outlining the principled approach of the Soviet Union to how our country can be incorporated into the system of world economic ties. We proceed from the fact that in a modern integral and interdependent world the Soviet economy is part of the world economy and cannot develop in isolation from it. 'The Seven' replied to the effect that it is necessary to continue and intensify, as far as possible, the dialogue on world economic issues and on ways of bringing our economies closer together.

The last year saw far-reaching political processes, those of overcoming the cold war and the related division of the world into East and West. Important developments took place in the economic sphere. There was an economic forum in Bonn, and a special General Assembly session

Soviet-American consultations held in Moscow

VLADIMIR PETROVSKY, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, and John Bolton, US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organisations Affairs, held consultations in Moscow on July 5 on the operations of the United Nations and other international organisations as well as on transnational issues.

The frank and business-like meeting centred on the preparation for the 45th UN General Assembly.

The sides examined ways to consolidate new trends in the activity of the United Nations and the development of the Soviet-American initiative, which was approved by consensus at the 44th session of the General Assembly, on raising the efficiency of the UN and its specialised agencies.

Both sides agreed that the rationalisation of the activities of UN bodies, elimination of overlapping, improvement of mechanisms of coordination in their operations and stabilisation of expenditures of international organisations are assuming special importance in the conditions of the organisation's growing role.

The sides discussed in detail the settlement of regional and conflict situations, the use of the UN peace potential and higher efficiency of UN peace-keeping operations.

They also examined Soviet-American interaction at numerous disarmament fora, the discussion at the United Nations of human rights and social and humanitarian issues, environmental protection, disarmament and development.

The sides reached an understanding to continue the practice of Soviet-American consultations in this sphere. □

ment on development and international economic co-operation. The Soviet Union was granted the status of observer at GATT. The agreement between the USSR and the European communities and also establishment of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development are creating an infrastructure for the USSR's direct participation in multi-lateral economic co-operation with Western countries.

All this coincides with far-going changes in the economy of the Soviet Union. These changes provide for its transfer to market mechanisms. The Soviet leadership is well aware that only this can bring about a qualitative improvement in the economy's efficiency, and its integration in the world economic system.

In the context of the current transitional period, of much importance is supplementing the internal efforts made in the Soviet Union with expansion and deepening of co-operation with us by Western partners. We expect the meeting in Houston to pay proper attention to this aspect, with due account taken of the initiatives made by Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand.

Will talks by the Federal Chancellor and the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on July 15 open the way to unification of both states in Germany? (in good time, prior to the December 2 elections?). What are the conditions on which depends the Soviet Union's consent to that?

Your question is now perhaps one of the most discussed foreign policy topics in the Soviet Union, even at such high forums as the current Moscow Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. I will divulge a secret: out of a hundred notes with questions sent to me by delegates following my speech at the Congress, more than half concerned – sometimes in a very sharp form – the German issue. I hope you are familiar with my statements to that effect at the Congress. I can add the following.

At the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union was firmly for a single Germany and vigorously opposed plans for its division that appeared at that time. In the subsequent period we never denied the rights of the Germans to unification, at the same time warning, in line with existing realities, against an artificial speeding up of movement to that goal.

We regard the building of German unity as an expression of quite understandable deep-rooted historical aspirations of the German people. Without overcoming the division of the German nation it is impossible to overcome the division of Europe. And this is the task we set ourselves by formulating the idea of building a "common European home."

Fully trusting the German people, with whom the Soviet people established close and ramified ties over the past decades, we expect that German unification will provide a powerful impulse for the further development of positive trends on the continent, which were indispensable for that unification. I am referring above all to the Helsinki Process, the dismantling of the military stand-off structure. I would put on the same plane the transformation of relations between two existing alliances – the North Atlantic Organisation and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. At a time when the cold war, that had engendered them, became a thing of the past, the blocs must become an instrument for wide and mutually embracing co-operation between their member countries.

Does this mean that there are no problems with the unification of Germany? Of course, it does not. Problems exist, and they are many, some being very complex. And they exist not only in the case of the Soviet Union, but also with regard to other countries involved in drafting the final German settlement on the basis of international law. I mean to the external aspects of German unification, which should be settled through the "two plus four" mechanism.

I must say that we are for maximum intensification of its work, for holding expert meetings practically on a permanent basis. We are convinced that given proper efforts by the sides all questions can well be decided by the end of 1990 when leaders of 35 CSCE member countries meet, so that "the Six" could report the results of its work to them.

We submitted our draft for the ultimate international legal settlement with Germany at the second meeting of "the Six" in Berlin on June 22. You are probably acquainted in general with its contents. So I will only say that in our view, it can form a good basis for fruitful discussions.

As we see it, as a result of settlement, Germany will be like all other states, without any discrimination. It will occupy its proper place in Europe and the world. Any infringement on the national sentiments of the Germans and their statehood is out of the question. Nor must there be any frustrated feelings, and unaccounted-for interests of other countries and peoples, as they could call in question the stability and strength of the future world without wars and conflicts, which we are jointly building.

In brief, Europe is now living through a crucial time, requiring a constant "synchronisation of watches" by political leaders. In this context the Soviet leadership is paying priority attention to maintaining constant working contacts with the leaders of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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