

Joint session of the presidential and federal councils

COMMUNIQUE

THE joint session of the USSR Council of the Federation and the Presidential Council chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev on August 30-31 was marked by an "acute, unprejudiced and fruitful" discussion, says the communique released in Moscow on September 1.

The session was attended by top officials from the union republics and members of the national government, representatives of autonomous administrative units and trade unions. They critically reviewed the situation in the country and discussed matters relating to the preparation of a new union treaty and the transition to a market economy.

A uniform understanding has been reached, the communique says, that the transition to market relations in the Soviet Union can be accomplished only within the framework of a national market, the creation of a single economic space free from artificially crafted

obstacles and barriers and ensuring favourable conditions for free entrepreneurial activity of economic subjects.

The disintegration of the economic mechanism does not meet the interests of the peoples residing in sovereign union republics. At the same time the qualitatively new character of this national mechanism must organically and without exceptions reflect the economic sovereignty of union republics and be based on an effective separation of powers between the republican and union authorities.

Participants in the session agreed to finalise within a week the draft programme for the transition to a market economy, taking into account the discussion at the session, and submit it for the consideration of republican parliaments and the USSR Supreme Soviet.

While discussing the economic situation, President Gorbachev and other participants stressed that its stabilisation is directly connected with the need to normalise the political situation. It is impossible to permit the disruption of wholesome democratisation processes by shaky labour

and executive discipline, unlawful actions to boycott transport communications, the extremely low level of work in the distribution network, the rampaging crime and other extreme destructive phenomena.

The session heard a report about the results of consultations aimed at the preparation of a union treaty held by a working group with representatives of union republics.

Participants in the session approved what has already been accomplished and agreed to form a preparatory committee to work out a new union treaty. The committee, including authorised delegations from the union republics led by their top state officials, the Soviet President, the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, is scheduled to begin work in mid-September.

Summing up the results of the session, its participants noted with satisfaction that the major discussion which had taken place helped to reach a uniform understanding of the key issues relating to overcoming the crisis in the present complicated situation. □

Gorbachev urges a single programme for transition to market economy

PARTICIPANTS in the joint meeting of the Presidential and Federation Councils, who discussed variants of economic reform in the USSR, have concluded that "there should be one blueprint" mapping out the country's transition to a market economy, President Mikhail Gorbachev told a press conference in Moscow on August 31.

Asked how many variants were discussed at the meeting, Gorbachev replied that "there is a very serious draft programme, elaborated by Academician Shatalin's group, and a government-sponsored programme." The participants in the meeting found it expedient to come up with a single draft.

The single draft is to be sent to the all-union and republican parliaments when it is finished, which will require "another week," the President said. The passage or revision of the programme by all parliaments of the country "will make for a document expressing general accord," Gorbachev said.

The existence of alternative variants "meets

the needs of the current stage of perestroika and democratisation." It is good, he said, "that we have things to choose from. One should not make a tragedy out of it, it is a normal political process."

Gorbachev told journalists that the meeting also reviewed the results of consultations on the future union treaty. He called the question "a topical problem," which has to be solved "if one counts on the successful advance of perestroika."

The participants in the meeting "stated that

the consultations held make it possible to take work to a new stage." The participants called for the setting up of a preparatory committee, made up of leaders of constituent republics, the Soviet President, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Prime Minister.

Much attention, Gorbachev continued, was paid to "the need to stabilise society regarding both political processes and the economy of the market and inter-ethnic relations." The President referred to this subject as being "one of the central issues." □

Soviet President denounces Iraq invasion

THE Soviet Union's desire to find a political solution to the crisis created by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was reiterated again by President Gorbachev on August 31. Speaking at a press conference in Moscow, he stressed that in the settlement of this conflict "everybody should display resolve, firmness and restraint."

Responding to questions, the President pointed out that the Soviet Union could not agree with the annexation of Kuwait. "It is unacceptable for us in principle," he said.

Gorbachev denounced Iraqi actions and said that they "ignite the situation and introduce a very dangerous element into it."

Pointing to the importance of taking advantage of all the opportunities for "not allowing the conflict to reach a dangerous phase," Gorbachev stressed the role that the Arab countries could play. "We should try to find keys to a peaceful settlement of this acute international conflict through using the Arab factor," the President said.

Speaking about the US military presence in

the Middle East, Gorbachev pointed out that when responding to the appeal from Saudi Arabia, the US acted in accordance with the UN Charter. He said that "the build-up of military confrontation is always fraught with unpredictable consequences," and drew attention to the need for a responsible approach "in order to prevent a large-scale military conflict."

★ ★ ★

It has been officially announced in Moscow that President Mikhail Gorbachev and President George Bush are due to meet in Helsinki on Sunday, September 9 to discuss international and bilateral issues. □

Gorbachev - Paris-Match

POLITICAL means of resolving the Gulf crisis are not yet exhausted, President Mikhail Gorbachev said in an interview with the magazine *Paris-Match*, which was published by the Russian edition of the weekly *Moscow News* on August 30.

(continued on next page)

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev addresses presidential and federal councils..... p294

Boris Yeltsin's news conference p295

Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers hold talks in Harbin p296

Soviet Foreign Ministry briefing on Helsinki meeting..... p297

Eduard Shevardnadze's statement at conference on Asia-Pacific p298

Mikhail Gorbachev addresses presidential and federal councils

THE present leaders of the Soviet Union and constituent republics have a real chance to take control of the situation in the country by drastically amending their policies and practical actions, and to propose a way out of the current acute situation to society, President Mikhail Gorbachev said on August 30.

He was addressing a joint meeting of the Soviet Federation and Presidential Councils, which opened in the Kremlin.

Gorbachev said that perestroika "has entered a period of serious tests, and we have no right to be late. But taking major decisions requires a comprehensive analysis, well-thought-out and well-balanced measures and maximally coordinated actions."

The President welcomed the adoption of sovereignty declarations by constituent repu-

blics, describing them as a "major achievement of perestroika and a serious prerequisite for a union of sovereign states, co-operation and friendship of Soviet peoples."

He added, however, that these "objectively ripe processes are sometimes accompanied by destructive actions, which in some places have already led to complications and the disruption of the activity of the already strained and misfiring state mechanism."

"If we do not break these negative tendencies resolutely, they may lead to the collapse of the economy, seriously weaken our statehood and thus push the country towards an uncontrolled situation."

Gorbachev said some people "are beginning to suspect that perestroika is another deadly experiment. There have already appeared signs of nostalgia for the times of stagnation and even Stalinism."

"Various kinds of opposition forces, and even anti-perestroika reactionary forces, already try

to play on people's discontent with present living conditions."

The President said it was important that the "revolutionary transformation in the Soviet Union should not go beyond the framework of law."

"We describe, with reason, perestroika as a revolution, but this is a peaceful revolution, which is being conducted within the framework of law and through a chain of far-reaching structural reforms."

"The greatest achievement of perestroika is that in such a vast country with a complicated history and present-day problems these transformations, on the whole, are proceeding within the framework of peaceful reforms. And this should be preserved."

The two councils met to discuss the economic policy, the situation in the country, ways to stabilise society and the transition to a market economy. □

Gorbachev and Yeltsin in joint television interview

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR and President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation met in the Kremlin on August 29 to discuss a mechanism of interaction that would prevent situations in which decisions of the centre are at variance with those of the largest Soviet republic.

Speaking about the contradictions which had occurred in the recent past, Mikhail Gorbachev said "it was not confrontation but a reflection of the search and dynamic characteristic of the changes."

Gorbachev and Yeltsin were speaking in a joint interview with Soviet television during a break in their talks.

Gorbachev noted that dynamic and deep

(continued from previous page)

Gorbachev granted the interview for a special *Paris-Match* issue in French and Russian, being prepared jointly with *Moscow News*. He said everything should be done to prevent the Gulf crisis from escalating.

"Even in the domestic experience of perestroika, I have often encountered situation when it seemed I ought perhaps to take sharper measures lest be accused of weakness. In perestroika, however, we have always sought to avoid a split and confrontation in society. We have always relied on political methods," Gorbachev said.

He added: "In international affairs, too, one should not take extreme measures in order to enhance one's prestige. That would be short-sighted. We should, through interaction, look for collective approaches and solutions to normalise the situation."

"I think we should continue co-operating in the United Nations frameworks and actively interacting with Arab countries, which can and should play their role," Gorbachev said.

"Such possibilities are also available to both the Soviet Union and France in their contacts with the present Iraqi regime. We are not evading responsibility. And we are using all possible opportunities," Gorbachev said. □

transformations in Soviet society often called to life situations in which the present Constitution and laws were not consistent with the processes, new tasks and the new distribution of powers between political institutions and between republics and the union.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev said, he and Boris Yeltsin have reached full mutual understanding concerning the need to avoid legal nihilism and disrespect for the law in the country.

Yeltsin stressed that in the Russian Federation processes were underway and decisions were made on the basis of the declaration of the republic's state sovereignty which seem to be ahead of the outdated Constitution and some of the existing laws. It is necessary to show tolerance until a new constitution and a new union treaty come into effect. Otherwise we shall find ourselves lagging behind society, Yeltsin said.

President Gorbachev noted that the country was passing through a major stage which called for deep and responsible decisions and resolute actions.

Gorbachev said his meeting with Yeltsin was mainly aimed at pooling the efforts of all democratic forces. He said he viewed as normal the situation where radical and conservative forces exist in society and said the task was to suppress the influence of extreme right and ultra-left for-

ces while uniting all the other forces around things of major importance aiming to consolidate perestroika, infuse it with modern meaning and carry out reforms more radically.

Gorbachev said he saw the approach to the solution of the country's current problems lay in the need to stabilise the situation by firmly gripping controls of the situation - in the economy and finances and on the consumer market - in order to ensure a softer transition to a market. Without this, he said, a hasty transition to a market would exacerbate all problems and deal a blow to the people.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin said that the group, set up by their joint decision to work out a programme of economic stabilisation and transition to a market economy, had reached sound prerequisites, radical measures and quicker action.

The Presidential Council and the Council of the Federation are due to consider the results of the group's work on August 30. The programme is expected to be finalised within a week and dispatched to all union republics to be considered by their parliaments.

After that, an economic agreement is expected to be signed between the republics and the President on the implementation of the programme. □

President and Defence Council debate military reform

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev chaired a meeting of the Presidential Defence Council in the Kremlin on September 1. The council heard and discussed reports by Soviet Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov and the commanders-in-chief of the armed forces about a concept for military reform for 1991-1995 and for the period up to the year 2000 and also measures to withdraw Soviet troops from East European countries and Mongolia.

The council pointed to the need to modify the armed forces consistently and substantially in keeping with the new defence doctrine while reducing their numbers.

The council discussed ways to improve the structure and control systems of armed forces

and the military-technical policy to ensure supplies of modern arms and military equipment, taking into account conversion of the defence industry.

It was recognised necessary to further upgrade personnel training, gradually pass to a more extensive involvement of specialists on a contract basis and prepare the reduction of the duration of the regular military service. Special attention was paid to the social and every-day provisions to servicemen and their families.

President Mikhail Gorbachev instructed the council to amend the draft concept, taking into account the results of discussion and submit it to the USSR Supreme Soviet. □

Boris Yeltsin's news conference

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin of the Russia Federation told a news conference in Moscow on September 1 that he was in favour of the resignation of Nikolai Ryzhkov's government because the programme for the transition to a market economy prepared by the national government "proceeds, as before, from centralisation, the preservation of the Gosplan state planning committee, instructions and orders.

"Its implementation will lead to a flop," he stressed.

Yeltsin told the news conference that the second session of Russian Parliament was due to open on Monday (September 2) to consider only one programme of transition to a market economy — compiled by Academician Shatalin.

"I believe that this is the only programme which can be approved by the Russian Parliament, the Russian people and other republics, including the Baltic ones," he added.

Yeltsin told journalists about his meeting with President Mikhail Gorbachev on Wednesday

(August 29). "The conversation lasted five hours," he said, "we had not spoken at such length in the past five years. We managed to discuss all the questions he and I had."

Yeltsin said the two presidents discussed the transition to a market and "we agreed that there should be one and only one programme," Yeltsin said.

Yeltsin said that economic reform required great discipline and some pressure. He pointed out that the first 100 days of Academician Shatalin's reform programme, during which the rouble was due to be stabilised, were of pivotal importance.

Yeltsin favoured the creation of a special body to implement economic reform. He said that the Soviet President had agreed to his proposal.

In this case, the Presidential Council will no longer be needed, Yeltsin said. Moreover, he added, he did not view the Presidential Council as the country's "supreme brains trust."

Yeltsin said he favoured, instead, a council including the president of the union and the presidents of all the sovereign republics. "There should be no big or small presidents — all of them must be equal."

On the subject of a future union treaty, Yeltsin

stressed that "many reefs have yet to be crossed on the way to such a treaty because there are now 13 union treaty drafts."

Responding to questions, Yeltsin said that Gorbachev and he had discussed the "political incident" i.e. the President's decree proclaiming null and void the resolution of the Presidium of the Russian Parliament on the protection of the economic basis of the republic's sovereignty. "We agreed not to let it happen again," he said.

Responding to a question by a Japanese journalist, Yeltsin recalled his idea of a five-stage solution of the Kuril Islands issue, which he brought to the notion of President Gorbachev. "But I did not have in mind five stages of the transfer of the Kuril Islands to Japan, as the Japanese media would have it," he stressed. "It is not so.

"In about 20 years, Yeltsin said, new people, with new thinking would come to lead the state and they would probably find a non-traditional way out of this deadlock."

He proposed concluding a direct treaty between Japan and Russia at one of the stages to encompass economic, scientific, technical, trade, social and other relations without conditioning them all on the Kuril Islands. □

Yeltsin on problems of Russia

RUSSIAN President Boris Yeltsin acknowledged the widespread and daunting problems confronting his republic and called for strong but lawful government to deal with them.

In his opening remarks on September 3 to the second session of the Russian Parliament, he said that "there are practically no problem-free regions and territories left in the republic any more.

"We know that problems directly affecting people, determining their position and mood, are getting worse. We know that poverty and even misery are widespread and that standards of living continue to fall," Yeltsin said.

He stressed that the session should adopt an economic recovery programme, "which goes along the same lines as a similar national programme and may form the basis for an economic agreement between republics."

Yeltsin called for local enterprises to be freed from central diktat and for altering the taxation system.

Describing the situation in the republic, which he has just toured extensively, Yeltsin said that "people are increasingly disappointed and tired of the proclaimed policy of updating socialism."

He said that "a transition is needed from the ideology-ridden economy to an efficiency-driven economy."

Yeltsin called for a new Russian constitution

prioritising human rights and said that it is essential "jointly with other republics, to complete the complex negotiating process to create a new union.

"The situation today is difficult, but there should be neither panic nor confusion," he went on. "Our most important and valuable asset is the credit of trust from our tired and dispirited people."

Yeltsin noted recent "more realistic" federal policies. He said that Russia is giving strong impulses to renewal across the nation and nudging, together with other republics, federal authorities to act more resolutely.

"The centre can no longer ignore this and discard everything done by us," he said. "We feel an increasing desire to understand and sort out our ideas and to act jointly. This has also confirmed by my five-hour meeting with President Gorbachev," he said.

Yeltsin said that "strong government is required" to stabilise the situation in Russia, but "this does not mean a relapse into the times of lawlessness and arbitrariness."

Following Yeltsin's remarks, the Russian Parliament got down to discussing a draft agenda. □

Russian Parliament discusses market plan

THE programme of the transition to a market economy is now under discussion in the Russian Parliament.

Russian Prime Minister Ivan Silayev set out the programme on September 3. The programme proceeds from the fact that a speedy transition to a market is impossible without the coordination of the transition among all union republics.

A fundamentally new structure will be set up to govern this process — an inter-republican economic council, which will replace ministries for separate industries. The council will report

directly to President Gorbachev.

Silayev said that this programme would offer a real chance to stabilise and later improve the economic situation.

The programme will be discussed in the committees and commissions of the Russian Parliament on September 4.

Commenting on Silayev's statement, Sergei Kovalev, a member of the Presidium of Russia's Supreme Soviet, said that he regarded it as a declaration of good intent and not as a firm programme of action. The full text of the programme, which runs to nearly 1,000 pages, requires further study, Kovalev said.

Chairman of Russia's Supreme Economic Council Mikhail Bocharov refused to comment on the substance of the programme saying only that a detailed analysis of the programme was necessary.

At the same time, prominent economist Viktor Sheinis said that he was impressed by the report. He said he believed that the programme could serve as the basis for economic reform, not only for Russia but also for the entire Soviet Union.

The debate in committees and commissions of the Russian Government's programme will last several days. The Russian Parliament will assemble for a plenary meeting on September 7. □

The Wonders and Problems of Lake BAIKAL

Lake Baikal is often called "the gem of Siberia" or "the Siberian Sea". It has a surface area of 31,500 square kilometres. Baikal is the world's deepest lake (1,620 metres), containing one-fifth of the fresh water on the surface of the planet.

Lake Baikal's water is almost as pure as distilled water. There are some 1,800 species of wildlife and vegetation living in the lake, and three-quarters of them are not to be found anywhere else in the world.

obtainable at 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

USSR-USA SUMMIT

Washington May 30-June 3, 1990
Documents and Materials

available at 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW

Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers hold talks in Harbin

THE Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers expressed serious concern over the situation in the Gulf.

They believe that the Gulf crisis not only threatens peace and security in the region but also negatively influences the stability of the international situation, says a press report circulated on September 2 on the talks between the Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers in Harbin.

The report says that the sides declared again that Iraqi troops should be withdrawn from Kuwait immediately, unconditionally and completely.

Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity should be restored, and safety and freedom of foreigners in Iraq and Kuwait should be guaranteed.

The sides favour a political settlement of the Gulf crisis by the strict implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The ministers said that China and the Soviet Union, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, bear great responsibility for peace throughout the world.

Both sides will continue bilateral consultations and co-operation to restore peace and stability in the Gulf as soon as possible.

The Soviet-Chinese report says that Eduard Shevardnadze and Qian Qichen believe that the decisive stage in a settlement of the Cambodian problem has arrived.

The USSR and China express hope that all Cambodian parties will soon reach an understanding on a political settlement on the basis of documents drafted by the five UN Security Council permanent members, form a supreme national council and will create conditions for the earliest general elections.

The report stresses that the ministers expressed satisfaction at the dynamic development of Soviet-Chinese relations which are spreading to new spheres.

The sides stated that they would exert joint efforts to realise understandings reached at the Soviet-Chinese summit last year and develop good-neighbourly and friendly relations between the USSR and China based on the Soviet-Chinese communique of May 18, 1989.

The talks between the two ministers were held

in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

★ ★ ★

Representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council adopted several documents recently, which will serve as a basis for a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia. The Cambodian and Vietnamese governments welcomed the agreements reached by the five.

On Sunday (September 2), before leaving Harbin for Pyongyang after a two-day working visit to China, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze expressed profound satisfaction over the reaction of most of the parties concerned to the decisions of the five, which are regarded as a good compromise basis for a discussion.

The Soviet Union expresses hope that Cambodian representatives will take advantage of favourable opportunities and will soon meet in Jakarta, Indonesia, to discuss the formation of a supreme national council, Shevardnadze said. This step would be praised by the world public and by all those who want peace to be established in Indochina, he stressed. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to North Korea

THE first four-hour-long round of talks between Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and his counterpart from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Yong Nam ended in Pyongyang on September 2. The Talks were held in the Mansude Palace of Congresses. Shevardnadze had arrived from China,

Soviet Foreign Ministry welcome German troop cuts

The following official statement by a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman was issued in Moscow on August 31:

MOSCOW has taken note of identical statements by Lothar de Maiziere and Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the Vienna talks full-scale meeting on August 30, formulating the commitment by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to cut the armed forces of a united Germany, including the army, the air force and the navy, to 370,000 officers and men.

"These statements are welcomed here as forming the basis of an obligation, to be assumed by the GDR and the FRG on behalf of the future united German state as part of a final German settlement, to set a limit on the numerical strength of the German Armed Forces." □

that morning for a short working visit.

The talks began with a one-to-one conversation, which lasted one hour 15 minutes. Kim Yong Nam said before the meeting that the DPRK was glad to welcome the Soviet minister. Interest in Soviet-Korean talks is extremely high both in the DPRK and abroad, he stressed.

The sides intend to discuss a wide range of international problems, primarily the crisis situation in the Gulf zone, the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the bilateral relations. An exchange of views about the situation in the Gulf zone is of special importance. A summit meeting between presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush, that opens in Helsinki on September 9, is one of the reasons for it.

★ ★ ★

THE talks between Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam were concluded in Pyongyang's Mansude Palace of Congresses on September 3 with the signing of Soviet-Korean documents on border issues. A treaty on the Soviet-Korean state border and a protocol on the demarcation line of the Soviet-Korean state border were signed.

All questions of the demarcation and regime on the state border, which stretches for 39.4 kilometres, were fully resolved by these documents.

Addressing reporters upon the conclusion of the talks, Shevardnadze, on the second leg of his tour of the Far East, said that the main provisions of the co-ordinated report on the talks will be published.

"We have discussed a considerable number of acute questions," the Foreign Minister said. "Naturally, we discussed the situation in the Gulf, first of all." I must say that our appraisals of the situation are identical, particularly as regards ways to settle the crisis.

"The situation on the Korean Peninsula was another major problem we discussed. We tried to analyse the situation and find ways for the

further normalisation in the area, the possibility of easing and ending the military confrontation in this central district.

"We have mutual understanding in this respect. We actively support the peace initiatives of our Korean friends – the signing of a non-aggression pact and the setting up of a demilitarised zone."

"The main thing is to remove the wall which separates the south from the north, to reduce armed forces stage-by-stage, to withdraw foreign troops, particularly nuclear weapons, from the peninsula. We have understanding on all these matters. European problems were also discussed.

"I have informed the minister of our domestic affairs in detail and he wished us success. I have also told him about our relations with South Korea, about how they are being built, about the volume and scope of our scientific, commercial and economic co-operation.

"It was a useful discussion. It helps us better understand the attitude of our Korean friends to this problem, to our contacts with South Korea. The debates will undoubtedly help us adopt a stand on this problem." □

A STEP TOWARDS A DREAM

The story of the Soviet-US SOYUZ-APOLLO space link-up

price 70p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Nuclear Deterrence: Past and Future

By Konstantine Nikolayev

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW

Soviet Foreign Ministry briefing on Helsinki meeting

MOSCOW analysts of international affairs believe that President Mikhail Gorbachev and President George Bush will concentrate on a settlement of the Gulf crisis during their forthcoming meeting in Helsinki, it was noted at briefing held at the Press Centre of the Soviet Foreign Ministry on September 3.

Political analysts believe that this working meeting between the leaders of the two superpowers confirms that Soviet-American relations are becoming more concrete and business-like.

Special attention is being given to a recently published article by Paul Nitze in the *Washington Post*, dealing with Soviet-American relations.

Nitze says that the stormy events in the world put the task before the Soviet Union and the United States to become the main guarantors of

a gradual and non-violent transition to the new political era that is replacing the cold war period.

This task can be resolved only by strengthening confidence and developing political interaction between the USSR and the United States.

Soviet spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov who held the briefing noted that this "reasoning is interesting and deserves attention."

World nations know from their experience that either superpower can block the solution of any international problem. On the other hand, a search for common approaches and actions by Moscow and Washington in the same direction lead to impressive positive results.

This was shown by actions during the settlement in Nicaragua, the Cambodian conflict, German unification, and, last but not least, by the international community's sanctions during the Gulf crisis.

Analysts here think that the Helsinki meeting may help find a way out of this crisis.

At the same time the forthcoming meeting has again prompted analysts to examine Moscow's attitude to the presence of US troops in the Gulf and their possible use to bridle the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait.

Replying to reporters, Gerasimov said that Washington was (up to this time) against military actions in the Gulf.

He noted that the presence of troops from the United States and other countries in that region was provoked by Iraqi actions and that they were stationed there at the invitation of Saudi Arabia to protect that state from possible aggression.

Gerasimov also said that the American side evidently understands that the greater US military build-up in the Gulf helps President Saddam Hussein "foster an anti-American bloc" in the region.

The Helsinki meeting evokes increased interest in light of these developments. □

Cambodian settlement: TASS comment

By Askold Biryukov, TASS political correspondent:

THERE is no denying that a long-overdue settlement in Cambodia now depends only on the warring Cambodian sides. The outcome of the process now hinges on their ability to overcome mutual mistrust and begin the practical implementation of agreements reached in Tokyo two months ago. If they fail, prospects for a settlement will once again take a nosedive.

The successful sixth meeting of representatives of the five permanent Security Council member-countries in New York worked out the basic documents setting up a framework for a Cambodian settlement.

This framework encompasses political, military and legal aspects of the settlement and problems relating to the preparation and the holding of elections, international guarantees of the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and non-aligned status.

During their meeting in Indonesia on Tuesday (August 28), President Suharto of Indonesia and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore said

that the documents would facilitate agreement between all Cambodian sides.

The settlement of internal disputes could have been accomplished in time for the previous, fifth meeting of the five in Paris, due to the agreement, worked out in Tokyo, to create a supreme national council to govern the country during the transition period.

The Khmer Rouge is to blame for letting the chance slip, as they refused to sign the joint communique with the other parties.

The world community was unanimous in condemning the behaviour of the Khmer Rouge, which sought to turn political dialogue into military confrontation. This condemnation prompted the US decision to revoke its support for the opposition and begin direct talks with Hanoi and Phnom Penh.

During his visit to Indonesia, Chinese Premier Li Peng, responding to the call from Jakarta to talk the Cambodian opposition into looking for peaceful ways to solve the issue, said that China would no longer provide military assistance to Cambodian opposition groups, including the Khmer Rouge, if other countries halt their arms supplies to the warring forces.

The pressure from the world community proved decisive. A recent meeting of Cambodian opposition groups in Beijing adopted a statement welcoming the convocation by the chairmen of the International Conference on Cambodia of a quadrilateral meeting of Cambodian parties in Jakarta to establish a supreme national council. It pledged full support for the Security Council permanent members' activity on Cambodia and declared that the documents approved by the five formed the basis for a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said the forthcoming meeting in Jakarta would become the new supreme council's first session. This session could be much more productive if all Cambodian parties stopped their military activities in time for the meeting. This was the message from the participants in the sixth meeting of the five who have submitted the documents they worked out for consideration at the forthcoming Jakarta meeting of the four Cambodian parties. □

Education of Soviet citizens from Gulf region

THE last group of families of Soviet specialists arrived in Moscow from Iraq on September 3. The total number of Soviet citizens to return from Kuwait and Iraq stands at about 2,000.

On instructions from President Gorbachev, a working group for the evacuation of Soviet citizens, led by Deputy Prime Minister Igor Belousov, was set up as a result of the Gulf crisis.

There were 880 Soviet citizens in Kuwait and 7,830 in Iraq when Iraq invaded Kuwait. After appropriate consultations, Iraqi authorities agreed to evacuate Soviet people from Kuwait, but only by road: via Iraq to the Jordanian capital of Amman.

At the same time measures were taken to evacuate Soviet women and children from Iraq.

The first group, numbering 225 (including 18 women and eight children), was evacuated from Kuwait on August 18. They covered some 2,000 kilometres by bus to Amman. The temperature was as high as 40 degrees centigrade.

This group was flown by Aeroflot from Jordan to Moscow. Another two groups were evacuated the same way.

The fourth group was luckier: the Iraqi side opened its air space to civil flights, and the group flew to Moscow direct from Baghdad. The evacuation of Soviet people from Kuwait was completed on August 24.

The evacuation of Soviet women and children from Iraq began on August 26. Four Aeroflot flights brought all 274 children and about 600 women from Baghdad to Moscow. Soviet specialists, including military specialists, are still in Iraq.

The first stage of the evacuation of Soviet citizens from the region has been completed. However, Soviet specialists in Iraq and about two million foreigners from over 40 countries remain in the zone of conflict.

The Iraqi authorities are not observing resolution 664 of the UN Security Council, which demands that Iraq permit the immediate exit of citizens from third countries. Most of them are being detained as hostages.

This problem must be settled as soon as possible, in compliance with the rules of international law, the principles of humaneness and respect for human rights. □

Readers' Concerns THE PEOPLE AND THE PARTY ARE UNITED?

Is socialism possible? Are democracy and a one-party system compatible? What is the future of Marxist ideology? These are just some of the questions which Soviet society is facing today.

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Eduard Shevardnadze's statement at conference on Asia-Pacific

Here follows the statement made by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze at the Second International Conference the Asia-Pacific Region – Dialogue, Peace, Co-operation which opened in Vladivostok on September 4. In part:

Mr Chairman
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades,

I have the honourable mission to convey to this distinguished gathering of ranking politicians, businessmen, scholars and public personalities from Asia and the Pacific a message of greetings and wishes to success for your work from the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

I too wish to welcome you in the Golden Horn Bay area – a geographic point in Soviet territory that symbolises the links binding us together. This city, where four years ago Mikhail Gorbachev put forward a set of initiatives intended for the countries of Asia and the Pacific, is playing host for the second time in a row to representatives of the world's largest geographic region. Dialogue, Peace and Co-operation – the meeting's noble motto – accurately describes the purpose of our discussions – namely, to exchange views on ways likely to transform this multidimensional yet single geographic region into an area that would be receptive to unifying political ideas.

The history of the world's continents has recorded some of those ideas. Even if they were couched in the language of philosophic and political concepts, they still served to narrow the differences between countries and peoples and safeguard their common traits from self-destruction. In the current, highly critical period, they have been used to build the foundation for a common home of the peoples.

I have in mind, of course, the idea of Europe and I have every reason to venture to say that there exists an Asian idea, the idea of Asia.

Although original experts and scholars may disagree with me, I would still contend that the idea can be traced to great ancient philosophies, whose common heritage has been passed on to us as the indivisible philosophy of humanism. All of the world's faiths, born in the East and ranging from Christianity to Buddhism to Zoroastrianism, have focused on the human being and spiritually endowed the human race through the human being.

The idea of Asia has likewise found its expression in more recent philosophic theories and political concepts intended for the vast Asian and universal human entity, among them the non-violence philosophy, the panch shila principles, the Bandung Declaration and the Delhi Declaration on the principles of a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

It is time that we fully flashed out the idea of Asia as is the case now with the idea of Europe.

It is not accidental that I am mentioning in one breath these two great continents, nor is it because of my personal whim, for history and modern times, politics and geography, economics and culture have placed them side by side. Europe and Asia, West and East have long reached out toward each other, overcoming the walls of division, self-imposed isolation of individual countries, the nightmares of colonial occupation and enslavement, regional conflicts and material inequality. The great silk road transcended wars and violence, the thin silk thread of history linked together time and space. What was possible in the past appears all the more attainable in the present, with slow-moving silk caravans giving way to optical cable

technology and electronics that can bring together in one single entity the formerly divided worlds.

In that sense, in addition to mentioning the symbolism of this meeting place, we should also underscore that it is unique in many respects.

For it is here, on the Pacific coast that we can embark on the road taking us through the Far East, Siberia, the European part of the Soviet Union, Eastern and Western Europe all the way to the Atlantic.

From atop far eastern hills, we can take a good measure of the vast eurasian territory called the Soviet Union. If we accept the phrase coined by our political analysts and columnists who refer to that territory as the world of the worlds, we should equally accept the assumption that, instead of separating, it brings together other distant worlds. To quote the outstanding Russian philosopher Georgi Fedotov, Russia must live politically in a complex world of the European and Asian peoples.

I may only add that Russia and the other components of the "world of the worlds" in Soviet eurasia wish to promote in political terms the assertion of peace and good-neighbourly relations between them.

The Soviet Union's unique geographic location may turn out to be a priceless asset in developing a variety of integration links between Asia and Europe.

Whereas in the past we succeeded in building transatlantic communication systems, modern technologies may allow us to bring to fruition a trans-eurasian communications network project.

Our transport infrastructure may likewise promote integration processes. The Soviet Union's highway and railroad grids together with its airline communication network would provide access to vast markets and zones of free, joint-venture entrepreneurship.

Nor should one overlook our outer space capability – a field in which the Soviet Union would be in a position to offer its space technology to the regional countries for use in a variety of peaceful economy sectors.

In short, we are suggesting consideration and evaluation of Soviet potential in the efforts to bring about integration of Asia and Europe.

The division of Asia and Europe was foreshadowed, in large measure, by the cold war, which split apart other continents in addition to Europe. Now that the cold war has come to an end we have every reason to approach the subject of a single eurasian area of security and stability. In this connection, we wish to submit for your consideration the idea of a decade of rapprochement between the two continents.

Ten years separate the world from the advent of the third millennium. Whether it gets off to a good start will depend, in large measure, on the turn the events may take in the world and eurasia in these next ten years.

It is from this angle that I wish to dwell before this highly qualified and representative audience on our vision of the region's problems and prospects.

In doing so, we lay no claims to ultimate truth. To set correctly the benchmarks, we should maintain a continuous and an exceptionally broad-based exchange of views, engage in discussion, and compare our assessments and concepts to make sure that we have an accurate perception of the world and the trends shaping its development, and choose the right course of action.

I think that the first question to be put before

us should be about the nature of world developments and the current phase of human civilisation.

A commonly shared conclusion resulting from recent political assessments is that we are living in a rapidly changing world.

Yet, is it not true that the world saw things change 20 or 30 years ago? Or could it be that the pace of change is the only thing that is now different? I would think that there is more to it than just the pace and the scope of change.

Before anything else, we should get a clear idea of the nature of those current developments that are fundamentally new.

It would appear that we have now come to a point in the development of civilisation which, to quote the great philosopher Vladimir Solovyev, marks the end of the growth of "the body of the human race." It may well be that for the first time ever our world has reached its natural limit. For the first time ever, we have realised that some of our vital resources are not infinite and that many forms of human activity need regulation on a global scale. Concurrently, another process – that of developing previously built physical infrastructures and organising orderly life in them – has been gaining momentum.

In addition to opening vast perspectives, the time of rapid and radical change has posed formidable and complex problems.

Amid dynamic and often dramatic developments, the human race would have to establish a single axis of ethical coordinates and learn to subordinate its individual component parts and specific interests to the interests of the community of nations as a whole.

In politics, ethical self-determination begins with the recognition of the equality of all people and the rights of every individual, with the realisation that the ultimate goal of any state should be promotion of people's well-being.

The ethical self-determination of society, the state or the human being manifests itself in the perception of violence and the use of force in relations among them.

The state must punish any assault on a person's life, dignity or property.

On the other hand, the state cannot exist without the protection of law, or without abiding by the rules of international law, for the alternative world imply acting exclusively on one's own behalf, in other words, arbitrary rule and the domination of the weaker by the stronger.

The international community cannot allow the emergency of predator states or pirate regimes, for this would inevitably lead to the erosion of national law and order, and destabilise international relations.

The question before us is whether we should follow the uniform perceptions of what is good and evil, or whether these perceptions are cynically allowed to go by the board in a blow to the world's foundations.

It would be very much in place to ask this question now in view of the critical moment brought on by the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

The aggression against Kuwait is an aggression against the positive developments that have begun to take shape in international affairs as result of the policy of new thinking.

All of us are duty-bound to abide by the latest UN Security Council resolutions.

Even hypothetically, we should not acquiesce in any option that would fall short of restoring the sovereignty, territorial integrity and legiti-

(continued on page 299)

(continued from previous page)

mate government of Kuwait – a country that will continue, as before to be a member of the United Nations.

For the first time in history, the international community has acted with so much unanimity and firmness in response to aggression and in seeking to eliminate its consequences. But it is essential to pursue our objective through non-military means and in a way that would remove the military presence of other countries.

Currently, many countries and politicians are busy trying to develop a formula for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. For instance, one of the proposals would have the Iraqi troops in Kuwait replaced by a UN peacekeeping force and the extraregional military presence by an inter-Arab troop contingent.

There are other proposals and plans, all of which are predicated on the need to have the Iraqi troops removed from Kuwait.

At this point in time, there is a growing awareness of yet another fact, namely, that a complex set of problems involving the Arab-Israeli conflict, the fate of the Palestinians and the tragedy in Lebanon awaits its resolution in the Middle East.

Indeed, we are faced with several highly complex interlocking problems that have many critical undertones. Aggravating the situation are the presence in the area of mass destruction weapons, the growing missile arsenals and the critically high level of armaments in many Middle East countries.

Quite a few extraregional states, including the great powers, have contributed to that situation. But that is all the more reason for them not to shy away from the search of ways that could reverse the routine sliding toward sharper confrontation and the accumulation of explosive political, military and social material in that part of the world.

Unless peace comes to the Middle East, we shall continue to pay a huge price for its wars.

After one more look at the situation, we still have come to the same conclusion that we have step up pressure for an international conference on Middle East without deferring for a subsequent period the efforts to bring about comprehensive settlement under the aegis of the United Nations.

Presumably, Israel's agreement to its covocation could exert a positive influence on the overall situation in the Middle East and on efforts to defuse the crisis in the Persian Gulf. For its part, the Soviet Union would not leave without response an Israeli move along these lines and might take a fresh look at the issue of Soviet-Israeli relations.

It is time that we acted now in the interests of the world's integrity.

“THE WORLD HAS BECOME A SAFER PLACE”

by

Eduard Shevardnadze

“The foreign policy initiatives of the Soviet Union are dictated by the interests of the people and conform to the ideals and principles of a socialist society,” declared member of the Politbureau of the CC CPSU, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

at 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Our position is that priority should unquestionably be given to non-military means. A round of Soviet-Chinese talks held a few days ago in Harbin and the discussions we had yesterday in Pyongyang have offered convincing proof that such an approach is shared by many states.

But the course at a peaceful settlement should in no way imply that the aggressor has nothing to fear, for it runs the risk of finding itself totally isolated from the rest of the world. We are convinced that the sanctions will produce their effect, compelling Iraq's leaders to heed the voice of reason.

We are faced with a highly critical emergency situation, which has made necessary an extraordinary action in the form of a special meeting between the Soviet and US presidents. Its results will soon be made public. There is no doubt that the meeting will mark a major milestone on the road toward resolving the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

A sense of unity the states of the world have shown over the past month is highly indicative of the ongoing changes, including in Asia and the Pacific. Favourable ground has emerged for promoting and encouraging integration tendencies, and stimulating the formation of joint political, economic, scientific, humanitarian and cultural entities that would embrace your continents.

The Soviet Union sees itself as an integral part of that single Euro-American-Asian belt. May I remind you that the Soviet Union is the only country that abuts on Europe, America and Asia.

For several decades, it remained isolated in many respects from the rest of the world. But the previously suspended traditional trade routes, spiritual, cultural and even human contacts are at long last being restored.

Next week will see a rail track linkup at Druzhba Junction, on the border between Kazakhstan and China, the services of Baikal-Amur Railway will be expanded.

In his address in Vladivostok four years ago, Mikhail Gorbachev proposed full and vigorous Soviet involvement in the life of the family of Asian nations.

We have not come to that family empty-handed, as first in Vladivostok and then in Krasnoyarsk we made several suggestions concerning possible ways of building-regional peace and security as well as developing mutually beneficial co-operation with the regional states.

And we have followed words with deeds. We have ended our involvement in the Afghan War, although the painful memory of the death of thousands of our boys and the grief of thousands of families will continue to haunt us for a long time to come. We must never forget that the Afghan War has taken the toll of some 1,500,000 human lives. In tribute to their memory, we must pull out all stops in our efforts to promote an intra-Afghan settlement.

Our latest contacts with the US Secretary of State James Baker showed that the positions of the USSR and the USA on the main problems of an Afghan settlement are becoming closer, though slowly.

The normalisation of Soviet-Chinese relations, accompanied by the dismantling of the structure of military confrontation between the two countries, has marked a historic milestone. Just a few days ago my Chinese counterpart and I agreed in Harbin that talks to that effect would start in Moscow on September 10.

The process of eliminating medium- and shorter-range nuclear missiles is close to completion, and the pullout of Soviet troops from Mongolia will be completed next year.

In 1991, Soviet armed forces stationed in the country's Asian part will be cut by 200,000 men. In the Far East, 12 land divisions are slated for reduction, 11 air force regiments will be disbanded and the Pacific Fleet will deactivate 16 warships, including 9 large surface vessels and 7 submarines.

We reaffirm our intention to work for the removal in the near future of Soviet military

presence outside our national borders in Asia and, incidentally, in other parts of the world.

But I should also mention several things that have yet to be done – for instance, the case of unwarranted delay in action on the decisions adopted in the wake of high-level statement giving back to Vladivostok an open-city status.

Asia and the Pacific are clearly going through a period of positive change. The countries that only recently treated each other with wariness have established normal relations befitting good neighbours – for instance, normalisation of relations between China on one side and India, Laos and Mongolia on another, between the states of Indochina and Thailand and other Asian countries. Other milestone events include the re-establishment of relations between China and Saudi Arabia, and the establishment of relations between the United States and Mongolia. I am sure that Indo-Pakistani relations would improve too.

The countries of Asia and the Pacific are actively involved in the efforts to promote the settlement of the Cambodian and other regional conflicts. They have made co-ordinate steps to ease tensions in South Asia inhabited by more than 1 billion people. China has made cuts in its armed forces, the Vietnamese troops have been pulled out of Cambodia and the United States has announced plans to reduce somewhat its military presence in Asia and the Pacific.

A package of basic accords for a comprehensive settlement in Cambodia has been put together. It is also gratifying to note that the five permanent members at the UN Security Council have taken a joint stand on the issue.

We are encouraged by statements from Hun Sen, Sihanouk, the leaders of Vietnam and other countries, who have endorsed the framework agreement on the Cambodian settlement.

I wish to lay special emphasis on India's broad-based proposals for the creation of a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world, the Chinese-proposed concept of a new international political order, Mongolia's initiative to develop a mechanism for dialogue among north-east Asian countries, conclusion of the treaty on a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific and the creation of similar zones in south-east Asia, proposed by Asean and Indochina. Other steps going in the same direction include an anti-nuclear legislation enacted by New Zealand, Australia's initiatives covering confidence-building measures in north-eastern Pacific. Thailand's idea concerning the development in south-east Asia of relations based on “positive co-existence”, and Indonesia's proposals intended to ensure security in the South China Sea.

The Soviet Union supports the PDRK's initiatives designed to bring about peaceful settlement on the Korea Peninsula. A non-aggression declaration by North and South Korea, measures to prevent an accidental outbreak of conflict, phased troops reductions in the two parts of Korea and establishment of nuclear-free zone in the Peninsula stand a good chance of shaping an altogether different climate in the explosive part of the region. South Korea too has made several similar proposals. What is essential is that the identical elements in the proposals by the two countries are brought into “sync” and acted upon.

OPENNESS and ESPIONAGE

**By Nikolai Brusnitsin
Deputy Chairman of the
State Technical Commission
of the USSR**

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

The ill-famed walls of division were built in Europe and elsewhere. Apart from the Berlin Wall, there is a wall in Korea, splitting the country apart. The Berlin Wall has now collapsed. Hopefully, the same will soon happen to the ferroconcrete barrier standing in the way of reunification of the Korean people.

The merging improvement of the political climate in Asia and the Pacific has yet to take firm hold and become irreversible. Mistrust and even a sense of enmity still run high, nurtured by territorial disputes, ideological, ethnic and religious factors.

A critically high level of military confrontation, particularly on the Korean Peninsula, still prevails. There is continued deployment of nuclear missile systems together with a growing naval activity. The proliferation of nuclear and missile technology continues to cause concern.

Aware of the diversity of the region, its structural and situation differences that set it apart from other areas of the world, we are prepared to look for specifically "Asian methods" to find solution to the problems of security and co-operation.

We find it difficult to accept the position, which on account of excessive emphasis on the special nature of the situation in Asia and the Pacific would effectively impair consolidation in the region of the positive trends that have manifested themselves in world politics.

We feel that reliable security may well be ensured in conditions of Asian reality provided the arsenals there are drastically reduced to a level of sufficiency and political means are efficiently applied.

But so far, according to available statistics, arms spending on several regional countries have continued to grow three or four times as fast as in Europe.

Do we really need to tread the same ground that has already been covered by others – in other words, stockpile arms, create military alliances and coalitions and build new military bases only to draw the conclusion that we could have done without it, while channeling resources toward the resolution of pressing socio-economic problems.

We have a truly unique chance to do so now. The cold war and the difficult period of confrontation of the Soviet-American-Chinese triangle have come to an end.

Soviet-American relations have seen unprecedented change. No longer viewing each other as enemies, we have taken several large-scale actions in promoting peace.

We should not expect only smooth sailing in the future as we may still run into some difficulty with these changes.

It is hard even to imagine what turn the situation in the Persian Gulf might have taken had the current crisis occurred some three years ago. Presumably, we could have been on the brink of a world war and nuclear forces would have been placed on high combat alert.

Today, the crisis situation has taken on a different dimension, and the unity among the five permanent members of the Security Council makes one confident that the crisis will be overcome.

ALAMANAC SOVIET LITERATURE AND ART

price £1.00 from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens, London SW7 4NW.

In our reflections on ways to proceed with the formation of regional negotiating institutions we have increasingly embraced the idea of a broad-based dialogue on regional problems.

In most other areas, except Asia and the Pacific, we have in operation universal forums dealing with some of the most pressing issues. They include the Conference on Security and Co-operation and a host of other mechanisms in Europe, the Organisation of American States in the western hemisphere, and the Organisation of African Unity in Africa. Of course, they may have some major shortcomings but no one would question the legitimacy of those institutions.

There is a growing interest in holding a pan-Asian forum, even if there is no agreement yet on its format and composition. For instance, a meeting of foreign ministers has been suggested to that end – and idea recently put forward by my Canadian and Australian counterparts.

Scholars and public personalities have been playing a major role in developing an infrastructure that could promote the idea of an Asian-Pacific forum. A series of conferences in Williamsburg, round-table panels in Kuala Lumpur, symposia in New Zealand and meetings in Vladivostok have indicated that the idea of a conference attended by official and other-level representatives from Asian and Pacific countries to discuss regional problems stands a good chance to success and has gained added urgency.

We also clearly need to have broader and more regular parliamentary exchanges.

Given the existing difficulties in the way of an Asian Pacific conference, we might try a phased approach involving the use of various political and diplomatic means and methods.

We would not find it productive to set any preconditions for the holding of a pan-Asian conference, for it would be unwise to wait until all disputes and differences cease to exist.

Therefore, we are offering what we view as a more productive approach – namely, development of a multilateral negotiating mechanism concurrently with more vigorous action designed to settle conflicts, ease confrontation and friction, and intensify bilateral contacts.

Where should we start and how can we set in motion that negotiating mechanism?

For instance, we could give some thought to organising a conference of a group of countries that have major military capabilities in the form of a working meeting of their foreign ministers that would be open to observer participation from other countries. The Soviet Union is prepared to hold appropriate consultations in order to prepare such a meeting, draft its agenda and a list of participants.

In the light of a commonly shared interest in ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation, we find it expedient to suggest creation of an international regional centre for the safety of ocean communications.

No single country, however powerful in terms of its naval powers, can pose as the "only guarantor" of stability, the champion of the freedom and safety of sea lanes. What is more, pretending to play such a role would make many countries wary of its intentions.

We find a system of international guarantees to offer the best possible solution to the problem of sea and air traffic safety, including terrorism and piracy control.

Today, I wish to make one specific suggestion – namely, invite the foreign ministers from all the Asian countries prepared to accept my offer to come to Vladivostok some time in the autumn of 1993.

This could be an open-ended meeting in terms of its membership and possible agenda.

I may suggest that in the course of that meeting we draft a joint document announcing a set of political principles shared by the meeting's participants.

That document would formalise the latest shifts, including abandonment of confrontational approaches, movement toward partnership

and so on.

I think that, alongside many other changes, by the time the meeting is called to order Vladivostok will have become a more open city.

Of course, in contacts among the ministers and on other levels we shall have another chance to discuss the meeting's format and underlying concept and come to appropriate agreement.

Joint efforts intended to enhance the role of the United Nations and other international organisations in coping with common problems might promote further improvement of the situation in Asia and the Pacific.

In New York, where the foreign ministers from many Asian and Pacific countries will arrive within the next few days to attend the coming UN General Assembly session, they could hold a round of consultations on regional problems and discuss, among other things, subsequent stages in preparation for their full-scale meeting in 1993.

Incidentally, who can't we set as our next goal the holding of a pan-Asian summit meeting?

It is my understanding that the idea of launching a dialogue in New York on exclusively Asian and Pacific problems has produced a positive response – namely, from the foreign ministers of Japan and Indonesia.

As we cast about for the optimal options, we would be well-advised to enlist broader support from the existing institutions, reckon with sub-regional tendencies and factors and seek to combine in an efficient way the universal role of the United Nations and the functions of those institutions.

We continue to support holding a conference on the Indian Ocean. It would be a good idea to write into a draft agreement legally formalising the goals and contained in the 1971 UN Declaration that proclaimed the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace a set of commitments to be assumed by the littoral states and the principal users of the Indian Ocean, among them the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The Soviet Union is prepared to launch a dialogue on military problems and confidence-building measures with all the Asian-Pacific countries. Just as in Europe, confidence-building measures stand a good chance of being applied in Asia.

I think that the subject matter in question will be appropriately highlighted in the course of the coming round of Soviet-Japanese talks and in our contacts with other countries.

Surely, it is not our intention to urge erosion of the existing politico-military structures. It is for individual countries to decide, on account for their national interests, how they should develop their security and other relationships with other states.

My Biography

In this booklet, Soviet journalists **Viktor Belitsky, Pyotr Polozhevets, Alexander Afanasyev, Anatoli Strunin, Alla Belyakova, Alexander Kabakov and Vitali Tretyakov**, with the active assistance of the book's compiler **Lina Lebedeva**, acquaint the reader with pen portraits of **Svyatoslav Fyodorov, Shalva Amonashvili, Victor Bosser, Alexander Kiselyev, Natalya Bekhtereva, Raimonds Pauls and Boris Yeltsin**.

price 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Along with politico-military concerns, the region has known quite a few problems involving economic development.

Lately, we have heard people predicting the onset of an economic cold war between Asia, Europe and America as well as in the Asia-Pacific region. We must now allow the emergence of a new North-South confrontational line, for we have just witnessed the appearance, for the first time ever, of a nascent integral world economy and international economic relations developing in accordance with the principles of equality, mutual benefit and reciprocal assistance. We have seen significant intensification in East-West economic co-operation, an increasingly universal drive for integration and a heightened interest of states in improving and raising the efficiency of multilateral trade, economic, currency and financial mechanisms.

These tendencies have fully manifested themselves in a region, which has already begun to shape, in large measure, the world's "economic climate" and has been economic integration processes gain momentum. We need to join our efforts so as to ensure a harmonious and democratic development of those processes, while eschewing the pitfalls inherent in any closed trade or economic organisations that tends to reproduce economic friction, conflicts and at times open "trade wars".

The Soviet Union has made its subsequent development contingent on the broadest possible participation in world economy. Consequently, it intends to work for a partnership relationship and for making the economy of the Soviet Far East and Siberia a part and parcel of the emerging economic structures in Asia and the Pacific.

We intend to do our utmost to help promote a co-operative mechanism in the area of environmental protection. We may suggest inclusion in that mechanism of an environmental risk early warning system, an emergency ecological relief system, an environment fund, and co-operation in exchanging latest environmental protection technologies. In this way, as we see it, Asia and the Pacific could make a major contribution to global environmental protection efforts and to preparations for the UN Conference on Environment and Development planned for 1992. It is essential in this respect to ensure co-ordination of all continental programmes.

By way of a tentative suggestion, I wish to propose conclusion of a multilateral convention on the conservation of biological resources, or what would be even better, the drafting of a convention on environmental protection in the Pacific. In this day and age, human thought, knowledge, skills and information, rather than material resources, constitute the main asset of any given country. In other words, science and technology have moved to the forefront.

On the eve of the 21st Century, scientific and technological progress, more than anything else tends to shape some of the major directions of society development and the future of the human race.

Accordingly, our future depends, in large measure, on further expansion of international scientific and technological partnership on a regional and global level.

Such partnership has particular significance for Asia and the Pacific as well as for their links with Europe, America and Africa. Even a cursory look at the geographic map would reveal that to be able to span limitless ocean space and vast land distances we would need advanced transport, tele and satellite communication systems. In that sense, the implementation of agreements on peaceful uses of outer space the Soviet Union recently signed with Australia and earlier on with several other countries could prove highly beneficial. Our co-operation to that end must have a clear eurasian emphasis.

We propose consideration of a tropical cyclone early detection and warning international centre. The Soviet Union has a wide network of meteorological hazard warning stations and would be prepared to transmit promptly the information received by those stations from satellites and other devices to a future international centre.

People in the East say that a mountain peak can be reached by several roads. Of course, one can choose any road according to one's taste and ability to travel. But by pooling the efforts and resources, choosing the optimal road and helping each other, the peak can be reached faster and at lesser cost.

What we are suggesting is that we climb to the top together, taking guidance from such related notions as respect, trust and co-operation.

It is only by respecting one's partner and that partner's socio-political system and legitimate interests that we can create the atmosphere of trust.

Trust will make it possible to carry out political, military and economic measures capable of removing suspicion and introducing predictability, dependability and a broad measure of understanding in international relations.

From that point we can start moving straight ahead toward co-operation among equal partners that would promote mutually beneficial exchanges and ties in highly diverse areas.

May I now make an aside, which I find absolutely indispensable.

I am delivering these remarks at a highly critical moment in the life of my country. The developments and events over the past two years have put on the line the future of perestroika and of the Soviet Union. I wouldn't mention this grave subject were it not for its obvious international resonance. To some extent, at issue is the future of the process that has spread before the world previously unheard of prospects for building a new world order. Any slowing down or curtailment of that process would inevitably generate tendencies destructive for international stability.

We face huge and exceptionally complex tasks. The drive to reform the country's economy along market economy lines, build a new multinational state foundation and reinforce democratic methods in governing the country has run into formidable hurdles and generated conflicting currents. The natural aspiration of the peoples to independence has clearly clashed with a no less vital need to ensure effective sovereignty through broader and more meaningful integration ties in the framework of a new union entity. Similar developments also have occurred in Europe, where developed and powerful democracies have been trying to enhance their sovereignty in the framework of integrated, supranational structures.

It may appear that, given their highly developed economies and long-standing economic traditions, France or Belgium should have nothing to worry about. And yet President Mitterand and Belgium's Government keep hammering out at the idea of a European confederation and a confederate Europe's shared goals.

I am fully aware that invoking the example of other countries would not halt the alarming de-

velopments. They can and, I hope, will be stopped by stark realities, which may, at times, turn cruel and ruthless. Left on their own to face countless problems of daily survival, people will start casting about for and surely find relief in the realisation that they have something to share with each other. But a point of no return may well be reached before that realisation dawns upon them.

And still, I wish to use this opportunity to express my firm conviction that on the eve of the coming century, when the world is looking for some common ground to make a push toward the future, when next to new centres of economic might there emerge others that are destitute, it would be a grave risk to start pulling down one's house in the illusory hope of rapidly building on the rains something more stable and enduring.

Perestroika has shaken the very foundations of the dilapidated edifice and released it from the seemingly iron grip of its rotten carcass, offering instead new, modern and pliable supports anchored in independence, freedom and democracy that would enable every people to shape their destinies as they see fit. But to be truly stable, they need a good adhesive material to join them firmly together. Otherwise, they would start fracturing and may ultimately cave in.

It has long become a rule of life that while pursuing one's individual interests people think it wise to reckon with the interests of others and with what is seen as a common interest.

That rule would seem to be all the more applicable in politics, which, as someone aptly put it, must not be tailored exclusively to national interests. And the same rule would have as much relevance in terms of domestic politics.

Perestroika has released a great deal of creative energy. But at times that energy may receive a negative charge, thus causing a relapse into aggressive license. As a result, tyrants might move to the foreground with the ensuing irreparable damage to the cause of democracy and freedom.

In upholding democracy, we must employ democratic methods, unless we want freedom to turn into its opposite. Of late, it has often crossed my mind that our obsession with self-flagellation has developed into an inferiority complex impeding our progress.

But that complex is totally uncalled for. The Soviet Union has immense potential and vast prospects before it, something we should not lose sight of. That is why I have referred today to the role the Soviet Union could play in the integration and development of a single eurasian entity of security and stability. The international community is aware of the unique location of our country that saddles the line dividing different worlds. It is my strong hope that as they start abandoning their unitarianism in favour of unity, the future free and sovereign national-state identities making up a new union will come to realise that their unity may offer them a unique chance and prove beneficial to their prosperity.

Europe and Asia, West and East have started to move toward each other and they are bound to meet at some point unless a mound of ruins appears on the ground that still separates them. At this point in time, we are not alone in our drive to avoid destruction, as West and East, Europe and Asia, the world of humans as a whole stand prepared to give us a hand. □

CONSTITUTION (FUNDAMENTAL LAW) OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

(This edition includes amendments
to the Constitution made in
December 1988, December 1989 and
March 1990)

price £1.00p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

The End of Ideology?

by
Konstantin Nikolayev

price 60p from
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Ivan Polozkov addresses Russian Communist Party Congress

"THE priority task facing the Russian communists is to work for civil accord in the republic and to uphold the political, economic and social interests of the working people," Russian Communist Party leader Ivan Polozkov said on September 4.

He formulated the Party's principal goal in a 60-minute report to the delegates of the Party founding congress, the second stage of which opened in Moscow on September 4.

Polozkov said that Russian communists shared the assessments of the 28th CPSU Congress.

Polozkov sees the reasons behind the economic crisis in the country, which "ultimately, puts perestroika on the brink of collapse," both in the complexities of the transition period and in people's psychological ill-preparedness for the country's transition to a market. He also blamed a surfeit of talk and lack of action among the causes of the country's sluggish economic performance.

Polozkov favoured "man's economic emancipation, the working collectives' economic freedom, the diversity of forms of ownership within the framework of the socialist choice" while recognising that "there is no alternative to the market." He called for determining "the

social price which people will pay for this transition."

Polozkov described the simplified formula "either socialism or the market" as a "serious delusion."

Polozkov emphasised that the Russian Communist Party supported the declaration on the sovereignty of the Russian Federation.

Polozkov criticised political forces that "behind general terms about the support of perestroika," are demonstrating "the aggressive tendency towards negating the socialist idea" and calling for "the restoration of the capitalist system" in the USSR.

In this regard, he urged the Russian Communist Party "decisively to shed ideological and organisational erosion, lack of confidence and inaction, to overcome over-emphasis on inner-Party problems faster and concentrate efforts on specific actions in the interests of the working peoples and the rebirth of Russia."

Speaking about the need to give a modern state and legal form to relations among the peoples living in Russia, Polozkov favoured concluding a treaty within the framework of the Russian Federation that would be analogous to a union treaty.

He called for work to counter "deliberate discreditation of the Communist Party and the

socialist choice as a whole" and advocated creating as soon as possible Russia's own news organisations.

Polozkov emphasised that the establishment of the Russian Communist Party was the "natural result of current sweeping changes in the minds of the Party rank-and-file rather than the result of instructions from above or 'apparatus combinations'."

However, dwelling on the situation in the Party ranks "in conditions of the sharpened political struggle," he said that 90,000 workers had quit the Soviet Communist Party (the Russian Party organisation unites about 60 per cent of all Soviet Party members).

Polozkov does not want to develop the Party's own programme and rules now, explaining it, in part, by "the particular dynamism of the social processes during the transition period."

He proposed to be guided by the programme statement of the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress and the new Soviet Party rules. Meanwhile, Polozkov emphasised the new Party's desire to solve independently political, organisational, personnel, publishing, financial, economic and other issues.

Polozkov called for giving various ideological platforms in the Party opportunities to explain their positions, including in the Party mass media. □

We should take a step forward

OLEG SHENIN, Politburo member and Secretary of the Central Committee, of the Soviet Communist Party, deals with Party development and personnel and was involved in preparatory work for the second and concluding phase of the founding congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. On the eve of the second part of the Congress, analyst Dmitri Gaimakov asked Oleg Shenin to answer a few questions.

GAIMAKOV: It is common knowledge that Soviet society's response to the founding congress of Russia's Communist Party was not uniform. Some publications doubted whether it should be held at all and contrasted the draft programme of action of Russian communists with the key policy statement of the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress. What is your attitude to these issues?

SHENIN: Soviet society took different viewpoints of the problem by creating the Communist Party of Russia from the beginning. Some saw in that a chance to strengthen the Party's influence in the republic, others, on the contrary, feared an intensification of centrifugal tendencies. It was said that a new structure may complicate the work of the entire Soviet Communist Party. But the time for discussions is past, and it is necessary to go over to practical work. In June the Party conference developed into the founding congress, which, reflecting the opinion of an absolute majority of Russian Communists, definitely voted for the establishment of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and elected a first secretary of the Central Committee and some of its members.

But the work was not completed. In my view, fears about the fact of holding the Congress were without ground. The work to create the Communist Party of the Russian Federation cannot go on indefinitely. People are expecting specific action and results. I would like to see the process of forming the Party and creating its

leading structures completed as soon as possible. The first secretary alone and some Central Committee members without a full-blooded apparatus cannot work properly. So it is necessary to elect a full Central Committee, drawing into it intellectual forces from among creative, scientific and technical intellectuals. Time is pressing.

As for the contrast being drawn between the draft action programme of Russian Communists and the key policy statement of the 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress, here I think we can compare only final texts of the documents.

As the experience of the all-Party congress shows, the final version may differ a great deal from the initial copy. It seems there are some grounds for criticising the weak points of the published document — they are present both in the socio-economic and other sections. But on the other hand, I would like to invite all who want to do so, and especially Congress delegates, to take most active part in constructive work on the final variant of the main document of the Congress. On what will depend its contents, its direction, and its correspondence to the decisions of the all-Party forum.

For Russian Communists it is essential, in setting up their Party, to take a step forward, to be able to deepen and apply to the conditions of the republic the major planks of the 28th Congress, aimed at promoting perestroika.

There has been of late an increased number of withdrawals from the Soviet Communist Party, including from Party branches in Russia. Do you think it is a process of revival or collapse of the Party: Was the Party leadership aware that the election of Ivan Polozkov as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation might add to the drain from the Party?

I think it would be over-dramatisation to consider the current withdrawals from the Party as a collapse of the Party. But it would be equally wrong and irresponsible perhaps to see in that a renewal of the Party either. One cannot say that people leaving it are not worthy. Some very competent people who once were loyal to the Party are turning in their cards. The reasons are

many. Some feel doubts about the correctness of the perestroika policy. Others are apprehensive of criticism and responsibility for past mistakes and still others feel insecure as crisis developments grow. Others succumbed to pressure on the part of other political forces.

We are realists and consider that the remaining months of the year will be difficult enough as far as the drain of the membership is concerned. All in all, I believe we should take some measures to halt the drain, to see to it that the party recruit young and fresh blood in earnest.

As for the impact on the process of such a person as Ivan Polozkov, there is a lot of superfluous element here. He was elected democratically by a Congress majority, on an ticket that included several other candidates. I think it would be more sensible not to continue debates concerning efforts to further work in the interests of the Party.

To my mind, it is absolutely wrong when a party in which there are more than 10 million communists is identified with the name of one leader. If we follow that logic and rule out the influence of a vast number of communists, the collective bodies of leadership on Party policy, we can then hardly speak of a renovated Party. It seems to me some people are still applying outdated yardsticks to the problem.

What sensitive points do you see in the work of the Russian Communist Party? How do you think it will develop its relations with the republic's Supreme Soviet?

Unfortunately, there are many sensitive points calling for attention and Communist Party participation. Both in the country as a whole and in Russia in particular, the political situation is far from simple. So too is the economic situation. The law reform is making slow progress. Problems proliferate. And I cannot see a single reform, a single area of perestroika in which the Communist Party should not take part. But a different matter is how it should participate.

The former methods of command no longer work. The Soviet Communist Party's dropping

(continued on next page)

Situation in Armenia after death of Deputy

A STATE of emergency was imposed in Armenia and a curfew in its capital Yerevan following a shoot-out involving automatic weapons in the city early on the morning of August 29, Soviet Interior Ministry officials told TASS.

They said the clashes, which lasted for about an hour, erupted in a district on the outskirts of the city, but later moved to the centre, near the Moskva cinema.

According to preliminary data, the clashes began when armed groups from the Armenian National Army (ANA) attacked the headquarters of the Armenian National Movement (ANM).

The Armenian Parliament this morning voted to outlaw, disarm and disband the ANA.

The Armenian Interior Minister ordered patrols of local police and interior troops on all approaches to Yerevan to prevent further armed groups from entering the city.

The turn of events should have been expected, observers believe. ANA is the main force opposing the ANM. Their political stand-off has gradually escalated into military confrontation, since both have armed groups of their own.

But while those of the ANM have been meeting the Armenian lawful leadership's demands unconditionally, ANA para-military units have defied them, refusing to lay down their arms.

The ANA comprises a variety of armed groups, some of which are criminal gangs that

rob their own countrymen and stage provocative activities on the border with Azerbaijan under the cover of the struggle for ethnic identity.

Attacks on police and army patrols in order to seize weapons continue in various parts of Armenia. Aerial and ground reconnaissance reported Armenian terrorist movements in Armenian regions bordering on Azerbaijan.

Eight guns were noticed on hills dominating Noyemberyan district and an arms cache was discovered in Idzhevan district. The Interior Ministry dispatched Ppetsnaz troops to both sites.

★ ★ ★

On the night of August 29-30 some 250 armed members of the Armenian National Army surrendered and laid down their arms at their headquarters. This was the result of an operation carried out by the Armenian Interior Ministry.

ANA leaders were detained. An investigation is being carried out, officials at the Soviet Ministry press centre told TASS.

After Wednesday's (August 29) armed sorties by the ANA, in which an Armenian parliamentary deputy and a member of a voluntary law enforcement team were killed, a state of emergency was declared in Armenia and curfew announced in Yerevan.

The Armenian Parliament ruled that ANA armed groups be immediately disbanded. It was announced that those who voluntarily turn in their weapons would not be punished. □

Independent body assess economic reform blueprints

A SENIOR Soviet economist has described the Soviet Government's blueprint for the transition to a market economy as "half-baked and too slow." Academician Abel Aganbegyan, who heads the so-called "independent" commission studying ways to move to a market economy, made the comment at a press conference at the Soviet Foreign Ministry Press Centre on August 29.

Aganbegyan said the commission's recommendations on some key provisions significantly differ from the government's views," he continued. For example, the commission proposes to first stabilise the consumer market and then de-control prices as opposed to the government's plan of raising prices, which will largely remain state-controlled.

The commission favours speeding up the transition to the market by not only lessening state controls, but even by "privatising" property.

"We also differ in the evaluation of the role of the foreign economic factor in the transition to the market," Aganbegyan said. There are appreciable differences between the commission and the government on the question of dividing power between the centre and republics. The commission, in particular, rejects the government's centralist approach.

Aganbegyan would not be drawn about his attitude to the work of the "presidential" group, set up a month ago by President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He only replied that "he did not have the results of its work." At the same time, Aganbegyan said he was aware of the high qualifications of people who made up the group.

Asked if both programmes, the government and the President's would be submitted for consideration by the USSR Supreme Soviet in the next few days, he replied: "I don't know. We gave our recommendations to both of them." □

(Continued from previous page)

of monopoly on power and its transfer to what is actually a multi-party democracy requires different, more flexible and democratic forms of influencing the work of bodies of authority — through communists elected to them. But without direct interference in the work of councils of all levels, beginning, naturally, from the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation.

The Communist Party of Russia has a chance

to set up in the Supreme Soviet of the republic its own Party group or faction. It is necessary to create conditions under which Party members should unite into a faction of their own free will and, acting together with the Party's Central Committee, should determine their line in discussing problems. Not in order to control or command, but to help deputies with their advice, to promote an in-depth drafting of laws, to defend the interests of the Soviet people more consistently.

If somebody wants to present such efforts as an attempt to create a structure for commanding the Supreme Soviet and other councils, he is deeply mistaken. Such an approach is ruled out for ever. The question may only concern mutual assistance and joint action of communists in councils. ■

(Novosti)

CPSU Secretary addresses ethnic problems

ANDREI GIRENKO, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, suggested that central committees of the communist parties of the republics hold congresses of representatives of peoples residing on their territories. A congress of peoples of the Soviet Union could become the concluding stage, Girenko said in an interview published by *Pravda* on August 31.

Girenko noted that the outbreak and spread of inter-ethnic conflicts shows that there is a need for more closely integrated efforts between Party and government bodies of neighbouring republics, territories and regions to settle ethnic problems.

He admitted that many Party committees, among them the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, have failed completely to grasp the situation and find and effectively use specific methods to resolve ethnic conflicts.

Girenko said that many of the provisions of legislative acts on state sovereignty adopted by parliaments of union republics run counter to the basic idea of a renewed federation: strong republics — strong union.

In addition, many clauses in republican laws on language, citizenship and property infringe the interests, rights and dignity of non-native citizens.

Girenko emphasised the need to protect constitutional rights of national minorities and to adopt a law on refugees with a reliable mechanism to compensate them for damages at the expense of the republics where they formerly lived. He believed that this may help check the acuteness of the manifestations of national contradictions. □

Gorbachev's message to UNESCO

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev sent greetings to the UNESCO International Conference on Education — a major event during the international year of literacy. The conference opened in Geneva on September 3.

"It is hard to overestimate your activity in preparing mankind for life in the epoch," he said. "Literacy is the foundation of culture and science. Civilisation's further progress is impossible without literacy's comprehensive nature and new quality. It is an indispensable condition for the moral development of man, irrespective of nationality, for the mastering of his role in the integral, interdependent world."

Gorbachev expressed hope that the conference will take its place among other efforts to assert democracy and humanism in international affairs. □

The Economic Structure of Socialism:

an attempted prognosis
by
Stanislav Menshikov

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW

THIS IS THE USSR

Ecology 70p
Peoples of the Soviet Union... 70p

the above are obtainable at the prices indicated from:

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

GATT: The benefits of membership

A. Kacunov, USSR First Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations

IN May this year the Soviet Union received the observer status with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This agreement came into effect on January 1, 1948 for the 23 countries which initially signed it. That was also when its main principle was codified: world trade must develop by economic laws, and no administrative methods of its regulation shall be allowed. This principle has since become universal. This is confirmed by the expansion of the list of states which have voluntarily joined GATT. Today, the number of its fully-fledged members stand at 98. Another 55 countries and 32 international organisations have the observer status.

GATT is a fairly authoritative and influential assembly in the international community for multilateral and bilateral negotiations and consultations in the sphere of trade and economic policies. Its participants grant one another the most favoured nation's status, pledging to refrain from any restrictive measures of a non-tariff character and to reduce customs tariffs. The participants coordinate the size of customs concessions and the terms when they should come into effect.

The GATT rules allows the establishment of interstate customs union and free trade zones. They also allow the imposition of temporary restrictions on the import of certain goods if it causes serious damage to national manufacturers and producers. There may also be quantitative limits on import or export for the restoration of the balance of payments. To protect public morality, health or national values and to safeguard national security other measures not stipulated by the agreement may be enforced.

Evaluating the role of GATT, one can say that it serves as a constitution of world trade. It has accumulated the wealth of experience of the functioning of the foreign economic mechanism in the market-economy conditions, which will be quite useful for the Soviet Union.

Until recently, our country did not seek to participate in GATT, as a result of which it ended up isolated from the multilateral trade system operating on its basis, where common rules and principles replace for the participating countries numerous bilateral agreements and treaties. Here is an indicative example. Experts have calculated that West Germany would have had to conclude about 5,000 bilateral trade and economic agreements with its partners had it not joined GATT. As our foreign trade and numerous industrial ministries, they have drawn up for decades, coordinated with one another and signed with foreign states hundreds of bilateral inter-governmental and inter-departmental agreements and protocols and reported on their growing number as on a major achievement.

In its self, the non-participation of GATT of such a country as the USSR weakens its universal character. Full-scale GATT membership would enable the Soviet Union to build its foreign trade relations on the generally recognised legal principles of international law and seek on legal grounds the cancellation of the existing discriminative measures against our country, including quantitative restrictions holding back the expansion of Soviet export to industrialised countries.

Under the GATT provision on the so-called "national regime", import products should not be subjected to discrimination through, say, higher taxation compared to that applying to products manufactured inside the country. The observance of this provision by us would cardinaly affect the commodity structure of the nascent market in the USSR. Soviet producers would be faced with competition as a result – within justified limits, of course – from foreign companies and firms. It is no secret that at present their trade activities in our country take place in extremely unfavourable conditions, whereas our manufacturers who feel quite comfortable with their present monopoly on practically everything are turning out low-grade products and setting high monopoly prices on them.

The GATT anti-dumping code would protect Soviet exporters from unlawful actions by Western nations undertaken under the pretext of the struggle against the supposedly deliberate understatement of prices on our export goods. It would be possible to reduce the foreign-exchange outlays on the certification and testing of Soviet goods abroad, which in some cases add up to 10 or even more per cent of their export value. There would be certain dividends for the USSR, too, from the use of the procedures and mechanisms of settlement of disputes and trade-policy conflicts, applying to the GATT members. We would also get the opportunity to take a direct part in the drafting of new rules and norms of international trade.

So the benefits are obvious. It must be clearly realised, however, that the way to full-scale GATT membership is not easy and will call for considerable efforts on our part.

Take, for example, the question of customs duties. Their actual effect on the internal prices of imported goods today is minimal. That is why customs tariffs in the USSR are not yet an effective instrument of regulating foreign economic relations like in other countries. Nor is there any real free access of foreign goods to the Soviet market. Until recently, all decisions on the purchase were adopted by the government on the basis of plan targets set by the State Planning Committee, while the numerous foreign economic associations followed the directives sent from above. It is equally pointless to speak of the freedom of choice of the supplier as long as the rouble remains non-convertible.

We are to remodel in a radical way the system of regulation of our foreign economic relations so that it should meet the GATT rules. The fundamentals of a new legislation on foreign economic activities are being worked out in this connection, a law on new customs tariffs has been drafted, and the existing and newly-introduced non-tariff regulations such as government rationing, subsidising and so on are being brought in alignment with the GATT requirements. In other words, the staff of our state-run foreign trade agencies will have more than enough things to attend to. Their functions, however, will change, and the requirements to their professional expertise will be higher.

The entire package of questions connected with the USSR's rapprochement with GATT are being tackled by a representative intersectoral

commission set up under the USSR Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations. With the reception by our country of the observer status, the functions of the commission should apparently be extended. In particular, it could organise inspections, including international ones, of the existing and draft legislation, which would figure out the extent to which it matches the principles, rules and practices of GATT. That is why all future drafts of legal acts aimed at making our economy more democratic, regulating our foreign economic relations should be examined by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with due regard for the conclusions of the intersectoral commission on GATT affairs.

The new foreign economic structures and mechanisms emerging today in Russia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and in other Union republics must likewise be built in the spirit of GATT from the very start. This way they will not have to be rebuilt in the future. Specialists at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and at the National Market Research Institute are studying the performance of GATT and storing the appropriate information. We are prepared to make it available for all interested organisations and provide them with qualified consultations.

In effect, the USSR's accession to GATT opens up an opportunity for building an integrated global "economic environment". Upon receiving the observer status with GATT, our country has embarked on what can be described as an "education course". It is in our interests that this course should be intensive. We will study the "know-how" of the market economy and its foreign economic "technologies" in order to overcome our chronic difficulties quickly and effectively. □

(Pravda, August 29, in full.)

Pravda: trade with Iraq stopped

EXPORT and import operations between the Soviet Union and Iraq have been stopped, said Boris Agafonov, Executive Secretary of the Permanent Soviet-Iraqi Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation.

In an interview with *Pravda*, published on August 30, he said that not a single vessel with goods for Iraq and Kuwait have sailed from Soviet ports since August 6, 1990, when the UN Security Council adopted a decision on sanctions against Iraq.

Two vessels with cargoes bound for Iraq have been recalled to the USSR. Any other commercial activity and trade exchange has been stopped.

"As regards our economic co-operation, we continue to work on the existing facilities where there are our specialists and material and technical resources," Agafonov said. "This is no violation of the Security Council sanctions, as we are not engaged in any commercial activity."

Regarding the Soviet Union's losses resulting from the Gulf crisis, Agafonov said that under an inter-governmental protocol Iraq is to deliver to the USSR this year 1.6 billion dollars worth of oil and transfer 350 million dollars in ready cash, which roughly amounts to 10.5 million tonnes of oil.

The USSR has received only 6.5 million tonnes of oil and 46 million dollars.

There is information that Iraq is ready to settle accounts with USSR. But that is impossible as Iraqi assets have been frozen in US banks through which accounts are settled.

"I am sure the Gulf crisis has also affected the interests of other countries trading with Iraq," Agafonov said. □

In the series
Man in the Modern World
VIOLENCE:
Sources
and Limits

price 70p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.