

Mikhail Gorbachyov replies to questions from *Rude Pravo*

Here follow the answers given by Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, to questions put by Zdenek Horeni, Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Rude Pravo*, published in *Pravda* on September 9:

QUESTION: Your statement about the extension of the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions till January 1, 1987 has evoked a very broad response and, as it seems to us in Czechoslovakia, has had a serious impact on the alignment of social and political forces in the world in the sphere of disarmament issues.

How do you evaluate the reasons for that and the possible consequences of that major new peaceable move of the Soviet Union?

ANSWER: The answer to the first part of the question seems evident. Today many more people than some time ago know about the Soviet moratorium. Political leaders and the mass media in the West find it more and more difficult to keep silent about the fact of the unilateral year-and-a-half moratorium, and the American arguments in favour of testing have lost much of their lustre, have lost their effect on the public. This is what I wanted to say first.

And secondly, the awareness of the reality of the nuclear threat is becoming ever more profound in the world. It can be averted only—and this is what we propose—by eliminating nuclear weapons, and terminating nuclear tests by way of a first step. This is as clear as daylight. Even the people obsessed with the arms race cannot but understand that in private.

Our socialist friends, the communist parties, the Harare Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement which represents scores of countries, the leaders of the 'Delhi Six', numerous public organisations and trade unions, authoritative political parties, including West German Social Democrats and Britain's Labour Party, people prominent in science and culture everywhere in the world came out in support of the Soviet moratorium, and have called upon America to follow the example of the USSR. On the whole, it can be said that it is easier to list those who did not support our action than those who approved it.

Words of support—and we highly appreciate

them—confirm that a new political thinking is forcing its way through old prejudices, outmoded conceptions, through heaps of lies about the "Soviet threat"

To the extent that American data make it possible to judge, the idea of terminating nuclear testing is supported both by public opinion in the USA and by a substantial part of Congress.

In a word, the realisation has never been as widespread before that a nuclear war must never be fought and that there can be no winner in it, no matter what crafty scenarios of military operations are drawn up.

Another factor is added to all that: the policy of the United States begins to scare people more and more; astounding manifestations of the militarist line have opened the eyes of many people, and alarm at the prospect that a catastrophe may indeed occur can no longer be concealed by anyone.

The response caused by the termination of nuclear explosions by the Soviet Union is also linked, to be sure, with the fact that it is not a declaration, but an action. For the fourth time now we have extended the moratorium. One year without explosions is both a political and military reality. The tendency of reason and common sense is now practically present in world politics, and it can be developed and augmented by an agreement on the mutual prohibition of nuclear testing. As well as by other bold, forceful steps, by resolving issues which are long ripe and overdue.

For example, isn't it important for the destiny of Europe and the entire world for that matter to crown the work of the Stockholm Conference with a substantial agreement? Undoubtedly yes. And for its part the Soviet Union, at one with Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries, is taking practical measures to ensure that it happens that way. There is a possibility—and I have already spoken about this—of reaching agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on the elimination of the industrial base for their production.

Rational compromises are possible on strategic arms, on medium-range nuclear-missile weapons, and on conventional armaments, if one really strives to lower the level of military confrontation and to achieve equal security. It is possible to reach agreement on strengthening the regime of such a fundamental document as the ABM Treaty.

But we have to look at matters the way they are. It seems that the number of possibilities is growing, but there is no turn for the better.

The reaction in the ruling circles of the United States to our statement is indicative in this respect. It has revealed from the very outset that at least in the entourage of the President, whose spokesmen did not even bother to conceal their irritation this time, they are not thinking in earnest about eliminating the nuclear threat. This is precisely why the extension of the moratorium caused such displeasure there. It is clear that people in these circles began to feel uneasy in the face of the new Soviet proposals. It has evidently become very difficult to justify their stand in the

eyes of both the world and the American public.

And once again the old road was followed in a bid to belittle the significance of our move—it was branded "propaganda". But it is appropriate to ask:

If this is propaganda, then what is it designed to prove, what do we want to say by it? That it is possible to do without nuclear explosions? That we back up our call to rid mankind of nuclear weapons with the termination of their tests? What is bad about such "propaganda"?

As to accusations of propaganda levelled against us, I have already said more than once: it is not serious at all when they seek to switch our responsible political actions to such a plane. This is not a proper approach at such a strained, one might say turning, point in world development.

It is not a propaganda war that we seek to win. We do not even want to participate in such a "fight", believing that it is unworthy of the importance of the subject. Our aim is to make a real step towards real disarmament. And we sincerely invite the American Administration to this. We want to have progress in negotiations so as to push back the nuclear threat for the sake of the security of all and genuine detente.

There is really a spate of propaganda speculations around our moratorium in the entourage of the White House, in political circles and in the press. Sometimes the impression is that in the USA they are altogether inclined to replace foreign policy with propaganda. How can there be then a business-like dialogue with promise of success! We reject such a style and believe that the matters we are discussing are too serious to have games of words played around them. And we want to hope that, in the long run, they in America will understand us and give an adequate, befitting response to our call.

If one is to speak about the "seriousness" that they called on us for when we extended our moratorium once again, I should like to say that the attitude to the termination of nuclear tests, to the early elaboration of a treaty on their full prohibition has now become the most convincing indicator of how seriously each of the biggest nuclear powers treats disarmament, international security and the cause of peace in general.

In the August 18 statement I have already said that the attitude to nuclear explosions is a test of historical maturity. This is my firm conviction.

Moreover, this is a touchstone to check real purposefulness, the main content of the foreign policy of a nuclear state.

Indeed. If one wants military superiority, one does not need a moratorium.

If one wants to continue the arms race and, particularly, to transfer it to new areas, to outer space, one does not need a moratorium.

If one wants to have new, more sophisticated weapons, one does not need a moratorium at all.

If in solving international problems one counts on strength and intends to resort to *diktat*, to blackmail, then a moratorium is a hindrance as well.

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachyov's replies to questions from <i>Rude Pravo</i>	p. 393
Nikolai Ryzhkov receives Pierre Aubert ..	p. 396
Nikolai Talyzin's visit to China	p. 397
Soviet military leader on air inspection ..	p. 398
International Year of Peace in USSR ...	p. 399
USSR's drive to streamline the economy	p. 400

If one is afraid of honestly competing with a different social system in economy, democracy, culture, intellectual wealth of human life, a moratorium obviously is unsuitable.

If one does not care what will happen to nature, to human environment, one will continue conducting nuclear explosions.

If the greedy appetites of the tycoons of military business and all those linked with it are more important than the opinion and vital interests of hundreds of millions of people all over the world—one continues nuclear tests.

In other words, the attitude to the moratorium lays bare the true essence and aims of one's policy. There is no getting away from this fact.

But if there really is a desire to start reducing nuclear arms and then do away with them altogether, as both the President himself and some members of his administration have declared officially and solemnly more than once, if there exists a real understanding that a nuclear war is inadmissible, if it is true that the United States does not seek military superiority, then there are no impediments of principle to an equitable and strictly verifiable agreement.

That is why we believe that the ball is not in the Russians' court, as the glib White House heralds claim, but in President Ronald Reagan's court.

The issue, however, is even broader and more fundamental than the attitude to the moratorium, although, let me repeat, attempts at evading this disarmament problem of crucial importance, dissolving it in other matters, devaluing it or sidetracking it are characteristic enough.

If one pieces the administration's post-Geneva policies together, the resulting picture is alarming. There has been a crash SDI effort, tests of the ASAT anti-satellite system and other actions undercutting the ABM Treaty, as well as trials of a new intercontinental ballistic missile, new aircraft and submarines, statements on abandoning the SALT-2 Treaty, and doing that just by the time they expect to be having a second summit meeting with us, fantastic requests for the next military budget, appropriations for binary weapons, bandit-style strongarm 'neo-globalist' actions against Libya and Nicaragua, in the south of Africa and in other places, the forming of new naval strike forces, and military manoeuvres near the Soviet Union—from the North Sea and the Baltic region to the Far East—which have been unprecedented in the amount of hardware involved ever since the 1950s. Marshal Akhromeyev put it aptly when he said at the conference in Stockholm: "Just imagine what there would be if such manoeuvres were mounted by the Warsaw Treaty countries."

How should we perceive defiant shows of military strength? Should we see them as demonstrating a commitment to peace and a desire for mutual understanding or, perhaps, as preparing the atmosphere for a summit meeting?

In the White House and around it, however, they say bluntly: this is all needed to force the Russians into more concessions. Such is the level of responsibility on the part of those for whom the arms race is a gold mine, as well as, incidentally, the level of their understanding of whom they are dealing with.

These military-political practices suggest a very serious conclusion: they want to legalise the arms race, this is in effect the material and psychological preparation for a world war. The people are naturally beginning to ask themselves: what is happening? Does this all mean that America is going to war? If this is so, then the logic of the administration's actions becomes understandable.

One is involuntarily prompted to recall the 1960s when an extremely reactionary group impudently laid claims to the White House. At the time, however, America itself checked that group. Other people came to power and an opportunity arose to hold back the growth of the cold war and later, in the '70s, to halt it altogether. Treaties were concluded, with some of

them effective to this day.

And what do we see now? Military build-up programmes are again being put into motion, but ones creating a much greater risk of the outbreak of a world war because they are being launched on a new scientific and technological spiral in the arms race and in the presence of much larger arsenals of weapons which are capable of wiping out civilisation in a matter of days.

This is why the task of our two countries, of all peace forces is to prevent this race from becoming irreversible.

The American people now also shoulder a much more serious, I would say a special, responsibility for where the course of developments in the world will go. This is something they have to ponder.

I want to believe in the reason, realism and also in the basic sense of self-preservation of the American people. Our two peoples ought to cooperate rather than to quarrel, to be on friendly terms rather than to war with each other. I call for this once again.

I know, Comrade Horeni, that in your country, Czechoslovakia, in my country and also in other countries the following question is also asked frequently: doesn't the policy of an unbridled arms race show a desire to undermine the USSR and the socialist community economically? How can one evaluate, in particular, both official statements and allegations in the mass media to the effect that the economic problems and difficulties existing in the USSR will compel it, if more pressure is applied, to agree to unilateral concessions?

We do have economic problems and difficulties. We have talked and keep talking about them openly. There are quite a few problems and difficulties also in other countries, especially those which took the path of independent development only recently. But are there no difficulties in the West, in the United States itself? There are. Moreover, they are menacingly growing there, most acute problems are piling up, the state debt has reached an astronomical figure, unemployment, already enormous, is now beginning to acquire a threatening dimension once again, and social contradictions are deepening.

As for our own economic concerns, we would like to cope with them as soon and as efficiently as possible. This is why we would welcome any opportunity to switch our funds and resources over from defence to the civilian industries, to improving the people's living standards. But we shall never sacrifice our security interests and shall never agree to concessions at their expense, including at talks. The Soviet people themselves would not allow us to do this.

We see full well the bid to undermine the USSR and world socialism economically through the arms race. And we shall do everything to foil these vile plans. We shall be acting in several fields at once, including diplomatic, military, political and—yes—propaganda, but first of all in the economic field, by making our economy more efficient, quickening the speed-up, and streamlining management.

In this respect high-quality labour by the Soviet people and the working people of all socialist community countries is also a contribution to the cause of peace. As we falter, the pressure by socialism's enemies grows harder. But as we grow stronger, stronger economically, socially and politically, so does the capitalist world's interest in a normal relationship with us, and illusions that the clock of history can be turned back are dispelled.

QUESTION: Comments on your statement have included assertions that neither the unilateral moratorium nor even a bilateral agreement with the United States on the issue will be of practically any help to solving the problem of nuclear disarmament. Is this so?

ANSWER: I cannot agree with this.

They are really trying to present the mora-

torium as something contradicting arms reductions and even to prove that it prevents starting the disarmament process. The following opinion is also making the rounds in some quarters and in the press: nuclear weapons are an "evil" but an "inevitable evil" because they make for restraint and, so, need reliability tests, that is, explosions.

All this is nonsense, if not an attempt to mislead people.

As far back as last January, we suggested starting jointly "to uproot the evil itself", by scrapping all nuclear weapons by the century's end. This is, of course, a formidable task. But we propose going about it stage by stage, with regard for all the difficulties involved. We set aside 15 years to do the job, envisage parallel efforts to destroy chemical weapons and make radical cuts in conventional arms, and provide, along with disarmament, for progress also in the political, economic and humanitarian fields of international relations.

Attempts to oppose the issue of ending nuclear blasts to the issue of reducing nuclear weapons are unscrupulous also for another reason. These attempts are breeding the illusion that the two powers "almost" agreed on radical cuts in nuclear weapons but the USSR has bungled everything with its moratorium. But this is not true at all. Since the Geneva meeting, we have not moved even an inch closer to an arms reduction agreement, despite all the efforts by the USSR.

A mutual halt to nuclear explosions, however, would be a great help to reaching agreement on this score because an end to testing would effectively stop the race in the most dangerous area, the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons and their upgrading. It would then only remain to cope with the quantitative aspect of the arms race, which is simpler.

Our stand, thus, is as follows—the termination of nuclear explosions is organically linked with nuclear arms reduction and would very tangibly assist the accomplishment of that task. To say nothing of the political aspect of the matter. Distrust, fear and suspicion, you will agree, have a pernicious effect on the international climate. There is also the moral aspect. To continue tests means to squander forces and funds for an evil cause, whereas the need to spend them on good, humanitarian undertakings is already enormous and continues growing.

QUESTION: It is said that Soviet nuclear weapons are "simpler and need no reliability tests", while American weapons "are more sophisticated and, hence, should be constantly tested for efficiency."

Another story is making the rounds, alleging that before announcing the moratorium in 1985 the Soviet Union modernised its nuclear arsenal, overtaking America by a large margin in that field, and can now permit itself to make an interval in tests, while the United States is now "catching up", and that is why it is conducting tests.

Where is the truth here?

ANSWER: There is no truth here at all. All these allegations are false from beginning to end.

Experts prove very convincingly that nuclear explosions are not needed in order to stay sure that the existing nuclear weapons are reliable. Other methods requiring no nuclear blasts can be used to control reliability as effectively, and notably less expensively and much more safely at that.

Long-standing practice shows that one can be sure of nuclear munitions without conducting explosions, limiting oneself to checks of non-nuclear components of bombs and warheads. Since 1974 the USA and the USSR do not conduct tests with a yield of over 150 kilotons in compliance with the existing treaty. Meanwhile, munitions with yields over that "threshold" make up 70 per cent of the nuclear arsenal in the USA, and our percentage is no less. This means that

both we and they believe in the reliability of weapons without explosions! So why muddy the waters?

If the Americans have doubts about the stability of their nuclear arsenal let them agree to the drafting of an agreement on terminating tests, and our experts will share with them the "secrets" of how the state of nuclear munitions is checked without explosions.

No. The main aim of nuclear weapon tests conducted by the United States is to develop fundamentally new types of arms. What does this mean? It means that new nuclear warheads, with both enhanced yields and high accuracy, are in development. Space-based nuclear weapons—X-ray lasers with so-called nuclear pumping—are being developed in the course of the testing. Work is under way to prepare an entirely new type of weapon capable of reaching targets both on Earth and in space. In such conditions it is hypocritical to say that the termination of tests will do nothing for the solution of the problem of nuclear disarmament.

As to the second argument, it could have sounded credible to at least some extent in the first couple of months of our moratorium. But not now, when silence reigns on Soviet nuclear test ranges for the second year.

If the development of new and modernisation of the existing nuclear weapons requires ever new nuclear tests—and this is indeed so—then it is only logical to assume that the USA which conducted many more blasts than the USSR, plus 18 more in the duration of our year-old moratorium, should be far ahead. It turns out therefore that it is we, not the US, who has to catch up. In a word, the very way the question is raised is absurd.

We also know another view: isn't it possible in what regards the tests to be satisfied for some time by a compromise between the Soviet and American positions. That is, not by a complete ban, but by their "regulation" in some way or another.

Of course, when proposing an agreement to the other side, one cannot reject compromises out of hand, but the idea of "regulation" instead of termination seems to me to be incorrect in principle.

First of all there is a certain amount of regulation already now: the 1963 Treaty and the so-called "threshold" agreements of 1974 and 1976. But they failed to stop the arms race. As a matter of fact it has become even more intense, but, of course, not because these treaties exist.

The same can happen to the proposed "regulation" of underground nuclear tests. Sooner than not it would lead to a situation whereby the race will simply go in a different direction, and then it will become clear that it is an even more dangerous one.

There can be no half-and-half solution to the problem of nuclear tests. There is one honest way to formulate the question—either to work toward an agreement not to test nuclear munitions and to put an end to that once and for all, or to give a start to even more dangerous military preparations. There is no other alternative.

Should the Americans succeed in drawing the world into a space arms race, whatever terms are used to designate such weapons—"defensive" or otherwise—this would for sure lead to the utmost destabilisation of the whole of the military-strategic situation. The threat to mankind would acquire qualitatively new deadly dimensions. Nobody has the right to shut his eyes to that.

QUESTION: And again, just as it was with regard to all other initiatives of the Soviet Union, President Reagan's entourage and spokesmen of some other NATO governments are trying to divert attention from the fundamental problem raised by you—the process of nuclear disarmament—by resorting to various kinds of speculation about control over it and verification.

How do you assess such an approach?

ANSWER: Exactly as you said—as an attempt to divert attention. They seek to extend the life of the bankrupt argument that a nuclear test ban is ostensibly impossible to control. The argument became bankrupt above all by virtue of the advances in science. It is now possible to detect any, even the smallest, nuclear explosion, by national means. To help resolve the problem the Soviet Union, nevertheless, agreed to other methods of control. The 'Delhi Six' offered their services—and we agreed. The United States kept silent. Scientists agreed on the installation of seismograph and other equipment near nuclear test ranges of the USSR and USA—we also backed that initiative, though the American Government treated it scornfully.

Not long ago I received a group of prominent scientists—specialists in this field from the USSR, USA, West European countries and Japan—and had a thorough talk with them. And I became convinced once again that they had no doubt at all as to the possibility of the most reliable control over a ban on nuclear tests.

Things so far look this way: the United States did not express readiness to get down to disarmament and speaks of control over armaments, and not of control over disarmament.

I and our military comrades have repeatedly said: we know what the Americans are doing, and what is taking place at their nuclear and other test ranges. And their attempts to conceal something, including some of their explosions (among them yet another conducted a week ago), convince us once again that one cannot take it on trust. Really: we have no grounds at all to trust American generals and we cannot count on trust on their part. Therefore we stand for strict, scientifically substantiated control and will insist on it, including on-site inspection. But, I repeat, not over the explosions but over the termination of explosions.

American instruments have already been installed near the Soviet nuclear test range in the Semipalatinsk region. We believe that the accord between scientists could be developed into an official agreement to mutually see to it that a possible agreement on the termination of nuclear explosions should not be violated. One can also think of establishing an international, supranational network of control over the termination of tests. I avail myself of the opportunity to make this proposal to the US President. The problem is quite solvable here. In Washington they are trying to present it as a nut which it is impossible to crack and this argument is easy to explain: the United States is not ready to give up the arms race and is therefore bluffing.

The US needs nuclear explosions, I repeat, not for restraining (there is nobody to be restrained: nobody is going to attack the USA) but for developing weapons intended for the conduct of a nuclear war.

QUESTION: And my last question, Comrade Gorbachyov, a delicate one, if you permit. Going by numerous statements that are made in the entourage of the President of the United States, and judging by the Western press, it is now sought to draw the attention of the world public to your new meeting with Mr Reagan, actually to replace topical problems of curbing the arms race with talk about the meeting.

What can you say about this?

ANSWER: We are for holding a Soviet-American summit, a summit that would be marked by notable headway in solving if only one or two of the substantial problems of international security.

After the Geneva meeting we took many steps to bring closer the stands on a wide range of problems related to terminating the arms race. The "all or nothing" approach is alien to us. There is no sense in holding a meeting for the sake of "nothing". Maybe this would suit somebody fine, but certainly not us.

The questions that are the point of the matter

affect all countries, the entire international community, though the measure of responsibility of the Soviet Union and the United States is, understandably, particularly great. Therefore, no matter how much we are being provoked, we do not snap the threads of contact with the US Administration, do not call in question their usefulness, do not slam the door (though certain persons in the West, especially among the entourage of the President of the USA, would like this very much). But contacts are valuable not in themselves, but by the results they produce.

We expect that the meeting to be held shortly by Eduard Shevardnadze with US Secretary of State George Shultz will help establish where we stand now, will show if the Soviet-American dialogue stands chances of progress.

If one proceeds from the view that a moratorium is unacceptable, if the question of medium-range missiles in Europe is blocked, if strategic arms are to be upgraded and so on, then what is there to agree about? A summit meeting would hardly be of any use in the atmosphere of a feverish arms race, of the spiralling of tension, in an atmosphere when the existing treaties are abandoned. And nothing would be easier than to use the meeting for misleading people, for lulling the public with pretences that everything is all right while continuing a dangerous policy. And, actually, this is already sought to be done in presenting matters in such a way as if the preparation for the meeting is in full swing.

By feigning a lot of optimism to create the impression that everything is almost ready for the meeting, it is, possibly, sought to blame the Soviet Union for the results of one's destructive policy. The same purposes are perhaps pursued by another version, that the USSR, allegedly, has arrived at the conclusion that one won't get anywhere with the Reagan Administration.

But we attach too much importance to the time factor to simply decide: let us stand still for two and a half years. No. It would be an unpardonable mistake to tarry, to take a wait-and-see stance. We shall continue using every opportunity for a productive dialogue, for advance towards arms limitation and reduction, and also for settling regional conflicts, for developing international co-operation along all important directions. In this sense, our conscience before the Soviet people and the other peoples is clear. Our Czechoslovak friends, countries of the socialist community understand us well and give us firm and consistent support.

I would like to emphasise particularly that we set high store by and scrupulously take into consideration the opinion of our allies, that we are determined to continue improving the mechanism and methods of consultations, of jointly working out the foreign policy of socialism. We highly appreciate the political initiatives of our allies and friends, their intensive effort to promote the new political thinking, their vigorous and equal participation in the common effort to solve problems of peace, security and disarmament.

I do not deem it possible to keep silent about another aspect of the matter connected with the prospects for a summit meeting. There is a lot of conjecture about my confidential correspondence with the President of the United States. I do not want to reveal its contents, but I must say something about the conjectures. They are marked by feigned optimism and smack of a promotion drive.

We received at the end of July another letter from the President of the USA, ostensibly as an answer to our initiatives. I know that this letter is presented in the West as something new in Washington's stand, that "leakages" advantageous for the administration are arranged with regard to the letter, that the idea is being conveyed that everything now depends on Moscow. We shall, certainly, give our answer to the President.

(Continued on next page)

Nikolai Ryzhkov receives Pierre Aubert

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, received on September 5 in the Kremlin Pierre Aubert, Vice-President of the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Pierre Aubert was on an official visit to the USSR.

Questions of Soviet-Swiss relations and some international problems of mutual interest were discussed during the conversation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the fact that political contacts between the two countries had intensified of late. Of special importance in this respect was the meeting in Geneva between Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Kurt Furgler, President of the Swiss Confederation, in the autumn of last year. Having shown mutual interest in the development of Soviet-Swiss co-operation in various spheres, it had imparted a

more dynamic nature to relations between the two countries.

The results of Soviet-Swiss commercial and economic, scientific and technical ties were on the whole positively assessed. Nikolai Ryzhkov emphasised that the implementation of the course at speeding up the social and economic development of the USSR endorsed by the 27th CPSU Congress created the conditions for enhancing the efficiency of the Soviet Union's foreign economic relations, including with Switzerland. This also presupposed a quest for new forms of co-operation, including industrial co-operation, setting up co-production and exchanging licences.

When international questions were discussed it was emphasised that the disquieting state of affairs that had now formed in the world insistently required enlisting the efforts of all states for taking radical measures to end the nuclear arms race, prevent their spread to space, ban and eliminate chemical weapons, and reduce armed forces and conventional armaments. In this connection Nikolai Ryzhkov pointed to the

special importance of the Soviet Union's decision to extend its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing till January 1, 1987, the decision announced by Mikhail Gorbachyov on August 18. The ending of nuclear testing would be a decisive initial step toward ridding humanity of nuclear weapons.

On his part Pierre Aubert confirmed the Swiss Government's striving to promote the consolidation of peace and a revival of detente. Neutral Switzerland welcomed initiatives and practical steps leading to a reduced level of military confrontation in the European continent, and to growth of confidence in inter-state relations.

During the conversation, the sides emphasised the importance of the European process as an effective instrument of constructive interaction of states for consolidating peace, security and peaceful co-operation, and expressed their striving to develop it in all directions.

The conversation passed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and benevolent sincerity. □
(TASS)

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Swiss Foreign Minister

TALKS took place in Moscow on September 5-6 between Eduard Shevardnadze, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and Pierre Aubert, Deputy Chairman of the Federal Council and Head of the Federal Department (Minister) of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, who was paying an official visit to the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Government.

The sides conducted in a business-like and constructive atmosphere exchanges of opinion on the more important aspects of the European and international situation. The exchanges centred on problems of security, including prospects for reductions in nuclear weapons, the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons and the lowering of the level of armed confrontation in Europe and the world.

Eduard Shevardnadze emphasised that the decision taken by the Soviet leadership to prolong the unilateral moratorium on any nuclear explosions until January 1, 1987 shows the Soviet

Union's determination to do everything possible to halt the nuclear arms race and persuade the US Government to proceed to nuclear disarmament.

The hope was expressed that the countries that stood for removing the nuclear threat and bringing about a radical turn in international affairs would do what they could to contribute to the achievement of a bilateral Soviet-American or multilateral agreement to ban nuclear weapon tests and renounce all other nuclear explosions.

Pierre Aubert said that Switzerland wanted the total abolition of nuclear weapons and sincerely wished the Soviet-American talks to produce accords on nuclear and space weapons. Switzerland also supported the idea of reductions in the conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe with equal security for the sides.

The two sides called for the constructive completion of the Stockholm Conference and dynamic progress at the forthcoming Vienna meeting of the states participating in the Helsinki Conference. In view of the importance of the Vienna forum, they consider it necessary to open it at the level of foreign ministers.

The sides called for a search for ways to remove the existing centres of tension in different parts of the world which were fraught with grave

complications for peace and international security.

The two foreign ministers expressed satisfaction with the condition of bilateral relations and confirmed their readiness to go on developing them comprehensively. □

(Novosti Press Agency)

Soviet television on US stand

"THE argument that a nuclear test ban is unverifiable, invoked by the opponents of the Soviet moratorium, doesn't stand up to criticism because both the technical possibility of verification and the Soviet Union's readiness to accept such verification exist," Gennadi Gerasimov said on Soviet television's 'International Panorama' programme on September 7.

"The Soviet Union and the United States are currently holding their second bilateral meeting on nuclear testing in Geneva. It is taking place behind closed doors but Washington's position is almost crystal clear, judging from American statements. The United States wants a nuclear test ban, but in some indefinite future, whereas for the time being its only goal is verification of limited nuclear tests.

"It is of course a little better than an absolutely free hand to carry out nuclear explosions, but falls dismally short of a total test ban," Gerasimov observed. "The Americans are of the opinion that it is a limit on nuclear testing that should be verified. As for the Soviet Union, it wants verification of a total nuclear test ban," he said. □

(TASS)

MIKHAIL GORBACHYOV'S REPLIES TO RUDE PRAVO

(Continued from previous page)

I studied the President's letter through and through, figuratively speaking placed it under a microscope and looked at it through a telescope. I shall not be more specific for we have agreed that our correspondence is confidential. I understand, however, the wish of people to know what is there, in that confidential correspondence. For this concerns everyone, all people on Earth. If they could familiarise themselves with the text of both letters, compare the importance of each of them for untying the main knots on the road to disarmament, they would see with what seriousness and sense of responsibility the Soviet leadership approaches problems of preventing war, and in what a concrete and business-like way, with due consideration for the interests of the other side, we formulate our proposals.

They would also see that we are far from a sense of hopelessness. They would see that we believe in the power of reason and mankind's sense of self-preservation.

By our actions and initiatives we are striving to strengthen the hope of peoples that the situation can be altered, that there is a real alternative to confrontation. I believe we have already entered the second phase of a global anti-nuclear process, the phase that is not only that of hopes, but also of realistic plans and concrete actions stemming from them. As a Communist I believe in the strength of the masses who are mastering the new thinking which indicates the way out of the crisis situation.

The time for adopting joint and responsible, even if compromise, decisions is the most valuable thing we still have. But it is quickly running out. The age of nuclear weapons is, apparently, the most fleeting of all ages through which world history passes. What is badly needed now is concrete deeds. I would like to conclude the interview with a call for them.

On behalf of the CPSU, of all Soviet people, I convey best wishes to the fraternal Czechoslovak people. □

A Real Step Towards Disarmament

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Nikolai Talyzin's visit to China

YAO YILIN, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, on September 8 gave a reception in honour of Nikolai Talyzin, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and the persons accompanying him, TASS reports from Peking.

Nikolai Talyzin is in the PRC on an official visit at the invitation of the Government of the PRC. In their speeches, Yao Yilin and Nikolai Talyzin pointed to the marked positive changes that had taken place in Soviet-Chinese relations in recent years. They expressed satisfaction with the

development of mutually advantageous ties and contacts between the two countries in various areas, and with the development of commercial and economic co-operation. "But what we have done so far is not commensurate with the vast potentialities of our two great neighbouring countries. Much remains to be done and it must be done," Yao Yilin said.

Yao Yilin expressed the conviction that Nikolai Talyzin's visit would promote the further development and widening of Soviet-Chinese co-operation in various spheres. "As to our economic relations, we shall be acting in this sphere on the principle of one side supplementing the other, which meets the interests of construction in the two countries," Yao Yilin said. He noted that the Chinese people were exerting every effort to implement the socialist modernisation of the country, to make economic reforms.

"Traditional friendship exists between the

peoples of China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese people follow with close attention the socialist and economic transformations now taking place in the Soviet Union. The exchange of experience and opinions between the two countries in the sphere of reorganising the economic mechanism is useful to both sides," Yao Yilin said.

In his speech Nikolai Talyzin said that the Soviet people lived under the signboard of the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress, and were working on reorganising the socialist economic mechanism.

He said that the main aim of the Soviet Union's foreign policy strategy was to ensure for the Soviet people the possibility of working in conditions of peace. "The Soviet Union regards it as its priority duty to do its utmost to ensure a peaceful future for the world. We oppose to the US 'Star Wars' plans our 'Star Peace' programme." Nikolai Talyzin pointed out that the Soviet Union had extended again its unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions, till January 1, 1987.

"The biggest part of the Soviet territory is situated east of the Urals," he said. "The striving to stabilise the situation in the area is natural to us as an Asian and Pacific country. In his speech in Vladivostok on July 28 this year, Mikhail Gorbachyov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, advanced a programme for creating favourable conditions for achieving this aim." Pointing out that the Soviet Union and China had similar tasks in the sphere of using the advantages of socialism to the utmost Nikolai Talyzin said: "The Soviet Union is sincerely striving to live in peace and friendship with the people of socialist China, our great neighbour. We are convinced that we have the objective conditions for widening the spheres of mutual understanding."

A steady development of Soviet-Chinese relations along the lines of friendship and good-neighbourliness, and the development of all-round co-operation on the basis of equality and mutual advantage would meet the vital interests of the USSR and the PRC, and would promote the improvement of the international situation, enhancement of the role of socialism in international affairs and consolidation of peace and stability in Asia and the whole world. □

Mikhail Gorbachyov's selected speeches published in Sweden

THE publication of a collection of Mikhail Gorbachyov's selected speeches and articles in Sweden is an event of great significance. The Swedish public is keeping an interested and attentive eye on the policies of the USSR which is now in a new important stage of its socio-economic development.

These words keynoted the speeches of Iren Mord, representative of the Fram publishing house, and Gunnar Rask, General Secretary of the Union of Sweden-Soviet Union Societies. They were speaking at a ceremony at the USSR's Embassy on September 5 devoted to the publication in Sweden of this collection by the Goeteburg publishing house Fram, reports TASS correspondent Nikolai Vukolov from Stockholm.

The collection of documents, which set forth the guidelines of the Soviet Union's peaceful foreign policy course and explains the aims and tasks set by the 27th CPSU Congress, will promote more profound understanding in Sweden of all the major processes now under way in the land of the Soviets, and therefore make a big contribution to improving mutual understanding between the Swedish and the Soviet nations, they noted. □

Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

AT its meeting on September 4 the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee approved the results of Nikolai Ryzhkov's talk with Dumaagiyn Sodnom, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian People's Republic.

It was noted that work to further enrich the content and forms of co-operation between the USSR and the MPR in the spirit of accords reached at the Soviet-Mongolian summit meeting accorded with the CPSU's invariable course of deepening and raising the efficiency of interaction between the USSR and the MPR in the interests of the cause of socialism and peace.

The Political Bureau heard a report from Yegor Ligachyov on his meeting with Mohamed Sherif Messadia, member of the Political Bureau and head of the Standing Secretariat of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front Party of Algeria, who presented a personal message from Chadli Bendjedid, the President of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria and General Secretary of the National Liberation

Front Party, to the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachyov. Satisfaction was expressed with the development of friendly co-operation between the USSR and the DPRA. The USSR's invariable position of support for Algeria's independent course and its solidarity with the Algerian people in its struggle against the intrigues of imperialism and reaction were confirmed.

At its meeting the Political Bureau approved the government's proposals to switch subunits of the Ministry of the Merchant Marine of the USSR to full cost-accounting as of January 1, 1987. It is provided that by working in the new conditions the ministry's shipping companies and enterprises will finance their development with the money they earn.

A resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR was adopted on speeding up the development at the Volzhsky car plant of designs of passenger cars in line with the long-term level of world car manufacture.

The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee discussed some other questions of economic and social development and of foreign policy activity directed at safeguarding peace and the security of peoples. □

(TASS)

TASS STATEMENT

On September 6 TASS made the following statement:

THE world has witnessed a fresh act of international terrorism.

On September 5, a passenger plane with nearly 400 people on board was seized at the airport of the city of Karachi in Pakistan. A group of terrorists made an attempt at hijacking the plane. In the subsequent shoot-out with airport security men, more than twenty persons have been killed and over 100 injured.

A grave crime has been committed, which involved casualties among innocent people. There is no justification for such a crime, whatever the motives of those who perpetrated it.

TASS is authorised to state that the Soviet Union most resolutely condemns this act of terrorism and calls upon all states for effective co-operation so as to eradicate completely this

dangerous phenomenon.

This should be done without delay. Such criminal terrorist actions must not be allowed to take a toll of human lives, jeopardise the normal functioning of international and interstate ties, sharply deteriorate the situation and spread violence.

It is necessary to start practically elaborating effective actions to prevent international terrorism. The Soviet Union, as it has said in the past too, is ready for such work and proposes that other countries should also do everything possible to find a solution to that problem. One of the most important directions is to end crises and conflicts in various parts of the world, which are a breeding ground for international terrorism.

The Soviet Government expresses its sympathy with the families of those killed and injured during the tragic events in Karachi. □

Soviet military leader on air inspection

MARSHAL Sergei Akhromeyev, First Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces, in a TASS interview on September 4 touched on the Soviet proposal for on-site inspection made at the Stockholm Conference.

"We suggest", he said, "inspecting the areas where troop exercises are conducted and which fall under suspicion of the other side, on land and from the air.

"This inspection would be conducted by groups of the other side with aircraft belonging to the country which is to be inspected. We do not see any contradiction here. Soviet pilots will fly Soviet aircraft over the territory of the Soviet Union, while West German aircraft will fly over West German territory and will be flown by West German pilots. The inspection will be conducted by inspection groups rather than by the pilots.

"They will give instructions to pilots in what direction to fly, where to make a turn and provide an opportunity to inspect the area. What is wrong here? However, the NATO countries propose another variant, under which a foreign aircraft flies over the territory of another sovereign state.

"This aircraft could be stuffed with intelligence equipment which could not only verify the operations of troops in that area but could also detect other facilities which are not the target of verification. This would be illegal reconnaissance and a violation of the other state's sovereignty. We believe that our position is just."

Marshal Akhromeyev also commented on a

Meeting of Hero Cities

THE first meeting of the steering committee of the International Union of War Victim Cities and Hero Cities has been held in the small French town of Verdun, TASS correspondent Nikita Yermakov reports (September 7). The union includes representatives from Madrid, Warsaw, Bastogne (Belgium), Arnhem (Holland), Verdun and the Hero City of Volgograd.

The constituent congress of the union, held in Verdun four years ago, stated that its purpose was the activation of the struggle for peace and disarmament, and the development of mutual understanding and co-operation among nations. The union urges residents of the cities to remember the sacrifices made in the struggle against fascism during World War II and to do their utmost to put an end to the crazy nuclear arms race.

Opening the meeting, Jacques Barrat-Dupont, Mayor of Verdun, a town seriously damaged during World War I, stressed the need for vigorous action by the cities in the struggle against the nuclear threat, and for the channelling of the enormous resources spent on armaments to the solution of urgent social problems facing our planet. He also spoke in favour of developing friendly relations with Soviet cities.

"The International Union of War Victim Cities and Hero Cities is striving to invigorate the struggle for peace and disarmament, against the threat of an all-out nuclear catastrophe," says a message sent on September 8 to the UN Secretary-General by the union's steering committee, meeting in Verdun, France. It was held to coincide with the UN-proclaimed International Year of Peace and the 70th anniversary of the battle of Verdun in the First World War. □

proposal put by the NATO states at Stockholm to the effect that war games involving more than 75,000 men should be banned if appropriate notification is not made two years in advance.

"We assess this proposal positively," he said. "It contributes to some extent to progress at the conference. But this is not the main thing. The main thing is not to conduct exercises in Europe on such a huge scale as the NATO states do. At present the 'Autumn Forge' exercise is under way. It involves NATO armed forces across all Europe, from North Cape to the southern coast of Turkey.

"A large-scale lift of ground and air forces from the USA to Europe is in progress. Military staffs of NATO states in Western Europe are moving from their areas of permanent location to field areas. Over 300,000 troops, 2,000 planes, 4,000 tanks and 300 warships are participating in the war games: NATO troops are approaching the borders of the Warsaw Treaty states. How should we respond to this? It is difficult to distinguish between such exercises and preparations for a real war. We are against such major manoeuvres. We are preparing our armed forces to rebuff an aggression. But we do not conduct exercises ourselves on such a scale and we call on the other side to follow suit. The answer so far has been in the negative."

Referring to Washington's refusal to abide by the provisions of the SALT-2 Treaty, Marshal Akhromeyev described the military-political consequences of this act as "negative".

"The refusal of the United States to abide by the SALT-2 Treaty does not help to lower international tension or reduce strategic arms. In fact, after Washington's rejection of the SALT-2

Treaty the sides would get freedom of action in developing their strategic nuclear arms.

"While abandoning SALT-2 President Reagan called on the Soviet Union to display restraint in developing inter-continental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. But what is the worth of such a call when the deployment of cruise missiles of various types of basing is left outside this proposal? Meantime the United States has already started deploying them on a mass scale and planning to deploy several thousand. This proposal is totally unfair, it is directed at securing for the United States unilateral advantages over the Soviet Union in the field of strategic arms."

On the possibility of reaching agreement at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, the Marshal said:

"If this stage of the Stockholm Conference is successful and the sides come to terms on concrete confidence-building measures, on their notification and effective verification, this will provide a basis for progress.

"It is not for nothing that the event is called a conference on confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament.

"If agreement is reached at it on confidence-building measures, it will be quite logical at the next stage to hammer out the next measures—measures of disarmament.

"Measures to reduce armed forces in Europe are a goal sought by the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty countries. Our proposals on this score have been set forth in Budapest at a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty countries. □

Afghanistan: NATO's chemical weapons proving ground

By Boris Gan, Novosti correspondent in Kabul

IN the course of recent operations against counter-revolutionary bands in Afghanistan, government forces captured large amounts of Western-made chemical weapons, including shells, hand grenades and cartridges.

"They were all made in the United States, West Germany and Italy in the early 80s," said Col. Mohammad Nazem, head of the Chemical Weapons Service Department of the DRA Ministry of Defence. "For the first time we've captured pellet war-gas grenades made in the USA. The pellets are covered with a mercury-chromium compound. Penetrating inside the human organism, it affects the nervous system and eventually kills the victim. The grenades have a green ring—the NATO mark for deadly chemical weapons."

Italian-made 81-mm calibre mortar shells, with mounts, are among the trophies. Marked 'GD', which means nerve gas, they have chemical and electric fuses. A batch of them were captured recently in the province of Kabul.

Incendiary-smoke shells, containing white phosphorous, and phosphorous hand grenades have been seized in Herat province. In burning they give off substances which affect the respiratory tract. There are West German-made 9-mm pistol cartridges, too, filled with chloracetophenone and having a red band mark, which indicates that they are temporarily disabling.

Col. Nazem said that the counter-revolutionaries have used war gases in the provinces of Herat, Bamian, Ghazni, Kabul, Farah and other places. They recently used chemical weapons to attack troops led by Col. Rahmatullah in Nangarhar province, in the area of the Nawe-Koza Kishlak in Huguani district. Those affected showed clear signs of poisoning—suffocation, vomiting and tears, and for about one hour they could hear nothing.

"We have information that the counter-revolutionary leaders are planning large operations with the use of war gases against civilians," Col. Nazem said. "As before, they will pass them off as operations by Afghan and Soviet troops. Special groups are being trained in Pakistan to be sent inside the areas where chemical weapons will be used. They will then photograph those affected and take water and soil samples. All this information will then become 'proof' of the use of war gases by the 'Soviet and Afghan troops' and then analysed by CIA experts, who are eager to convert Afghanistan into NATO's proving ground for chemical weapons." □

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International Year of Peace in the USSR

THE Commission on the Holding of the International Year of Peace in the USSR calls upon all its fellow commissions in other countries, the United Nations Associations and the public at large abroad to step up their activities in defence of peace, against the threat of nuclear destruction.

Resolute action by all states and nations, by people of different convictions is now needed more than ever before to stop mankind's sliding towards the nuclear precipice. There is no time to lose because, contrary to the hopes and aspirations of all people on Earth, the arms race is accelerating not slowing down. The danger of its proliferation into space has emerged, and intensive militarisation is going on in the US and other NATO countries.

The nuclear-and-space age demands that the leaders of all states, first of all of the nuclear powers, should realise in full the dimensions of the nuclear threat, and display wisdom, a far-sighted approach and political boldness corresponding to the realities of our time.

The Soviet Union deems it its high duty to do everything it can to preserve peace on Earth. Proceeding from the understanding of its high responsibility for the future of the nation and the peoples of the rest of the world, the Soviet Union set forth on January 15 this year a programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, an historic and thorough programme for redressing the current unfavourable development of the world situation.

The unilateral Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions, announced by this country on the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, has been operating for more than a

year. All people of goodwill welcomed our decision to impose it. Politicians and MPs, public figures and organisations of all countries regarded this action as an example of the right approach to modern problems. It inspired them with the hope of shaking off the fear of nuclear disaster. The Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions is an action rather than a mere proposal, and it shows in practice the seriousness and sincerity of the Soviet programme for nuclear disarmament, of its call for a new policy, a policy of realism, peace and co-operation. Indeed, cessation of nuclear tests is the most simple and at the same time the most effective barrier in the way of the nuclear arms race and the development and sophistication of nuclear weapons.

Mikhail Gorbachyov's statement of August 18, 1986 on the decision to extend the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions until January 1, 1987 is convincing new proof of the unflinching commitment of our Party and government, of all Soviet people to the cause of peace. It testifies to our understanding of the responsibility for the future of human civilisation. The statement expressed the unanimous will and aspirations of the Soviet people, the new political mentality which is required by the modern nuclear epoch.

On behalf of the Soviet people, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee appealed to the wisdom and dignity of the Americans not to miss again the historic chance

of halting the arms race. He called on the US Government to sign an agreement on ending nuclear tests even before the end of this year at the Soviet-US summit meeting. The signing of such an agreement could become the most important event of the International Year of Peace, a real step forward towards the improvement of the international situation.

The peoples of the world should spare no effort to make the moratorium on nuclear explosions universal, to persuade all other nuclear powers, above all the US, to join it.

More than half of the International Year of Peace is over. This year has witnessed numerous actions by the working people in all countries for peace, cessation of the arms race and development of co-operation between states and peoples. Extending its unilateral moratorium, the Soviet Union is making one more big contribution to the common struggle of nations against the nuclear threat.

The Commission on the Holding of the International Year of Peace in the USSR appeals to its fellow commissions in other countries, the United Nations Associations and the public at large in all countries to strongly support the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions, oppose continued nuclear testing by other nuclear powers, and do everything for this year to justify its name—the International Year of Peace. □

(Novosti Press Agency)

Pravda report on Non-Aligned Summit

"THE Harare forum has been distinguished by manifestations of new political thinking on the part of the leaders of the non-aligned countries, by heightened attention to the problems of southern Africa, by sharp condemnation of the imperialist policy of neo-globalism, and by a more active approach to promoting economic co-operation among African, Asian and Latin American nations," *Pravda* said on September 7 in a dispatch from the Zimbabwean capital, the venue of the 8th Non-Aligned Summit.

"A desire by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement to prevent nuclear catastrophe threatening mankind has been reflected more broadly in Harare than at the previous forums," the paper said.

The results of the conference in Harare, *Pravda* said, "indicate the non-aligned countries' readiness to take their share of responsibility for the future of mankind, by barring the way to the arms race and preventing its spread to outer space, containing the militarist ambitions of imperialist quarters, and removing the evils of colonialism, racism and apartheid from the Earth."

The 8th Non-Aligned Summit, the paper went on, "has examined the situation in the south of Africa as deeply and comprehensively as never before."

"None of the speakers avoided this issue, to which almost a quarter of the political declaration was devoted," *Pravda* continued, adding that a desire by non-aligned countries for practical steps to curb apartheid had become one of the Harare summit's distinguishing features.

"The main result of the forum in Harare is the coordinated position of the more than 100 non-

aligned states on the key issues of their strategy and tactics in the coming years. Worked out by consensus, the documents of the conference, including a political declaration, an economic declaration and a special declaration on southern Africa, testify to the fact that the Non-Aligned Movement has become a powerful force opposing imperialism, colonialism and racism and increasing the potential of peace and good will." □

(TASS)

Anatoli Dobrynin receives Armand Hammer

ON Wednesday, September 3 Anatoli Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, received Armand Hammer, President of Occidental Petroleum and a prominent representative of US business circles, at the latter's request, TASS reports from Moscow.

Questions relating to the present state of Soviet-US relations and possible ways of improving them were discussed during the conversation. The consensus was expressed that the widening of commercial, economic, scientific, cultural and other relations between the two countries could play a greater role in the fruitful development of these relations based on the principles of equality and mutually advantageous co-operation.

At the same time, the sides emphasised the need for pooling the efforts of the USSR and the USA in adopting effective and urgent measures to avert the war danger threatening the world, to normalise Soviet-American relations and ensure an improvement in the international climate as a whole. In this connection, it was emphasised particularly that the Soviet Union's proposals advanced by Mikhail Gorbachyov in the statement of August 18 served as a good basis for this. □

Nuclear blast in Nevada

THE American Peace Test anti-war organisation has thoroughly examined the information in its possession, compared it with the news coming from other organisations and government agencies and announced that the United States carried out a new nuclear weapons test at a test range in Nevada on the morning of September 4, says a dispatch carried by *Pravda* on September 8.

A nuclear device was detonated in a deep vertical pit at square 19 and its yield was equal to an underground tremor measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale.

Under the US Energy Department's 'calendar', this explosion was staged as part of the secret military research conducted by the Las Alamos atomic laboratory in New Mexico, and the test was agreed to be titled as 'Galvestone'.

So the United States set off its 19th nuclear device since the Soviet Union announced its unilateral moratorium on nuclear blasts, the correspondent writes.

As has already been the case on more than one occasion this year, there was no report on the test in the mass media.

Pravda's correspondent placed a long-distance call to Las Vegas where American Peace Test is headquartered. The call was answered by Jesse Cox, the organisation's national coordinator.

She said that a news blackout imposed on all information relating to the developments at the nuclear test site in Nevada could be explained perfectly well. The administration does not want the US public to be reminded once more about the ongoing US nuclear tests. She said the organisation was also forced to check its information through other channels, including sources in the Energy Department and other federal agencies. □

USSR's drive to streamline the economy

By Gennadi Pisarevsky, *Novosti* political correspondent

NEVER before, as far as I can remember, has the country's economic development been so fascinatingly and tantalisingly intricate as it is now. Structural adjustment policies have been applied to all economic sectors, including industry, agriculture, construction, transport and trade. Managerial practices are being drastically reformed, and so are education methods and curricula in schools.

The reform will soon touch the institutions of higher and secondary learning. Soviet society is moving at top speed to cleanse itself of dogmatism, red-tape and conservatism, boost its labour morale and socialist morality, and purge uncompromisingly what it regards as obsolete. 'Reform' is, perhaps, the best word to describe the phase which Soviet society is going through. No wonder, in this country 'reform' and 'revolution' are treated almost as synonyms.

So what is happening to the Soviet economy?

To begin with, economic development rates have soared, due mostly to better performance and quality. Industry is humming more rhythmically: the last of its stagnating sectors, oil production, hit the planned daily quota on August 21. On the whole, the pace is heartening and is suggesting that plans may be overfulfilled. Things go better, albeit slowly, in construction, the quality of goods has improved, more services are available and transport has been doing well enough.

Consumers, however, tend to note economic advances from their own experience rather than from statistical reports. In Moscow, they can see a lot of vegetables and fruit on sale, though not as much as to say there are plenty, by which we imply the meeting of consumer requirements for foodstuffs to a scientifically substantiated minimum. Yet the calorific content of Soviet diets is one of the highest in the world. The problem now is to improve 'calory quality'.

The first positive results of agricultural reforms aren't encouraging for all, as producers are faced with more rigid demands and they are increasingly chided in public for their blunders. But no

reform can produce an immediate effect. Differences between the old and the new are settled in a tough fight, and this fight often proceeds in an unusual manner.

Thus, collective and state farm managers have been given greater autonomy in decision-making. Economically, they have been vested with virtually unlimited rights. Yet autonomy in this case also implies greater responsibility for the end results. Some seem to have been at a loss: they have got used to acting on orders from the centre and executing those orders without a hitch, but not to be fully in charge of production and take all the risks and responsibility. And yet they have to reform, as time has thrown down its gauntlet, so they have to pick it up.

From 1987 all industries without exception will be operating under new conditions. Greater stress will be laid on performance-oriented management schemes, encouraging initiative and giving more autonomy to factory work collectives. This means avoiding commands sent down from the centre and petty tutelage of factory management, avoiding substituting for the management, because they are down there at the factory and know better. It also means avoiding substituting the living, bodily links between the centre and local management with instructions, letters and all that is known as red-tape. The task is to create legal and social prerequisites to enable enterprises to operate more or less independently. Work has proceeded apace precisely along these lines on a new law on socialist enterprise. It will be expected to provide for a more even distribution of rights and duties between ministries and departments, sum up their experience and underscore anything that helps achieve better end results.

Reforms in industry, agriculture and construction are beautifully complemented by trade reforms. These are certainly needed to beat the paradox of our economy whereby production plans are met but consumers' demands are not, if only because the quality of many goods is poor, to put it mildly. Trade, an intermediate link between producers and consumers, has yet to say a word in this, and not just handle what it has been given for sale.

In the early postwar period, when the country was rehabilitating itself from the nazi onslaught and putting strains on the economy to feed

people and give them shelter, trade could afford to be a broker between producers and consumers. But that was yesterday. Today consumers want quality rather than quantity, as shops are stuffed to the ceilings with goods, though not the ones that consumers want.

Consumers are trying to make their demands heard by producers, rightly so, whereby trade could be an important link for conveying those demands to whom they are addressed. Trade establishments ought to become clients and quality watchdogs for factories. In 1987 factories will only be producing consumer goods ordered by trade establishments. Orders will be made at wholesale trade fairs, and these will be held more often and for a longer period. In the near future the number of orders at a factory will be an indicator of its performance.

The drive to streamline the Soviet economy and effect profound transformations in Soviet society has been gathering momentum. All of us and the country as a whole are living through hard but heartening times. We have embarked on drastically reforming the economy to turn it into a model that the world could use as a yardstick. It is a mammoth task. Yet our people know a thing or two about how to handle such tasks. □

Moiseyev ensemble a success

THE performances of the dance ensemble directed by People's Artist of the USSR Igor Moiseyev have received a great ovation at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The American audience enthusiastically applauded the artistry of the Soviet masters, reports TASS correspondent Igor Makurin from New York.

Cynthia Haber, a resident of New York, has said that the Moiseyev Ensemble's performance was an amazing dance feat. "It is difficult to find words to express the indelible impression produced by the ensemble," she said in a talk with the TASS correspondent. "The beautiful lines, the expressiveness of movement, the virtuosity—I have seen nothing of the kind before. It is really tremendous," she said.

"The guest performances of the remarkable ensemble were possible owing to the accord reached at the Geneva summit meeting between the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachyov, and US President Ronald Reagan," Igor Makurin was told in an interview with Albert Hunting, one of the managers of Columbia Artists, dealing with international exchanges in culture and art. "This accord testifies to the striving for development of contacts, the desire to know each other better, to promote mutual understanding between broad strata of the population of our two countries. The aim of the terrorists who threw the tear gas bomb during the premiere was to prevent an improvement in Soviet-American relations, and to frustrate the possible holding of a second meeting between the leaders of the two great powers."

He said that this act of terrorism was directed against all sober-minded people not only in the two countries concerned, but also in the whole world, against those who come out for stabilisation of the international situation.

In an interview on NBC television Shatel Solomon, director of one of the Broadway ballet studios, said she was delighted by the performances of the Soviet artists. "Art helps us to know more about a people and its character." She said she was sure that cultural exchanges would help the United States and the Soviet Union to overcome the period of suspicion and to relax tension in bilateral relations. Everyone without exception would gain from that. □

USSR Foreign Ministry briefing

AT a briefing at the USSR Foreign Ministry's press centre on September 4, the chief of the ministry's Information Department, Gennadi Gerasimov, was asked about the attitude of the Soviet Union to US plans to stage yet another nuclear blast at the testing range in Nevada. He replied "the attitude is utterly negative".

"Obviously, the US Defense Department has a nuclear test schedule which it is bent on observing even if the whole world is destroyed in the process," he said.

Attention was called at the briefing to the call made by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, for the signing of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and for all nuclear powers to declare a moratorium on nuclear explosions prior to it.

"This is what the Soviet Union has done," the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "and

we hope that all those attending the 8th Non-Aligned Summit will give their due to the silence on the Soviet testing ranges."

* * *

"The explosion of the tear gas canister at the New York Metropolitan Opera Theatre during a concert by Soviet performers was an act of vandalism and banditry. It shows how low is the morality of those who directly engineered this act and of those who encouraged the criminals," Gennadi Gerasimov told journalists at the briefing.

"The Soviet side", he went on, "has taken note that the Director of the United States Information Agency, Charles Wick, apologised on behalf of the United States to the USSR Ambassador in Washington. We also take into account the deep indignation of the American public at what happened. Nevertheless, the American authorities should seriously concern themselves with the maintenance of such an atmosphere that would facilitate cultural exchanges between the two countries without obstructions of the type of tear-gas bombs." □

(TASS)