

Mikhail Gorbachev's New Year Address to the Soviet people

Here follows the full text of the New Year Address to the Soviet people by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

Dear Comrades

The last minutes of 1987 are ticking away into history. Each year in the history of an individual and a nation is unique in its own way.

For us Soviet people 1987 will remain in our memories as the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

All the world has evaluated befittingly the significance of our Revolution and its influence on the destinies of world civilisation.

On those jubilee days we seemed to synchronise our plans and deeds with the dawning hours of our history, with Lenin's ideas and the first experience of their implementation.

We have been convinced time and again that Lenin's ideas are triumphing and the Revolution continues.

The Revolution continues in the ongoing movement of our society along the road of progress, the road of socialism.

The Revolution continues in our struggle for peace and disarmament — for the survival and development of humanity.

The outgoing year of 1987 was a year of deep changes and momentous decisions, a year of intense work.

The main directions for the revolutionary reconstruction of our society were defined by the January and June plenums of the Party's Central Committee and the Law on the State Enterprise which was discussed countrywide before adoption.

This year seems to round off the first stage of perestroika. The new political and moral atmosphere which has formed in our country is an immense accomplishment of this stage.

Society is getting out of its stagnant condition, and there is growing social activity and responsibility of Soviet people for the affairs of the nation.

The prestige of good and honest labour is reviving.

A high level of exactingness, criticism and self-criticism, broad democratism and glasnost is being asserted more and more in the life of the community.

Of course, perestroika is not all plain sailing. It is not always that everything comes off first go,

as conceived. The old ways are not ceding to the new without a fight.

But this should not bother you and me. And we must not fold before difficulty. We have undertaken an immense cause which will transform us individually and nationally. This will evidently not just happen of its own accord. We must endeavour conjointly.

And we feel growing support for the Party policy to reconstruct. Our nation's understanding of the urgency of the new tasks is becoming sounder by the day.

And this, in the final analysis, is the most important and most major point.

Perestroika is influencing more and more our economy.

The outgoing year was not so simple in economic affairs but we are completing it with fair results in industry, capital construction, agriculture and transport.

Large social programmes are underway to develop health, science and culture, and the service sector. More housing than planned has been built in all rural and urban regions.

Naturally, comrades, when talking of all this, we understand well that our economy is not yet satisfying many of people's vital needs. And ahead of us lies immense, challenging endeavour.

The incoming year will start the clock for a new stage of perestroika. It will be a responsible stage on the path to deep renewal of all aspects of the life of society — both material and spiritual.

Before us stand two inter-related key targets — further democratisation of society and radical economic reform.

On January 1st, the Law on the State Enterprise comes into effect.

Thereby most workforces will come to live and labour in conditions of full accountability, self-financing and self-administration.

This means we all must learn to be full-blooded masters of production.

This means we must act so that every workforce treasures creative work, initiative and responsibility, organisation and discipline.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party is confident that the working class, farmers and intelligentsia, all Soviet people will demonstrate — as they have done more than once at the big turning points in our history — the high moral qualities of patriotism, endurance and diligence, and faith in the future that are inherent in them in order to make a big new step along the road of perestroika.

And then the life of everyone will undoubtedly become better materially and richer spiritually.

Dear comrades, we connect the prospects for our development with the peaceful future of humanity.

We must still accomplish much so as to create a world without armaments and fear, a world in which respect, mutual understanding and co-operation will rule in relations between peoples.

Important steps toward that goal have already been made. Nineteen eighty-seven was a frontier year in a clear sense in that it set the beginning for the historic process of eliminating nuclear weapons.

The signing at the Soviet-American summit in Washington of the Treaty on the complete elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles is a major event in world politics and marks a victory for the new mode of political thinking.

It is the success of the whole world community.

The first step has been made — a difficult but very important one. And made in the interests of humanity.

Great and invaluable is the merit of the Soviet people. By heroic efforts Soviet people have created an economic, scientific-technical and defence potential which permits us to speak with our partners on equal terms.

The persistent and fervent endeavour of our

(Continues on next page)

President Reagan addresses the Soviet people

U.S. President Ronald Reagan addressed the Soviet people through the USSR's Central Television on January 1.

He observed that the New Year in the United States is the year of presidential elections. The President said that he is going to meet Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow in a few months.

Reagan expressed the hope that by that time a Soviet-American treaty will be prepared on cutting strategic nuclear arms by 50%

The U.S. President pointed out that the new summit would discuss ways of resolving regional conflicts, human rights and some other issues.

There is no such thing as inevitability of history, Reagan said. It is possible to take the decision to make the world safer and freer if there is enough courage, he observed.

The American President recalled in his Address that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were allies in the past war, a war in which the Soviet people set an example of courage.

He offered to devote this year to manifestation of the will for peace rather than war. This is our duty to mankind, to our children, the children of our children and all succeeding generations, he said.

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Mikhail Gorbachev's New Year Address to the American people

Here follows the full text of Mikhail Gorbachev's New Year Address to the American people.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Friends

I'm glad to greet you, citizens of the United States of America, on New Year's Day and convey to you season's greetings and best wishes from all Soviet people.

January 1st is the day when we sum up in our minds the results of the past year and try to look into the year ahead.

The past year 1987 was crowned with an event that can be regarded as a good omen. In Washington, together with President Reagan we signed the Treaty eliminating intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. The Treaty marks a first step along the path of cutting nuclear arms — this imparts to it paramount importance. The Treaty has another merit — it has brought our peoples closer together.

We are entering the New Year with hope for further advancement — advancement towards a safer world.

We are ready to continue fruitfully talks on reducing strategic arms so that the treaty to this effect can be signed as early as in the first half of this year.

We would like to address without delay the issue of cutting drastically armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

(from front page)

nation for peace and mutual understanding has become part of one gigantic movement of all peoples on Earth for preserving world civilisation and affirming peace on our planet.

We enter this new year of 1988 confident that this effort will increase and fresh practical steps will be made along the road toward general disarmament, consolidation of trust and extension of peaceful cooperation between states.

We want more than to merely preserve the world. We want this world to be better and to contain more justice and freedom. We are for a world which in actual fact asserts humanism, one which elevates the working people.

Realising our social goals and developing socialism, we see how closely connected this is with the solution of all humankind's problems.

In this sense our perestroika also bears significance for all humanity and this places immense historic responsibility upon us.

Comrades

May the new year of 1988 be happy for each of us, for our country and for all sincere people on Earth. On behalf of the Central Committee of the Party, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, I congratulate you on the New Year holiday.

We address New Year greetings to the peoples of the fraternal socialist countries and to our friends all across the world.

May the New Year be one of fresh victories for work, reason and humaneness, and thereby peace and good.

Happy New Year, Comrades!

We are prepared for interaction in resolving other problems, including regional ones.

I think I should say that the past year was marked by growing mutual interest by our peoples. Contacts between Soviet and American youth, war veterans, scientists and teachers, cosmonauts and businessmen, and workers in culture have broadened considerably.

The thousands of threads of these contacts are beginning to make up, I would say, a tangible fabric of trust and growing mutual understanding. It is the duty of political figures in the USSR and the United States to take into account the sentiments of the citizens of their countries and reflect their will in political decisions.

The Soviet people are starting work in the New Year with the sense of realisation of their lofty responsibility for the present and the future. Profound changes will take place in our country along the lines of further perestroika, democratisation and radical economic reform. This will ultimately enable us to embark on the broad road of accelerated development.

We know that you Americans, too, have enough problems. But in handling these problems, I think that we and you should remember the most important thing — the life of man is equally precious no matter where he lives; in the Soviet Union, in the United States, or in

any other country. So let us spare no effort for the sake of upholding peace on Earth.

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the official send-off ceremony before my departure from Washington I expressed regret that I saw but very little of America during the visit. But I think that I have managed to capture the main thing.

This main thing is the immense potential of goodwill that the American people have. I can assure you that the Soviet people also have a potential of goodwill that is just as immense. Releasing that potential is the most noble and important task facing statesmen and politicians in our countries.

If they succeed in this, it will be possible to attain what today one can only dream about — lasting peace, the end of the arms race, broad trade, establishment of cooperation in combatting hunger, diseases and ecological problems, progress in safeguarding human rights and resolving other humanitarian problems.

Let the new year 1988 be an important landmark along this path.

Concluding my New Year Address to the citizens of the United States of America, I wish peace, happiness and joy to every American family.

I wish you all a happy New Year.

Zoya Pukhova's New Year interview

"PEACE — as the guarantee of the continuation of the human race and as the most vital condition for happiness of our children and our families — is our most crucial issue," Zoya Pukhova, Chairwoman of the Soviet Women's Committee, told TASS in a New Year interview. This mass organisation unites millions of women from all Soviet republics.

Zoya Pukhova described the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan as the central event of international life in the past year. "The elimination of two classes of nuclear missile weapons, prospects for further steps towards a nuclear-free world and the development of Soviet-U.S. relations find broad support among the entire Soviet people. Of course, as a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet, woman and mother, and as head of the Soviet Women's Committee, I welcome the signature of this agreement. Hopefully, it will be ratified by the two sides and become a reality and an important step towards a peaceful nuclear-free future," she said.

"The entire course of international development in the present-day world," Pukhova emphasised, "calls for the active participation in making crucial political decisions of the broadest circles of the world public and various political forces. This is especially important in everything that concerns such vital issues as the preservation of peace on Earth. As an example of broadly-based interest of the public she cited the World Women's Congress held in Moscow last summer. The Congress drew 2,800 representatives of women's organisations from 154 countries. Discussions indicated

women's common striving to mutual understanding, cooperation, respectful attitude to each other and improvement of the international situation. These changes in public opinion can and must affect politics."

"The Soviet Women's Committee maintains permanent contacts with 18 major women's organisations of the USA," Zoya Pukhova pointed out. "Among them are liberal, pacifist, antiwar and charity organisations. Bilateral seminars with the participation of American women from the organisations Bridges of Peace and Peace Links were held in Moscow recently.

"We have extensive plans for the New Year," the Chairwoman of the Soviet Women's Committee said. "We maintain contacts with 350 organisations from 130 countries, and plan to hold workshops in the USSR with women from the USA, Finland, India and other countries and take part in seminars planned by our partner women's organisations abroad. We will strengthen cooperation with women from socialist countries.

"The main direction in our international activities will be struggle for a lasting peace, for a nuclear-free future for our children and for equality, development and social progress."

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Mikhail Gorbachev's conversation with Franz-Josef Strauss

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV met in the Kremlin in Moscow on 29 December Franz-Josef Strauss, Minister-President of Bavaria and Chairman of the Christian-Social Union of the Federal Republic of Germany.

They held a substantive, lively exchange of views on major issues of world and European politics and relations between the USSR and the FRG.

In setting out the philosophy of the Soviet approach to present-day international affairs, Gorbachev pointed out that the Soviet Union in its foreign policy stands firmly on the soil of reality.

"In the world where dozens of states with their interests are at work, ignoring realities may bring about grave consequences — as happened in the past," he said.

"The world has changed in the past 40 years, new realities have emerged, which should be taken into account. Lessons must be drawn from the past.

"The main thing today is to respect the choice of other peoples. We are committed to our structure, to our system. But we also respect the choice of others. We are to live together, to compete and to cooperate.

"History will show which choice is better. The sooner we come to this conclusion, the quicker we will be able to diminish military confrontation and bring international relations into the channel of peaceful cooperation.

"The Soviet Union not only proclaims its philosophy of achieving a safe world by the year 2000 but is also undertaking specific realistic steps — displaying due flexibility and readiness to come to accord with partners in the West."

Strauss agreed that it is necessary to reckon with the existing realities. The CSU Chairman firmly declared that war should be excluded from the practice of inter-state relations as a means of resolving political issues. There should be no war, either nuclear, 'semi-nuclear', or conventional, he pointed out.

"We shall never raise the sword. Military clash should never be allowed to take place, whether on the territory of either of the two German states or the Soviet Union. The Government of the FRG realises this full well."

In discussing disarmament problems, Gorbachev pointed out that the conclusion of the INF Treaty is but a first step, the start of

the process that is to be followed by further steps in the field of cutting strategic arms and conventional weapons and prohibiting chemical arms.

On the whole, Strauss spoke to the effect that further steps in the field of disarmament should be undertaken.

Both sides paid due attention to problems of European security. The discussion revealed quite a few points of contact.

Gorbachev observed that the Soviet Union attaches prime importance to Europe's role in world politics. "We are Europeans ourselves. We will never allow a step that would damage European security. We will work towards reducing the level of confrontation in the European continent.

"Our European policy proceeds from the premise that all problems of the continent — security, cooperation in various areas — should be handled through concerted effort, on the basis of reciprocal interests."

"In the field of conventional arms," Gorbachev said, "the Soviet Union strongly favours the elimination of existing imbalances and asymmetries. We are prepared for realistic and constructive discussion of these issues.

"On the whole, it is necessary not simply to agree on eliminating imbalances, but to reduce step by step the military potentials down to the level required only for defence and insufficient for waging offensive actions."

Tactical nuclear weapons were discussed in this connection, and their elimination along with the reduction of conventional arms.

Understanding was revealed of the need for total prohibition of chemical weapons given strict verification.

Within the context of all-European cooperation, much attention was given to issues of Soviet-West German relations. Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union favours the development of cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany. "We invite the Government and politicians in the Federal Republic to build these relations on the basis of respect for post-war realities.

"If they are ready for this, great opportunities may open up for promoting political dialogue,

and economic, scientific-technological, cultural and other relations between the two countries."

Strauss favoured all-round development of relations between the FRG and the Soviet Union describing them as a major element in the European political landscape. He spoke of the interest of the FRG, in particular the Bavarian government, in promoting economic, scientific and technological cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev backed these remarks, noting that such cooperation could be built successfully on the basis of reciprocal benefit. In general, development of economic, scientific, technological and cultural ties constitute a good basis for strengthening confidence.

The General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee expressed the hope that the new year 1988 will be marked by more intensive constructive political dialogue between the USSR and the FRG, and broader contacts and meetings between the two countries.

Both sides showed understanding of the importance of making Soviet-West German relations a matter of practical policy.

At Strauss' request, Gorbachev described the processes currently taking place in Soviet society. "Politicians in the West," he said, "should have no illusions with regard to the consequences of the restructuring drive. We are not going to alter our system.

"We want to use to the maximum the opportunities it has. We hope to be correctly understood. We will march along our path. Our society needs restructuring. It does not threaten our neighbours."

Strauss expressed the hope that these processes will help strengthen confidence and cooperation between East and West.

The conversation, which lasted more than two hours, passed in a good atmosphere, on the basis of business-like discussion of all issues. It was useful for relations between the USSR and the FRG.

Anatoli Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Theo Waigel, Gerold Tandler and Edmund Stoiber, who arrived in Moscow with Strauss, took part in the conversation.

Shevardnadze and Kamentsev meet Strauss

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, met Franz-Josef Strauss on 28 December. Strauss arrived in Moscow on a visit at the invitation of the State Foreign Economic Commission of the USSR Council of Ministers.

In discussing issues of bilateral relations between the USSR and West Germany, Shevardnadze said that if one proceeds from such objective factors as the two countries' geographic proximity, peculiarities of their economic development and from historical experience and traditions, the conclusion can be reached that taking due account of mutual interests — primarily in the field of security — both West Germany and the USSR can attain a lot both for themselves as well as for the sake of ensuring a peaceful future in Europe and the world over.

Strauss supported the idea of giving fresh impetus to Soviet-West German cooperation and stated the preparedness of Bavaria, which is known to be one of West Germany's most industrially advanced lands, for this undertaking.

The talk also touched upon matters pertaining to the situation in Europe and some regional issues.

On the following day Vladimir Kamentsev, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Chairman of its Foreign Economic Commission, met the Bavarian Premier.

They held a constructive exchange of opinions on issues of Soviet-West German economic, scientific and technological relations, in particular between Soviet associations and enterprises and Bavarian firms and organisations.

The sides expressed themselves in favour of further developing and diversifying these relations, paying special attention to new forms of economic interaction such as cooperative production arrangements and joint ventures.

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Mikhail Gorbachev meets King Hussein of Jordan

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV met King Hussein Ibn Talal of Jordan in the Kremlin on Tuesday 22 December.

They held a substantive exchange of views — marked by the spirit of candour and mutual understanding — on issues of Soviet-Jordanian relations and topical international problems.

Greeting the visitor Mikhail Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union values relations with Jordan and appreciates the King's efforts to promote cooperation between the two countries. Soviet-Jordanian relations are successfully developing in various areas.

King Hussein said that Jordan takes pride in its relations with the Soviet Union — relations which are based on mutual understanding, trust and confidence in each other. He emphasised that the processes taking place in the Soviet Union are evoking immense interest in Arab and nonaligned countries. Great hopes for improvement in the international situation and a better future for all of mankind are being pinned on Soviet foreign policy initiatives.

The Jordanian head of state highly praised in this connection the Soviet-American accords reached in Washington, and expressed the hope that they will have a positive effect on the settlement of regional conflicts which pose a serious potential threat to peace and security.

Mikhail Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union is firmly committed to facilitating the normalisation of the situation in the world and taking international relations onto the road of constructive cooperation.

During the Washington summit, the Soviet Union persistently called on the U.S. to cooperate with all sides concerned in order to defuse conflict situations in the Near and Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, in Central America and other regions. It was emphasised that the search for settlement through political means on the basis of the legitimate interests of all sides is increasingly active in these regions.

A thorough exchange of views was held on all aspects of the Middle East situation and on ways to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Soviet public sides with Palestinians' just cause

"SOVIET people express profound indignation at atrocities committed by the Israeli invaders against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip, the Jordan West Bank and East Jerusalem," Vasil Solodovnikov, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and deputy chairman of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, said on Monday. He spoke in Moscow at a press conference of representatives of the Soviet public.

"Israel's actions are a blatant violation of the rules and principles of international law formalised in the U.N. Charter and other documents," he pointed out. "Events in the Gaza Strip and the Jordan West Bank have convincingly shown once again the need for the earliest and just settlement of the Palestinian problem, and the way to this settlement lies through an international Middle East conference

Gorbachev and Hussein were unanimous that a comprehensive and fair Middle East settlement can only be achieved through convening a competent international conference. It is only in this way, by concerted effort and on the basis of honest cooperation that it is possible to bring to a common denominator the interests of the Arabs — including the Palestinians — Israel and the other states.

It was stressed that, under all circumstances, the Palestinian factor remains the key element to the Middle East settlement and that it cannot be attained without the PLO.

The main thing now, Gorbachev said, is to set into motion the mechanism of the international conference and start practical talks. The number of supporters of this approach is increasing, he observed. But no real advancement has as yet been achieved. This was due to the lack of constructiveness in the position of the U.S. and Israel, and their attempts to impose their methods of settlement.

"We say bluntly to the Americans and to the Israelis that this is an unrealistic approach. This course runs counter to the interests of the Arabs and Israel alike."

"The international conference," Mikhail Gorbachev stressed, "must not be a cover for separate arrangements. Attempts to take the road of separate deals have not led anywhere. And this means that all the sides — including the PLO — should participate collectively in working out a fair and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, including the Palestinian problem. This should be done on both a multilateral and bilateral basis. This work should result in decisions that take into account the lawful interests of all the parties involved. The quest is conducted in the right direction, but this process should be stepped up."

"Such is the Soviet Union's approach to this forum. It sensibly combines principledness, flexibility and realism, and the readiness to take into consideration various viewpoints. The Soviet Union is going to continue interacting seriously and responsibly with all those who intend to make a constructive contribution to defusing the Middle East conflict."

King Hussein spoke about the results of the Arab summit conference held last November in

Amman. He noted that the idea of convening an international conference is supported by the participants at the Amman summit.

The great importance of joint actions by the Arab states in the interests of the fair solution of the Middle East problem was noted in this connection.

The interlocutors discussed widely questions connected with the Iran-Iraq conflict and the situation in the Persian Gulf. The common awareness was noted that the aggravation of the situation in the region requires vigorous and energetic actions.

Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised that the Soviet Union strongly favours an early end to that war, and the settlement of disputed questions by political means observing the lawful interests of both Iraq and Iran. It implements this line consistently in contacts with all the sides.

The Soviet and Jordanian leaders noted that the U.N. Security Council's Resolution 598 remains the real basis for taking effective steps toward peace.

In connection with the lack of real progress in the process of negotiations, King Hussein, referring to the decision of the Amman summit, declared in favour of the Security Council adopting a resolution on an embargo on arms deliveries to Iran as the side which refuses to comply with the Security Council's decisions.

Mikhail Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union — continuing to declare for the implementation of U.N. Resolution 598 — is not against considering that question at the United Nations Security Council. But there are doubts as to whether those who declare for an embargo the loudest, and who by the way were caught secretly supplying arms to Iran, would observe an embargo. And this is of no little importance for the matter. The Soviet Union does not supply arms to Iran.

"We deem it necessary to use every means for ending the war, including those envisaged by the United Nations Charter," Mikhail Gorbachev went on. "A great deal will depend in this on the warring sides themselves, on their readiness to carry matters to genuine settlement on the basis of reasonable compromise."

"The Soviet Union will promote this process in every way and will vigorously support collective efforts giving an impetus to the continuation of the talks. Clearcut and concrete directives were given to the Soviet representative at the United Nations to this effect."

"The question of normalising the situation in the Persian Gulf must be decided alongside this. The situation in the Gulf continues worsening, and threatens to develop into a serious international crisis. The situation in the Gulf zone should be relaxed and the sooner the better. The Soviet Union holds that the forming of the United Nations naval force will make it possible to improve the political climate and concentrate attention on the task of an early end to the Iran-Iraq war. The Soviet proposals to this effect are known. But we are also open to a serious discussion of any other constructive ideas. We call on our partners in the West to ponder jointly and interact in this question."

Mikhail Gorbachev and the Jordanian King expressed mutual interest in continuing the Soviet-Jordanian political dialogue and confirmed their striving for the further widening and deepening of relations between the two countries in various areas.

King Hussein invited the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee to make an official visit to Jordan. The invitation was gratefully accepted.

USSR Foreign Ministry Statement

Here follows the full text of the Statement by the USSR Foreign Ministry issued in Moscow on December 26, 1987 —

On December 16, 1987 the United States launched the production of a new generation of chemical weaponry: binary weapons (these are chemical weapons in which the warfare poisoning substance vx or sarin is formed from relatively low-toxin components during the munition's flight to the target). So a step has thus been taken towards a new twist in the race in chemical weapons, a step which was unprovoked.

This action, which is militarist in nature, was taken despite meaningful progress made at the current Geneva talks on the total and universal ban on and destruction of chemical weapons, progress which brings closer the goal of ridding mankind of the chemical threat. Moreover, at the summit meeting in Washington a week before this, the U.S. leadership expressed its adherence to the cause of working out a verifiable comprehensive and effective international convention on banning and destroying chemical weapons, and concurred with the need for more intensive talks with a view to concluding it.

The conclusion prompts itself that by embarking on the road of binary chemical rearmament, the United States is preparing to make a choice not in favour of an agreement on chemical disarmament. It is evident that it was precisely the binary programme that was the reason why the United States began impeding the Geneva talks on banning chemical weapons recently.

The U.S. binary programme does not tally in any way with the shaped process of building confidence in the field of chemical weapons, a

manifestation of which was the visit by the parties to the talks — including the United States — only a short while ago to the Soviet military facility in Shikhany and the visit by Soviet experts to the U.S. military-chemical facility in Tooele, Utah.

But the negative consequences of the United States' move to begin implementing the binary rearmament are not limited to this. Although in words the United States loudly declares its concern over the emergence of new states possessing chemical weapons, by its actions it just prods on the proliferation of chemical weapons, giving a bad example to those countries which do not produce them for the present.

In making attempts to justify in the eyes of world public opinion the launching of binary weapons production, U.S. spokesmen usually allude to a chemical threat allegedly stemming from the Soviet Union. In so doing, they cite absolutely fantastic 'data' on chemical weapons stocks in the USSR. It is claimed that they amount in the USSR to 250,000 to 700,000 tons of warfare poisonous substances and that the USSR has a multiple edge over the United States in this field.

It is necessary that an end be put to this deception. The USSR Foreign Ministry is authorised to state that the stocks of chemical weapons in the USSR do not exceed 50,000 tons in terms of poisoning substances. According to Soviet experts' estimates this corresponds to the chemical weapons stocks of the United States. Moreover, all Soviet chemical weapons are located on Soviet territory.

Those who speculate on a Soviet chemical threat, deliberately ignore the fact that it is precisely the Soviet Union which consistently presses at the Geneva talks for the earliest and total ban of chemical weaponry, destruction of all their stocks and the very industrial base for their production, and acts for the process of chemical disarmament to proceed with most stringent international verification — including mandatory

on-site challenge inspections with no right of refusal.

The USSR stands for building confidence and openness in the field of chemical weapons. Our concrete proposals for a mutual exchange of data on chemical weapons were handed over to the U.S. side even prior to the signing of the convention. The Soviet Union halted the production of chemical weapons, never used these weapons, did not turn them into strange hands, and did not deploy them outside its borders. Work to develop the capacities to destroy the entire chemical arsenal is vigorously under way in our country as a way of preparing for concluding the convention.

All these facts demonstrate that the launching of the production of binary chemical weapons in the United States is nothing short of an attempt to torpedo the process of chemical disarmament, a manifestation of disrespect for the efforts of the states participating in the Conference on Disarmament and the multilateral talks on banning this type of weapons of mass destruction, and for the repeated calls by the U.N. General Assembly for speeding up these talks. The U.S. binary programme runs counter to the aspirations of the world's people who link their hopes with the prospect that, following the conclusion by the USSR and the United States of the Treaty to eliminate intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, the matter of real disarmament will move ahead in all directions.

The Soviet Union denounces this action by the United States and holds that it creates a new situation in the field of chemical weapons, which can require the adoption of respective measures. At the same time, the USSR will continue doing everything depending on it to prevent the talks in Geneva from being thwarted, towards which the United States prods by its actions.

The Soviet Union hopes for the understanding and support of all countries coming out for ridding mankind of barbarous chemical weapons.

TASS Statement

Here follows the full text of the TASS Statement issued in Moscow on 19 December 1987 —

Israel, persisting in its policy of keeping the occupied Arab territories by force, has again, for the umpteenth time, launched massive repressive actions against the civilian Palestinian population.

Ever new reports are coming in from the Gaza sector and the West Bank of the Jordan on crimes being perpetrated by the invaders. Almost full-scale combat operations involving tanks and helicopters were launched. As a result, there are dozens killed and hundreds injured. Even hospitals were attacked: there are casualties among patients and the attending personnel.

An explosive situation remains too in Lebanon's south where Israel, flagrantly trampling upon the norms of international law, occupies part of sovereign Lebanese territory. The Israeli military are making preparations which cannot be regarded otherwise than as preparation for a fresh aggressive attack against the Arabs.

The escalation of violence against the Palestinians coincided with the signing of the US-Israeli "memorandum of understanding" which in the field of military cooperation granted Israel a status which is equal to that of the USA's

NATO allies. This cannot but encourage the adventurist policy of the Tel Aviv hawks.

The glaring violations of human rights by the occupiers and their overt disregard for the 1949 Geneva Convention give rise to the international community's indignation. Quite recently the United Nations General Assembly qualified Israel's actions in the occupied territories as war crimes and an affront to mankind.

At the current special meetings of the UN Security Council, representatives of many countries firmly denounced Israel's repressive actions.

The criminal actions against the civilian population in the occupied Arab territories are being strongly condemned in the Soviet Union, and solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people against occupation and for their inalienable national rights is being expressed.

The developments in the occupied Arab territories indicate that the Middle East conflict remains among the most acute problems and requires solution without delay.

The way to just and lasting peace in the region lies through the convocation of an international conference under UN auspices with the participation of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and all parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation — the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Recently an overwhelming majority of states at the 42nd session of the General Assembly again declared for the convocation of such a conference.

It is time the leading circles of Tel Aviv heeded this voice of reason.

Realities and Guarantees for a Secure World

Mikhail Gorbachev's article published in *Pravda* on September 17.

Price 30p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
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USSR Foreign Ministry briefings

Krasnoyarsk radar station.

A letter from three U.S. Congressmen—Robert Carr, Thomas Downy and Jim Moody — printed in the newspaper *Washington Post* has attracted attention in Moscow. The Congressmen visited in August the radar station which is under construction in the area of Krasnoyarsk, chief of the Information Directorate of the USSR Foreign Ministry Gennadi Gerasimov told Soviet and foreign journalists at the Foreign Ministry's press centre on 29 December 1987.

"The authors of the letter refute statements ascribed to them that allegedly what they saw in Krasnoyarsk testifies to violation of the ABM Treaty," the USSR Foreign Ministry representative said at the briefing. The Congressmen refer to their report prepared upon their return from Krasnoyarsk in which they note that when they visited the structure they held that it was not a violation of the ABM Treaty. The authors of the letter underline the significance of the Soviet initiative to suspend unilaterally the work on building the Krasnoyarsk radar station as "assisting solution of that problem".

"The question of the Krasnoyarsk radar station was frequently raised and is being raised as an example of imaginary violation of the ABM Treaty by the Soviet Union. The explanations of the three Congressmen who visited the place is, in our view, bound to help close the issue," Gennadi Gerasimov said.

Soviet expert on banning chemical weapons

A Soviet Foreign Ministry expert on chemical weapons, attending the press briefing, described the production of binary munitions in the United States as contradicting the significant progress made at the Geneva talks for banning chemical weapons and the understandings on the chemical weapons ban reached by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan at their Washington summit.

"The Soviet stocks of chemical weapons do not exceed 50,000 tons. This is out of all comparison with the obviously exaggerated figures mentioned in the United States," Sergei Batsanov told the briefing.

"Besides, all Soviet chemical weapons are in Soviet territory, while the United States deploys its chemical warfare agents in other countries, in particular the Federal Republic of Germany, in the immediate proximity of the borders of socialist nations," he added.

While condemning the U.S. militarist action, the Soviet Union has taken a constructive step promoting openness and building trust, by being the first to declare the quantitative parameters of its chemical weapons arsenal, Batsanov said.

Before that no country, including the United States, had disclosed the size of its stocks, he added.

The Soviet expert stressed in conclusion that "the USSR has acted and will continue to act energetically and perseveringly at the talks for prohibiting chemical weapons, pressing for the early preparation of the convention on general and complete elimination of all chemical weapons without exception."

"Along with preparing a treaty on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive arms — in the context of continued compliance with the ABM Treaty — the signing of such a convention is now a priority in the on-going process of real disarmament started by the Soviet-U.S. INF (intermediate-range nuclear force) treaty."

PLO Mission in the U.S.

The Soviet Union considers as illegitimate any attempts to deny the Palestine Liberation Organisation — the sole lawful representative of the Palestinian people — the opportunity of effectively participating in the work of the United Nations given to it by General Assembly decisions, spokesman for the Soviet Foreign Ministry Gennadi Gerasimov stressed at the briefing.

"It was emphasised at the recent discussion of the issue at the U.N. that a decision of the U.S. Congress to close the PLO Mission would contradict the 1947 U.N. Headquarters Agreement and the United States' international legal commitments with regard to this world organisation," he pointed out.

Denunciation of Israeli terror on occupied territories

"The very fact of holding by force Arab lands — that is, lands belonging to someone else — is a flagrant violation of the fundamental right of man to have a motherland and to freely choose ways of national and state development," Gennadi Gerasimov stated at the press briefing.

"Apart from that, even in conditions of an acute conflict situation in the region, Israel as the invading country must observe the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilian population at times of war," he continued.

The fact that the Convention is applicable to the lands occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, was confirmed by Resolution 605 of the U.N. Security Council of 22 December 1987.

According to reports coming from the West Bank of the River Jordan and the Gaza Sector, repressions by the Israeli authorities have entered a new stage. "The Soviet Union believes that human rights are of universal value which is the same in Israel, the U.S., or any other country. Together with the whole of the world community the Soviet Union denounces the collective punishment practised by the Israeli authorities, the wholesale arrests, the administrative detention and the torture of prisoners, as well as the eviction of Arabs from the occupied lands and the denial of their right to return," Gerasimov emphasised.

The Soviet stand on this problem is fully consonant with the resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly on questions dealing with the actions of Israel affecting human rights. It is noteworthy that only two countries, the U.S. and Israel, voted against these resolutions.

On a statement by Geoffrey Howe

"A statement by Geoffrey Howe, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on the situation in Afghanistan is full of hostility for the policy of national reconciliation pursued by the leadership of that country," Gennadi Gerasimov said at the briefing.

The Soviet spokesman pointed out that Howe's statements on the national reconciliation policy reflected a nonconstructive and instigatory stand by London on the problem of the settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

"The only contribution made so far by the British side to the settlement of the Afghan problem is the deliveries to the counter-revolutionary forces of ground-to-air 'Blowpipe' missiles, whose explosions caused a lot of suffering to the civilian population of Afghanistan", Gerasimov said.

Road to Khost open

Units fighting their way towards each other from the Afghan cities of Khost and Gardiz linked up on December 29, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman reported.

Gennadi Gerasimov told newsmen that the units' advance towards each other had been greatly complicated by mines.

"Each day 1,000 to 1,200 mines have been defused," Gerasimov said.

"The Gardiz-Khost road has been liberated along its full length," he stressed.

"Troops are now demining the sides of the road, restoring some of its sections that have been destroyed, and organising diversions around ruined bridges."

"The road is expected to be made passable for motor traffic by December 31 and regular deliveries of all essential cargoes currently in storage at Gardiz will begin from the first days in January," the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The main combat activities were conducted by Afghan forces with Soviet military units only supporting them on commanding heights.

USSR Consulate-General in Isfahan

The USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman touched upon the details of the bandit attack against the USSR Consulate-General in Isfahan on December 27, 1987.

"The attack was launched by a group of outrageous elements from among the Afghan counterrevolutionaries, who settled in Isfahan," Gennadi Gerasimov said. "More than 300 bandits armed with knives, iron rods, clubs and stones broke into the territory of the USSR Consulate-General. They penetrated some premises of the Consulate-General, set a car on fire, destroyed furniture and other material values. The attackers threatened by their actions the lives of the Soviet officials and members of their families, among them children, who were staying in the Consulate building."

"After the energetic demarches made by the Soviet side, the territory of the Consulate-General was cleared of unauthorised persons an hour and a half after the start of the raid. The police drove the bandits out of the territory of the Consulate-General," he said.

According to a spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, as a result of the use of firearms by the police in dispersing the attackers, some bandits were killed. Several policemen were also badly injured. By the end of the day the situation around the Consulate-General had returned to normal.

The Soviet side made a resolute protest to representatives of the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Iranian Embassy in Moscow over the attack. The USSR demanded that the Iranian authorities ensure the full security of all the Soviet institutions and citizens in Iran, prevent a repetition of actions of this kind and also compensate for the material damage.

The spokesman for the USSR Foreign Ministry said that the Iranian side expressed regret over the accident and gave assurances that a repetition of hostile actions against Soviet representations would not be allowed.

"The USSR would wish to hope that the Iranian side will meet its commitments," Gennadi Gerasimov emphasised.

Search for settlement of Iran-Iraq conflict

"It is essential that the conflicting sides themselves should more actively join the process of searching for a political settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict," Gennadi Gerasimov said at the briefing. There are possibilities for this, he emphasised. The U.N. Secretary-General plans one more round of consultations with representatives of Iraq and Iran in January 1988.

The Soviet representative drew attention to the statement, made on Monday by a representative of the U.S. Department of State, on

(Continued on next page)

Soyuz TM3 returns to Earth

COSMONAUTS Yuri Romanenko, Alexander Alexandrov and Anatoli Levchenko returned to Earth at 12.16, Moscow time, on Tuesday 29 December 1987 after successfully accomplishing a programme for scientific-technical research and experiments on board the orbital complex Mir.

The descent module of the Soyuz TM-3 spaceship landed 80km away from the town of Arkalyk. Upon landing the cosmonauts felt well.

Vladimir Titov and Musa Manarov continue work in orbit.

For the first time in history cosmonaut Yuri Romanenko made a 326-days-long space flight. Full change of the crew was effected during the interrupted functioning of the orbital research complex Mir.

The programme for work in orbit included astrophysical, geophysical and medico-biological research, and engineering, technological and biotechnical experiments as well as assembly operations in open space to install an experimental solar-cell battery.

The crew was partially changed in the middle of the flight — Alexander Alexandrov took the place of Flight Engineer Alexander Laveikin and made a 160-day space flight.

A large amount of research was carried out under international cooperation programmes. The Soviet-Syrian crew worked on board the orbital complex for a week, performing experiments prepared by the scientists of the Soviet Union and Syria.

The addition of the scientific module Kvant to the orbital complex made it possible to implement an extensive programme of astrophysical research using the Roentgen orbital observatory created by the scientists of the Soviet Union, Britain, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the European Space Agency as well as the Glazar ultra-violet telescope designed in the Soviet Union with the participation of Swiss specialists.

The telescopes of the Kvant module were the first in the world to record the X-ray radiation of the super-nova in the large Magellanic cloud.

In all, there were more than 500 sessions researching into various astro-physical objects. Two hundred and seventy photographs of starry sky areas were taken by means of the Glazar ultra-violet telescope.

The existence of several technological installations made it possible to perform a large number of experiments on space study of materials with due regard for the results obtained in the previous flights.

Visual observations, photography and spectrometry of land and the world ocean area were regularly carried out under the programme of researching into the natural resources of the Earth and studying the environment.

Equipment, apparatus and expendable materials necessary for ensuring the cosmonauts' work were uninterruptedly delivered to the orbital complex Mir by Progress automatic spacecraft.

The state of the cosmonauts' health was continuously monitored during the flight. A series of disease-prevention measures enabled the mission commander to make the record-long space flight.

Soviet cosmonautics approaches the end of the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution with outstanding successes.

Effective operation of the orbital multi-module complex Mir and the modernised transport spaceship Soyuz TM — which were created on the basis of the latest achievements of the country's industry — has been started.

The results of the research and experiments carried out by the crews on board the orbital complex Mir are of great scientific value, and will be used in the development of fundamental sciences as well as in many branches of the national economy.

Mir-Soyuz TM4 crew — biographies

HERE follow brief biographies of the Soyuz TM-4 crew working on Mir —

Vladimir Titov

Pilot-Cosmonaut Vladimir Titov was born in the town of Sretensk, Chita Region, in 1947. After graduating in 1970 from the Chernigov Higher Air Force College, he served as instructor pilot and then as flight commander in an air force regiment. He mastered aircraft of several types.

Titov is a member of the Communist Party since 1971. He joined the cosmonauts' unit in 1976. He completed his first mission in April 1983 as Commander of the Soyuz T-8 spacecraft.

This year Titov graduated — without discontinuing his main work — from the Yuri Gagarin Air Force Academy.

Musa Manarov

Musa Manarov was born in 1951 in Baku, capital of the Soviet Transcaucasian republic of Azerbaijan.

After graduating from the Moscow Aviation Institute in 1974, he worked at a design office, preparing and staging tests of space equipment and analysing conducted experiments.

He has acquitted himself as a specialist with erudition and initiative.

Manarov took part in controlling the orbiting station Mir as a shift flight director at the ground control centre.

He has been a Party member since 1980.

After joining the cosmonauts' unit in 1978, he has undergone the full course of training for missions aboard Soyuz TM spaceships and the orbiting station Mir.

Anatoli Levchenko returned from Mir on board Soyuz TM-3 —

Anatoli Levchenko

Anatoli Levchenko, who holds the title of Merited Test Pilot of the USSR, was born in the town of Krasnokutsk, Kharkov Region in the Ukraine in 1941. After graduating in 1964 from the Chernigov Higher Air Force College he served in the Air Force.

Levchenko is a member of the Communist Party since 1965. Since 1971, after completing a course of studies at the test pilots' school, he has been engaged in testing of aircraft. He has the grade Test Pilot 1st Class.

Levchenko began training for space missions in 1978. He underwent a full course of training for flights on Soyuz TM craft and the orbital complex Mir.

Soviet cosmonauts receive awards

YURI ROMANENKO, USSR Pilot-Cosmonaut and twice Hero of the Soviet Union, has been awarded the Order of Lenin, says a decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet issued in Moscow on 29 December. The top award was conferred on him for the successful implementation of the long space flight on board the Mir orbital research complex (326 days) and for the courage and heroism displayed during the flight.

Alexander Alexandrov, USSR Pilot-Cosmonaut and Hero of the Soviet Union, was awarded the Order of Lenin and the second Gold Star medal for the successful implementation of the space flight on board the Mir orbital research complex and for the courage and heroism displayed during the flight. Anatoli Levchenko was conferred the title of Hero of the Soviet Union and was awarded the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star medal. Besides this he was conferred the title of USSR Pilot-Cosmonaut.

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the American side's readiness to study the Soviet Union's proposal that a U.N. naval force be formed in the Persian Gulf. "This statement is a pointer to a certain positive evolution in the U.S. approach to the issue. Meanwhile we consider unjustified the American side's attempt to make consideration of the Soviet proposal conditional on adoption at the Security Council of a resolution on embargo of arms deliveries. The USSR holds, as before, that practical work at the Security Council on these two issues can go on in parallel," Gennadi Gerasimov pointed out.

Soviet trade unions and U.S. State Department

A Soviet trade union leader speaking at the press briefing accused the U.S. State Department of pursuing a blatantly discriminatory policy against Soviet trade unions.

Gennadi Yanayev, Secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, added that the State Department had denied entry visas to representatives of the Soviet working people and trade union officials more than 20 times since 1981.

"In the rare cases when entry into the United States was allowed, the visas, more often than not, were granted with discriminatory qualifications, obliging the Soviet trade unionists not to get into contact with representatives of the U.S. Labour unions," Yanayev said.

The latest discriminatory action by Washington, he told the briefing, has been especially defiant.

"On December 11, the day after the Soviet-U.S. summit meeting, the U.S. Embassy made an official notification about the refusal to grant visas to a delegation of Soviet workers invited by

the *Labour Today* newspaper.

"The composition of the Soviet delegation was completely as specified by the inviting side," Yanayev said.

He added that Soviet trade unions have been regularly hosting many hundreds of representatives of the U.S. working class and labour unions, including both official delegations and numerous tourist groups sponsored by labour unions.

The Soviet trade unionist described the situation as a "one-way street".

He said the importance of contacts and exchanges to better mutual understanding between the Soviet and American peoples was confirmed at the recent summit in Washington.

"It is logical to expect concrete shifts in this issue on the USA's part," Yanayev said.

(continued on back page)

The USSR stands for settlement of situation around Afghanistan

SOVIET leader Mikhail Gorbachev put forward the Soviet stand on an Afghan settlement at the press conference in Washington USA on 10 December 1987.

"We are for a settlement which will make it possible to put an end to the internal bloody conflict, eliminate the possibility of its recurring, and prevent in the process of reaching a political settlement the origination of a situation that would have serious consequences for the interests of the world community," said Mikhail Gorbachev.

"We said clearly that we do not want and do not strive for a pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan," he continued. "But the American side must state just as clearly that it is not striving for a pro-American regime there. In free, non-aligned and neutral Afghanistan the government must be established on the basis of reconciliation, on the basis of all political realities being taken into account and on the basis of cooperation and a coalition of various forces and their national reconciliation. And to promote this our two countries can do a lot.

"We put the question of Afghanistan as follows — the political decision on the withdrawal of troops has been taken. We've named the time limit — 12 months. It could be less. This is the fourth item and it is awaiting its solution under the aegis of the Cordovez Commission. Our position is that the beginning of the withdrawal of troops must at the same time become the beginning of the termination of assistance in arms and money to the dushmans. From the very first day this is declared, our troops will start withdrawing. They will not take part in military operations, except in self-defence. Hostilities will cease and the process of political settlement will begin. We shall facilitate this process as much as our influence allows. But the main effort should be made by the real forces within Afghanistan itself — by all sides concerned."

The 'Afghan problem' was created by external

forces. Outside pressure and imperialist intervention started as soon as progressive shifts took shape in Afghanistan. The Afghan leaders asked the USSR for assistance. Such assistance was given in conformity with Article 4 of the 1978 bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Goodneighbourly Relations and Cooperation — "The high contracting parties, acting in the spirit of traditional friendship and neighbourly relations, will consult and with both sides' consent take appropriate steps to ensure the two countries' security, independence and territorial integrity." From the very start, the sides declared that the stay of the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan is forced and temporary.

The USSR and Afghanistan immediately started searching for ways of political settlement. The Afghan Government's statements of 14 May 1980 and 24 August 1981 charted real possibilities for normalising the situation around Afghanistan. The statements noted that the main aim and content of the political settlement is to end armed or any other intervention in internal Afghan affairs and create conditions that will rule out such intervention. The Afghan Government suggested immediately starting bilateral or trilateral talks with Pakistan and Iran.

Indirect Afghan-Pakistani talks were launched in Geneva in 1982 on the basis of these initiatives and thanks to the good services of the U.N. Secretary-General. In order to give an impetus to these talks the USSR held consultations with the Afghan side and returned home six regiments with their organic armaments and equipment in October 1986. This gesture of goodwill was primarily addressed to the United States and other countries involved in the conflict.

Early in 1987 the Afghan Government launched its policy of national reconciliation. The USSR actively backs this policy which creates internal prerequisites for political settlement. Within the framework of this policy the Afghan Government ordered the army to unilaterally cease fire, amnestied political prisoners and allowed the activity of political parties. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan called on all Afghans for a dialogue and voiced its readiness to share power — offering the opposition a number of posts up to those of Prime

Minister and Vice-President.

More than 30,000 oppositionists went over to the Government's side and more than 100,000 members of their families returned to peaceful life in 1987. As many as 110,000 Afghans returned home from refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran. At present, the Government controls over one-third of all villages as well as all 45 cities and 214 district and sub-district centres. Soviet troops were withdrawn from 12 Afghan provinces.

National reconciliation in Afghanistan favourably influenced the Geneva talks. A number of key documents underlying the political settlement were coordinated. Among them is an Afghan-Pakistani Agreement on normalisation of bilateral relations and mutual nonintervention in each other's home affairs, on the voluntary return of refugees, and on the international safeguards of mutual non-intervention. What is left is to coordinate the final schedule for withdrawing Soviet troops and stopping military and financial assistance to Afghan counterrevolution.

Speaking at the Loya Jirgah (National Assembly) in Kabul late in November, Afghan President Najibullah noted that at the next round of the Geneva talks — to be held early in January — Afghanistan will suggest withdrawing the Soviet troops within not more than 12 months. Najibullah stressed that this term can be reduced if national reconciliation in Afghanistan makes great strides.

During his conversation with U.N. Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez in Moscow on 15 December, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze noted the USSR's and Afghanistan's readiness to promote the success of his mission. The Soviet Foreign Minister pointed out that a withdrawal of Soviet troops within 12 months or less would create a new situation. This realistic approach considering the interdependence of the internal and external aspects of settlement opens up prospects for progress in all fields in the interests of peace and tranquility on Afghan soil.

Novosti Press Agency

Anatoli Adamishin's press conference

USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoli Adamishin, in New Delhi in connection with regular political consultations with representatives of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, emphasised at a press conference yesterday the usefulness of such consultations.

He said that the sides exchanged opinions on matters connected with the situation in southern Africa, discussed the situation in the African continent as a whole and considered some other problems. Dwelling on the economic dependence of the frontline states of southern Africa on the Republic of South Africa, Adamishin said that such a state of affairs had been shaping over decades and was artificially maintained at present with the use of the South African military machine. The Soviet Union, India and non-aligned countries, as well as other countries, are doing everything possible to ease the economic position of those emergent African states.

Anatoli Adamishin explained the Soviet Union's stand with regard to Afghanistan. We

declare for the settlement of the situation in this country on two basic lines, he said. The first is the negotiations in Geneva between Afghanistan and Pakistan via representative of the U.N. Secretary-General Diego Cordovez. As is known, agreement has already been reached there on many points. It remains to agree on the schedule of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. And this is connected with an end to interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs implemented from the territory of Pakistan, and not Pakistan alone. Weapons are brought into Afghanistan from Pakistan. Other forms of interference are intensively publicised in Pakistan. The next round of the negotiations is to be held in mid-February. We would like it to be the last round so that the final arrangement between Afghanistan and Pakistan is achieved and it becomes possible to embark on the implementation of the agreement, including Soviet troops withdrawal. The second basic line is national reconciliation in Afghanistan. This is an internal problem of the Afghans. It is for them to decide what government they want to create and what kind of country Afghanistan should be. This is not connected with the questions discussed through the mediation of Diego Cordovez.

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"The sides are after all bound by certain commitments under the summit statement."

Afghanistan — situation in Khost latest reports

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov on Monday refuted Western wire services' reports to the effect that fighting was continuing in the area of the Afghan city of Khost.

Quoting the Soviet military command in Afghanistan, he told correspondents at a briefing at the Foreign Ministry press centre that "there are now no military activities in the area of the Gardiz-Khost road and the situation there is calm. It is only sometimes that blows are dealt on far approaches to that region to armed groups infiltrating from Pakistan."

The road was opened on 30 December and every day a column of 200 trucks has been delivering various cargoes from Gardiz, primarily food for hungry people in Khost.

"Over these days over 4,500 tons of freight have been hauled to Khost. All in all, 24,000 tons of cargoes are to be delivered there," Gerasimov said.

He added that deliveries are being organised also by private entrepreneurs.