

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with American visitors

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev on March 23 met two American citizens: teacher Mary Bicouvaris, 1989 National Teacher of the Year, and Darlene Pierce, co-ordinator of this competition. The winner receives a prize from the President of the United States.

A similar competition is to be held in the Soviet Union for the first time this year. The winner will be presented with a prize by the Soviet President.

The conversation was open and candid and touched upon many subjects. It was an extension of Gorbachev's contacts with American intellectuals, with teachers and students.

The education systems in the two countries were compared. Gorbachev spoke about the role the teacher plays in the life of society, particularly now that the generation which will build a new world and will live in it are being educated.

"The teacher and the school are essential. There is no social institution as flexible and close to people as the school. Soviet teachers are now living through difficult times. Perestroika requires considerable changes in man's moral make-up. In the long run, it depends on the teacher what results perestroika will have," Gorbachev said.

"If there is a new sower, then there will be a new harvest. The teacher's age is not essential. What matters is his ability to be always young at heart and to keep abreast of the times. It is of great importance for perestroika in the Soviet Union that the majority of teachers sincerely accepted it," he said.

Mary Bicouvaris said she believed the essence of education was that young people should be strong, capable, and view the world as the legacy of all humanity. Gorbachev went along with this view and asked, jokingly, for this to be conveyed to President Bush. When everybody agrees with this, the world will be a different place to live in, he said.

Gorbachev said he had quite good co-operation with the American President and that they rely on the fact that the American and the Soviet peoples regard themselves as part of one and the same world. And when this attitude spreads to politics, there is greater hope for embarking on a peaceful period in the history of the civilisation.

"We are now at the crucial stage. This is not a spontaneous process. There is a need for great efforts and constant encouragement. It is necessary to be aware that the world is vulnerable and can be destroyed by a nuclear, ecological, or technological disaster. This now realised not only be great minds. This has been grasped by

millions. Hence the progress. But everything is still ahead, even though some important achievements have already been made," Gorbachev said.

"Combining politics and morality is the most topical task. Many troubles, also in the present period, resulted from the fact that politicians neglected morality. Teachers, intellectuals play an important role in ensuring that this does not happen," he said.

Gorbachev dwelt on the contribution of the Soviet intelligentsia to perestroika, including the political process, and to the development of Soviet-American relations.

The American educators summed up their impressions from their stay in Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, and from their contacts with school pupils and with Soviet colleagues.

"So much has happened in the past few years if from viewing each other as an enemy we have advanced to a stage when you, American women, feel at home in the USSR," Gorbachev said.

Soviet education chief Gennadi Yagodin was also present during the conversation.

Gorbachev and Crowe

The meeting with the American teachers went beyond the protocol framework, and Admiral Crowe, the former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, had to wait until the President was free. Everybody thought this symbolic. The admiral himself accepted this with a sense of humour and understanding.

This was not Gorbachev's first meeting with William Crowe. This time Crowe came to the USSR as a guest. He visited various places and familiarised himself with the progress of perestroika. A considerable part of their rather brief conversation was devoted to the problem and difficulties encountered by perestroika.

Marshal Akhromeyev and Admiral Crowe at news conference

FORMER chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff William Crowe was received by President Mikhail Gorbachev on March 23.

The admiral is visiting the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Defence and State Security Committee of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Crowe said at the news conference that it was a good meeting, which had passed on an optimistic note. They spoke about future relations between the USSR and the United States, progress in arms control and the future of perestroika.

Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, a member of the Soviet Parliamentary Committee, took part in the news conference.

Asked about the destiny of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation in view of the changes in Central Europe, Akhromeyev stressed the need to reduce the military importance of these alliances, which should result in greater stability on the continent.

Akhromeyev opposed a future united Germany's integration into NATO, stressing that this move would help increase NATO's military might and, consequently, increase instability.

At the admiral's request, Gorbachev summed up the processes in the country. He explained why some problems which seem to have caught attention long ago, are, in the opinion of critics, being resolved slowly. "We do not know how to go about many things and we have to learn," he said.

"And it is not easy for a country of many millions to learn new ways, a country which was accustomed to certain forms of life over decades. This takes time and patience. There is no other way to advance along the new road, and perestroika has become the destiny of the country which came up against a wall, having nowhere else to go," he said.

With regard to critics, the admiral quoted a remark of Churchill that people who know answers to all questions are usually not in government.

The conversation dwelt on the forthcoming Soviet-American summit meeting, on relations between the two countries, on the various views in the United States as regards the situation in the Soviet Union and on political calculations that are not always realistic.

"On the whole, it is not in vain that we have embarked on a difficult undertaking of achieving mutual understanding between our two countries," Gorbachev said. "We are now beginning to reap the harvest. And Admiral Crowe is one of those whom I respect for contributing to the construction of new relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Thorough, multi-faceted preparations for the Washington meeting are under way. Similar preparations are apparently being conducted by the US Administration. We hope for balanced decisions which may make the year 1990 a historic year. The stakes are very high."

Gorbachev asked Crowe to convey his greetings to President George Bush. Marshal Akhromeyev participated in the conversation. □

Admiral Crowe, conversely, favoured a united Germany within NATO, but specified that the solution of this issue was linked not only with Germany. He added, at the same time, that NATO should not necessarily remain as a military organisation. Crowe said that there were political alternatives to this.

Crowe and Akhromeyev said that during the talks they discussed various issues of cutting nuclear and conventional armaments, including the problem of naval force reduction. Akhromeyev noted with regret that there was still not much common ground in the sides' positions on this issue.

Akhromeyev stressed that the USSR did not claim equality with the United States in the field of naval armaments, and noted the need to consider this problem not only from the point of view of the United States' interests. "As we live in an interrelated world, the other sides' interests should apparently be taken into account with greater detail," Akhromeyev noted.

Asked what measures will be taken by Soviet authorities against Lithuanian servicemen who deserted from their units, Akhromeyev answered: "I think that this will be done according to the USSR laws." □

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Mikhail Gorbachev appoints presidential council

PRESIDENT Gorbachev has signed decrees, released in Moscow on March 24, appointing a number of people members of the Presidential Council. The decision to create the council of great state authority was made at the extraordinary Third Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR Moscow in the middle of March.

The President's decree appoints ten members of the Presidential Council, including Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov, KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov and Central Committee Secretary Alexander Yakovlev.

Other Presidential Council members are Academician Stanislav Shatalin, people's deputies Albert Kauls and Veniamin Yarin, writers Valentin Rasputin and Chinghiz Aitmatov.

The USSR Presidential Council will work out measures to implement the main directions of the Soviet Union's internal and foreign policy and ensure the country's security. The Presidential Council will also discuss matters relating to the implementation of the economic programme endorsed by the Congress of People's Deputies and take steps to ensure its realisation in practice.

On March 25 President Gorbachev appointed

three more members to the new Presidential Council.

Named to join the council were Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin, Valeri Boldin, head of a department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, and Yuri Osipyan, Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, specialising in theoretical and applied physics.

The Presidential Council will assist the Soviet President to implement Soviet internal and foreign policy and ensure the country's security.

The Presidential Council will also oversee the implementation of the economic policy, approved by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

* * *

TWO new members of the USSR Presidential Council have been appointed by decrees issued by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The decrees were made public in Moscow on March 26.

The newly appointed members are Yevgeni Primakov, Chairman of the Council for the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet and Grigori Revenkov, member of the USSR Supreme Soviet. □

TASS statement on Lithuania

The following is the full text of a TASS statement on Lithuania published on March 22:

In fulfilling the decree of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on additional measures to secure the rights of Soviet citizens and protect the sovereignty of the USSR on the territory of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic of March 21, 1990, and the instructions contained in the March 20 statement of the State Security Committee (KGB) of the USSR have reinforced border posts and other facilities along the state border passing across the territory of the Lithuanian SSR.

Frontier troops are extending assistance to

customs officials in reinforcing the regime of the passage of cargo and people across the state border.

Control over the departure of Soviet citizens abroad from the republic's territory has been enhanced. Measures are being taken to restrict the entry of foreign citizens into Lithuania.

Measures are being implemented to confiscate weapons from organisations and the population. The confiscated arms are being submitted for storage to military garrisons.

The protection of enterprises, vital supply facilities and the Ignalina nuclear power plant is being stepped up. □

Statement by Lithuanian Communists

THE adoption by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet of a package of documents on 'Restoring an Independent Lithuanian state' and suspending the action of Lithuanian and USSR Constitutions on the territory of the republic amounts to a reactionary state coup, an encroachment on the Soviet social system. This statement was made by the 4th plenary meeting of the provisio-

nal Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party (on the CPSU platform).

The move will lead to a further exacerbation of political tension in Lithuania, to undermining the integrity of the Soviet socialist state and to the complication of international relations in Europe and world security, the statement runs.

The orientation of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet on the republic's secession from the USSR meets the interests of anti-socialist forces, opposed to the revolutionary perestroika of Soviet society, the plenum pointed out. Speeding up the elaboration and implementation of anti-Soviet plans damages the economic and political development of the republic, exacerbates the social and inter-ethnic relations of social life, and threatens the sovereignty of the republic.

The plenary meeting of the provisional Central Committee of the Party, the statement runs, fully approves of the resolution of the extraordinary Third Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR on the decisions of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet and appeals to the USSR President and the Soviet Government to enforce the fulfilment of this resolution. □

Presidential decree on Lithuania issued

PRESIDENT Gorbachev on March 21 issued a decree ordering extra measures to protect the rights of Soviet citizens and Soviet sovereignty in Lithuania.

The document noted that contrary to the Congress of People's Deputies' March 15 resolution, the Lithuanian Parliament and government continue passing bills that violate the rights of Soviet citizens and the sovereignty of the USSR.

In this connection the President bound the federal government, the executive agencies of local governing councils in Lithuania, and law enforcement services with ensuring the observance of the federal Constitution and laws and protecting the rights and legitimate interests of Soviet citizens living or staying in Lithuania.

The presidential decree ordered KGB forces to step up security on the Soviet border on Lithuanian territory and halt all illegitimate actions violating federal legislation on frontiers.

The President also ordered a temporary suspension in Lithuania of the federal government's resolution on the acquisition, accounting and keeping of hunting rifles, and banned the sale of firearms there for the same period.

The decree demands that citizens living in Lithuania turn in all firearms into temporary police custody within the next seven days.

The President ordered the federal foreign and interior ministries to tighten control over the issuance to foreigners of visas and permission to visit Lithuania.

The decree bound the federal interior ministry and procurator-general's office "to take essential measures to stop violations by foreign nationals staying in Lithuania of regulations concerning the stay of foreign nationals in the USSR, up to their deportation in keeping with the USSR Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Nations in the USSR."

The decree became effective immediately. □

Gorbachev's telegram to Lithuanian leader

Here follows the full text of the telegram that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev sent to Vitas Landsbergis, President of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet on March 22.

Reports coming from Lithuania show that in the republic's territory volunteers are being recruited into so-called organisations of territorial protection, which are called upon to replace the activity of frontier troops and partially of internal security bodies.

I suggest that undelayed measures be taken to stop all actions at creating these and similar units. Please report fulfilment within two days.

I must also call your attention to the fact that the bill 'On Criminal Responsibility for Anti-State Calls' put on the agenda of the session of Lithuania's Supreme Soviet is invalid, since establishing responsibility for state crimes is the competence of the Soviet federation.

President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

M. Gorbachev

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Supreme Soviet Chairman on new Soviet political system

THE institution of an executive presidency will not diminish the role of the Soviet Parliament, because the prerogatives of supreme authority have not been changed, notwithstanding the seriousness of the recent constitutional amendments, Anatoli Lukyanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, said on March 22.

Of course, changes will be made in the work of the top echelon of power aimed, in the first place, "to ensure co-operation of the authorities, along with the division of their functions and the preservation of counter-balances," he told TASS.

Speaking about the characteristic features of the political system which is being created in the country, Lukyanov pointed out that, while in some countries a president heads or supervises the government, the executive presidency in the Soviet Union fits into the framework of the soviets. "The government will continue to be the executive authority and the Supreme Soviet and the Congress — the legislative authority. The most important task of the President is to coordinate their work. The President personifies the unity of the country, the unity of the country, the unity of nations, the unity of Soviet power, which manifests itself in the functions of both legislative and executive authorities," he said.

Lukyanov described "the emergence of a whole galaxy of new, promising politicians, connected in thousands of ways with the people, the land and production" as the most important characteristic feature of the Supreme Soviet and the Congress, revealed in less than a year of their existence. "They have already accumulated some experience of transforming the will of elec-

tors to legislative acts and resolutions of supreme authorities."

"The Parliament is getting more and more mature, capable of adopting both popular and unpopular resolutions," Lukyanov pointed out. He believes that a further deepening of perestroika and the radicalisation of the economic reform will inevitably call for unpopular measures and, consequently, a responsible attitude of the legislators to the laws looking more like wishes or declarations. Now it is time to adopt laws demanding action."

Speaking about the prospects of the creation of a multi-party parliament, Lukyanov said that "a one-party parliament can also have pluralism of opinions." He described as an illusion the idea that a multi-party parliament can resolve all problems and set everything in order. "Parties are not created on somebody's order. Only life can promote their emergence proceeding from its requirements."

The present one-party Supreme Soviet is a parliament with a variety of opinions, Lukyanov pointed out. Several very active groups have formed there — agrarians, ecologists, scientists, women and a group of young deputies. As soon as republican groups began to be created, which upheld mostly their regional interests, the Sojuz (Union) deputy group emerged, which rallies 140 members of the Supreme Soviet and more than 300 deputies at the Congress. There is also an inter-regional group, which puts forward its own plans and proposals.

"A chairman of the Supreme Soviet needs to be patient and tolerant, to display will, to be attentive to each of the groups," Lukyanov continued. Stressing that he is a communist and will remain a communist, he said, at the same time: "I always remember that my Party proposed a dialogue with all forces, following the course of

perestroika, and I shall do my best to promote the success of this dialogue."

Lukyanov said that 32 parliamentary delegations and 17 deputy groups had visited other countries in the past nine months. A total of 200 deputies visited 42 countries, without taking into account individual trips of Supreme Soviet members invited to attend various activities. There were about 300 such trips. "Sometimes this affects the working schedule of the Supreme Soviet and reduces the efficiency of voting on major bills," Lukyanov pointed out.

"Now it is important to master the co-operation mechanism in the legislator-president-government triangle. We are just beginning, but we shall move steadily along the chosen path," he stressed. □

Pravda on rally democracy

"PERESTROIKA should be reliably protected from violence and unreason, political ignorance and extremism," says an editorial entitled 'Democracy and Anti-democracy' published in the newspaper *Pravda* on March 26.

Describing the participation of many thousands of people in rallies as representing a robust desire to directly influence changes taking place in the country, the newspaper points out at the same time that "rallies and demonstrations increasingly often become a form of legalisation for extremism and for 'rocking the boat' in the complex situation prevailing in society."

A thoroughly co-ordinated action, planned for February 25, was regarded by the organisers as a powerful means to put political pressure on local-government, state and Party bodies, the article says.

Therefore, the supreme bodies of state power appealed to the country's citizens to show restraint and prudence and to support the efforts of the country's leadership towards ensuring reliable guarantees of perestroika.

As a result, the designs of the organisers of the wave of rallies turned out to be largely unrealised.

At the same time it would be a serious error to underestimate the scope and political essence of the past activities. Rally-type activities heat up the socio-political atmosphere in the country.

People's discontent over the crisis phenomena in the economy, the hard financial situation, market imbalances, the decline of discipline and order, the growth of profiteering and crime are being used to inflame feelings. Strain in inter-ethnic relations does not slacken and more and more new regions are becoming inflamed with hostility to the non-indigenous population.

The political struggle for power has assumed overt forms, the article emphasises. The active and organising participation of a number of members of the Interregional Group of Deputies (IRG) was the characteristic feature of the rallies that have been held.

Some members IRG, including members of the Soviet Communist Party, have embarked upon the road of open opposition, come forward with slogans that are incompatible with the Party's line and constitutional norms, and act with methods that are far from the principles of democracy and inner-Party relations.

Under these conditions dissociation with them becomes inevitable. A more precise definition of positions and ideological and organisation rallying of the CPSU will be needed in an atmosphere of genuine political pluralism and an emerging multi-party system. □

Abalkin: new federation accord needs improvement

SOVIET lawmakers, grappling with a legislative log-jam, approved the first reading of another crucial bill, envisaging greater economic independence for constituent republics.

At the morning session on March 23, the Council of the Union, one of the chambers of the Soviet Parliament, accepted the 'Draft Guidelines for Economic Relations Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Union and Autonomous Republics'. The bill was previously endorsed by the Council of Nationalities, the other chamber.

The proposed law gives more powers to constituent republics in finances, taxation, invest-

ment policy and resource management.

Under the proposed law, the republics will be able to conduct trade with other countries, draw up their own plans and budgets, and even abrogate the decisions of central authorities if they violate republican interests.

The bill specifies the mutual responsibility of the centre and the republics.

Speaking on behalf of the Council of Nationalities, Deputy Aklim Mukhamedzyanov said that the bill will help end central diktat.

Most of the deputies agreed. Alexander Mokuhanu from Moldavia said the draft should set the stage for a union market, or otherwise, "the transition of all powers from the centre to the republics will lead to their isolation, and, finally, to the splitting of the federation."

The draft drew considerable fire from Deputy Anatoli Sobchak, who spoke on behalf of the parliament's legislative committee. Sobchak said the rights of enterprises should be expanded. The proposed law will only help replace central red tape with republican bungling and hamper the development of market relations in the country, he warned, saying the bill should be further improved.

He was backed by reform-minded Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin, who said the draft was good in general, but contained several unjustified limitations on enterprises' activities.

Abalkin called on the deputies to speed up work on the bill, saying that the government will have to do a lot of work if it is to be enacted by January 1, 1991. □

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SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER IN AFRICA

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Tanzania's President

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who is in Tanzania on a working visit, was received by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi on March 25. Their discussion focused on key issues of the present-day situation in the world.

Shevardnadze conveyed best wishes to the President and the people of Tanzania from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Mwinyi asked to convey congratulations to Gorbachev on his election as President of the USSR.

Mwinyi said that the creation of this post was an exceptionally wise step, adding strength to perestroika, with whose goal Tanzania fully agreed.

Mwinyi praised the Soviet Union's assistance to the efforts to establish peace in the south of Africa, the USSR's contribution to Namibian independence, and approved the Soviet leadership's initiatives for disarmament.

Noting that East-West confrontation is senseless, Mwinyi, at the same time, expressed the hope that their rapprochement would not lead to a situation where the Third World will appear to be forgotten.

Shevardnadze showed understanding of this formulation of the issue. "Indeed, much time has to be spent on contacts with representatives of the Western world. First, Soviet policy in this direction is dictated by national interests. Second, we felt that without disarmament talks, we will have no prospects for solving global issues. Efforts to put an end to the cold war and launch the process to free financial resources have succeeded now," Shevardnadze said.

"In principle, I am against opposing south to north and east to west. All of us are part of an integral and interrelated world. If we manage to reduce military spending, we will find a solution to economic and other vital issues.

"The Soviet Union proceeds from the premise that the Third World should not find itself on the periphery of world development. We will remain as ever the friends of the developing countries," Shevardnadze stressed.

The talks also concerned some other global issues and Soviet-Tanzanian relations. The sides expressed satisfaction that there was much common ground in the two countries' positions.

Shevardnadze also met Tanzanian Prime Minister and First Vice-President Joseph Warioba. He told him about the numerous talks he had during his tour of African countries. The main impression, which he got from these talks, is that the region needs peace and tranquillity.

Peoples are tired of war. The time has come seriously to address the problems of peace in Angola and Mozambique. Shevardnadze said that necessary external conditions were taking shape for this: the gaining of independence by Namibia and positive shifts in South Africa.

"Mutual understanding achieved with Americans on these issues should be helpful," he said. "Certainly, the United States pursues its own goals. But continued armed confrontation in Angola and Mozambique is not in its interests. Elements of flexibility have begun to be discerned in the US position," he said.

Warioba concurred with this analysis of the situation in the areas of southern Africa, which are torn by conflicts, and underlined the need for an early peace.

During the exchange of views on the development of the situation in South Africa, both sides voiced the hope that the first steps would result in the dismantling of apartheid.

Warioba emphasised that there was enhanced interest in Soviet perestroika in Tanzania. Shevardnadze described it as the shaping up of a new image of socialism in conditions of the scientific-technical revolution. "Humanism, democratism and the overcoming of man's alienation from the means of production are its salient features," he said.

Warioba said that Tanzanians admired the boldness with which transformations are enacted in the USSR. He said that by their impact on the world they could be likened to the October Revolution.

"Difficulties on this path are inevitable. But we hope and are convinced that you will continue to pursue this course and achieve success."

Shevardnadze and Warioba stated that political relations between the USSR and Tanzania were in an excellent state. There is full mutual understanding between them and good interaction on the international scene.

Economic relations are lagging behind, although the shoots of the new are coming through here, too. Economic reforms in the USSR and Tanzania are opening up new opportunities to forge sensible and mutually beneficial co-operation.

Both sides expressed interest in further strengthening diversified ties and contacts between the USSR and Tanzania. □

Shevardnadze and Mandela meet in Windhoek

THE meeting between Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa Vice-President Nelson Mandela in Windhoek March 21 passed in an exceptionally warm atmosphere.

Shevardnadze invited Mandela to visit the Soviet Union. The invitation was accepted with gratitude.

"I am very glad to meet you and learn that you feel well," Shevardnadze said. "I should say that you are a legendary personality in our country. Not only Soviet leaders and President Mikhail Gorbachev, but also the entire Soviet people are looking forward to meeting you," he said.

Mandela noted that special relations developed between the ANC and the Soviet Union, which always responded to the national liberation movement's requests for help. "Support on the part of the USSR and other socialist states is of a unique nature. Without it, it would be much more difficult to wage the struggle against apartheid," Mandela said.

Mandela expressed confidence that relations between the ANC and the USSR would develop fruitfully and successfully.

Shevardnadze and Mandela discussed in detail the situation in South Africa. Shevardnadze welcomed the ANC's decision to launch a dialogue in order to clear obstacles to talks with the South African government. □

Shevardnadze hails Namibian independence

NAMIBIAN independence opens up good prospects for national reconciliation in Angola and heralds the beginning of radical changes in southern Africa, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told TASS in Windhoek on March 22.

"This event is the result of the heroic struggle by the Namibian people and efforts by the world community, United Nations Security Council and Secretary General, neighbouring states and Cuba," Shevardnadze, visiting Windhoek for the independence celebrations, said.

Commenting on prospects for dismantling apartheid, Shevardnadze spoke of his talks with President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa and Foreign Minister P.W. Botha.

"Told them, that if progressive forces succeed in dismantling the system of racial segregation, it will be the major event of the end of our century."

De Klerk assured him that he sincerely believes this is possible and that he wants this to happen, Shevardnadze said.

Talks with Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the African National Congress suggest that they, as well as the South African President, are prepared to begin talks, "actually 'talks about talks'," he said.

ANC representatives are expected to meet with the South African Government on April 11, according to Shevardnadze.

The forthcoming negotiations will be complex—even "gruelling", Shevardnadze stressed, saying that consistency, determination, patience, flexibility and understanding will be required to overcome forces trying to preserve apartheid.

"As for the Soviet Union, we are prepared to do everything we can to end the violence. We will continue our contacts with the ANC and other democratic forces and will try to bring about a peace settlement."

"Soviet-American co-operation is having a positive influence on this process."

"Soviet-US interaction can help achieve much in southern Africa and on the entire continent," Shevardnadze said. □

Shevardnadze meets de Klerk

DURING his visit to Namibia for the independence celebrations Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting Shevardnadze and de Klerk said that, in their opinion, the meeting was useful and helped them get a better idea of each other's stands. It is especially important now, at the decisive stage of the development of the situation in southern Africa, they pointed out. □

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NEXT CENTURY: WHAT WILL IN BRING

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SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER IN AFRICA

Shevardnadze meets Zimbabwe's President

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE during his working visit to Zimbabwe was received by President Robert Mugabe. The meeting was held on March 24 in the town of Kadoma where Mugabe was staying in connection with the election campaign.

Shevardnadze conveyed to Mugabe warm greetings from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Mugabe, in turn, wished Gorbachev success in his efforts to solve domestic problems and to promote peace around the world.

Democratisation in the East and the rest of the world would have been impossible without perestroika and glasnost, the Zimbabwean President said.

He expressed conviction that it was only due to Gorbachev's initiatives that harmonious, normal and friendly relations were being established between the East and the West and that an end has been put to the cold war.

Shevardnadze and Mugabe had a general discussion on the difficult political process in Africa and Europe. They discussed the destiny of the world and the future of the idea of socialism which, they both agreed, lives on.

The Soviet Foreign Minister said society of the future will, perhaps, comprise all positive achievements of the civilisation, the experience of capitalist, socialist and developing countries.

Shevardnadze and Mugabe discussed basic aspects of Soviet-Zimbabwean relations and expressed satisfaction with their general level.

They said both countries were seeking to develop these relations, to extend them to new areas and to make their economic ties efficient and mutually beneficial. Zimbabwe's developed infrastructure creates good conditions for this:

In international affairs, the Soviet Union and Zimbabwe share positions on the majority of global and regional problems.

During the discussion of the situation in southern Africa, it was pointed out that the achievement of Namibia's independence proved

that mankind can solve most difficult problems by pooling their efforts. This creates good prospects for Angola and Mozambique and will have an effect on changes in South Africa.

Shevardnadze held talks with his Zimbabwean counterpart Nathan Shamuyarira. They discussed the search for ways to improve economic ties between the two countries to make them match their political relations.

The potential of Soviet-Zimbabwean economic co-operation has not been effectively used so far. New possibilities for this are being opened by the conversion of Soviet defence enterprises to civil production.

The ministers welcomed the forthcoming opening of direct air traffic between Moscow and Harare in a few days by the Soviet airline Aeroflot.

Shevardnadze and Shamuyarira also discussed a wide range of international issues on which the Soviet Union and Zimbabwe successfully cooperate. □

Soviet Foreign Minister's letter to Javier Perez de Cuellar

The following is the full text of the letter, released in Moscow on March 24, from Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar:

Dear Mr Secretary General,

Dear Mister Secretary General,

I have already had a chance, in a letter forwarded to you on April 30, 1989, to present the Soviet Union's proposals concerning ways to form and the functions and tasks to be accomplished by the urgent ecological aid centre, the creation of which was proposed in the speech of the UN General Assembly.

The letter noted among other things that the centre's principal function would consist in prompt sending of international groups of specialists to areas where the ecological situation has dramatically deteriorated to analyse the situation and prepare recommendations on the curtailment and eliminating negative consequences. It was also pointed that it was desirable to finance the centre's activity with the

minimum expenditure from the UN regular budget and that a procedure could be envisaged under which the member-countries would pay from their own resources for a sending specialists when required.

On behalf of the Soviet Union, the readiness was expressed to participate in a practical way in measures to create the centre by providing the services of Soviet researchers and specialists.

The idea of creating an ecological emergency aid centre at the United Nations was received by most countries with interest and understanding. This positive international response reconfirms the need to translate the Soviet proposal into the language of specific actions. Specific practical actions are the key element of international co-operation in the protection of the environment at the present stage.

Today I have the honour to forward to you a list of 33 Soviet scientists and specialists, whom the Soviet Government will be ready to send to places indicated by the ecological emergency aid centre. In this way, the first step has been taken towards the creation of the international expert corps, the interaction with which will be the centre's prime target at the first stage of its existence. If other countries, which have amassed rich national experience in environmental protection, did likewise by assigning to the centre several experts each and pledging to pay their travelling expenses, the new UN agency could begin functioning within the next few months at the minimum expense to the UN regular budget. (One or two office workers would be required to keep the lists of experts and bring them in touch with the governments of countries applying to the centre for aid).

In this way, two conditions would be realised in practice which are required to further international environmental protection co-operation — the leading role of the United Nations and the readiness of each member-nation to render diverse material support to this co-operation, ta-

king it, when necessary, beyond the confines of established stereotypes.

I would appreciate, Mr Secretary General, any information about practical steps you would deem possible to take with the aim of expediting the creation of the ecological emergency aid centre at the United Nations.

I would also like to ask you to release this letter as an official document at the 45th UN General Assembly session. □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

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How are we to renew our union, all together or each by himself?

AT THE request of *Izvestia* and TASS correspondents Yuri Maslyukov, Politburo member, First Deputy Premier and Chairman of the State Planning Committee, discusses prospects for the development of the political situation in Lithuania and some Soviet republics.

The efforts to rectify mistakes made in ethnic relations and ensure genuine sovereignty and equality of all the constituent republics on a firm legal basis within a federation agree with the historically established ties between the peoples of the USSR and mirror the integration processes that characterise the world's social development today.

Against this background the calls for secession from the USSR made in some republics may seem discordant. However, such calls have their reasons: it is the administrative-command system, which has been condemned by society and the Party, excessive ministerial control, which considerably restricts the independence of the constituent republics, and the Stalinist policy of nationalities, under which national sovereignty became practically non-existent. Among the other contributing causes are the efforts to belittle the ethnic factor in the development of the Union, emphasis on obliteration of ethnic distinctions, subjective interpretation of the history of some peoples and differences in the assessment of the incorporation of some republics into the Soviet Union.

However, limiting ourselves to just listing these distortions of the nationalities policy would mean taking a simplistic view of the situation and admitting bias in the analysis and evaluation to the processes taking place in our multi-lingual and multi-ethnic country. Focusing attention only on mutual grievances and escalation of tension in ethnic relations lead to new dangerous upheavals.

The newly-elected Supreme Soviet of Lithuania is reportedly to include in its agenda the question of declaration of Lithuania an independent state. Practical steps in this direction have been made before. Allegations were made that the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 1939 and a secret protocol to it led to the loss of independence by Lithuania and its forcible annexation by the USSR.

This question has already been settled. The Congress of People's Deputies has made an exhaustive political and legal assessment of the 1939 treaties with Germany.

The advocates of Lithuania's independence from the USSR are trying to prove that during the years of Soviet rule the republic has stood still in its development and that secession is the only possibility for a breakthrough to progress.

Let us analyse the situation without bias. Let us recall what Lithuania was like in 1940. Perhaps it was not the best year for the Soviet Union, but even in this case industrial production in the "13th Soviet republic" - Lithuania - was three times less than the national average. Almost 74 per cent of Lithuania's population were engaged in agriculture and just a little over seven per cent were employed in industry, which manufactured simple agricultural equipment and some consumer goods.

Lithuania, a small country which lost its traditional markets in the east in the early twenties and had not enough capital, had no opportunities for growth in an atmosphere of tough competition. Bourgeois Lithuania was one of the least developed countries in Europe in terms of such a general indicator as per capita national income. In terms of per capital national income

it was far behind neighbouring Latvia and Estonia. Unemployment and emigration were the plight of the nation.

All these facts are well known today, although you would hardly hear at rallies and the meetings of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet that even in spite of some structural imbalances in the national economy industrial output in Lithuania has increased 84 times since 1940. In 1988 Lithuania's per capita national income totalled 2,427 roubles, whereas the average national per capita income is 2,210 roubles. Nearly 50,000 million roubles have been invested in the Lithuanian economy during Soviet years and investment growth rates in Lithuania have exceeded by far those of the Soviet Union as whole. In 1988 capital investments in Lithuania totalled 3,200 million roubles. Nearly a third of all investments in the economy after the Second World War have been used to strengthen the material and technological basis of agriculture.

New industries have been created in Lithuania, such as machine-tool building, ship-building, electrical engineering, electronics and radio electronics, chemical and petrochemical, and the fishing industry has been modernised. Factories and plants have been built in Lithuania which other republics wanted to be built on their territory. Industrialisation ensured Lithuania faster industrial growth rates than in the other republics.

The Lithuania economy is closely linked with the development of all the constituent republics. It is part of the territorial division of labour. In 103 industries taken into account in the inter-branch balance Lithuania imports 101 items and exports 83 items.

With almost no fuel and energy resources of its own, Lithuania is supplied with 75 per cent of its needs in fuel and electricity from other regions of the country.

According to the latest national statistics, Lithuania imports from the other republics 7,500 million roubles worth of goods and exports goods worth 6,000 million roubles. These figures indicate that Lithuania's imports exceed its exports by nearly 1,500 million roubles.

I am not citing these figures to scare anyone or, as some say in Lithuania, to "threaten an economic boycott". The government has not declared a boycott against anyone and has no intention of doing so. I just wanted to show how closely the Soviet republics are tied with one another and how much harm Lithuania's withdrawal from the national economy may do to Lithuania and the country as a whole.

Integration is a natural and the only possible process in condition of scientific and technological progress. All countries are trying to resolve their problems by arranging closer co-operation with one another. Such co-operation is particularly important within a single state.

The Elfa plant in Vilnius, for example, which makes low-capacity electric engines, supplies almost all its output to the other regions of the country. It co-operates with 790 consumer organisations and 520 supplier plants. Nearly 16 consumer million roubles are to be invested in the development of this plant by the end of the current five-year plan period, of which 12.3 million roubles will come from the centralised national funds. Besides, we have allocated the plant an equivalent of nine million roubles of hard currency for the purchase of foreign equipment in 1989-90.

Here is another example. Twenty-one out of 24 Lithuania-based defence-related plants manufacturing consumer goods and components for them have no analogues anywhere in the Soviet Union. One can easily imagine what a severance of their traditional industrial and economic ties

mean for the Soviet economy and the working people of Lithuania.

Is it just the problem of factories and plants or the amount of meat which Lithuania supplies to the country or grain which it receives from the national granary? It is the question of the future of a whole people and its ties with the natural social and economic environment of which it has become a part during the 50 years of living together with the other peoples of the USSR.

One should also bear in mind that during the years of its existence within the USSR Lithuania has become integrated with all the other Union republics. That is why a severance of the established ties will seriously affect their interests too. So I should say without beating about the bush that the Union has a responsibility to all the republics and duty to protect them from possible negative consequences of any arbitrary actions. It is its constitutional duty.

The existence of a single economic system in the country poses the question of division of state property. It can only be resolved on the basis of the national Law on Ownership and the national and Union republic legislation on land. The ownership law regards as state property many objects and enterprises that were built, financed and developed in the interest of the whole country. These are defence plants ensuring the country's security and protection of its borders; enterprises in the Group A and defence industries, power engineering projects, machine-building plants and other infrastructure of national importance. These are also trunk railways and roads, ships and aircraft, sea ports, airports, pipelines, transmission lines and communications. Any arbitrary action with regard to these facilities would paralyse many industries and cause many people to lose their jobs.

There are several ways to decide the future of these objects, if such a problem arises: a republic may buy out property or rent it from the Union; the Union may dismantle a project and move it to other republics; property may stay where it is and an agreement may be signed giving the Union bodies the power to manage it. Lastly, there is a possibility of arranging joint production and sale of output on the basis of mutually agreed shares, prices, wages, and so on. The cost of objects of national importance on the territory of Lithuania that may require compensation is 5.5 to 7 billion roubles.

Is the compensation demand legitimate? You can judge for yourself. This is how the Lithuanian economy compared with the national economy in terms of the national income produced and used. According to the State Statistical Committee, during the past two decades the national income used for consumption and the accumulation in Lithuania exceeded the republic's national income by over 5,000 million roubles in current prices. These data refute the allegations of some Lithuanian economists and politicians that the Soviet Union owes Lithuania a debt resulting from the republic's participation in the construction of projects in other regions of the country.

A major question that can't be ignored is that of ensuring the economic interests of the USSR and other sides with regard to the use of transport lines that pass through the territory of Lithuania and have international significance. International law knows of many instances when transport main lines are used for production capacities built by foreign companies on the territory of different countries. The main task here is that of ensuring continuity of railways and roads, communications and transmission lines.

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This is all the more important since electricity, raw materials and consumer goods are delivered to the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation through Lithuania.

Annual railway carryings for this region alone total 12 million tons and export and import deliveries through the Kaliningrad sea-port amount to 2.4 million tons.

There is a transport line of special importance for the Soviet Union's international ties. It is a ferry service between the Soviet port of Klaipėda and the East German port of Mukran. It carries up to 5.3 million tons of cargoes a year, which is a large part of the cargoes delivered through the Klaipėda sea-port. What should be done to ensure that this service continues to operate without damage to the USSR or any Soviet republic or East Germany?

Yet another acute problem is the use of airspace over the territory of the republic, which is the main corridor linking Moscow and even the Far East with Western Europe and America.

A disruption of ties between Lithuania and the Soviet Union would require a special discussion of the question of mutual accounts on deliveries of materials and technology and finished products. Other republics would inevitably demand a review of the prices in trade operations. In fact, they would promptly demand the use of world prices in mutual accounts.

Each year Lithuania receives imported products worth between 1,000 million and 1.5 million roubles in domestic prices. A third of these imports is repaid from the export of products manufactured in other republics. Who will pay this compensation in a different situation?

Some say that re-orientation in deliveries to the West is the only cure against currency shortages. Unfortunately, there are no serious calculations behind such allegations. Moreover, all the data we have prove the opposite: Lithuania is so closely linked with and dependent on the other regions of the USSR that re-orientation of its products to the markets of other countries is impossible in the foreseeable future. The range of products manufactured in the republic and their quality will hardly interest consumers in Western Europe. Besides, there are not enough raw materials and other resources to the west of the Baltic Sea to which Lithuania's enterprises are orientated. There is no demand on the world market for the products (meat, milk and cotton articles) which Lithuania exports to the other regions of the USSR. Are the people who say that all this is not very important aware of the actual situation?

Yet another problem that would have to be resolved is the republic's internal and foreign debt. To determine the size of this debt we should use as its criterion the republic's share in the overall national income used for consumption and accumulation. In 1988 it was 1.58 per cent. Consequently, Lithuania's share of the country's foreign debt is 600 million roubles in convertible currency, or about 1,000 million dollars.

Lithuania's share of the internal national debt, which on January 1, 1990, totalled 398,600 million roubles, is 5,800 million roubles. Besides, the republic owes nearly 460 million roubles to the USSR State Bank owing to the differences in the prices of livestock products. Thus, the aggregate domestic debt of Lithuania amounts to about 6,300 million roubles.

Protection of the rights of citizens employed at centrally-controlled enterprises in Lithuania and all persons wishing to retain citizenship of the USSR or even if the situation in the republic further deteriorates, a certain number of people may leave the republic. In this case, Lithuania would have to pay compensation to the families that have emigrated from the republic leaving behind their property. It would also have to pay compensation for their resettlement and re-employment, although it is clear that one

cannot compensate in roubles or any other currency the moral losses suffered by the people whose fate was decided against their will and contrary to their established patterns of living.

One cannot ignore either the opinion of the population groups that live on the territories that were annexed to Lithuania at different periods of Soviet history. Their incorporation into the republic resulted from the establishment of greater affinity between our peoples, which provided the basis for their present national-territorial structure. The new situation may create territorial problems in their relations and we must not shut our eyes to this danger.

As for the international aspects of this problem, one should bear in mind that responsibility in tackling the problems of self-determination rests not only with the self-determining part of the state but also the state as a whole. Granting a people the right to self-determination, the state has a duty to take into account the interests of all its peoples. This principle is laid down in the UN Charter, human rights covenants and other international documents. It is formulated in all the laws recognised by the international community. The Soviet Union cannot shirk this responsibility.

One should also take into account the international processes taking place in Central Europe and the Baltic republics. It is important to know whether possible solutions help stabilise the situation in Europe and implement the Helsinki agreements or play into the hands of the opponents of detente and plunge Europe into a quagmire of national and territorial conflicts. This is the most important question for the entire international community, because any change in the fragile balance of political problems here may jeopardise the stability of the post-World War II system of international relations.

Yet another difficulty arises from this country's obligations concerning the defence capability of the Warsaw Treaty countries. These obligations rest upon all the Soviet republics. Any ill-advised or rash solutions to problems concerning military parity may have grave consequences for each Warsaw Treaty member country and put many European countries on the verge of losing control over the situation.

The problem of ensuring the inviolability of the borders and the security of the USSR is closely linked with the problem of the presence of Soviet troops in Lithuania military bases and defence facilities essential for the functioning of the national defence infrastructure. Can we permit any rash or ill-judged decisions here?

It should also be noted that any serious violations by any republic of its obligations inside the country would inevitably create the problem of succession of international treaties of the USSR, both bilateral and multilateral. Under international law, specifically the Vienna international convention on succession of states in respect of treaties of 1978, the main principle of settling such questions is preservation of stability, which compels the republic, if it does not wish to defy the entire international community, to continue to fulfil its earlier obligations.

A responsible approach to the questions of self-determination requires that one should take into account the fact that a seceder state will have to face all the problems that in a federation are tackled by all its recognition by other states and international organisations. The more important problem is that of political and economic adjustment to the rigid structure of world relations. Compounded by unsettled territorial and other claims, it may become a problem of survival in the full sense of the word.

World experience shows that no people can solve its problems at the expense of other peoples or ignoring the interests of other peoples. A weakening of allied relations between the republics of a federative state would undermine positive results of internal political reforms and improvements in international relations and quickly have a damaging effect

on the international situation as a whole.

Thus, a republic's secession from the Union will require solutions to extremely difficult and sensitive economic, political, legal, international and, lastly, ethical problems. Although staying within the Soviet Union does pose problems for a republic, but these are known problems on which the republic has begun working, but when it secedes, it will face new, perhaps even more difficult problems. One should realise that while political independence can be proclaimed in one day, the creation of a new economy, based on market relations, and the re-organisation of the entire system of ties, including international ties, is a far more difficult process.

I think the realistic way of tackling national problems today is linked with the development of the federation and the expansion of a constructive dialogue at all levels between the republics and the Union and between all the republics in the context of the current efforts to democratise Soviet society and renew the Soviet State.

Dialogue is also necessary when living in one state becomes increasingly difficult. International experience shows that when the process of creating a new state is regulated and implemented at all its stages through negotiations between the sides concerned, the possibilities for extremism and violence decrease, while the chances for a satisfactory solution of the most difficult practical problems increase.

The Communist Party's draft policy on nationalities contains an in-depth analysis of the causes of these problems and maps out ways to harmonise ethnic relations. The February plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party further elaborated this programme aimed at arranging the relations between the republics on entirely new basis. It emphasised the importance of the principle of organising the Union on the basis of agreements and the diversity of the forms of relations within the federation, taking into account the specific conditions of each republic. It does not shut the door to a further search for constructive solutions. The only condition for this is goodwill of the peoples.

Work is underway at the national level and in the republics to create a mechanism of legal regulation of relations between the constituent republics and the federative state. Twelve bills on these questions have been submitted to the third session of the USSR Supreme Soviet for immediate consideration. These include Constitutional amendments on the national and state structure of the USSR, legislation on local self-government and local economies, a bill on the management of economic and social affairs in the Union and autonomous republics and other documents regulating state and public relations in the federation changing on a new legal basis. The current session of the Supreme Soviet is also to discuss a major bill regulating secession of a constituent republic from the USSR in accordance with Article 72 of the Constitution.

The bills allow each republic to pass its own laws, while the USSR will adopt only the main principles of civil, land, forest, water, mining, labour, financial, environmental, criminal and procedural legislation.

The Second Congress of People's Deputies passed a law giving economic independence to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Later the Soviet Government passed a resolution giving the republics control of some enterprises formerly controlled from the centre, formulating new principles of locating enterprises, giving the republics the right to supply their products to the national funds on the basis of contracts and broadening the republics' powers in arranging economic relations with foreign countries.

The political basis of relations between the republics is being overhauled to help the Union and the republics resolve their differences. In Lithuania Mikhail Gorbachev said that we have not yet lived in a genuine federation. I am

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March plenum of the CPSU Central Committee: heeding the voice of the rank and file

By Dmitri Gaimakov, *Novosti* analyst

THE March plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party has provided answers to many questions that were in the focus of heated debates and discussions both in the Party and Soviet society as a whole. It also set, at long last, the exact date for the convocation of the 28th CPSU Congress – it will open in Moscow on July 2, 1990.

This is all the more important because there was no unanimity in the Party as to when the forum should be convened and what it should discuss. Some advocated an immediate convocation of a special, extraordinary, congress and an early re-election of the current Central Committee made up on the basis of the outdated *officio* principle and therefore incapable, in the opinion of the proponents of this idea, to carry on effectively with the perestroika campaign. Others advocated the convocation of a regular congress but stressed that it should be called as soon as possible.

On a more general plane, the social and political situation in the country is changing so rapidly that the majority of Party members thought it was impossible to wait until October (that date was named by the Central Committee plenum last September). With due regard for that widespread concern among Party members the policy-making body decided to bring the date nearer by another three months. In addition to other questions, it put on the agenda the CPSU policy document, or platform 'Toward a Humane and Democratic Socialism' (its draft was published last February).

The plenum was held in three stages – in view of the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies which elected Mikhail Gorbachev President of the USSR – and considered during its sessions another document which was second in impor-

tance only to the Party platform. It was a draft of new Party rules called upon to record the democratic norms of life and work which would correspond to the new role of the Party as a vanguard political force making no claims to a monopoly on power and prepared to work, on an equal footing with others, in conditions of a possible multi-party system.

The draft contains precisely such democratic principles which make it possible to minimise the former massive influence of the Party apparatus on decision-making and establish the authority of the rank and file in formulating and implementing CPSU policies and in forming its guiding bodies. However, a number of provisions related to the structure of Party organisations and their committees on different levels still needs 'refinement'. In all they will be examined and finalised during the debates in the months before the Congress.

The important thing is that a major step has been made towards meeting the wishes of the rank and file. The new Party rules with their democratic principles have not yet been endorsed by the Congress, but some of the important provisions are already at work. I refer primarily to the procedure for electing delegates to the forthcoming Congress.

Communists are free to choose from several options. Since the majority of primary organisations of the Soviet Communist Party have fewer than 100 communists and the norm of representation is one delegate from 4,000 Party members, delegates can be elected in both one-candidate 'constituencies'. Those organisations where the number of Party members corresponds to the norm of representation can elect candidates directly. Importantly, the right to determine the procedure for electing delegates goes to local Party bodies which should take due account of the views expressed by communists in every region.

However, local Party bodies are obliged to abide by two fundamental rules: the right of

every primary organisation to nominate its own candidate for delegate, and the right of every Party member to vote in his own primary Party organisations. For that purpose it is planned to set up special election commissions called upon to prevent entrenched Party apparatchiks from turning the elections into a game. Nonetheless, in my opinion, the election procedure, although undoubtedly democratic, is such that the number of leading Party officials elected delegates to the Congress may be far greater than in previous years. Especially in those regions where there are many small primary organisations and the overwhelming majority of communists know the leader of the local Party committee. (This is not necessarily bad.)

Another major concession made by the Central Committee to the rank and file is the decision on the procedure and time frame for holding report-and-election meetings. In his reports made in February and March Mikhail Gorbachev advocated the idea of holding such meetings in the period preceding the Congress. Such an arrangement would make it possible to bring new and fresh forces of perestroika supporters into Party work – something which is vitally needed at present. However, both Central Committee plenums and local Party bodies tried to justify a different viewpoint. They argued that report-and-election meetings should be held after the Congress on the basis of its decisions. A compromise decision has been found: the right to decide these matters has been given to the central committees of the communist parties of the union republics. As far as the Russian Federation is concerned, the decision is to be made by territorial Party committees (there are six of them) and regional committees, of which there are seventy-one.

The March plenum has brought to a close an important stage in preparations for the forthcoming Congress. The draft documents have been worked out. Their endorsement will chart the guidelines of the Party activity in the future. □

The parity principle remains immutable

By Vladimir Ostrovsky, *Novosti* commentator

OLEG BAKLANOV, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, believes that the present international situation and the process of renewal going on in Eastern Europe bear out the correctness of Soviet policy – that the Warsaw Treaty and NATO should move away from military functions.

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convinced that now that vigorous efforts are being made to create such a federation and ensure conditions for free and constructive development of society a severance of federative ties would harm the interests of the Lithuanian people.

All the republics and the country as a whole are now receiving new opportunities for arranging their relations in a reformed state, using to the full extent the sovereign rights of its constituent nation-states. This is a chance for us all and no good intentions will justify the failure to use it. □

(Izvestia, March 10. In full.)

The sooner it happens, the better, Baklanov said.

One indispensable condition for movement away from military confrontation between these alliances and for the abandonment of their military functions, according to Baklanov, is parity in all their measures of reorganisation. In the case of any cuts in conventional and nuclear arms, troops, and air and naval forces, parity must be a *sine qua non*, otherwise, the arms reduction process would prove counter-productive, precipitating destabilisation in Europe and throughout the world.

It will be remembered, Baklanov said, that the Warsaw Treaty did not come into being until six years after the establishment of NATO and its military wing in 1949. "On our part, that was a forced measure. And I think it's a very good thing that we were the first to raise the question of the disbandment of these military organisations several years ago. Today, this proposal is more relevant than ever," Baklanov said.

"Some argue in this way: let the Warsaw Treaty break up and Soviet troops be withdrawn from Central Europe, while NATO, including

American troops, should remain in place as the 'guarantor' of security and stability in Europe. This approach, which is a perversion to common sense, must not be allowed to prevail. If it does, the West will certainly be in a position of superiority, something which we cannot accept. Neither would this be acceptable to the common European home, where each nation must enjoy full security and must not feel threatened by military force from neighbours' territory. This is the way I see the European process," Baklanov said in closing. □

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