

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at dinner for Margaret Thatcher

Here follows the full text of the speech delivered by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at a dinner given by the Soviet leadership in the Kremlin on March 30 in honour of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher:

Esteemed Mrs Prime Minister,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades,

Greeting you today, Mrs Thatcher, we are greeting the country with which the Soviet Union, Russia, has had a long-standing relationship and common interests. The two nations have gained much of what is useful from the four centuries of communication since Moscow and London exchanged their first embassies in the mid-16th century. There were other things, too, to the point of armed conflicts. But the two countries joined forces to fight nazism. That glorious page will forever remain in history. It will never be obliterated from the memory of the Soviet people.

International responsibility

The times have changed. There are new problems, new concerns and hopes today. Soviet-British dialogue is an inseparable and important part of today's European and world politics. This is explained by the circumstance that the Soviet Union and Britain are two great powers and that each has made a major and irreplaceable contribution to world history. Both were among the founders of the United Nations and are permanent members of the UN Security Council. All this determines their international role and responsibility.

It is from these positions and in the spirit of realism and a desire better to understand each other's way of thinking that we approach the current talks.

Your visit to Moscow, Mrs Thatcher, is taking place at a very interesting and very responsible time, at a time which is crucial in many respects. And this is making an imprint on our dialogue.

We have talked a good deal about the process of reorganisation in our country. I want to repeat in this context: our foreign policy today stems directly from our domestic policy to a larger extent than ever before. We say honestly for all to hear: we need a lasting peace to concentrate on

the development of our society and to tackle the tasks of improving the life of the Soviet people.

The West is scrutinising this open position for signs of the Soviet Union's weakness. They claim that the Russians have hopelessly fallen behind, that their system is not working and that the goal of socialism has proved altogether flawed. That is why, supposedly, any concession can now be wrenched from them if proper pressure is applied. It is a bad delusion.

World peace and progress

The Soviet Union today is a result of immense, great socio-economic changes and transformations, which her peoples have carried out in the seven decades since the Revolution. True, there have been difficulties, sometimes dramatic, and quite a few external obstacles. But one thing is clear: the efforts of the people have turned the country into a world power, whose role in international affairs is well known and commonly recognised. The economic potential of the Soviet State, its political prestige and the ability of our society for more energetic advance are being turned by us to the good of world peace and progress.

The socialist system has demonstrated repeatedly and in many ways its advantage over capitalism. This is not boasting but a hard fact. Far from all its potentialities have been identified and put to use. The full development of the potential of socialism, the comprehensive perfection of the Soviet system, its new quality and a new level of the material well-being and the cultural and intellectual standards of the people are what reorganisation will give us.

At the same time it is socialism's invitation to peaceful competition with any other social system, and not merely an invitation but the manifestation of readiness to participate as equals in the development of an appropriate mechanism of this competition, co-operation and, if you wish, rivalry — but peaceful rivalry. This mechanism should promote and strengthen trust, create an atmosphere for the peaceful competition of states.

It is one of the fundamental aspects of new political thinking. Today's world needs it. Otherwise the age which gave rise to nuclear weapons will be short and end in a tragedy for humankind.

It is alarming that the West continues to claim today that nuclear deterrence is the only way of averting war.

We do not understand how nuclear weapons can be lauded when there are four tons of explosives for everyone, including children, in the world and when the explosion of even a small part of the existing nuclear arms arsenals will jeopardise life on Earth. We cannot agree to this from the point of view of either politics or morality.

I would like to say, too, that the Soviet Union has pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and will never turn them against those countries which have no such weapons in their territories. This is our immutable principle.

I have already had a chance to point out the evil of the ideology and policy of nuclear deterrence. I want to explain our position anew. First, this tool is not fail-proof and as time goes on the risk of the accidental outbreak of a nuclear conflict keeps growing. It is the fuse of the charge which is capable of destroying civilisation. Second, deterrence is a policy of blackmail and threats and therefore a constant source of the arms race and the escalation of tension.

Third, the logic of deterrence, i.e., the build-up and upgrading of weaponry, means the subordination of politics to the interests of militarism with most grievous consequences for the well-being of the people and for democracy itself.

Old thinking, involving armed force as a means of achieving political goals and the presentation of other nations in the "image of an enemy", led to two world slaughters. It bred the Cold War and today's extremely dangerous situation, and has brought the world to a point beyond which unpredictable consequences begin.

Accord on medium-range missiles

Our unilateral moratorium, the Programme for a nuclear-free world, announced on January 15, 1986, the Reykjavik initiative, the Moscow Forum For a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity and now the proposal to detach the question of medium-range missiles in Europe constitute manifestations of new thinking. The basic outlines of an accord on medium-range missiles in Europe were agreed in Reykjavik. It would seem that there are no serious obstacles to rapid progress. An accord would have major military and political importance and, moreover, change the situation psychologically: we have been arming ourselves till now but then would for the first time start dismantling nuclear weapons.

But what is happening in response to our initiative?

We see the problem of medium-range missiles being weighed down with a package of conditions upon and demands to the Soviet Union. We see the NATO countries retreating from the positions of their own "zero option". Things have gone so far that, instead of reductions in the nuclear arms arsenals, Europe is being offered a build-up of those arsenals, the deployment of American shorter-range theatre missiles.

We also hear statements that the West will trust the Soviet arms reductions proposals if the USSR modifies its political system, taking Western society as a model. It is just not serious. To hope that we surrender our ideals at any time means to flee from reality.

The next few weeks will show if NATO really wants to remove a whole range of nuclear weapons from Europe, in accordance with the wish of the peoples, or if it is again trying to find a decent way of disguising its desire to retain Pershings and Cruise missiles in Europe and even increase their number, or replace them with something more novel.

To the roar of nuclear explosions in Nevada,

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we had to cancel our eighteen-month unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing. But this does not mean that we have dropped our idea of achieving a solution to this key problem of nuclear disarmament.

The Soviet Union is prepared to return to the moratorium any day and any month the United States declares an end to its testing. Let me take advantage of this opportunity to remind Britain that it is a participant in tripartite talks on this issue.

We hope that the in-depth dialogue we are conducting with Western countries and our positions and intentions, which we have been talking about frankly and backing up with practical action, as well as this visit of yours, esteemed Mrs Prime Minister, and our forthright talks will finally form a subject for serious deliberation and invite reciprocal moves. At this critical moment for Europe, it is its nuclear powers — Britain and France — that we are addressing in the first place.

The world today is one in which a struggle is under way between reason and madness, morality and savagery, life and death. We have determined our place in this struggle definitely and irreversibly. We are on the side of reason, morality and life. This is why we are for disarmament, most notably nuclear disarmament, and for creating a system for general security. This is the only possible way that mankind can regain immortality.

Universally shared values

Strength must give way to universally shared values and equal relations presupposing respect for the interests of every nation and for its right to an independent choice, the right to be unlike others.

It ought to be said that in the West there still are quite a few people with a penchant for talking about the freedom of choice. But they really mean the choice of the capitalist system. However, when this or that people — in Nicaragua, Africa, the Middle East or Asia — actually reveals a desire to look for a different road of its own, which will suit it better, it finds its way immediately barred with dollars, missiles or mercenaries. They start with hypocrisy and end with bloodshed.

As a result, the "volcanoes" of regional conflicts are fuming.

The "lava of strife" they are spewing forth has been burning the whole organism of the world community and filling it with smoke. We propose looking at this problem, too, in the light of new thinking and demonstrating an ability to reckon with the realities of specific situations and see the real causes of any conflict rather than zealously search for a "hand of Moscow" everywhere.

Book on Soviet-British relations

THE Moscow-based publishing house Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya (International Relations) has put out a book by V. Ryzhikov, *Soviet-British relations. Milestones in History*.

The new publication, says a review published in the magazine *Knizhnoye Obozreniye* (Book Review), is an attempt to highlight main stages in Soviet-British relations starting from 1917 and till the present time. Special attention is devoted to bilateral ties in the post-war period, the least studied, and to their difficulties and complications.

The review says that at present relations between the USSR and Great Britain are developing in many directions. The leaders of the two countries meet, political consultations are held and members of the general public, business quarters, the scientific and cultural communities and the press hold 'round-table' meetings. □

Approaches to a settlement can be different. An international conference on the Middle East, activities by the Contadora Group, the UN Secretary-General's efforts for an end to the Iran-Iraq war, effective economic and political measures against the apartheid regime in southern Africa, co-operation between the countries of ASEAN and Indochina as a factor for a settlement regarding Kampuchea — these and possibly other methods and forms could help quench the fires.

So far as Afghanistan is concerned, we are for resolving the problem by political means through an end to outside interference. The Afghan Government's programme for national reconciliation has evoked broad response both in that country and elsewhere in the world. It is the only right way to take. Soviet troops have come to Afghanistan at the request of its government, and they will be returned home as part of a political settlement. The process of achieving national reconciliation and a settlement concerning Afghanistan has already got under way.

Scale down military confrontation

It is making progress. The main thing is not to hamper it, and to put an end to any interference in the affairs of that sovereign country which wants to be and will be neutral and non-aligned. We are, however, only witnessing a step-up in efforts to scuttle the normalisation process on the part of certain Western forces.

The goal of "humanising" international relations is served by continuing the CESC (Conference on European Security and Co-operation) process started in Helsinki. The CESC process is a kind of university of political dialogue. It has taught us more than one lesson in the difficult science of mutual understanding, it has been teaching us to see the opposite side not as an enemy but as a partner. The document adopted in Stockholm is proof that these lessons have been learnt well.

But further progress has to be made. We are waiting patiently for a reply to the Warsaw Treaty countries' initiative on conventional arms and armed forces and are prepared for a decisive scaling down of the military confrontation of the two blocs in a zone stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Arms must be reduced to a level of reasonable sufficiency, that is a level only needed to cope with the tasks of defence. In the European building every flat is entitled to protect itself against burglars but only in such a way as not to demolish the next-door apartment.

We are prepared to come to terms on a dependable and irreversible destruction of all chemical weapons.

So we count on the West, especially West European countries, being aware of its responsibility and taking reciprocal steps also in what concerns non-nuclear arms.

The CESC process could be effectively assisted by a representative humanitarian forum we have suggested holding in Moscow. But it's interesting that as soon as we made the invitation to talk about human rights in a serious and business-like manner and compare, in an atmosphere of mutual candour, how people really live here and in capitalist countries, there they have apparently grown nervous and are again trying to reduce the whole subject to two or three individual cases, while evading a discussion of all the rest.

We are prepared to discuss also the particular cases in a humane spirit, but are strongly intent on talking about the whole range of related problems openly and loudly so that we shall be heard in the West by the millions of the unemployed, the homeless and the destitute, by those beaten by police and victimised in court, and by those whose civil rights and human dignity are subjected to glaring discrimination simply because of the colour of their skin, and so that we

shall be heard also by the trade unions being deprived of the right to protect their members and thus of their inherent mission and by blue-collar and other workers denied the possibility to take part in running the factories they have been bound with by their whole lives.

If we are to talk about human rights, let's talk about all rights and especially about those concerning millions of people.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Comrades,

Face-to-face meetings are the best way of finding common ground and bringing positions closer together on specific matters. What is essential here is an ability not only to talk but also to listen, and not only to listen but also to understand each other and to look jointly for solutions to the most formidable problems of the modern world. It is in this vein that we would like to pursue our political dialogue with Britain.

The Soviet Union cherishes its economic, scientific and technological contacts with Britain. Our departments have prepared well for talks on these matters. You will have an opportunity to see this for yourselves tomorrow. But things will not start to hum if the British side remains unwilling to remove the obstacles which keep everything that is the most interesting for us out of the exchanges, prevent Soviet goods' access to your market or make offers by your firms non-competitive. In short, we need reciprocity and understanding for each other's interests in this field.

Watershed period

We in the Soviet Union respect the British people's allegiance to traditions. We know the role your country has played in developing world trade and industry and appreciate the skills of its workers and the great contribution by its scientists, artists and writers to the cultural treasure house of civilisation. We understand the feeling for one's historical "roots" and share it. A nation disregarding its history puts a question mark over its future. But it is likewise true that he who does not think of his future devalues also the best in his past.

So let us address the problems of the times so that the people of the 21st century could appreciate the political thinking demonstrated by the leadership of the USSR and Britain in this complex, watershed period.

I wish happiness and well-being to you, Mrs Thatcher, and to all British guests and peace and success in tackling their problems to the people of Britain. □

Soviet Booklets

The following APN booklets are now available from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, London, SW7 4NW (01-373 7350):

V. I. LENIN, *Pages from His Life*50p

The Issyk-Kul Forum: a New Way of Thinking (on the international forum of cultural personalities, scientists and scholars)50p

Three Meetings: 1945-1955-1985 — commemorating the historic Allied link-up on the Elbe, April 1945 (many photographs)50p

Estonia, Choice of a Path: 1917-1940. A Documentary Survey£1

WHENCE THE THREAT TO PEACE, fourth edition. Complete with maps, tables and photographs£1.50

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Margaret Thatcher

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV met British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the Kremlin on March 30.

They had a substantive and thorough discussion lasting several hours on major issues of the present time, including the decisive one, that of disarmament.

The conversation proceeded in a friendly way, although it was not without polemics which, however, was aimed at understanding each other better and seeing more clearly the positions and intentions and the political logic of each side.

Diminish the threat of war

The visit by the head of the British Government is important and necessary. Different as their positions and views are, the USSR and Great Britain remain partners in the search for the solution of the chief issue — how to diminish the threat of war. This is the most important issue today.

The essence of the dialogue at this level is to look for ways for a better world.

Mikhail Gorbachev expressed strong disagreement with the view that security could be based on the position of strength. This is an old concept that has brought about many troubles in the post-war period.

The logic of Margaret Thatcher's reasoning made it clear that she stood for maintaining nuclear weapons and building up Britain's nuclear potential because she was convinced that the Soviet Union intended to impose communism around the world and that the threat of a Soviet attack on Western Europe remained.

Mikhail Gorbachev refuted with arguments this totally groundless opinion by relying on the philosophical concept of the contemporary world given at the 27th CPSU Congress, and pointed to the objective interrelationship between the goals of perfecting socialist society, reorganisation and the peaceful foreign policy of the USSR.

A policy, especially in a situation of the imminent nuclear threat, should be based on realities, on coexistence between states with different social systems, on the right of free choice and independent development of each country. This is especially important for correct relations with the developing world.

The Soviet Union recognises historical ties between states and regions in the present-day world — be it West-East or North-South. It is necessary to make all these relations wholesome. Let us think about that — how to ensure a balance of security, a balance of political and economic interests.

It is very important, Gorbachev said, that a major and at times acute discussion was held on problems in relations between states with different systems since herein is the starting point of misreading the Soviet Union's intentions and actions.

Having different views on the origination of regional conflicts, the interlocutors agreed that they should be settled by political means.

Margaret Thatcher kept forth at length on the positive aspects of Western democracy, British democracy in particular. But she heard strong

arguments in debates on these issues. It is important, however, that frank exchanges of views took place on that subject, too. A dispute on any question, if it is serious and not speculative, also is useful: it prevents thoughts from standing still and highlights what has seemed clear even without discussion.

The sides concentrated on ways of curbing the arms race. We are not going to make war on the US, or on Britain, or on anyone else, Mikhail Gorbachev said. This explains our initiatives and concrete steps. But we do not see any adequate response to them. We have been seeing for two years the same picture: as soon as there is a glimmer of hope for a positive solution, Washington, London, Paris and Bonn immediately bend their efforts to find pretexts to hold back the process because of the Soviet Union's "superiority".

And now we are seeing attempts to block the INF talks. Detaching the INF problem from the package, we hoped for British and French support. But where is it, that support?

The Soviet Union has done a good deal to give an impetus to the arms reduction talks. She has agreed not to count the British and French nuclear potentials, although they keep growing and being upgraded. But all this is quickly "forgotten" and more concessions are expected from the Soviet Union.

With less weaponry

Mikhail Gorbachev strongly disagreed with the view that the elimination of nuclear weapons in Europe would leave the Soviet Union with an overwhelming superiority in conventional weapons and create a political threat to Western Europe. He reiterated the Soviet Union's readiness to enter most deep-going and comprehensive talks on reductions in the conventional armaments and armed forces of both military alliances.

Mikhail Gorbachev noted that the Soviet proposals take into consideration the concerns of Western Europe and Britain, including those related to conventional and chemical weapons. It is not by chance. We want to dispel Western mistrust. It is not bluff. It is our course of principle, which we formulated in long and deep deliberations and approved at the highest forum of the country.

We stand for a search for ways to a world with less weaponry. Trust cannot arise from nothing. What we need is talks, quests, not expectations. Let us go to Stockholm-2 and discuss conventional weapons there, exploring every aspect and leaving nothing aside.

Mikhail Gorbachev thoroughly briefed Margaret Thatcher on how the Reykjavik talks really proceeded and how a unique chance has been missed to take an historic step by initiating real nuclear disarmament.

In this context the sides attached serious importance to the preservation of the ABM Treaty. Mikhail Gorbachev reaffirmed that the relationship between cuts in strategic offensive weapons and the non-placement of weapons in outer space is strategic linkage. We will never untie that package. We have a study of ways to depreciate SDI without spending the mad funds that America will need to develop it. But who needs it except those who would like to earn nine-digit profits from it? He asked his visitor to think if it is admissible that all, primarily Europe, become hostages to SDI-orientated war business.

When asked by Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev described in detail the nature, character and progress of reorganisation in the Soviet Union, the problems that have to be tackled, difficulties and prospects offered to Soviet society by reorganisation. We are overcoming a paradox in our development, with perhaps the best educated society in the world having long been unable properly to use its immense intellectual potential. We will do so through democracy, through the development of the entire potential of the socialist system.

Margaret Thatcher displayed much interest in what is taking place in the USSR and expressed the hope that these processes will be a success. She gave assurances that the West in general and she in particular have an interest in the ongoing processes in the Soviet Union bearing fruit.

Eliminate medium-range missiles in Europe

As for humanitarian issues, Mikhail Gorbachev said, there is much in them which is speculative, pointed and intended to misrepresent the Soviet Union.

We should look for solutions to all problems and take steps towards each other while remaining different. It is not a shortcoming but an advantage. We are ready to act in politics with a broad approach, aware of inter-dependencies not only in the European framework but on a world scale. And let Western Europe rid itself early of fears of the Soviet Union. It should make a greater contribution to world politics, to the international process. It has every opportunity to do so.

But we still have the impression that Britain and her Prime Minister are not playing the role which they could play today, at this crucial point, when the most important and urgent task is to take first steps towards reducing nuclear weapons.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher noted that as a result of extensive exchanges of views they have mutual understanding and close positions on the elimination of medium-range missiles in Europe and that they are ready to bring talks on the elimination of chemical weapons to their conclusion and advocate the settlement of all the problems related to the need to reduce conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe.

The conversation was broad, frank and constructive and featured a search for solutions in favour of a safer world and approaches to co-operation.

The sides expressed their desire to broaden and deepen political dialogue and to develop closer relations between the two countries.

They noted the need for the further advancement of the Helsinki process to build "a common European home" with all its aspects, including economic, scientific, cultural and humanitarian ones, among them the reunification of families and foreign travel. All this will help forge trust and contribute to better international relations as a whole.

We stand for co-operation with Britain, Mikhail Gorbachev said, for it becoming broader, deeper and friendlier, and for trust between us growing stronger. He expressed the hope that this is precisely what will happen. It will benefit Britain, the Soviet Union, Europe and the world as a whole. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's conversation with Margaret Thatcher

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, talked yesterday with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

They pointed to the usefulness of the current British-Soviet exchanges of views on a broad range of international problems and issues of bilateral relations, and to the interrelationship between political relations of states and the possibilities of developing extensive trade and economic co-operation between them.

Normalisation of the international situation will make it possible to channel extra resources and efforts to tackling many pressing economic and social tasks facing mankind.

It is not the policy of nuclear deterrence from the viewpoint of which Britain's Conservative government looked at international relations, but the termination of the arms race and other consistent measures to strengthen East-West trust that constitutes the best guarantee of security for all peoples, Ryzhkov said.

The hope was expressed that the British Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union will promote better understanding between the two countries on drastic issues of the international situation and facilitate their economic, cultural and other ties.

Margaret Thatcher showed interest in matters

of humanitarian co-operation that, in her opinion, should be directed at increasing human contacts, raising the level of information about one another and familiarising peoples with life in their respective countries with a view to consolidating trust.

Nikolai Ryzhkov pointed out that an active exchange of information, dissemination of the ideas of peace and better knowledge of each other's life will largely contribute to strengthening Soviet-British relations in the spirit of co-operation, and that the Soviet Union adheres to a constructive stand on all these issues.

"We do not understand, however, when many mass media bodies in the West and even statesmen seek to distort the image of the Soviet people and smear the Soviet reality."

Increase bilateral trade

The participants in the conversation considered in detail issues of bilateral trade and economic relations.

Nikolai Ryzhkov expressed confidence that, given goodwill and concerted effort on both sides, it will be possible to increase bilateral trade substantially, which was noted by Mikhail Gorbachev during his stay in Britain in December 1984.

The Soviet side came out with specific ways to attain that objective. Margaret Thatcher's attention was drawn to the fact that restrictions and discriminatory measures employed in the West, Britain included, with regard to trading with the USSR, hindered that growth.

It was observed that the extent to which British

proposals are competitive against proposals coming from other countries is an important condition for reaching practical agreements on several issues currently being discussed between Soviet organisations and British firms.

For her part, Margaret Thatcher reaffirmed Britain's interest in the further development and extension of trade and economic ties with the Soviet Union and said that her government will actively facilitate the realisation of measures directed at attaining this objective.

The Prime Minister also noted that restructuring in the British industry carried out in the recent years is creating conditions for enhancing its competitiveness in the world market.

Explaining that the restructuring of the economic mechanism in the Soviet Union is opening up great opportunities for business circles in the West to develop trade and economic ties with the Soviet Union, Ryzhkov pointed to the importance of the active use by British firms of new forms of co-operation — co-production, establishment of joint enterprises, and research and development by scientists from both countries.

He expressed the hope that the British Government will assist in the implementation of the many useful Soviet-British agreements that have recently been concluded.

The sides agreed to carry out practical measures to increase the volume of reciprocal trade and further broaden economic relations on a mutually beneficial basis.

The conversation was held in a business-like, constructive atmosphere. □

Soviet-British documents signed

FOUR Soviet-British documents were signed in the Kremlin on March 31 in the presence of Mikhail Gorbachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain.

The documents included an agreement between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on co-operation in studying and using outer space for peaceful purposes, an intergovernmental agreement to improve direct communications between the Kremlin and the British Prime Minister's residence in London, a Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments on new areas of co-operation in the fields of information, culture and education, and an agreement on the mutual granting of plots of land for building new embassy compounds in Moscow and London.

The documents were signed by Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, and Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of Britain. □

USSR Intensified Economy and Progress in Science and Technology

Available from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, LONDON, SW7 4NW. Price 35p. (Cheque, PO)

British-Soviet Chamber of Commerce opens office in Moscow

THE British-Soviet Chamber of Commerce opened its representative office at the World Trade Centre in Moscow yesterday.

The Chamber of Commerce, which groups hundreds of British firms and dozens of Soviet foreign trade organisations, has an important role to play in broadening business ties between the USSR and Britain. Its 71st annual assembly held recently has identified further opportunities for extending bilateral trade, and economic, scientific and technical contacts.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Margaret Thatcher underlined the traditional character of trade relations between the two countries. She recalled that Britain's first economic mission was established in Moscow some four centuries ago. The company 'Moscovia', intended to develop British-Russian trade, was set up at that time.

The Prime Minister said that the opening of the representative office of the British-Soviet Chamber of Commerce in Moscow was planned during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Britain. He said then that reciprocal trade should be increased by 40 to 50 per cent. Mrs Thatcher expressed her support for this idea but said that it required a good deal of work.

The head of the British Government said that that morning the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and herself agreed that reciprocal trade could reach 2.5 billion roubles in 1990. She

said they were confident that an increase in British-Soviet trade would serve to enhance trust between the two peoples.

Attending the inauguration ceremony were Vladimir Kamentsev, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, Boris Aristov, Foreign Trade Minister of the USSR, Leonid Zamyatin, Ambassador of the USSR to Britain, and other officials, and also the British statesmen accompanying the Prime Minister. □

Expert Opinion

A new series of booklets from Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, available from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, London SW7 4NW (phone 01-373 8421):

- Social Programmes Benefit from Economic Restructuring**, by Ivan Gladky, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Labour and Social Affairs 40p
- We Can All Make the Most of Ourselves**, by Natalia Gellert, alternate member of the CPSU Central Committee and Deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet 40p
- Possessing Energy Resources is Not Enough**, by Academician Anatoli Alexandrov, member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Hero of Socialist Labour 40p

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Warsaw Treaty Foreign Ministers

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, met on March 25 the participants in the meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member-states: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria Pyotr Mladenov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia Bohuslav Chnoupek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GDR Oskar Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary Peter Varkonyi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Marian Orzechowski and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania Ioan Totu.

During the meeting that proceeded in an atmosphere of comradeship and complete mutual understanding, the Ministers expressed satisfaction with the reorganisation of the work of the Foreign Ministers' Committee which is becoming increasingly creative and called for greater initiative on the part of everyone in implementing the jointly-charted policy of the countries of the socialist community. Note was taken of the great importance of the Soviet initiatives aimed at ensuring mankind's survival, dependable security for each people and all

countries and the creation of a non-violent and nuclear-weapon-free world.

Special emphasis was placed on the historic importance of the processes taking place in the Soviet Union, linked with the acceleration of socio-economic development, reorganisation and democratisation, for the destinies of socialism and peace.

Having expressed satisfaction with the work of the Foreign Ministers' Committee, Mikhail Gorbachev spoke of the need to impart to it even more dynamism and energy in getting things done so that this important instrument for coordinating the foreign policy activities of the fraternal socialist countries should correspond in full measure to the grown and more complex tasks on the world scene, and to the broadening opportunities for the socialist countries to have an impact on the destinies of the world with their peaceful policy. It is a fact that the initiatives set forth by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty member states and aimed at averting a nuclear catastrophe and at disarmament are winning over the sympathies and support of world public opinion and changing the very atmosphere of international life. The Soviet Union is approaching with a full measure of responsibility the issue of war and peace, it has been doing and will continue doing everything that depends on it for protecting mankind against the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Mikhail Gorbachev noted that the fraternal parties and countries are building relations between them on the solid foundation of equality, independence and responsibility, initiative and concerted efforts. The CPSU and the Soviet Union are unswervingly loyal to the policy line collectively charted by the countries of the socialist community.

Speaking of the Soviet Union's domestic affairs, Mikhail Gorbachev said the Soviet people are fulfilling tasks which have far-reaching consequences for revealing the opportunities inherent in the socialist system. The reorganisation is not an easy undertaking. It is not proceeding without struggle or without problems, because it has an impact on many people and the whole of society. However, it is the unanimous wish of the Communists and all Soviet people not to stop half-way and to take the cause of renovating all sides of the Soviet people's life to completion.

Mikhail Gorbachev wished the participants in the meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee and all diplomats from the socialist countries to be creative and innovative in their approach to the attainment of the noble aim of averting war.

He also asked them to convey comradesly greetings to the leaders of the fraternal parties of the Warsaw Treaty member states. □

Statement

BY THE WARSAW TREATY MEMBER-STATES ON THE ISSUE OF A BAN ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Here follows the full text of the statement on the issue of a ban on chemical weapons, which was adopted at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states held in Moscow on March 24-25:

PROCEEDING from the interests of strengthening international peace and general security, of ensuring disarmament, the Warsaw Treaty member states resolutely declare for a ban on chemical weapons, for scrapping the existing stocks of such weapons and the industrial base for their production. One of the main objectives of their foreign policy is the speediest completion of talks on a full and universal ban on chemical weapons.

The major initiatives advanced by the socialist states in order to accelerate and invigorate the talks, the proposals of the other countries participating in the Geneva Disarmament Conference have made it possible to eliminate many obstacles in the way of drawing up a mutually acceptable agreement. The necessary prerequisites have been created for completing — with due regard for the proposals of the participants in the Disarmament Conference to settle the outstanding issues at the talks already this year — the work to hammer out an international convention that would effectively ensure a full and universal ban on the development and production of chemical weapons, scrapping all of their stocks soon and guaranteeing that they will never be revived anywhere. The real opportunity to eliminate chemical weapons, to put an end for ever to the

chemical threat to the whole of mankind shall not be missed.

A serious obstacle in the way to the attainment of this goal are the plans to produce and deploy in Europe a particularly dangerous binary type of those weapons. These plans are in conflict with the demands of the world community and the UN decisions on the need for a ban and scrapping of nuclear weapons.

The allied socialist states will further do on their part everything in their power to conclude a convention most speedily. To find solutions at the talks on questions which still hamper the completion of work on the convention, they have put forward fresh proposals at the Disarmament Conference concerning announcement of the chemical weapons depots, ensuring non-production of such weapons in the civilian chemical industry and exercise of control, including international control, in places and check-ups on request.

The allied socialist states stand for ridding Europe, its individual regions of chemical weapons. They reaffirm their support for the initiatives made by the GDR and Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania on the establishment of zones, respectively in Central Europe and the Balkans, free from chemical weapons — zones in which the deployment, testing, production, acquisition and stockpiling of such weapons would be banned — as a major contribution to the effort to avert the threat of chemical weapons' use.

Proceeding from their principled position the Warsaw Treaty member states stand for imposing the toughest system of verification, including international verification, to monitor the compliance of the signatory states with their commitments under the convention. They reaffirm their readiness to seek on that basis mutually acceptable solutions to issues related to the observance of the convention by all the parties and to the build-up of trust among its signatories.

Guided by their striving for an early completion of the effort to draft the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on their destruction, and for the creation of the necessary conditions for that, the states represented at the meeting are urging all states:

— to refrain from all steps that could complicate the attainment of mutually acceptable accords at the talks or slow down their progress;

— not to produce chemical weapons, including their binary or multi-component types, not to deploy chemical weapons on foreign territories, to withdraw them from those foreign territories where they have already been deployed, and the states which have no chemical weapons on the territory — to prevent their deployment.

To ensure resolute progress toward an agreement on the elimination of chemical arsenals it is especially important now that all parties to the talks demonstrate political will,

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Warsaw Treaty Foreign Ministers' statement

For furthering the CESC process and bringing the Vienna follow-up meeting to a successful outcome

THE Foreign Ministers of Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia note that the Vienna follow-up meeting of representatives of the states participating in the Conference on European Security and Co-operation (CESC) has entered the crucial phase of working out tangible accords which will embrace the entire spectrum of the Helsinki Final Act as a single whole, and they aim to facilitate the continued practical implementation of its provisions.

The Ministers reiterate their countries' commitment to furthering the CESC process which can enhance detente and make it universal in coverage. This will make it possible to build and develop relations between the participating countries on the solid and dependable basis of all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act with a view to improving the life of all people in general and every person in particular, so that they are able to enjoy the benefits of peace and look confidently into the future.

In present-day conditions they see the principal objective of the Vienna meeting in elevating the CESC process to a fundamentally new level, making it more dynamic and promoting co-operation among the CESC states in the sphere of security and in political, economic and humanitarian fields.

The Ministers believe that proposals by the participants in the Vienna meeting should serve these goals and that the forum should discuss pressing problems of the greatest concern to the nations of Europe and to every person, such as disarmament, peace, security, stronger trust and broader co-operation in every field.

I. Proceeding from the special need to facilitate disarmament in Europe and cuts in armed forces and conventional arms, the Ministers pointed out that the understandings reached at the first phase of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe direct the participating countries to proceed to an integral system that would cover confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament.

They thoroughly discussed those matters in the light of the Budapest Address by the Warsaw Treaty member states and the proposals made by the socialist countries at the Vienna meeting for moving on to specific talks on substantial cuts in armed forces and conventional arms in Europe — from the Atlantic to the Urals — in the framework of a corresponding forum, a conference.

They take the view that the issues of security and disarmament should be examined and resolved in the framework of the CESC process. In this connection they reaffirmed the proposal made by their countries in Vienna for supplementing the mandate of the Stockholm Conference so that it will hold specific discussions of disarmament matters as well.

Such talks would be conducted along with the elaboration of the confidence-building measures which were not agreed upon at the initial phase of the Stockholm Conference or which can be proposed in future, including a gradual scaling down of military activities, especially those by the two military alliances, notification of independent exercises by air and naval forces, coverage by confidence-building measures of the

territories of all CESC countries, and other confidence- and security-building measures.

Basically new confidence- and strategic military stability-building measures in Europe directly connected with cuts in armed forces, conventional arms and military spending, which would make it easier to achieve accords and help achieve military parity at the lowest possible level, would also become a subject for discussion.

The countries represented at this session stand for active participation by neutral and non-aligned nations in the examining of the military aspects of European security at every stage and believe that these nations, considering their positive role in the CESC process, can make a positive contribution also to disarmament in Europe.

For reduction of nuclear arms

The start of informal consultations between representatives of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries attending the Vienna meeting has been a new development. The countries represented at this session hope that the consultations will help solve issues connected with transition to substantive negotiations on cuts in armed forces and conventional arms in Europe, on the understanding that a decision on the mandate for these negotiations should be taken in the course of the Vienna meeting and reflected in its final document.

The Warsaw Treaty members are prepared, on the basis of equal rights, balance, reciprocity and equal respect for the security interests of all CESC countries, to look for mutually acceptable approaches to the future negotiations on cuts in armed forces and conventional arms on an all-European scale.

Concluding the Vienna meeting with tangible practical results would create a more felicitous situation for progress at the talks discussing the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms and the prevention of weapons in outer space, as well as for the implementation of initiatives for creating in Europe zones free from nuclear and chemical weapons.

II. The Ministers pointed out that an important component of European security is the development of the whole complex of economic relations and co-operation between the CESC states. Such ties make the material basis of detente, security and peace in Europe.

The initiatives of the socialist countries to convene an economic forum in Prague, a conference on scientific-technical co-operation in Bucharest and an ecological forum serve towards further developing and deepening the all-European process. Their other proposals on questions related to broadening and enriching economic and scientific-technical co-operation, production co-operation and sharing of technology in new forms and also on eliminating obstacles in the way of trade and economic exchanges-between CESC states go in the same direction.

The Warsaw Treaty member countries point out that many other CESC states have made proposals on all aspects of the "second basket" and are prepared to examine them attentively in order to find mutually acceptable decisions.

III. The Warsaw Treaty member states consider co-operation in the humanitarian field to be an important element of the all-European process, of creating a comprehensive international peace and security system. They declare for broad interaction in that field. They are convinced that everything should be done to ensure the right of man to life and work in conditions of peace and freedom, implementa-

tion in full of the political, civic, economic, social and cultural rights in their totality, and interdependence with respect for the sovereignty of states.

The interests of peace, building up a climate of confidence, mutual respect and friendship among nations necessitate an end to all attempts at fostering anti-communism, propagating racism, chauvinistic and nationalist attitudes.

The proposal to convene a conference in Moscow on the development of humanitarian co-operation, that would make it possible to examine the totality of questions of co-operation in that field between the participating states, serves the attainment of progress for the whole complex of the humanitarian issues in all the CESC states in conformity with the Helsinki Final Act. The Warsaw Treaty member states urge all countries participating in the Conference on European Security and Co-operation to show a favourable attitude to the convocation of a humanitarian conference and declare for the holding of a comprehensive discussion at that forum with sights set on practical results.

The joint proposals of the socialist and other countries, including on the convocation in Krakow of a symposium on cultural heritage, the initiative of the Hungarian People's Republic on encouraging translation, publication and propagation of literature in less widespread languages of the participating states, and the proposal of the Socialist Republic of Romania that a conference be convened on education and training of personnel, on questions pertaining to crime, alcoholism and drug addiction are also aimed at further developing and deepening the all-European process in the fields of contacts, information, culture and education.

With the same aim the socialist countries have put forward a number of proposals aimed at resolving other topical issues, among them unemployment, illiteracy, the position of young people, equality of women, co-operation in the field of mass media.

The states represented at the meeting will strive for the attainment of mutually acceptable agreements with the other CESC states on questions pertaining to the humanitarian field.

The Warsaw Treaty member states are addressing all the CESC states with a call for making efforts so that the Vienna meeting will end its work by adopting meaningful and balanced decisions.

They are resolved to do their utmost so that the Vienna meeting will proceed in a constructive, business-like spirit, so that its decisions will be a manifestation of the new thinking in international affairs and contribute towards strengthening peace and security, developing co-operation in Europe and all over the world. □

(Moscow, March 25, 1987)

Warsaw Treaty New Initiatives

Documents of Meeting of Political Consultative Committee of Member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, Budapest, June 10-11, 1986 (includes Address to NATO Member States, All European Countries with Programme of Reducing Armed Forces and Conventional Armaments in Europe)

Price 20p

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

COMMUNIQUE

Warsaw Treaty Foreign Ministers' Committee session

A REGULAR session of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States which are parties to the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance was held in Moscow on March 24-25, 1987.

The session was attended by the following Ministers of Foreign Affairs: Peter Mladenov, of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Peter Varkonyi, of the Hungarian People's Republic, Oskar Fischer, of the German Democratic Republic, Marian Orzechowski, of the Polish People's Republic, Ioan Totu, of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Eduard Shevardnadze, of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Bohuslav Chnoupek, of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs exchanged views on the state of affairs in Europe and in the world as a whole. The discussions centred on the cardinal issues of our time: the removal of the nuclear threat, the ridding of mankind of the burden of nuclear and other arms, the strengthening of European and universal security, and the development of international co-operation.

The participants in the session, having expressed the concern of their countries over the fact that the complex international situation is persisting as a result of the intensification of the arms race, the nuclear arms race in the first place, in view of the actions of the United States and NATO, emphasised the need to intensify and combine the efforts of all countries for the purposes of disarmament, and to press resolutely for the establishment of a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

It was pointed out at the session that the large-scale proposals which were put forward by the Soviet Union in Reykjavik signified a qualitatively new approach to disarmament issues and were a further development of the Programme set out in the January 15, 1986 Statement by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee for the establishment of a nuclear-free world.

The Warsaw Treaty member states are resolved to work for headway from the ground gained in the capital of Iceland, to seek deep, radical cuts in and the elimination of nuclear weapons, to prevent the arms race from spreading over to outer space, and to press for strict observance of the ABM Treaty conditions.

It is essential to do everything for the accords which began to emerge to become embodied in specific agreements. In this connection the Warsaw Treaty member states again declared for continuation and deepening of the political dialogue between countries.

The states represented at the session emphasised the need for the Soviet Union and the United States to sign without delay a separate agreement, under which US and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe would be fully eliminated.

They support the Soviet Union's proposal on this score and welcome its readiness to withdraw longer-range theatre missiles from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, by agreement with the governments of those countries, immediately after a Soviet-US agreement is signed.

As far as other theatre missiles are concerned, the USSR is prepared immediately to begin talks

with a view to fully reducing and eliminating them. The conclusion of an agreement on medium-range missiles as soon as possible would open the way for complete deliverance of Europe from nuclear weapons.

The participants in the session went on record for immediate termination of the implementation of SDI as well as of the development of projects similar to the 'European Defence Initiative', bearing in mind the extremely dangerous consequences of the realisation of such plans.

The Warsaw Treaty member states are reaffirming their determination to seek a total ban on nuclear tests, and are declaring for the start of talks with a view to concluding an agreement on this issue as soon as possible.

2. The session considered in detail matters connected with the furtherance of the proposals contained in the Budapest Address of the Warsaw Treaty member states. The session reaffirmed these countries' determination to press for a substantial reduction in the armed forces and conventional arms in the European continent so that cutbacks concerning the two military and political alliances would amount to 25 per cent as early as at the beginning of the nineties, as compared with the present level, with an appropriate decrease in the military expenditures of the countries, and so that the cutback process would go on in future as well.

3. The allied socialist countries come out in favour of stage-by-stage lowering of the level of military confrontation in Europe with permanent maintenance of the military balance at an ever lower level. They hold that, wherever there is non-parity in some elements, it is essential to equalise the state of affairs through appropriate cutbacks.

The Warsaw Treaty member states attach much importance to securing that the lowering of the level of military confrontation is accompanied by measures, first of all in the field of arms cuts, which would make it possible to diminish the possibility of a sudden attack, if not rule it out completely.

4. The ministers emphasised the desire of their countries to achieve positive results at the Vienna Talks on Mutual Reductions in the Armed Forces and Armaments in Central Europe.

5. The participants in the session consider that the establishment of nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones in the Balkans, in Central Europe, in the north and in other parts of the continent would serve the goals of diminishing military confrontation in Europe and strengthening all-European security.

They stated their countries' determination to press for the implementation of the proposals made on that score by the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

6. The Warsaw Treaty member states are for the agreements that are being worked out on disarmament issues to envisage a strict and effective verification system which would accord with the content of the disarmament measures, right up to on-site inspections.

7. The participants in the session emphasised that the inviolability of borders, and respect for the established territorial and political realities are an indispensable condition for the preservation of lasting peace in Europe.

The activities of revanchist forces, first of all those in the FRG, and encouragement of revanchism no matter where are a threat to peace and international security.

8. The Warsaw Treaty member states are fully resolved to press for the formation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security in co-operation with other countries, and will continue to contribute to expanding and deepening international co-operation in all fields — military, political, economic and humanitarian — with a view to establishing such a system.

The development of a constructive dialogue, both bilateral and multilateral, in the international community on principles for a world safe for everyone would make it possible to determine the most effective ways and specific measures for the restructuring of international relations in accordance with the aspirations of all peoples as applied to the realities of the nuclear and space age.

9. The participants in the session again emphasised the need for strict respect by all states for the principles of national independence and sovereignty, non-use of force or threat of force, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and other principles and goals of the UN Charter, the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, and other universally recognised norms of international relations.

10. The ministers discussed in detail the course of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on European Security and Co-operation (CESC) participating states, which is called upon to give a new impulse to the CESC process, and adopted a statement on the matter.

11. The participants in the session considered the question of a ban on chemical weapons, and adopted an appropriate statement.

12. The ministers considered and agreed upon specific measures aimed at strengthening the unity and cohesion of the Warsaw Treaty member states, and the friendly and allied relations between them, and at increasing their interaction in the pursuance of a coordinated policy towards disarmament, the strengthening of peace and broad international co-operation.

The session of the Foreign Ministers' Committee was held in an atmosphere of friendship and comradely co-operation.

The Committee's next session is to be held in Prague. □

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realism and lotty responsibility.

The Warsaw Treaty member states are emphatically urging the NATO countries and all participants in the Conference on Disarmament to work together with them in order to overcome by joint efforts the remaining obstacles at the talks, complete the drafting of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons in the current year so as to embark shortly on the complete elimination of chemical weapons and the industrial base for their manufacture everywhere.

The states represented at the meeting believe that 1987 can and must become the year of the beginning of complete and general chemical disarmament. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov answers questions on Radio Mocambique

IN the present-day conditions, power politics and wars cannot be a means of settling international problems, and the striving for military superiority can ensure political gains for nobody, because it is no longer possible to win a nuclear war or even the arms race, said Nikolai Ryzhkov, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, answering questions from Leite Vasconcelos, Director-General of Radio Mocambique. The Soviet Prime Minister had a friendly meeting with him in the Kremlin last week in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Treaty of

Friendship and Co-operation between the USSR and the People's Republic of Mozambique.

The Soviet Union opposes nuclear war in principle and has committed itself not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, Nikolai Ryzhkov continued. He recalled the USSR's major foreign policy initiatives, a special place among which is occupied by the Programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the current century, and the comprehensive international security system advanced by the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

The CPSU's and the Soviet State's active stand in international affairs is an expression of the new political thinking, without which there can be no mutually-acceptable solutions and agreements in the interests of humanity's survival, the head of the Soviet Government said.

Asked about the results of co-operation between the USSR and Mozambique, he expressed satisfaction with them and stressed that the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between the two countries, whose 10th anniversary will be marked on March 31, has become a reliable foundation on which the whole complex of relations between the two countries is built. The Treaty has stood the test of the times.

Nikolai Ryzhkov reiterated that the USSR firmly and consistently declares for the elimination of the disgraceful apartheid system in the RSA, and in support of the frontline states — of which the USSR is a reliable and loyal friend.

The Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers briefed Leite Vasconcelos on the course of reorganisation in the USSR, and on how the Soviet people are preparing to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. □

Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee at its March 26 meeting made a keen assessment of the shortcomings in the handling of questions affecting the vital interests of the working people, and the drawbacks in this work on the part of the central committees of the Communist Parties and Councils of Ministers of the union republics, ministries and departments.

It considered measures to ensure the implementation of the assignments on the development of material and technological facilities for the social and cultural sphere in the 12th Five-Year-Plan period (1986-1990).

It was observed that the plan for commissioning housing, schools and outpatient clinics and polyclinics for 1986 was fulfilled. No drastic change has occurred as yet in this sphere however. The targets for building hospitals, child-care centres, community centres and vocational schools were not met.

A set of measures for implementing the programme for building social and cultural amenities for 1988-1990 was outlined.

The task was advanced to narrow the lag. Housing construction assignments were specified to commission up to 630 million square metres of housing against 595 million square metres as planned for the five-year period.

It was emphasised that the implementation of the projected programme to accelerate the development of the material and technical resources of the social sphere must become a matter of paramount political importance to all Party, state and public organisations.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee also discussed the question of refining the scientific support for the development of the agri-industrial sector of the country.

It was pointed out that scientific development efforts seriously lag behind the requirements of life.

The Political Bureau recognised it advisable to elaborate and implement measures to develop the material and technical resources of science as well as to better the remuneration of the work of researchers, designers, technologists and

specialists, and to improve their training.

Reports by Eduard Shevardnadze on the results of the visits to Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Australia, Indonesia, and Thailand, and by Alexandra Biryukova on the CPSU delegation's trip to Vietnam were discussed at

the meeting.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee also considered other matters aimed at implementing the decisions of the 27th Congress of the Party in the field of domestic and foreign policy. □

Press conference on foreign economic relations

A PRESS conference held at the press centre of the USSR Foreign Ministry on March 27 was devoted to problems involved in the reform of the USSR's foreign economic relations. Soviet and foreign journalists familiarised themselves with measures being carried out to streamline the management of foreign economic activities.

Vladimir Kamentsev, Chairman of the State Economic Commission of the USSR Council of Ministers, Boris Aristov, USSR Minister of Foreign Trade, Konstantin Katushev, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, Yuri Ivanov, Chairman of the Board of the USSR Vneshtorgbank (Foreign Trade Bank), and Viktor Komplektov, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister, answered numerous questions from those at the press conference.

Soviet organisations have received more than 200 specific proposals from their foreign partners for setting up joint ventures, Vladimir Kamentsev said. By mid-March, a total of 121 proposals had been examined, discussed and aroused certain interest. Thirty-nine proposals are close to the stage of final discussion and the proposals for 12 ventures are being practically implemented.

USSR Foreign Trade Minister Boris Aristov said that in 1986 the Soviet Union's trade turnover came to 130,000 million roubles, i.e. declined by eight per cent as regards its value. This was due to a drop in the prices of fuel, raw materials and some other cargoes. Unilateral restrictions established in a number of capitalist countries on trade and crediting relations with the Soviet Union have also played their negative role. Yet the volume of trade in 1986 grew two

per cent (without considering the changes in prices).

Speaking on a change in the structure of the USSR Foreign Trade Ministry, Boris Aristov said that nine foreign trade organisations together with their personnel and trade mark had been turned over to industry. On top of that, separate trade firms have been turned over to a number of ministries. Nevertheless the Foreign Trade Ministry remains the Soviet Union's biggest foreign trade organisation.

Yuri Ivanov, Chairman of the Board of the USSR Foreign Trade Bank, pointed out that the appraisal of the bank's solvency in the international foreign markets is high and Vneshtorgbank did not plan the issue of either shares or bonds, albeit some new forms of operations are likely to be used.

Touching upon the introduction of convertibility of the national currencies of the CMEA member-countries between themselves and into transferable roubles, he said that the conditions and forms of such a convertibility are being discussed with partners from those countries.

Yuri Ivanov stressed the Soviet Union's positive attitude to GATT, and its preparedness to carry on the process of drawing closer which had got under way, with the sights set on full membership of that organisation as the ultimate goal.

The international monetary system, Yuri Ivanov pointed out, has serious shortcomings preventing the USSR's participation in the International Monetary Fund. At the same time, he said, we are prepared to maintain contacts with that organisation at the level of experts. □

(N.B. The cross-heads in this bulletin were inserted by Soviet News—Ed.)